

## LTC15D138

**Title:** *Proposals relating to Joint Degree programmes*  
**Author:** Dr Adam Longcroft (ADTP) & Rachel Paley (LTS)  
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### Issue

Some proposals from the Academic Director for Taught Programmes (ADTP) and Rachel Paley (LTS) aimed at ensuring a more consistent high-quality student experience for students on Joint Degree programmes at UEA. Whilst many aspects of the Joint Degree student experience have been enhanced by ensuring more consistent regulations (e.g. the BIM Regulations) and other changes to University systems have ensured greater consistency of treatment of students between different schools (e.g. panel-based decision-making via FACPs, ECPs etc.) feedback from students on Joint Degree programmes via the SES, NSS and student case studies over a three year period has highlighted problems that need to be addressed. The proposals and recommendations set out in this paper are intended to address these problems. The recommendations can be approved by LTC now – a set of Guidance for staff and students involved in running or studying on Joint Degree programmes will follow, with the aim that this will be considered by LTC at its next meeting on 22 June 2016. Rachel Paley will be circulating a draft of the Guidance to Course Directors across the 4 faculties for comment/feedback and additional suggestions of best practice etc. This feedback from Course Directors will inform the final version of the Guidance which goes to LTC in June. The recommendations below were discussed by TPPG in April 2016, and were strongly supported by the Group.

### Recommendations:

1. That the University produces a **guidance document** that sets out points to be considered in the design, arrangement and provision of cross-School degrees at the University of East Anglia. The guidance should apply equally to those programmes that are single honours but are taught jointly by two or more Schools.
2. To accompany the guidance document, **check lists are provided to key role holders** to help encourage and apply best practice.
3. That **annual reports** are received by the Learning and Teaching Committee on the performance of students taking degrees that are delivered across Schools of Study for monitoring purposes.
4. That a **'cross-school degree' forum** is established. The forum to be chaired by the Academic Director of Taught Programmes and to include student reps from cross-school degrees (ideally members of SSLCs), 2 or 3 course directors and Union Council reps. The purpose of the forum being to discuss issues relating to cross-school degrees and to monitor the adoption of the guidance document and to keep this document under review.

5. That the **student administration system (SITS) is developed** to allow Deputy Course Directors to have the same view as the Course Director and to allow students on cross-School degrees to be included in communications sent out to students registered in their 'second' School.

### **Resource Implications**

There are resource implications (e.g. in staff time) associated with the recommendations since they include the creation of new processes and groups aimed at ensuring a more consistent student experience. These need to be taken into account by LTC when considering their efficacy and the practicalities of their implementation.

### **Risk Implications**

There are no risk implications associated with the proposals since they are focused on 'enhancing' the student experience for students on Joint Degree programmes. There is, however, an 'opportunity-cost' – staff time devoted to addressing the recommendations needs to therefore be given proper consideration.

### **Equality and Diversity**

There are no equality or diversity implications associated with the proposal. The recommendations contained in the paper are aimed at ensuring more consistent treatment of students and a more consistent student experience.

### **Timing of decisions**

Approval by LTC will result in the recommendations being implemented during the 2016/17 academic year.

### **Further Information**

Contact:

Dr Adam Longcroft e mail: [a.longcroft@uea.ac.uk](mailto:a.longcroft@uea.ac.uk)

Rachel Paley e mail: [R.Paley@uea.ac.uk](mailto:R.Paley@uea.ac.uk)

## **Cross-School degree programmes - courses delivered between two (or more) Schools of Study including joint honours**

### **Introduction**

The University has a variety of joint honours degrees and single honours degrees which are delivered across two or more Schools of Study<sup>1</sup>. There are many potential benefits to students in taking a joint degree programme but there is sufficient evidence, both within the University<sup>2</sup> and across the HE sector<sup>3</sup>, to suggest that more can be done to support these students throughout their time at University to improve the student experience by mitigating against the logistical, cultural and organisational barriers that can be experienced.

The University has taken steps in recent years to help with the student experience for those taking cross-school degrees. This has included the requirement (under BIM) for all joint degrees to have a Deputy Course Director assigned from the partner School. The current Advising scheme, launched for the 2015/16 academic year, requires students on joint-degrees to have a second Adviser assigned to them from the partner school. However, there is recognition that more that can be done.

