

## Sussex Choice: Process, Roles and Responsibilities

### Sussex Choice and the elective system

Sussex has a long history of interdisciplinary teaching and learning. This was originally through the radical principle that natural science students should be enabled to take modules in the social sciences and humanities - and vice-versa - and then later through 'School courses' that brought together disciplines within Schools. In 2012, 'Sussex Choice' was introduced with the aim of 'reconnecting with Sussex's interdisciplinary heritage' by providing students with structured opportunities to engage with subjects beyond their core disciplines through electives and pathways. Sussex Choice is mechanism for interdisciplinarity for the undergraduate offer, so this is the focus of this paper. A separate paper will consider interdisciplinarity within the context of the postgraduate offer.

During 2024, a review of Sussex Choice carried out under the Curriculum Reimagined Project identified a series of issues, including:

1. A lack of oversight of the overall offer
2. A proliferation of electives with highly variable recruitment
3. A lack of clarity about the elective offer to prospective and current students
4. Administrative complexities caused by the teaching of electives outside of the elective timetable.

An outcome of the CR project was the creation of a Sussex Choice Oversight Board (SCOB) in September 2025. This is chaired by the Dean of the Sussex School for Progressive Futures, and its membership includes the PVC (Education and Students) and representation from all four Faculties and key Professional Services divisions. At the same time, the Sussex 2035: Progressive Futures strategy was launched, and the Sussex School for Progressive Futures was also established as a catalyst for delivering the strategy and for curating the activity of the University through the transformation themes: Environmental Sustainability; Human Flourishing and Digital and Data Futures.

The aim of this document is to clarify process, roles, responsibilities and reporting for delivery of the Sussex Choice offer, curated through the transformation themes. It therefore directly related to the [Education and Student Life Plan](#), specifically action ESL\_08

### Proposing new elective modules

Currently approximately 1,500 students a year access the elective curriculum (4,500 in total). Ongoing and future curriculum development will aim to increase the proportion of students who are able to access the elective offer.

In relation to the transformation themes, there is an imbalance in the offer weighted towards HF, with fewer in DDF and ES. **SCOB therefore particularly welcomes proposals for new electives that reflect DDF and ES.**

New electives should be interdisciplinary. They should also align closely to the Applied and Relevant Curriculum Design Principles of the [Sussex Academic Framework](#) (pp.14-15), with a

particular emphasis on experiential learning, to aid delivery of Action ESL\_09 (embedding employability) of the Education and Student Life Strategic Plan.

- SCOB must be consulted in relation to any new elective modules
- If a member of faculty wishes to propose a new elective, they can informally discuss this with colleagues in SSPF by emailing [progressivefutures@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:progressivefutures@sussex.ac.uk). They should also check with the chair of their Board of Study regarding departmental support for the proposed module
- Assuming informal support, then a module proposal form should be completed and submitted to the SCOB via [progressivefutures@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:progressivefutures@sussex.ac.uk). SCOB will provide feedback and guidance on module design and take a view on whether it supports the module
- The module proposal should then be submitted by the proposed convenor via normal processes to the relevant Board of Study
- AQP should be informed of newly approved elective modules, and of decisions to suspend and/or withdraw modules, which will be conveyed to SCOB

### **Detailed roles and responsibilities**

#### **Sussex Choice Oversight Board**

The purpose of the SCOB is to facilitate the strategic development and oversight of the Sussex Choice cross-campus interdisciplinary offer ([ToR for SCOB](#)). Its responsibilities are to:

- Provide academic leadership of the shape and content of Sussex Choice, through determining the ideal shape and format of the offer, eliciting and encouraging new modules and reviewing those that already exist, including with regards to their viability, experiential learning, and the overall balance of the elective offer in relation to the transformation themes
- Work with Schools and Faculties to support a cross-Faculty approach, and to ensure that students receive appropriate guidance on their elective choices
- Work with CEA to ensure that marketing and prospectus information on Sussex Choice is attractive and accurate
- Report to UEC
- Review elective/pathway proposals and provide feedback to proposing departments
- Review/monitor electives in terms of MEQs and the student experience more widely.

#### **Faculties/departments**

- Consult with SCOB regarding proposed new electives
- Responsible for submitting proposals for new electives via Boards of Study
- Responsible for withdrawing/suspending modules in liaison with SCOB
- Make final decisions on which electives/pathways will be run in any specific year and convey this to AQP
- Formally own electives: deliver teaching and module administration in the same way as with all other teaching
- Liaise with AQP on maintenance of electives within CMS
- Ensure the promotion of the Sussex Choice offer to those students for whom it is available
- Monitor student experience of elective modules via MEQs

## **Student Experience Division**

### ***Academic Quality & Partnerships***

- Provide advice and guidance on the Sussex Academic Framework and how this relates to the Sussex Choice offer, associated quality assurance processes, and the maintenance of elective modules within CMS

### ***Student Administration – Timetabling***

- In accordance with the Timetabling Framework, changes to or proposals for new electives/pathways should receive input from Timetabling, prior to approval. This is to ensure that operational implications of curriculum changes are fully considered
- Timetabling has responsibility for scheduling elective modules in accordance with the Timetabling Framework and the relevant Timetable Production Schedule
- Relevant point of contact for discussions about the timetabling of elective modules

### ***Student Data and Records***

- Responsible for the operational aspects of the option module process

### ***Educational Enhancement***

- Source of advice and guidance on teaching, learning and assessment and the delivery of the curriculum design principles in the Sussex Academic Framework

### ***Careers, Employability and Entrepreneurship***

- Source of advice and support on embedding employability into modules, guided by the Applied and Relevant Curriculum Design Principles in the Sussex Academic Framework

## **Communications, Engagement and Advancement**

### ***Marketing***

- Develop a clear and compelling **proposition** for Sussex Choice
- Work to ensure the proposition is presented appropriately in prospective student touch points – advertising, social media, course pages, recruitment events (external and internal), prospective and offer holder email marketing
- Create suitable multi-channel content to support the articulation of the proposition
- Evaluate, report and recommend on marketing activity to inform future promotions and provide development opportunity insights to SCOB

### ***Student communications***

Develop and deliver a student communications plan aligned to key Sussex Choice decision points, including awareness-building, module selection opening, reminder and deadline communications.

This work will complement Marketing activities to ensure consistency of offer is clearly communicated to current students. Proposed headline tactical communications actions are:

- Where possible use segmented messaging to target significant numbers of students by stage, programme and access to electives, so that communications are relevant, timely and linked to the right guidance.
- Create engaging content in the Student Update, app notifications, Student Hub news, digital screens to explain the offer and showcase featured electives and pathways.
- Use student stories collated by student digital media creators (DMCs), to create case studies and module spotlights to demonstrate the value of Sussex Choice, including interdisciplinarity, skills development and links to the transformation themes.
- Create student-focussed content that features key academics who will be delivering electives – weave in messaging about academic progress, benefits for career progression and value of a Sussex degree which is enhanced by the electives.
- Work with faculties, advisers and other student-facing teams to cascade consistent key messages through local channels, induction activity and module choice touchpoints.
- Where possible, student content will be designed and created in a manner that will also be appropriate for marketing / prospective student benefits.
- Promote student communications Sussex Choice content to Sussex staff, particularly student-facing staff, via staff communications channels.

### **Planning**

Inclusion of Sussex Choice information and data in APR and Academic Business Planning