

Shared UG and PGT Teaching: Approval Criteria

1. New course proposals that include shared UG and PGT teaching

- 1.1 New course proposals that include shared UG and PGT teaching should adhere to the principles in section 3 below; and should address the questions and criteria in section 4. A separate statement should be submitted to TQARO to satisfy this requirement.

2. Background

- 2.1 The School's current policy position is that shared lectures between undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses are not currently barred. However, discussions on the subject at meetings of the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Sub-Committees (USSC/GSSC) make clear that neither sub-committee wishes to encourage a proliferation of this practice, especially if the master's students concerned are being charged high or premium fees.
- 2.2 This paper therefore proposes that departments wishing to introduce shared UG/PGT teaching in new subject areas must submit a case on a course-by-course basis to USSC/GSSC. Such cases should justify the intellectual and pedagogic basis for mixed teaching. They should show how the proposal in question satisfies the principles in section 3 below. They should also provide sufficient detail in section 4 to allow the sub-committee to come to a judgement on whether the proposal should be approved.

3. Principles

- 3.1 By 'mixed UG and PGT teaching' is meant shared lectures only. Courses that run shared lectures shall hold separate classes/seminars for UG and PGT students. UG and PGT students will follow different syllabi, and always sit different assessments.
- 3.2 Courses that offer shared teaching would predominantly involve a level 300 UG course and a level 400 PGT course, for example AN301 and AN402. Proposals for shared teaching between a level 200 and a level 400 course will be considered when a strong justification can be provided for such arrangements, although this would not be the norm due to the expectation in the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) that levels of study reflect progressively more challenging learning and that the gap between level 200 UG courses (level 5 of the FHEQ) and PGT courses (level 7 of the FHEQ) may be problematic to accommodate in shared teaching. For this reason, it is not possible for shared teaching to exist between a level 100 UG course and a level 400 PGT course due to the significant gap in subject knowledge and subject-specific skills between first year undergraduate students and taught master's students.
- 3.3 UG and PGT students should register for the course under different course codes to help maintain a sense of separation, and to ensure that separate learning levels can be represented (e.g. on transcripts).
- 3.4 Quality assurance in the UK and Europe is primarily concerned with outcomes, and what students are capable of when they have completed a particular level of education. The main implication of this focus on outcomes is not so much how students are taught as a) what they learn and b) how this learning is evidenced through how they are assessed for their programme as a whole. The QAA's qualification descriptors show how the endpoint of an MSc programme, in terms of the aptitudes, skills and knowledge a student should have, should be qualitatively different from that of an undergraduate programme.
- 3.5 Distinct learning outcomes for UG and PGT students must also apply at the course/module level where mixed teaching is practiced. Some suggested ways of helping students achieve separate learning outcomes are set out below.
- 3.6 ***Having some clearly "master's" level courses as part of programmes:*** No MSc programme at the LSE is totally reliant on undergraduate courses. A distinctive feature of the majority of MSc programmes is the dissertation, which picks up on the QAA master's level requirement of "originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline".

- 3.7 **Separate class/seminar teaching** is an obvious way of showing the levels to be different. This can be reinforced through differences in reading lists and class assignments: undergraduate students might have more guidance and/or be expected to read less widely; while postgraduates may be exposed to more “latest thinking” and more controversial materials. Also, postgraduate classes may be more obviously “student lead/directed”.
- 3.8 **Differences in the assessment process:** There are several examples within courses at the School of how difference can be introduced at the level of the final exams; and in other forms of assessment that might more appropriately correspond to different learning outcomes and levels of learning. These include, for final exams:
- totally different exam papers for the two levels
 - similar question papers, but where the undergraduate paper is rather more explicit in what it is asking students to do than the MSc paper (e.g. in a Philosophy paper students at undergraduate level are set questions with clearly defined parameters such as “Evaluate the arguments for and against the objectivity of social science”, where master’s students are given a more open question: “Can social science be objective?”)
 - differences in how students can select questions (e.g. where undergraduate students are given free choice of a set of questions, while master’s students have certain compulsory questions requiring them to demonstrate higher order thinking)
 - differences in reference materials that students are allowed to bring into open-book examinations (e.g. where undergraduate students are able to bring in different reference texts from those allowed for master’s students)
- 3.9 **Differences in marking criteria:** Another approach to demonstrating that a jointly taught course has different outcomes for students at different levels is the marking criteria used. Many departments do now have explicit exam marking criteria. However, departments where there is substantial joint teaching are encouraged to review these criteria at the undergraduate and master’s level *together*, to assure themselves that the levels are distinctive and that this distinctiveness is made clear to students and to examiners.

4. Questions and criteria

- 4.1 Departments proposing new courses with shared UG and PGT teaching (i.e. at sections 1.8 and 5.2.1 of the CAPIS course proposal template) will be asked to elaborate further on the points below in an emailed statement to TQARO:
- 4.1.1 Background/rationale – why is shared teaching for this course being proposed (as opposed to running two separate courses at the UG and PGT level)?
- 4.1.2 Please list the separate learning outcomes for UG and PGT students.
- 4.1.3 Please list the separate assessments for UG and PGT students. How will they help students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes in line with the different levels of learning?
- 4.1.4 How will the lectures be pitched at an appropriate level for both UG and PGT students?
- 4.1.5 Please provide sample syllabi for the course (i.e. separate syllabi for UG and PGT students, where appropriate).
- 4.1.6 How will marking, including through the use of distinctive marking criteria, assure that the learning levels are separate, and that this distinctiveness is made clear to the students?

5. Resource Approval

- 5.1 Due to the complexities of timetabling shared UG and PGT teaching, especially when either course is available to students on a high number of programmes, approval for courses with shared teaching is subject to resource approval from Timetables for both the undergraduate and taught master’s course. For example, if a PGT course proposal including shared teaching is approved by the GSSC, Timetables approval for the PGT course will be subject to approval of the UG version by USSC and vice versa, even if one proposal is considered at a later committee meeting or at a distinct time by Chair’s action.