### **Summary of the concerns highlighted by joint degree students in the SES, NSS and the student case study**

- Lack of joined up induction across schools
- Perceived lack of support from academic adviser re: questions/guidance relating to course (note that this may have been improved following the implementation of the new academic advising policy)
- Feeling of falling between schools and not “belonging” to a School
- Difficulty seeking help and receiving advice regarding module selections
- Lack of and/or missed communication from all schools
- Lack of joined up communication between Schools/professional services noticeable to and impacts on students
- Bunching of deadlines from modules delivered across Schools
- Different experiences across schools in relation to delivery and standard of teaching, timeliness and quality of assessment feedback
- Lack of module choices or equality of choice across all subjects/disciplines
- Problems with timetabling systems/slots resulting in clashing modules thereby limiting module choice

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1 Appendix 1: List of cross-School degrees

2 Appendix 2: Comments from “Joint degree” students Student Experience Survey and National Student Survey and case study with a student

3 Guardian and Telegraph articles – [www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jan/09/joint-honours-degrees](http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/jan/09/joint-honours-degrees)

[www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/clearing/10226371/Joint-honours-degrees-are-two-subjects-better-than-one.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/clearing/10226371/Joint-honours-degrees-are-two-subjects-better-than-one.html)

- Not having a clear point of contact who can provide appropriate advice

#### Summary of positives highlighted by joint degree students in the SES, NSS and student case study

- Degree suits student's interests
- Beneficial for employability
- Opportunity to meet more people
- Opportunity to develop different sets of skills
- Good range of module choices
- More flexibility of module choice compared to single honours
- Sense of getting the best of both subjects/worlds

#### Appendix 1 – Cross-School degree programmes (DRAFT- to be checked)

Route code	Full name	In Use?	BIM?	Cross School?
U1N324302	ACTUARIAL SCIENCES	Y	Yes	E
U1N323404	ACTUARIAL SCIENCES WITH A YEAR IN INDUSTRY	Y	Yes	E
U1TQ73402	AMERICAN AND ENGLISH LITERATURE	Y	Yes	A
U1TQ73401	AMERICAN AND ENGLISH LITERATURE	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1TQ73302	AMERICAN AND ENGLISH LITERATURE (3 YEAR)	Y	Yes	A
U1T7W8402	AMERICAN LITERATURE WITH CREATIVE WRITING	Y	Yes	A
U1T7W8401	AMERICAN LITERATURE WITH CREATIVE WRITING	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1T7WV302	AMERICAN LITERATURE WITH CREATIVE WRITING (3 YEAR)	Y	Yes	A
U1C700302	BIOCHEMISTRY	Y	Yes	A
U2C700602	BIOCHEMISTRY	Y	Yes	A
U1F125302	BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY	Y	Yes	A
U1F125301	BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1F152402	BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY (MCHEM)	Y	Yes	A
U1F152401	BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY (MCHEM)	Y	- PRE 2013	A

U1F154402	BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY WITH A YEAR IN INDUSTRY (MCHEM)	Y	Yes	A
U1F154401	BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY WITH A YEAR IN INDUSTRY (MCHEM)	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1F153402	BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY WITH A YEAR IN NORTH AMERICA (MCHEM)	Y	Yes	A
U1F153401	BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY WITH A YEAR IN NORTH AMERICA (MCHEM)	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1NL41302	BUSINESS FINANCE AND ECONOMICS (BSC)	Y	Yes	A
U1NL41301	BUSINESS FINANCE AND ECONOMICS (BSC)	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1GN54302	BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS	Y	Yes	E
U1GN55401	BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEMS WITH A YEAR IN INDUSTRY	Y	Yes	E
U1G390304	BUSINESS STATISTICS	Y	Yes	E
U1FG11302	CHEMISTRY AND MATHEMATICS	Y	Yes	A
U1G450305	COMPUTER GRAPHICS, IMAGING AND MULTIMEDIA	Y	Yes	A
U1GN51302	COMPUTING FOR BUSINESS	Y	Yes	E
U1G511402	COMPUTING FOR BUSINESS WITH A YEAR IN INDUSTRY	Y	Yes	E
U1G450304	COMPUTING SCIENCE, IMAGING AND MULTIMEDIA	Y	Yes	A
U1LQ23302	CULTURE, LITERATURE AND POLITICS	Y	Yes	A
U1C180302	ECOLOGY	Y	Yes	A
U2C180602	ECOLOGY	Y	Yes	A
U1C18A402	ECOLOGY WITH A YEAR ABROAD	Y	Yes	A
U1LC18302	ECONOMICS AND ECONOMIC PSYCHOLOGY	Y	Yes	A
U1L1N4303	ECONOMICS WITH ACCOUNTANCY	Y	Yes	E
U1H221302	ENERGY ENGINEERING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (BEng)	Y	Yes	A
U1H220402	ENERGY ENGINEERING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (MEng)	Y	Yes	A
U1H22A402	ENERGY ENGINEERING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT WITH A YEAR IN INDUSTRY(BEng)	Y	Yes	A
U1QT37302	ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE	Y	Yes	A
U1QT37V01	ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE VISITORS	Y	- PRE 2013	A

