

1	Awarding Institution:	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
2	Teaching Institution:	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
3	Final Award:	Degree of Bachelor of Science with Honours
4	Programme title:	BSc with Honours in Combined Studies; BSc with Honours in Combined Studies (with Foundation Year) (These degree programmes are often referred to informally as Combined Honours.)
5	Programme Accredited by:	Not applicable
6	UCAS Codes:	CFG0, (with Foundation Year: FCG0)
7	QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s):	Not applicable

8	Date of production/revision:	June 2004
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9 Programme Aims:

To recruit from varied educational backgrounds students who wish to study a range of Science subjects at Honours level.

To produce graduates with a sound knowledge of a range of science subjects.

For each Combined Honours student, to provide in each science subject an educational experience that is the same in quality as that enjoyed by corresponding Single Honours students, though inevitably of reduced quantity.

10(a) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:

The intended learning outcomes for the Combined Studies degree programme are sum of those of the individual modules taken by the student.

10(b) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:**Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies****A Knowledge and understanding**

In each case the teaching and learning methods and strategies are those of the individual subjects studied by the student.

Assessment strategy

The assessment methods for each subject are those defined in the degree programme regulations for the individual subjects taken. Candidates are assessed for Honours performance on the basis of all Honours modules taken at Stage 2 and all modules taken at Stage 3, with each module given weight according to its credit value.

B Subject-specific/professional skills

The teaching, learning and assessment strategies are those of the individual subjects studied.

C Cognitive Skills

The teaching, learning and assessment strategies are those of the individual subjects studied.

D Key (transferable) skills

The key (transferable) skills are those of the individual subjects studied.

In addition, for each candidate on the Combined Studies degree programme, there is the added advantage of experiencing contrasting academic and cultural milieux, each with its own style of discourse, its own values, and its own standards of evidence and conduct.

11 (a) Programme Curriculum, Structure, and Features:

The Combined Studies in Science Degree Programme is supervised by the SAgE Faculty Board for Co- and Multi-Disciplinary Programmes, chaired by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. The Dean also chairs the Awards Board and the Staff-Student Committee. There is a SAgE Faculty administrator with special responsibility for Combined Studies: she is secretary for the Faculty Board for Co- and Multi-Disciplinary Programmes, the Staff-Student Committee and the Awards Board. The Degree Programme Director is the

degree programme director for Joint Honours degrees. He is also Admissions Tutor for Joint and Combined Honours degrees.

The Combined Studies degree programme is a three-year full-time modular programme. In the course of each academic year, students are required to study modules with a total credit value of 120 credits, normally made up of 60 credits in each semester (half teaching year). The University has determined that a 10 credit module is equivalent to 100 hours of total study time (contact hours plus private study).

Stage 0 [Foundation Year]

Candidates are required, subject to the approval of the Degree Programme Director, to select modules to a total value of 80 credits from Science subjects, plus further modules with a total value of 40 credits. In certain circumstances, candidates may be given permission by the Degree Programme Director to study modules offered by schools in other faculties.

In order to progress from Stage 0 to Stage 1, a candidate must pass all modules. However students are permitted to re-sit failing modules, and up to 40 credits worth of modules can be passed by compensation. University regulations dictate when and how often a student may re-sit a module, and also the time limit within which a degree course must be completed.

N.B. The above Foundation Year will in future be subsumed in the new SAgE Foundation Year.

Stage 1

Candidates are required, subject to the approval of the Degree Programme Director, to select Stage 1 modules with a total value of 80 credits from Science subjects, plus further modules to a total value of 40 credits. In certain circumstances, candidates may be given permission by the Degree Programme Director to study modules offered by schools in other faculties.

In order to progress from Stage 1 to Stage 2, a candidate must pass all modules. However students are permitted to re-sit failing modules, and up to 40 credits worth of modules can be passed by compensation. University regulations dictate when and how often a student may re-sit a module, and also the time limit within which a degree course must be completed.

Stage 2

All candidates must select, subject to the approval of the Degree Programme Director, Stage 2 modules in Science subjects with a total value of 60 credits, plus further modules with a total value of 60 credits.

Modules designated as Stage 2 modules by the school offering them count as Honours modules. Other modules do not normally count as Honours modules.

In order to progress from Stage 2 to Stage 3, a candidate must pass all modules. However students are permitted to re-sit failing modules at the end of Stage 2, and up to 30 credits worth of modules can be passed by compensation.

