

Multidisciplinary delivery: Are you thinking of revising or redesigning curriculum?

(Guidance note, to be considered in conjunction with accompanying diagram)

The concept of multidisciplinary delivery may be invoked by following steps in this guidance document as a strong demonstration of Boyer's scholarship of 'integration' (1990). Since, generally, teachers in college HE are fully utilised with little time to invest in different work practices or teaching ventures when not formally remitted to do so, different types of multidisciplinary and evidence of its working can be attempted depending on the culture or departmental nature of your college.

In the first instance, straightforward sharing of expertise – through resource creation – can conjoin disciplines with further team teaching or individual delivery of sessions where possible. Innovating curriculum can, therefore, **start with any of the three perspectives on the guidance diagram**, to devise new programmes of study (or assessment) so invoking a requisite need for multidisciplinary teaching. Similarly, existing courses may be reappraised to recognise an opportunity for elements of delivery to be taken on by staff from different disciplines to inform the nature of sharing knowledge from the outset – as opposed to seeing which elements of pre-existing programmes could be delivered by different experts. Notwithstanding that a curriculum design process may only be an option when teams are asked to re-write or validate new programmes, one step is to consider assessment types on courses where it may be deemed important or beneficial for multidisciplinary practice to contribute towards the learning directed at one final or summative assessment.

Some ideas that demonstrate this include principles to encourage multidisciplinary approaches in college HE:

1. Courses can be considered with common objectives in mind to facilitate the desire to integrate areas of delivery and anticipate where shared thinking will be of benefit for learning, towards assessment or working backwards from assessment design.
2. Look for commonalities in learning across discipline teams – are students on courses effectively doing the same thing? Or learning the same skill? If so then they may benefit from sessions by outsiders or sharing a session with other students to broaden the ways they view how they are asked to learn or address a brief.
3. One effective way to stimulate practical development is when staff teams are designing curricula and/or programme modules. For instance, at an initial planning stage it would serve best to propose additional disciplinary input, from teams, or wider provision, to explore where sharing of expertise can enhance the learning experience.
4. In all cases, application of **different disciplines** is key, so this exercise must be meaningful and rally against ‘guest speaker’ approaches which tend to supplant existing forms of knowledge or remain perceived as ‘one-offs’ to strengthen the *same* forms of understanding.

Overlapping themes of sharing delivery ideas and content – from **staff perspectives**, mixing groups of learners – **students’ perspectives**, and assessing together with evidence of wider input can lead to different ways of knowing as multidisciplinary, then interdisciplinarity – **both perspectives and approaches**. Ultimately, one goal is that students ‘knowledge share’ in legitimate fora to solve problems with the experience of drawing upon one another’s vantage, preparing them for the ‘real’ world of work.