GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SUBJECT NETWORKS

A Subject Network is a specialisation of validated provision: it refers to the situation where the same validated programme operates at a number of different partner institutions. This is the University's preferred model for collaborative activity in Northern Ireland.

The following guidelines for the management of subject networks are informed by current practice in existing networks or consortia. They are intended to complement information contained in the Partnership Handbook. The guidelines elaborate on the following:

1. Terms of Reference and Membership of a Network Committee at a Partner Institution.

2. Calendar of Annual Activities.

3. Template Agenda for Network Committee Meetings.

4. Template Minutes for Network Committee Meetings.

5. Duties and Responsibilities of the Network Leader.

6. Duties and Responsibilities of the Lead Module Co-ordinators.

Collaborative Partnerships' Forum
September 2016

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF A NETWORK COMMITTEE AT PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

a) To advise and report on all matters relating to the organisation of teaching, including curricula and assessment, in the network.

b) To confirm and agree the standardisation of resources for delivery of the course(s) across the network.

c) To report on the progress of student cohorts across the network.

d) To submit minutes of network committee meetings to the University and the Partnership Manager, as well as joint responses to external examiners' reports.

e) To consult with linked University and other course or network committees on matters of mutual interest or concern, where appropriate.

f) To ensure compliance with University and College quality procedures.

g) To report and advise on such other matters as may be determined.

The membership of a network committee at a partner institution should include:

a) all course directors from partner institutions;

b) the Network Leader;

c) the Partnership Manager;

d) the External Examiner(s);

e) the Heads of Quality Improvement or HE Co-ordinators (or nominees);

f) the Dean of the associated Faculty of the University (ex-officio);

g) at the discretion of the network:

   i. module co-ordinators;
   ii. co-opted members, subject to such terms and conditions as the network may determine.

CALENDAR OF ANNUAL ACTIVITIES

September	Network Committee meeting Selection or confirmation of lead module co-ordinators and module co-ordinators Agreement and publication of calendar of assessment Agreement of dates of progress boards Network Committee agrees response to External Examiner's report, and Partnership Manager's report
October	Network Leader forwards moderated assessment specifications to External Examiner for approval
January	Network Committee meeting Optional cross-moderation exercise organised by Lead Module Co-ordinator(s) Review of first semester assessment Confirmation of arrangements for second semester assessment Progression Board (Partners record their own minutes), External Examiner may attend Network may forward samples of semester one assessed and moderated material to External Examiner if desired
February	Lead module co-ordinators forward CA3s, CA5s etc to Network Leader for implementation in the following year Network Leader forwards CA forms to External Examiner for approval Network Leader forwards approved CA forms to Partnership Manager Network Leader forwards material to be published in prospectuses to Partnership Manager for approval
June	Network Committee meeting Cross-moderation exercise organised by Lead Module Co-ordinator(s) Selection or confirmation of Network Leader for following academic year Confirmation of arrangements for supplementary examination boards in August Board of Examiners (Partners record their own minutes), External Examiner in attendance Network Leader submits new staff CVs to Partnership Manager for approval

August	Optional Network Committee meeting Supplementary Board of Examiners (Partners record their own minutes). External Examiner may attend, but if not, Network Lead ensures External Examiner non-attendance form is completed and assessment approved
September	Fast-track only: Board of Examiners (Partners record their own minutes), External Examiner in attendance

NETWORK COMMITTEE: TYPICAL AGENDA ITEMS

This sample agenda contains items which are likely to appear on all, or nearly all Network Committee agendas. This list is not exhaustive and not all items here will need to be dealt with at all meetings. Network Leaders should therefore use this as guidance and adapt the agenda as required. The Agenda and associated papers should be issued to the members of the Network Committee ideally a week in advance of the meeting.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

3. MATTERS ARISING

4. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIR
> **For example;**
> (a) To note communications from the External Examiner.
> (b) To note communications from the University.
> (c) To note communications from PRSBs.
> (d) To note other communications.

[Note: it is recommended that the Network Leader should use this part of the agenda to bring as wide a range of factors as possible to the attention of the Network Partners. This might include issues such as fees, student numbers, national and international changes, updates to Professional body requirements, etc.]

5. REVIEW OF ACADEMIC YEAR
To review the External Examiner's report and agree the Network Committee's joint response and action plan.

6. STUDENT COHORT PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE
To consider trends and statistics relating to student cohort performance.
[Note: this might include the results of examinations, data on performance in other forms of assessment and specific analysis of performance that the Network Committee has carried out.]

7. ASSESSMENT
[Note: this item has been included on the standard agenda because it is likely that at most Network Committee meetings there will be some issues under this heading. Depending on the time of year, these might include:]
> (a) Identification of Lead Module Co-ordinators, and Module Co-ordinators.
> (b) Reports on examination papers received/papers outstanding on a per-module basis.
> (b) Comments from the External Examiner.
> (c) Arrangements for marking.
> (d) Agreeing a Schedule for the issue and return of Coursework.

8. COURSE REVIEW AND REFLECTION
> (a) To consider issues relating to student learning, teaching, and the quality of the student experience of the course.
> (b) To consider the operation and effectiveness of the current syllabus.

(c) To consider the case for changes to the course.

[Note: this could include putting forward specific course changes through CA2/CA3 forms. Course Committees should begin the process of major overhaul of a programme in the year before the evaluation is due to take place. This would cover periodic review and the review of any collaborative provision. Some forms of external appraisal and accreditation will be started earlier.]

