**Guidance for Completion of the Programme**

**Specification Template**

If you have any queries about completing a Programme Specification, please contact your College Programme Approval Coordinator in the first instance. For further queries, please contact the Faculty Office on [programmeapproval@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:programmeapproval@exeter.ac.uk).

**Guidelines for the completion of the Programme Specification Template**

**Introduction**

The purpose of the Programme Specification is to describe and define clearly what the students are expected to learn, how they will learn it, how their learning will be assessed, and how the criteria used to judge achievement are aligned to the intended learning outcomes. It should be clear from the programme specification how learning activities will enable students to develop knowledge, experience, transferable skills, and subject specific skills. It should also be clear how each of the intended learning outcomes will be assessed. You should consult the [Generic University Assessment Criteria](http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/academic/tls/tqa/Part%208/8T%20Generic%20Assessment%20Criteria.pdf) which describe the level of complexity, demand, and relative autonomy expected of your students at each level of the curriculum.

The Programme Specification should be written to the student in the 2nd person i.e. ‘You will…’. The language you use should be student-friendly and should give a genuine and inspiring picture of the learning experiences and outcomes planned. Engaging text (which could, in principle, be copied into a student handbook) that meets the needs of the template is preferable to language which looks like an exercise in form-filling. Most students coming into University are now very familiar with looking at intended learning outcomes/course outlines in their pre-university study. These programme specifications should inspire them to choose your subject.

In writing or revising programme specifications, you should consult the University of Exeter’s [Credit and Qualifications Framework](http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/academic/tls/tqa/Part%2013/13CQF.pdf). Six award levels are described, which mirror those in the

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) published by the Quality Assurance

Agency. The framework for University awards details the required credits and credit levels a programme should comply with in order that a particular award can be achieved. The Programme descriptors indicate the principle outcomes that a student should be able to demonstrate following the completion of an award at a designated level. All new and revised programmes of study should be checked with the levels and awards framework to ensure that the educational aims, curricula, programme outcomes, and other elements of the programme are appropriate for the qualification

to which the programme is intended to lead.

Wherever possible, standard entries have been provided in order to support the accurate and efficient completion of the Programme Specification template. Colleges are encouraged to provide further information in these sections as appropriate. **Please note:** Professional Doctorate programmes include some taught elements equivalent to a minimum of three full-time calendar years with level 7 study in addition to the research dissertation. The standard entries in the programme specification template will need to be adjusted, in particular in sections 6, 9, 10 and 11, to include information and details for these programmes.

**1. Programme Name**

**Guidance**

*Purpose:* To indicate in broad terms programme scope and content. This will be used in official publications including the Calendar, the prospectus, and on student awards and transcripts.

*Format:* Title.

*Examples: BSc* Psychological Research Methods *MA* Staging Shakespeare

**2. Description of the Programme**

*Purpose:* To provide an outline of the programme, that describes the distinctive features of the programme and identifies any unique activities or opportunities. Why should a student choose this programme at Exeter?

*Format:* Free text written to the student in language that is student friendly as well as enticing, to attract students to the programme.

*Example:*

“Our programmes at the Streatham Campus in Exeter aim to provide you with a broad understanding of geographical aspects of human society and the physical environment and their complex inter-relationships. Within this we offer you the opportunity to develop your own interests

in the discipline and gain a more detailed appreciation of a variety of specific aspects of geography in which the Discipline specialises.

You will have access to well-equipped experimental laboratories for physical geography to support your research, including a £3.7 million sediment research centre, GIS labs with high-spec

workstations, two computer rooms, a cartographic studio and a technical workshop. These facilities are managed by experienced and dedicated technical support members of staff.”

**3. Educational Aims of the Programme**

*Purpose:* To clarify what the programme will offer to students in terms of academic scope, learning and teaching methods, and learning environment. Aims should express the broad educational intentions behind providing the programme, as an answer to the question ‘why is this programme being provided and how does it meet the needs of students, professional bodies, potential employers, other interested parties?’ The aims section should also articulate what is distinctive about the programme.

The Higher Education Academy can provide further support in identifying employability skills

([http://www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/)).