U1Q200402FG	ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE WITH FRENCH AND GERMAN	Y	Yes	A
U1Q200402	ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE WITH FRENCH OR GERMAN LANGUAGE	Y	Yes	A
U1Q201302B	ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE WITH FRENCH OR GERMAN LANGUAGE	Y	Yes	A
U1Q200402A	ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERATURE WITH FRENCH OR SPANISH	Y	Yes	A
U1VQ53302	ENGLISH LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY	Y	Yes	A
U2VQ53702	ENGLISH LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY	Y	Yes	A
U1VQ53301	ENGLISH LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1FL87302	ENVIRONMENTAL GEOGRAPHY AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Y	Yes	A
U1QW36302	FILM AND ENGLISH STUDIES	Y	Yes	A
U1WV61302	FILM AND HISTORY	Y	Yes	A
U1RP1J402	FRENCH AND FILM AND TELEVISION STUDIES	Y	Yes	A
U1R9N2402	FRENCH LANGUAGE WITH MANAGEMENT STUDIES	Y	Yes	E
U1R9N2401	FRENCH LANGUAGE WITH MANAGEMENT STUDIES	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1R9N2403X	FRENCH SPANISH DBLE HONS LANG WITH MANAGEMENT STUDIES	Y	Yes	E
U1VV13302	HISTORY AND HISTORY OF ART	Y	Yes	A
U1VL12302	HISTORY AND POLITICS	Y	Yes	A
U1VQ32303	HISTORY OF ART AND LITERATURE	Y	Yes	A
U1VQ32304	HISTORY OF ART AND LITERATURE	Y	Yes	A
U1V3R8402	HISTORY OF ART AND LITERATURE WITH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE	Y	Yes	A
U1VT39403	HISTORY OF ART AND LITERATURE WITH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE	Y	Yes	A
U1Q9N2302	INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION WITH BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	Y	Yes	A
U1LV2C302	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND MODERN HISTORY	Y	Yes	A
U1TP23402	JAPANESE AND FILM AND TELEVISION	Y	Yes	A
U1TP23401	JAPANESE AND FILM AND TELEVISION	Y	- PRE 2013	A

U1R9N2402J	JAPANESE LANGUAGE WITH MANAGEMENT STUDIES	Y	Yes	E
U1M121403	LAW WITH FRENCH LAW AND LANGUAGE	Y	Yes	E
U1M121402	LAW WITH FRENCH LAW AND LANGUAGE	Y	- PRE 2013	E
U1G1N1303	MATHEMATICS WITH BUSINESS	Y	Yes	E
U1L9P3301	MEDIA AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Y	Yes	A
U1L9PO301	MEDIA AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE	Y	Yes	A
U1FF97302	METEOROLOGY AND OCEANOGRAPHY	Y	Yes	E
U1F790402	METEOROLOGY AND OCEANOGRAPHY (MSCi)	Y	Yes	E
U1F790401	METEOROLOGY AND OCEANOGRAPHY (MSCi)	Y	- PRE 2013	E
U1FF8A402	METEOROLOGY AND OCEANOGRAPHY WITH A YEAR ABROAD	Y	Yes	E
U1FF87402	METEOROLOGY AND OCEANOGRAPHY WITH A YEAR IN INDUSTRY	Y	Yes	E
U1FF87401	METEOROLOGY AND OCEANOGRAPHY WITH A YEAR IN INDUSTRY	Y	- PRE 2013	E
U1RP9H403	MODERN LANGUAGE AND FILM AND TELEVISION	Y	Yes	A
U1R9L9403	MODERN LANGUAGE WITH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES	Y	Yes	A
U1R9N2405	MODERN LANGUAGE WITH MANAGEMENT STUDIES	Y	Yes	A
U1CFG0302	NATURAL SCIENCES	Y	Yes	A
U1CGF0402	NATURAL SCIENCES (MNATSCI)	Y	Yes	A
U1CFGA402	NATURAL SCIENCES WITH A YEAR ABROAD	Y	Yes	A
U1FCG0401	NATURAL SCIENCES WITH A YEAR IN AUSTRALASIA	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1GCF0402	NATURAL SCIENCES WITH A YEAR IN INDUSTRY	Y	Yes	A
U1VP53302	PHILOSOPHY AND FILM STUDIES	Y	Yes	A
U1VV51302	PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY	Y	Yes	A
U1VV51301	PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1LOV0302	PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS	Y	Yes	A
U1LOV0301	PHILOSOPHY, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1LL12303	POLITICS AND ECONOMICS	Y	Yes	A