Stage 3

All candidates must select, subject to the approval of the Degree Programme Director, Stage 3 modules with a total value of 60 credits modules in Science subjects, plus further modules to a total value of 60 credits, so as to satisfy the requirement that the candidate shall take, during Stages 2 and 3, at least 180 credits beyond Stage 1.

Honours Performance

Candidates are assessed for Honours performance on the basis of all Honours modules taken at Stage 2 and all modules taken at Stage 3. All such modules are given equal weight.

Ordinary Degree in Science

Students who do not perform well at Stage 1 in a Combined Honours degree programme may apply to transfer to the Ordinary Degree in Science. This is less demanding (students need to amass 300 credits and the pass mark on each module is 30) and less specialised (students may take a broad range of modules). In fact, many students on Stage 2 of the Ordinary Degree Programme choose to take the same modules as they would have taken on Stage 2 of the Combined Honours Degree Programme, with the aim of doing well enough to apply for restoration to the Combined Honours Degree Programme, and some are successful in this aim. Of course, some are not successful, and pass on to Stage 3 of the Ordinary Degree in Science. It is also possible, on completion of the Ordinary Degree in Science, to apply to return for an extra Honours year, to convert the Ordinary Degree to an Honours Degree.

12 Criteria for Admission

Students are admitted through UCAS on an individual basis. The entry requirements vary from year to year, depending on the level of demand and the quota imposed by the University. All candidates are asked to nominate two subjects to be studied at Stage 1, to ensure that their choice is compatible with the timetable. Only students who are judged likely to achieve a good Honours degree are admitted to the degree programmes. Typical offers vary from ABB to BCC at A level.

Most suitable applicants, including usually all of normal age, are offered a place on the basis of their UCAS application form. All are invited to an Open Day: the Open

Day programme includes tours and presentations in schools, and opportunities to talk to the Subject Coordinators.

SCOTTISH QUALIFICATIONS

Entry requirements vary with the degree programme. Typically AABB at Higher level, usually requiring A in Mathematics. Advanced Highers are preferred.

IRISH QUALIFICATIONS

Typical entry requirements are 5 passes at Higher level, including 4 at B3 with Mathematics at B2 (All B2 for combinations involving Psychology.)

BTEC

Entry requirements vary, but usually 3 Merits, plus Distinction in Mathematics at Level III where appropriate are required.

NON-STANDARD ENTRANTS

Non-standard entrants are evaluated on an individual basis, and where possible, are interviewed.

Where a student, though generally acceptable, has some deficiencies in background, it is possible for him or her to be admitted initially to the Combined Studies in Science (with Foundation Year), UCAS Code FCG0. During this year, the student remedies any deficiencies, and on successful completion of the year, transfers to Stage 1 of the Combined Studies in Science Degree Programme.

Mature students are expected to have recent experience of further education, together with experience in areas relevant to the chosen degree programme.

13 Support for Students and their Learning:

- A **Degree Programme Handbook** is produced for Joint and Combined Honours students explaining how the Degree programmes are organised, and indicating for each subject the module combinations which are available and free of timetable clashes. The handbook explains the support systems for Combined and Joint Honours students and gives the names, telephone numbers and email addresses of the Joint Honours Subject Coordinators, who also counsel Combined Honours students.
- The **Induction Week** programme for Combined Honours students has several components. At an initial session, the Degree Programme Director issues the Combined Honours degree programme handbook, and explains the workings of the Degree Programme, the role of the Joint Honours Advisers and the Degree

Programme Director, and the various sources of assistance that a student is able to call on. For each student, the remaining components are provided by the schools in which he or she will be studying. Each school is required to identify those parts of its Induction Week Programme that a Combined Honours student is expected, if possible, to attend.

- Each student is assigned on entry a **Personal Tutor**, drawn from a school in which he or she will be studying to provide academic advice on choice of modules, learning strategies, and to comment on progress and performance. The Personal Tutor also has a pastoral role. Students with academic or personal problems will normally discuss these in confidence with their Personal Tutor. More generally, the Personal Tutor acts as a buffer between the student and the university bureaucracy: a student with a problem is advised to take it, in the first instance, to the Personal Tutor; conversely, where a student's conduct is a cause for concern, the first person to be informed should be the Personal Tutor.

Sometimes, a Combined Honours student's interests may change during the degree programme, and the expertise of the original tutor may no longer be relevant. In those cases, a change of tutor may be advisable.