*Format:* Prose that may contain a bullet-point list. Unlike learning outcomes, which refer to students, the educational aims should articulate the intentions of the programme providers. To describe what the programme offers, it is therefore appropriate to consider the preface *‘the Programme will …’* and to use terms such as: provide, develop, enable, assist etc. The aims should be clearly linked directly to the programme intended learning outcomes. Reference to additional information on the College or institution’s website would be appropriate.

*Example: (Taken from the Primary PGCE Programme Specification, GSE)*

• to provide you with the procedural knowledge to develop conceptual understanding and analyse data

• to provide the organisational and transferable skills central to professional autonomy

• to support your ability to define and evaluate complex educational issues drawing on national and international perspectives

• to develop your teaching competence through a phased initiation into good practice in teaching under mentorship in partner schools

• to enable you to achieve a grounding in the application of subject knowledge which gives you

both an appropriate level of teaching subject knowledge and understanding for the teaching and assessment of pupils applied to the pupils' National Curriculum and other syllabus requirements

• to introduce you to what is known about pupils as learners, both from research and

professional experience

**4. Programme Structure**

*Purpose:* To provide a description of the structure, timescale, composition, interim awards, and distinctive structural features of the programme with details that may be **helpful to current or prospective students** and to academic reviewers.

*Format:* The following key points will be addressed:

• Credit target

• Number of stages

• Normal timescale

• Site of study

• Assessment weighting across stages

*Example:*

“Your MA History programme is a 12 month programme when studied full time and a 24 month programme when studied part time, at National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 6 (as confirmed against the FHEQ) which is divided into ‘Stages’. Each Stage is normally equivalent to an academic year. You will be located at the Streatham Campus of the University of Exeter for the duration of your studies.

Your programme is also divided into units of study called ‘modules’ which are assigned a number of ‘credits’. The credit rating of a module is proportional to the total workload, with 1 credit being nominally equivalent to 10 hours of work.

Interim Awards

You may exit this award with a Postgraduate Certificate History where you have achieved 60 credits or a Postgraduate Diploma History where you have achieved 120 credits. In both cases you must have achieved at least 2/3 credit from History modules. “

**5. Programme Modules**

*Purpose:* To provide a clear description of the modules that a student is required to take and pass in order to complete the programme successfully. Colleges are required to clearly outline how a student can expect to achieve the required number of credits at each stage of the programme by identifying the core option and elective module structure. Colleges are also required to list by name and code all core modules and any optional modules which are recommended or required for a

particular pathway. All other optional modules can be referenced through the hyperlink you have provided.

*Format:* The following key points will be addressed:

• Explanation of modularity (and reference to online module portfolio)

• Notes on the availability of modules

• Detailed composition of stages (list modules identified by codes and title)

• Identify modules that are non-condonable, core and optional

• In particular, there will be reference to any ‘stopping off’ points (interim awards), or entry points

• Details of the classification of the award

*Example:*

“The following tables describe the programme and constituent modules. Constituent modules may be updated, deleted or replaced in future years as a consequence of normal programme development. Details at any time may be obtained from the College website (see [https://student- harrison.emps.ex.ac.uk/](https://student-harrison.emps.ex.ac.uk/)).“

You may take **option modules** as long as any necessary prerequisites have been satisfied, where the timetable allows and if you have not already taken the module in question or an equivalent module. Descriptions of the individual modules are given in full on the College website (see <https://student-harrison.emps.ex.ac.uk/>).

You may take **Elective Modules** up to 30 credits outside of the programme in stages 2 and 3 of the programme as long as any necessary prerequisites have been satisfied, where the timetable allows and if you have not already taken the module in question or an equivalent module.

**Stage 1:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **CODE** | **TITLE** | **CREDITS** | **COMPULSORY** | **NONCONDONABLE** |
| ECM1101 | Professional Studies and Skills  Development 1 | 15 | Y | N |
| ECM1102 | Core Engineering 1 | 30 | Y | N |
| ECM1106 | Electronics for Engineers: Core  Engineering 2 | 15 | Y | Y \* |
| ECM1107 | Materials and Manufacturing: Core  Engineering 2 | 15 | Y | Y \* |
| ECM1108 | Engineering Mechanics: Core  Engineering 2 | 15 | Y | Y \* |
| *Depending on Entry Qualifications, 30 credits to be taken from:* | | | | |
| ECM1103 | Engineering Mathematics A | 30 | Y | N |
| ECM1104 | Engineering Mathematics B | 30 | Y | N |

Note: One module out of ECM1106, ECM1107 and ECM1108 may be condoned, subject to the rules specified above and detailed in the programme assessment and progression regulations.”