(d) To consider the effectiveness and appropriateness of Course Regulations.

(e) To consider the operation and results of module evaluation.

(f) To consider preparations for the Annual Course Review meeting.

9. RESOURCES

To consider issues relating to:

- staff
- hardware
- software
- and other resources.

10. WORK-BASED LEARNING

To consider any placement and work-based learning issues.

11. COURSE PUBLICITY

- identifying staff who will take part in Open Days, school visits etc
- agreeing text for prospectus/leaflets
- updating Web-based material.

12. JOINT STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- consider arrangements for upcoming or suggested staff development events organised by the University or partners.

13. ADMISSIONS

- consider the numbers and profiles of applicants or new students

14. COURSE PLANNING

- proposals for new programmes/optional pathways/modules

Additional Notes

There is no set timing for Network Committee meetings but a suggested sequence of meetings might be as follows:

- In the early weeks of Semester One.
- In the early weeks of Semester Two.
- Around the end of Semester Two to consider module results, review the year and to plan for the next academic session.

Minutes should be produced by the Network Leader for each meeting, and partners may produce their own minutes if they wish. Network Committees should adopt a consistent numbering policy for items within Network Committee minutes. This is to facilitate tracing items through minutes and matters arising for quality audit purposes.

This agenda is for guidance only and may be adapted to suit individual Network Committee requirements.

Partner Institutions:

Course(s):

MINUTES OF THE NETWORK COMMITTEE

Date:

Attendance: Staff:

Apologies   Staff:

Agenda Item	Summary of Discussion	Action Points	By Whom	By When	Date of Completion
1. Apologies					
2. Minutes of the previous meeting					
3. Matters arising					
4. Chair's Communications					
5. Review of Academic Year					
6. Student cohort progress and performance					
7. Assessment					
8. Course review and reflection					
9. Resources					
10. Work-based learning					
11. Course Publicity					
12. Joint staff development activities					
13. Admissions					
14. Course Planning					

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NETWORK LEADER

The Network Leader is normally elected at the June network committee meeting and assumes the role from semester one. Partners may decide to rotate the role if they wish.

The Network Leader will be responsible for the organisation and management of the network. In particular the Network Leader will:

1. act as Chairman of the Network Committee;

2. in consultation with partners, ensure that a lead module co-ordinator is appointed for each course module, and that module co-ordinators are identified in each of the partner institutions (this should be done at the September meeting);

3. collate all documentation relating to network committee matters in a course folder to be transferred to the next Network Leader at the end of the term;

4. ensure regular liaison with the Subject Partnership Manager and other University staff as appropriate, acting as a single point of contact where necessary;

5. ensure that the Network Committee carries out its functions and be responsible in collaboration with other members of the committee for:

    a. preparation of course publicity material;

    b. ensuring that information held on the University database is updated to take account of revisions which affect the modules taught on the course by acting as a single point of contact in collaboration with the Subject Partnership Manager;

    c. collation of draft examination papers and collaboration with external examiners and the University in the approval and moderation of examination papers and other forms of assessment;

    d. confirmation of the agreed calendar of assessment and examination timetable;

    e. arrangements for meetings of Boards of Examiners and for the attendance of external examiners, in consultation with partners (partners are responsible for their own minutes);

    f. co-ordination of the presentation of students' results profiles for presentation to the Board of Examiners (partners are responsible for their own course results sheets);

    g. preparation for consideration by the Network Committee of a draft joint response to the report(s) of external examiner(s);

    h. collation of appropriate documentation for proposed revisions to the course(s) to be forwarded to the Subject Partnership Manager.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEAD MODULE CO-ORDINATORS

Each module has a Module Co-ordinator who has overall responsibility for the module at the level of the partner institution. The duties of module co-ordinators are described in Appendix 36 of the Partnership Handbook 2011. Where a module is taught in more than one partner institution, a Lead Module Co-ordinator will normally be appointed for each module. This will usually be decided at the September meeting of the Network Committee, and partners may choose to rotate the role if they wish.

The main responsibilities of the Lead Module Co-ordinator are:

- planning the module and changes to the module

- co-ordinating teaching on the module

- co-ordinating the examining of students on the module.

1. **Planning the Module and Changes to the Module**

    a. In respect of a new module, the Lead Module Co-ordinator provides the Network Committee with the details of the new module by completing the module description template for inclusion in the course document.

    b. In respect of changes to an existing module, in consultation with the module co-ordinator(s), the Lead Module Co-ordinator completes and submits to the Network Leader a CA3 form setting out the proposed changes. The Network Leader collaborates with the Subject Partnership Manager to present the CA3 for Faculty consideration.

2. **Co-ordinating Teaching on the Module**

    The Lead Module Co-ordinator:

    - convenes periodic meetings with the module co-ordinators to plan teaching, to review assessment procedures and examination marks, etc (these may be conducted on-line or by video-conferencing);

    - circulates relevant information to the module co-ordinators.

3. **Co-ordinating the Examining of Students on the Module**

    The Lead Module Co-ordinator is responsible for:

    a) arranging for moderation of material and other procedures such as double marking;

    b) collation of the draft examination paper for submission to the Network Leader for approval by the external examiner (the Lead may ask individual co-ordinators to contribute questions;

c) submission of approved examination papers to the Network Leader;

d) ensuring that all documentation, and especially moderation forms, is completed and that copies are circulated to all module co-ordinators;

e) attendance at meetings of network committees/ boards of examiners and reporting on student performance where required.