U1LL12302	POLITICS AND ECONOMICS	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1F008402	SCIENCE (WITH A FOUNDATION YEAR)	Y	Yes	A
U1WW84302	SCRIPTWRITING AND PERFORMANCE	Y	Yes	E
U1LP33302	SOCIETY, CULTURE AND MEDIA	Y	Yes	E
U1LP33301	SOCIETY, CULTURE AND MEDIA	Y	- PRE 2013	E
U1RP4J401	SPANISH AND FILM AND TELEVISION	Y	- PRE 2013	A
U1R9N2402H	SPANISH LANGUAGE WITH MANAGEMENT STUDIES	Y	Yes	E

## Appendix 2

Verbatim Comments from NSS and Experience Surveys 2013, 2014, 2015:

### a. Negative

- Because it is a joint degree between two schools of study you are halfway between both, and your academic adviser is one school when most of the modules you take are in another. In addition to this, some of the compulsory modules seemed irrelevant and I would rather have been able to choose something I wanted to do more and which fitted in with the rest better. (CMP)
- This is a Joint Honours course and there is not enough recognition of that as I only get half the information I need. (LDC)
- I'm doing a Joint Honours degree so I feel I fall between the two schools. (PSI)
- Studying 3 very different subjects equally means it is very difficult to get advice for example when choosing modules. There isn't anybody who knows about all of the modules we have the option of taking. Same problem applies to your personal adviser. It's also hard because you have to be as good in all of your modules as the people who do the subject alone, and who have often done modules before that relate to what you are learning, so I think Joint Honours degrees involve quite a lot more work (ECO)
- Communication between the different schools of Env and Dev is still weak, and so I have missed out on certain opportunities such as career events and guest seminars and lectures (ENV)
- As I do Joint Honours, it is often tricky to make sure deadlines don't overlap, and the two schools are communicating (HIS)
- I feel that with my Joint Honours degree in Mathematics with economics, not enough choice is given with the modules I could pick and my advisor did not help at module at all



when I was finding module decisions difficult. I feel that a Joint Honours in maths with economics should be 60:40 respectively instead of 80:20. (MTH)

- As I do a Joint Honours course, I can see the severe differences between one and the other. History is staffed by enthusiastic lecturers with extremely interesting modules to pick. Philosophy has neither it appears too much is reliant on which course you actually do. (PHI)
- Joint Honours courses not very well run. Numerous times events (for example, lectures on module choices) for the courses were on at the same time. Abilities in more than one discipline are not recognised as a plus, even on a Joint Honours course. Joint honours students not very well supported. On my course, initially there were mostly Joint Honours students, but a substantial amount of those people dropped one subject or the other, or expressed a desire to drop one to a member of staff. Limited support for Joint Honours. (PHI)
- I feel that taking a joint degree this leaves help a little hard to come by. My advisor is incredibly great, but very busy and of course is on one side of the course. So when it comes to the other side of the degree I feel I have no idea who to talk to, where I'd go.. In fact during the induction when I first started I didn't even feel like I was involved with the other 50% of my course as we weren't included in any of the induction lectures (PHI)
- All the general arrival activities were good, especially the freshers fair. The subject induction wasn't the best though, the people from one subject didn't turn up, so the one guy that was there made a valiant effort to keep it together, but of course couldn't tell us much about the joint subject we were doing (PHI)
- Offer more support and communication for students on joint degrees (my degree Business Information Systems is joint between NBS and CMP and it can be very difficult being between schools) (CMP)
- Year 3 Economics is difficult and useless for future work. There are too many Economics modules for my old course Economics with Accounting. (ECO)
- Lack of school coordination when communicating with students following a triple honours degree (Philosophy, Politics & Economics). On a related note, having an advisor who is an economist when you yourself identify more as a politics or a philosophy student makes your main link to the university institution less stimulating. (ECO)
- I did Joint Honours and I don't think there's enough support. (ECO)
- It was difficult to know whom to turn to when I had a problem, as my advisor was only from Eco, and not PSI. Also, some of the compulsory modules went from being very easy to incredibly difficult over the three years, without any link between them. (ECO)
- I am part of the ENV and DEV schools and did a DEV dissertation. Although ENV dissertations were submitted a week after ours, they received their marks and feedback earlier this week whereas we are still waiting and have been told we won't receive them until end of next week at earliest. Other coursework in DEV modules has also taken longer than other schools to mark and return. (ENV)
- Better communication between schools (Joint honours) (ENV)