**6. Part A. Programme’s Intended Learning Outcomes**

*Purpose:* To make explicit the learning that should be achieved by a typical student, *whatever combination of modules is studied for the award*, and to indicate to students the link between their learning and the mode of assessment. To promote consistency in meeting the University’s

academic standards by providing a means for demonstrating that programme learning outcomes articulate with the University’s [Credit and Qualifications Framework](http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/academic/tls/tqa/Part%2013/13CQF.pdf).

*Format:* These should be written in the form of statements of what a successful, typical student will have achieved by the end of the programme, i.e. in the form of intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for the programme. Programme outcomes will **be identified alphanumerically** to enable them to be conveniently cross-referenced to teaching and assessment methods. ILOs should be written to follow on from the precursor “**By the end of the programme the students should be able to**…..” and followed by a verb*.* The verbs used will be **measurable;** assessment provides the evidence that the students have achieved the specified learning outcomes It is therefore appropriate to use such verbs as ‘define’, ‘analyse’, ‘assess’, ‘demonstrate’, ‘evaluate’, ‘classify’, ‘explain’, describe’. Normally, no more than three or four ILOs are required under each heading.

Where relevant Subject Benchmark Statements exist, these should be used to inform the programme’s intended learning outcomes. These should be named at the end of this section.

The ILOs are normally categorised under three headings, as follows:

(a) **Specialised subject skills and knowledge**: - *the knowledge and skills that students will have*

*gained by the end of the programme that make the* ***programme distinct*** *to the University of Exeter and are* ***specialised*** *within a subject area or discipline.*

(b) **Academic discipline core skills and knowledge**: - *the skills and knowledge that students will have gained by the end of a programme that are shared by all graduates in a discipline (as defined by the national benchmarks where available).*

(c) **Personal, transferable/employment skills and knowledge**:- *skills and knowledge that students will have gained from across all modules in the programme and that are readily transferable to employment and other contexts outside of academic activity; for example communication, teamwork, professional standards. These are the most broad-based and generic skills, which will benefit the student. This section should include any skills that may be gained from work placements and/or study abroad. This section should not suggest that these skills are restricted in any way to the programme being described. Advice on the expectations for this section may be sought from staff in the Educational Enhancement Unit or a partner institution’s central learning and teaching unit.*

*Examples:*

*By the end of the programme, the students should be able to:*

• **apply** concepts and theories used in the study of politics to the **analysis** of political ideas, institutions and practices

• apply appropriate mathematical methods, scientific principles and computer based methods to the **modelling, analysis and solution** of practical engineering problems

• **identify** and **evaluate** educational concepts and issues related to their specific field of study and **engage in critical debate** about current educational issues, **drawing on evidence** from theory, research and practice

**Part B. Learning Activities, Teaching and Assessment Methods**

*Purpose:* To outline the learning, teaching, study and assessment methods used to promote learning.

*Format:* Learning activities, teaching and assessment methods should be written in free text. These methods should be constructively aligned with the Programme’s Intended Learning Outcomes. Both in-class learning and teaching and independent study methods and assessment should be

outlined. Due consideration should be given to the weighting of contact versus non-contact time and the associated learning requirements linked to ILOs.

This section requires the articulation for alignment of ILOs with teaching, learning and assessment in a diagrammatic form.

Some methods of learning, teaching and assessment are more appropriate than others for developing particular types of learning outcome; each programme should include a variety and range of methods in order to meet the learning needs and abilities of students and to provide variety of experience.

*Examples:*

**Knowledge and detailed information** are often developed though lectures and seminars, supported by directed research of texts and journals, achievement of the ILOs could be assessed through vivas, presentations, assignments, project work or exam or a combination of these.

**Intellectual skills** such as analysis, synthesis evaluation and problem solving can be practiced and demonstrated through more active student-centred learning methods such as project work, group activities, seminars, workshops or field-based activity. Independent project work or dissertations are commonly used to assess students’ intellectual skills and abilities.

