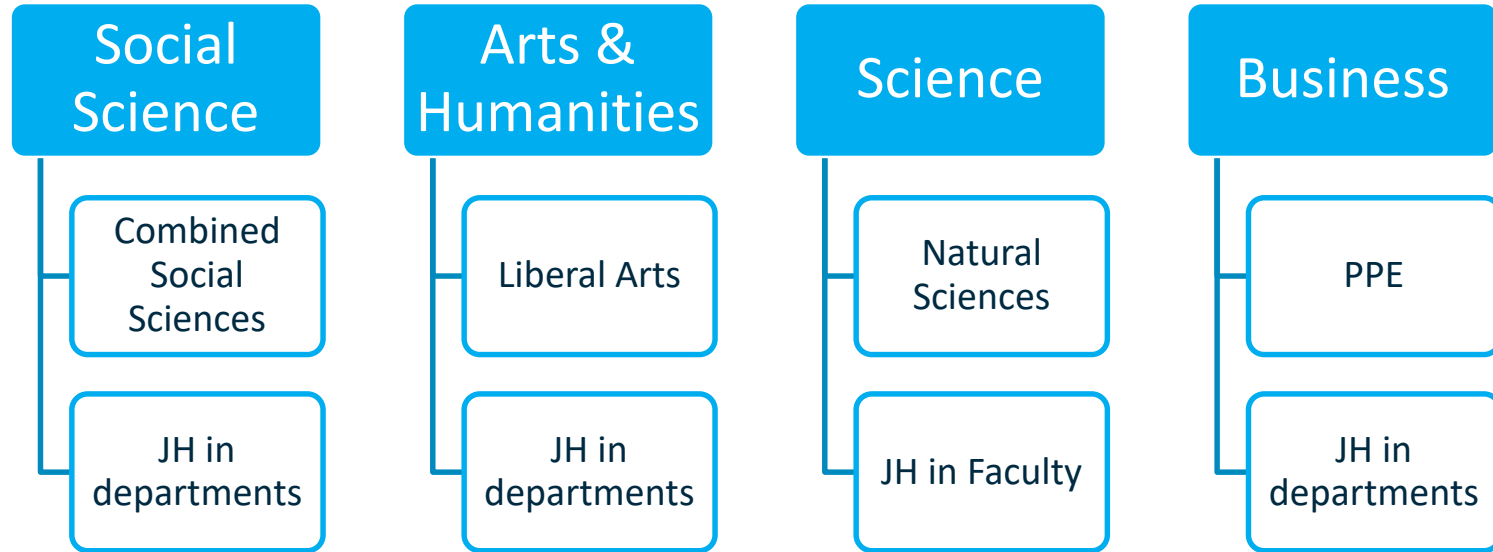


Creating a new space for interdisciplinarity

Faculty of Social Sciences Interdisciplinary Hub: Challenges and Opportunities

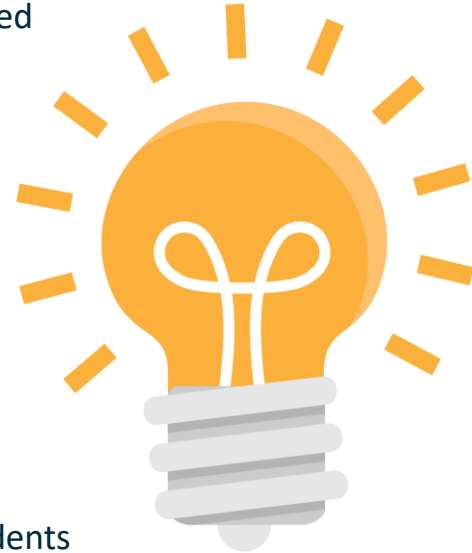
Megan Bruce and Emily Roper

Where are interdisciplinary programmes located at Durham?



A new departure

- June 2022 – Durham University Senate approves a proposal for each Faculty to create a “multidisciplinary hub”
 - Some interdisciplinary programmes exist already, but not consistently managed
- **Benefits to students:**
 - Self direction – pursue areas of thematic interest
 - Innovation – studying emerging areas of research
 - Salience – addressing questions which transcend disciplinary boundaries
- **Benefits to university:**
 - Student recruitment – attract a wider pool of students
 - Educational excellence – higher entry tariff and exit qualification than SH students
 - Research development – enabling staff recruitment in emerging fields of research
 - Resource maximisation – remove duplication and ease administrative load



Main challenge – departmental perception



- Departmental resistance was the key (unexpected) barrier to initial progress
- Significant tensions regarding governance, workload, income and power of veto for new endeavours

Where to begin – a collaborative approach

- Project Management Approach:
 - Setting a vision and clear objectives
 - Planned approach, with risk and issue consideration
- Collaborative
- Documented
- Involving stakeholders who had voiced key concerns



Workstreams to develop

- Governance
- Policy framework
- Staffing
- Finance
- Student Experience
- Timetabling Complexity
- Communications and Stakeholder Engagement



What will the Interdisciplinary Hub be?

- A space to enable cross-departmental **collaboration**
- An **administrative function** to support interdisciplinary programmes
- **Department colleagues** structurally involved in all decision-making bodies
- **Admin workload relief** for academic departments

Project Timelines – completed so far

- Project Board created to oversee development
- Interdisciplinary governance structures approved
- Assessment policy developed
- Income allocation processes approved
- Service level agreements created
- Plan for PS staffing agreed
- New process development – new programmes/module development



process map

Project Timelines – still to complete



- Process review of existing programmes
 - Distinction between faculty hosted and faculty oversight
- Academic staffing plan
- Launch in September: *What can the interdisciplinary hub do for you?*

Ideas and opportunities

Programme opportunities

- MSc Sustainability
- BA routes through existing CHSS programme

Module opportunities

- Educ – Digital Literacies in Action
- Soci/Pol/Hist – the Far Right
- Sociology - "not statistics quants module"

Student opportunities

- Expansion of peer mentor scheme



Mistakes we've made so you don't have to

- Assuming colleagues/departments would be enthusiastic rather than trepidacious
- Not starting with the process (the how) rather than the product (the what)
- Communicating the right level of detail to the right stakeholders – know your audience!



Questions?

