General Notes on Undergraduate Programme Specifications

Introduction

1. These notes on writing programme specifications were approved by the University Board for Teaching and Learning (UBTL) at its meeting on 26 February 2009.They were amended in March 2011 and January 2013 to reflect procedural changes which had been approved by UBTL.

2. They have been informed by the QAA Guidelines for preparing programme specifications http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/guidelines06.pdf which were last revised in 2006. They should be considered alongside the Guidelines on the design of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes (http://www.reading.ac.uk/web/FILES/qualitysupport/programmedesign.pdf) and the following documents:

   - Guidelines on producing Undergraduate Programme Specifications
   - Programme Specification template
   - University Guidelines on Module Descriptions
   - Module Description Template

Terminology

3. In view of national trends, and because of the long-standing ambiguity of the word ‘course’, the University Board for Teaching and Learning has decided that the overall ‘package’ taken by a student (e.g. BA History, BSc Mathematics) should be referred to as a ‘programme’, and that in line with the QAA Guidelines, the description of a programme should be referred to as a ‘programme specification’ rather than ‘course profile’. Also, annual parts of a programme should be referred to using Arabic numerals rather than roman.

The Programme Specification and its purposes

4.

The development of a programme specification by the programme team may offer an opportunity for an institution to link quality enhancement to quality assurance through deliberative consideration of the curriculum. In such cases the programme specification may provide evidence of the deliberative process through which the programme aims and intended learning outcomes were determined, how the curriculum enables the intended learning outcomes to be achieved, and how assessments test the student's achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

An institution will normally use its programme specification to communicate information about the programmes it offers to students (prospective and current), as well as to staff, external examiners, employers and others.'

Publication of Programme Specifications

6.

A requirement to achieve an overall average greater than 50% would normally only be permitted where stipulated by an accrediting body.

- Integrated Masters programmes require students to achieve an overall weighted average of 40% for progression from Part 3 to Part 4

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Assuring-Standards-and-Improving-Quality/Documents/Subject-benchmark-statements/Subject-benchmark-statement-Education-for-teaching-and-learning.pdf

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4.	**Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s)** The relevant QAA benchmarking group must be included. Schools are reminded to revisit and review the subject areas listed by the QAA each year at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/subject-guidance/Pages/Subject-benchmark-statements.aspx
5.	**Programme length** The length of the programme is automatically programmed to appear on the programme specification.
6.	**Programme Director /Adviser** As previously mentioned, Programme Specifications must should include the name of the Programme Director and of any Programme Adviser where such exists as a separate role.

Schools should ensure that the total credit weighting of modules listed under each Part corresponds to the minimum total credits to be undertaken at that Part.

Compulsory modules: a module which **all** students registered for the degree programme **must** take – i.e. there is no choice (including no 'either' / 'or' option) involved.

A list of compulsory modules for each Part of a programme will be generated automatically by RISIS for programme specifications produced via the RISISweb portal.

Optional modules: Any optional modules to be included in programme specifications must be added separately, with a clear distinction made between compulsory and optional modules. It is not thought necessary, in drawing up programme specifications, to list all possible modules in cases where the choice of optional modules is very wide, for example when an optional module can be chosen from the whole Faculty or university provision.

and Progression of First Degrees, section 8.1.2.)

N.B. In formulating the programme-specific element of any rules, Schools should refer to the standard formulations at the foot of this section.

Part 2 – **[t**

	There is a standard sentence in each programme specification, as follows: 'As part of the degree programme students have the opportunity to study abroad at an institution with which the University has a valid agreement' Please edit and/or supplement this information, as appropriate, stating what opportunities are available; at what stage of the programme and the length of opportunity. Please note that for joint programmes, the information included in this section must be agreed upon by both Schools.

19. Placement opportunities

A statement on opportunities for students to undertake placements should be given in this section.

Schools are reminded that following the outcome of Thematic Review of Work-related and Placement Learning, **all undergraduate programmes must have a placement opportunity (PO) available to students entering the programme from 2011/12 onwards,** being either a work

Programme outcomes:

must be divided between the four subheadings shown on the template. These four areas should not be seen as separate entities and there is room for overlap between the outcomes within them. As a guide, there would normally be between 4 and 10 outcomes under each subheading, so that the key outcomes are expressed in enough generality to apply to each and every student studying on the programme.

should provide a balance of outcomes between the two areas of joint degree programme. For a combined degree programme, it is accepted that there may be a need for more than 10 outcomes. These sections require liaison between Schools in the case of such combined and multi-disciplinary degrees.

must be informed by the learning outcomes of their constituent modules as stated in the relevant Module Descriptions and vice versa. Whilst programme specifications may refer to specific learning outcomes of modules, it may be better simply to refer the user to the particular Module Description. For example, if independent research skills are mentioned, then emphasis might be placed on developing these through a dissertation.

must take into account the relevance of subject benchmarks to learning outcomes.

must give explicit details in the three areas relating to Skills of how both degree-specific skills are developed through the programme.

Undergraduate Programme Specification Template

The numbered items below correspond to the list of instructions on the accompanying Guidelines to producing Undergraduate Programme Specifications document, as a guide to filling in each part correctly.

Programme Title **UCAS code:**

Mod Code	*Module Title*	x	x

Part 2 (three terms)		*Credits*	*Level*
Compulsory modules			
Mod Code	*Module Title*	x	x
Optional modules:			
Mod Code	*Module Title*	x	x

Part 3 (three terms)		*Credits*	*Level*
Compulsory modules			
Mod Code	*Module Title*	x	x
Optional modules:			
Mod Code	*Module Title*	x	x

Progression requirements

To gain a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

'(i) obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken at Part 2;

(ii)marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits; and

(iii) marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 120 credits.

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student must achieve a threshold performance [AND…. state prog-specific rules if applicable].'

Assessment and Classification

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:
Grade C or better in English, Maths, Science (subject(s) as appropriate) GCSE (or equivalent qualification); and achieved
A minimum UCAS Tariff score of:
Three Higher Level International Baccalaureate scores of :

Learning support is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-sessional English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre

D. Transferable skills – able to:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies *Assessment*

Please note