**Personal and transferable skills** such as communication can be developed through written work, presentations, seminars, open question and answer sessions, discussion and group work: team- working can be developed through group projects and research, or through work experience. Assessment of ILOs can be through written work, peer assessment, standardised observations by the lecturer against stated performance criteria etc.

**7. Programme Regulations**

*Purpose:* To outline the key regulations related to the programme of structure and to provide links to the TQA for further details. This section should be amended to comply with the regulations of the particular award in terms of whether it is UG or PG. The following points should be addressed:

• Credit

• Progression

• Assessment and Award

• Classification

*Format:* This section should be written as free text. Standard text has been provided which requires editing to comply with the regulations of the particular award in terms of whether it is UG or PG.

*Example for an Undergraduate Programme:*

**8. College Support for Students and Students’ Learning**

*Purpose:* To describe the infrastructure and learning environment offered to participants in the programme by the College. This should include reference to personal tutor arrangements and recording of achievement.

*Format:* Some of this section could be extended with standard College listings, e.g. Library, IT Services, study skills advice, SSLCs, welfare and counselling support, etc.

Partner institutions should consult their central learning and teaching units.

Programmes which include study abroad or placements should also include detail on the support

available during these activities. Please refer to the relevant Study Abroad [Code of Practice](http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/academic/tls/tqa/Part%205/5Fabroad.pdf).

**9. University Support for Students and Students’ Learning**

*Purpose:* To describe the infrastructure and learning environment offered to participants in the programme by the University

*Format:* The standard entry is for the Exeter campuses. This section needs to be amended for programmes delivered at the Cornwall Campus and any off-campus provision.

**10. Admissions Criteria**

*Purpose:* To specify the qualifications or procedures required for enrolment in the programme. This should include details of non-standard admissions and the member of staff appointed to consider these.

*Format:* College specific criteria should be written as free form text and prepared from current admissions data.

*Example:*

“General admissions requirements of the University of Exeter are published in full at <http://www.exeter.ac.uk/undergraduate/applications/>and in the University of Exeter undergraduate prospectus. Candidates offering GCE AS and A2, the International Baccalaureate and equivalent non-UK qualifications will be considered, as well as mature candidates with evidence of appropriate alternative qualifications.

Offers and entrance requirements for individual applicants will vary depending upon the subject areas chosen, but are likely to fall in the range AAA to ABB for A-levels and 32 to 30 for

International Baccalaureate. Please refer to the latest Entry Data tables at

[http://www.exeter.ac.uk/undergraduate/.](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/undergraduate/) These can be found under Entry Requirements within the relevant subject entries.

Non-standard applications will be considered where the applicants can demonstrate existing knowledge experience and skills developed in the workplace, relevant to this degree. All non- standard applications should be referred to the Programme Director for consideration.”

**11. Regulation of Assessment and Academic Standards**

The standard entry on the University’s procedures for security of assessment and academic standards is provided, with reference to procedures for acting on external examiners reports – making use of precepts in the relevant sections of the QAA Code of Practice (with opportunities for amendment by the College).

The main processes to be referred to are: (1) the central approval of examination conventions and assessment strategy; (2) the scrutiny of external examiners; and (3) Annual Programme

Monitoring. These processes are alluded to in the centrally-provided text that must be included in all Programme Specifications except where it is inappropriate to do so. Partner institutions should

consult their central learning and teaching units.

**12. Indicators of Quality and Standards**

A **Standard entry** on other indicators, such as progression data and completion rates that are included in the internal monitoring and review process is provided.

**Colleges** should add a summary of the outcomes of recent accreditation by PSRBs and outcomes of TQA assessments.

**13. Methods for Evaluating and Improving Quality and Standards**

A **Standard entry** on the University’s procedures for module and programme monitoring and periodic review is provided. This can be **amended by the College** to take account of features special to the College or discipline, such as the role of accrediting bodies.

**14. Awarding Institution**

award the qualification to be received by those successfully completing the programme.

*Format:* Institutional title, normally ‘University of Exeter’. In the case of programmes that involve academic partnerships, the ‘awarding institution’ should not be confused with the partner organisation, which will normally not have degree awarding powers.

*Examples:* University of Exeter Universities of Exeter and Plymouth (PMS)

**15. Lead College(s)/Teaching Institution and Discipline:**

*Purpose:* To identify the College(s) and discipline(s) responsible for coordinating the programme.