- more freedom in module choices as a joint honours student (LDC)
- here seems to be a palpable 'beef' between the American studies and LDC Departments, particularly when it comes to getting your preferred module choices. (LDC)
- I am reading for a joint degree and there is not always unity between my two schools in regard to administration, particularly at the beginning of my degree. (LDC)
- There was a big difference in the standard of teaching and the overall material between the Politics Department and the History Department. The Politics modules were very dry and relatively limited. (PPL)
- As I was doing a joint degree across two skills (International relations and modern history), I felt that communication between the two schools could have been improved. This was a particularly issue when choosing my third year modules, as a lot of the modules clashed, limiting my options. (PPL)
- As a Joint Honours student, I found it difficult to go through different schools as they didn't recognised me as I belonged to the School of Philosophy. (PPL)

**b. Positive**

- Having a degree that is joint, between two schools has allowed me to meet lots of different people, and develop different sets of academic skills, which I think will be beneficial to me in later life. Having the option to do work experience abroad is good, but a study abroad option should be available as well (ENV)
- I have had such a wide range of module options to choose from, it has been hard to make sure I study all that I want to! (HIS)
- The degree is good for having a range of job opportunities. (MTH)
- I can choose different Economics, Accounting and Finance module. (ECO)
- As a Joint Honours student, I feel that I get the best out of both subjects, and the compulsory modules gave me a well-rounded view about the subjects. There was also a wide choice of modules. (ECO)
- Wide range of modules available. Teaching staff in both Env and Dev have been approachable and helpful. ??? has supported me very well throughout my degree. ??? was also extremely helpful. I have thoroughly enjoyed my course (Environmental Geography and International Development). (ENV)
- All have been very positive. I think because I'm doing a Joint Honours degree there are sometimes particular problems between different schools but they've been really good at communicating so that's been good. (LDC)
- A joint degree gives double the choice in regard to module selection, which is a particularly successful factor of studying at UEA. (LDC)
- As a Joint Honours student, I was primarily based in the Politics Department, though 50% of my modules were based in history. The History Department was outstanding with a wide range of module choices, fantastic and supportive teaching, and very intellectually rewarding work. I can hardly fault it. (PPL)

- The course provides a good range of topics allowing students to either explore a variety of subjects, eras, and events; or students may choose to specialise in one or two specific periods or subjects. The combined degree between International Relations (Politics School) and Modern History (History School) provides extra room to choose between such topics. My peers on other less diverse courses have not had as wide a choice as I have when choosing modules. (PPL)

**c. Single honours courses taught across Schools or topics:**

- Wish there were more solely Television modules to choose from seeing as the course is named Film and Television studies. There seemed always to be more of a focus on film, even in modules that were supposed to cover both. (AMA)
- In the course, I'm doing (Film & Television Studies) the heavy focus on film modules as opposed to the less lucrative television by the university is, to me, damaging. I would strongly oppose a move to singularly film studies. (AMA)
- The split between the School of Biology and the School of Chemistry can make things difficult at times. Chem. students get lots of free stuff but bio students (this course is technically under bio) don't even though this degree involves plenty of chemistry modules. (BIO)
- Biochemistry is split between two departments, these results in some subject areas being overly repeated and other being neglected altogether. The differences between the two separate teaching styles, marking, organisation and especially lab difficulty are astounding with chemistry being far more advanced than bio, often making it difficult to know how to approach coursework. (BIO)

**d. Case study: with a cross-School degree student**

**Main topics of discussion**

- Timetabling
- Communications
- Final Year Projects

**Negative**

- Schools delivering teaching using different timetabling slots
- Some module events are not within a timetable slot
- Module choices/ changes are passed between the two Hubs
- Induction timetable needs to be clearer so students know where to go
- Induction timetables to be improved so efficient induction received from both schools
- Fail to receive communications from second School e.g. missed off mailing list re: projects
- Peer Assisted Learning sessions assigned to a module which students on this course don't take so missed opportunity
- Advisers not equipped to help with any questions associated with second school and students referred to module organisers
- Not having one contact in the second school
- Difficulties knowing who most appropriate academic is for reference requests

- Lack of support for deciding whether to opt for an project in School A/B. Adviser fails to provide guidance

**Positive**

- Course Blackboard Site
- Course 'housekeeping meeting' once per semester for students to ask questions
- Student Facebook Page for students to share comments