- The Combined Honours student is also able to call on the expertise of the **Joint Honours Subject Coordinator** attached to each subject area, particularly in cases where the tutor lacks familiarity with a subject area. The Subject Coordinators are also a source of advice and information to new tutors who are unfamiliar with the Combined Honours structure. In addition, each Subject Coordinator is automatically a member of the Faculty Board for Co- and Multi-Disciplinary Programmes, and acts as a channel of communication between Joint and Combined Honours and the relevant school. Subject Coordinators are expected to report to the Faculty Board any issues arising in the schools which have implications for Joint and Combined Honours.
- The **Degree Programme Director** is accessible to Joint Honours students throughout the year. Personal Tutors and Joint Honours Subject Coordinators notify the Degree Programme Director when problems arise.
- **Discipline:** Where a student is delinquent or is performing badly, the individual schools, which are in day-to-day contact with the student, may counsel the student through the school support mechanisms available to Single Honours students, normally via the appropriate school Degree Programme Director. However, responsibility for discipline and monitoring progress lies with the Degree Programme Director, and tutors should normally report directly to the Degree Programme Director.
- There is a wide range of **University Support Services**, all given in the Student Handbook. These include a) the Disability Unit, b) the Student Counselling Service, c) Student Welfare, and d) the Careers Service.

- The **Robinson Library** has an excellent collection of books, journals, local and on-line databases, and self-tuition courses in study-skills. In addition, there are permanently manned, subject-specific help-desks to assist students in finding information. The **Science Liaison Librarian** is on hand to provide further assistance, as and when required.
- The **University Computing Service**, through its distributed resources across the campus, and with the Halls of Residence, gives e-mail, web access, and use of all necessary software.
- The **Common Room** on the Ground Floor of the Agriculture Building has been designated as a place where Joint and Combined Honours students can meet each other, and relax between lectures. The Notice Board for Joint and Combined Honours students is adjacent to the Common Room.

14 Evaluation and Improvement of the Quality of Teaching and Learning

Module reviews are the responsibility of the individual schools contributing to the Combined Honours Degree Programmes.

Programme reviews: each contributing school is expected to review its contribution to the Joint and Combined Honours degree programmes each year.

External examiner reports: the Combined Honours Degree Programmes do not have an External Examiner, nor is it intended that they should have one. However, they share an **External Assessor** with the Joint Honours Degree Programmes. The External Assessor attends the Awards Board and advises on the application of the Examination Regulations in difficult cases, but does not vet examination questions or review scripts. However, each subject area has its own External Examiner(s) and they are required to report to the Awards Board, via a standard form, any issues arising in the subject area which have implications for Combined Honours students.

Student evaluations: Degree programme questionnaires are sent annually to all Combined Honours student by email. The returned questionnaires are discussed by the Staff-Student Committee and the Faculty Board for Co- and Multi-Disciplinary Programmes.

Review Mechanisms:

Student Questionnaires
Degree Programme Review
Internal Subject Review
QAA Academic Review

Committees For Monitoring Quality

Faculty Board for Co- and Multi-Disciplinary Programmes.
Awards Board for Co- and Multi-Disciplinary Programmes.
Staff-Student Committee

School Boards of Studies
School Boards of Examiners
School Staff-Student Committees
Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee
University Teaching and Learning Committee

15 Regulation of Assessment

All work is marked against the University mark scheme for which the pass mark is 40. Modules within the Faculty use a common set of marking criteria, supplemented in each school by more specific criteria. Most modules are assessed by a combination of in-course assessment, and an end-of-semester written examination. In addition, there may in individual schools be other methods of assessment – essays, case studies, research reports, individual and joint projects, posters, open book/unseen examinations, and oral presentations. The methods of assessment for each module, and the relative weightings for each component, are published in the school degree programme handbooks.

Assessment is overseen by the Awards Board for Co- and Multi-Disciplinary Programmes. The members of the Board are the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the External Assessor, the Degree Programme Director, the Faculty Administrator with special responsibility for Joint and Combined Honours Degree Programmes and the Joint Honours Subject Coordinators.

17 Other Sources of Information

University Prospectus
University Regulations
School Brochures
Joint and Combined Honours Degree Programme Handbook
School Degree Programme Handbooks
University's Web Page: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/external.phtml>
The Faculty of Science Web Page: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sage/>

18 Availability

This degree programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the Joint Honours degree programmes, and of the learning outcomes that a typical student may reasonably be expected to achieve. It should be read in conjunction with the specifications to be provided by each Joint Honours school for its contribution to the Joint Honours Degree. While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of these specifications, the availability of individual modules will inevitably depend on there being staff with the relevant expertise to teach them, so that availability cannot always be guaranteed.