*Format:* Name of the College/Teaching Institution and discipline in full.

*Examples:* The College of Humanities, Modern Languages

University of Exeter Business School, Economics

**16. Partner College/ Institution and Discipline**

*Purpose:* To identify the partner College(s)/Institution and discipline responsible for co-delivery of part of the programme.

*Format:* List of one or more College/Institution and discipline in full. Examples: The College of Life and Environmental Sciences, Geography

The University of Bristol, Geography

**17. Programme accredited/ validated by**

*Purpose:* To identify where external bodies have endorsed the contents and standards of the programme

*Format:* List of one or more professional societies or statutory bodies or N/A for ‘not applicable’.

*Examples:* Institute of Physics Royal Society of Chemistry

**18. Final Award(s)**

Purpose: To identify the degree, diploma, certificate or other similar formal mark of recognition for successful completion of the programme of study. (Please note that it is not necessary to create a programme specification for the PhD, M.Phil or MByRes)

*Format:* The full title of the highest qualification available on completion followed by the abbreviated qualification title in brackets

*Examples:* Bachelor of Arts with Honours (BA Hons) Master of Arts (MA) Bachelor of Science with Honours (BSc Hons) Master of Science (MSc)

**19. UCAS Code (if relevant):**

*Purpose:* For undergraduate programmes only (to include for example: MChem, MPhys and MEng where entry is through UCAS). This ensures that the programme articulates with UCAS mechanisms for advertisement and recruitment and with the University Calendar and prospectus. Not relevant for postgraduate programmes.

*Format:* Alphanumeric code or N/A for ‘not applicable’

*Examples:* M103

**20. NQF (FHEQ) Level of Final Award(s):**

*Format:* A single level indicator is drawn from those in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which incorporates the framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ) published by the Quality Assurance Agency:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Typical higher education qualifications within each level** | **NQF level\*** | **Corresponding FQ-EHEA cycle** |
| Doctoral degrees (e.g. PhD/DPhil (including new-route  PhD), EdD, DBA, DClinPsy) | 8 | Third cycle  (**end of cycle**) qualifications |
| Master’s degree (e.g. MPhil, MLitt, MRes, MA, MSc) | 7 | Second cycle  (**end of cycle**) qualifications |
| Integrated Master’s degrees (e.g. MEng, MChem, MPhys, MPharm) |
| Postgraduate diplomas |  |
| Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) |
| Postgraduate certificates |
| Bachelor’s degrees with honours (e.g. BA/ BSc Hons) | 6 | First cycle  (**end of cycle**) qualifications |
| Bachelor’s degrees |
| Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)\*\*\*\* |  |
| Graduate diplomas |
| Graduate certificates |
| Foundation degree (e.g. FdA, FdSc) | 5 | Short cycle  (**within or linked to the first cycle**)  qualifications |
| Diplomas of Higher Education (Dip HE) |
| Higher National Diplomas (HND) |
| Higher National Certificates (HNC) | 4 |
| Certificates of Higher Education (Cert HE) |
| Introductory Certificate | 3 |  |

**21. CATS and ECTS**

*Purpose*: To indicate the total credit value of the programme

*Format*: Provide the UK credit total first under the Credit Accumulation & Transfer System (CATS), followed by the EU credit total under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The ECTS rating is always half that of the CATS rating system

*Examples*: 180 credits (90 ECTS) 360 credits (180 ECTS)

**22. QAA Subject Benchmarking Group**

*Purpose:* To indicate how the programme articulates with the QAA’s benchmark statements that make explicit the general academic characteristics and standards of honours degrees in the UK.

*Forma*t: Subject area(s) drawn from the list of 47 covered by QAA benchmark statements or N/A for ‘not applicable’ if no benchmark statements are relevant. ISSH and CH programmes might refer to several subject areas.

Subject areas are reviewed every four years through a periodic subject review scheme that includes external contributions.

*Examples:* N/A Accounting Music/Languages and Related Studies

**23. Origin Date/Date of Last Revision**

*Purpose:* To indicate when the programme specification was completed and submitted for approval and when it was revised and may have been re-submitted for approval.

*Format:* Month/Year

*Examples:* February 2008

Revised January 2010

Last updated August 2015

Last reviewed April 2015

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