Imperial College London

Guidance Regarding Programme Specifications

1. Introduction

1.1. This document contains guidance notes for the completion of Programme Specification templates.

1.2. The programme specification is the definitive record of the programme including the learning outcomes, credit breakdown and assessment structure. The programme specification should be written in plain English and should be accessible by a non-specialist audience including prospective and current students.

1.3. Departments are expected to maintain a record of their programme specification(s) for the current academic year plus the previous six years as specified in the College's 'retention schedule'.

1.4. In order to ensure that information remains accurate over time, it is requested that links to information held on the website are not included, except where explicitly indicated in the programme specification template.

1.5. The academic department responsible for the programme should ensure that there are adequate systems in place to manage version control of the programme specification. In most cases it is expected that this will be managed through the 'Responsible Officer' (see 16. below).

1.6. In most cases a programme specification will provide details of only one programme.

1.7. In some cases it may be appropriate to produce one programme specification for multiple programmes (e.g. umbrella programmes, programmes containing multiple 'streams' or 'pathways', programmes containing nested qualifications, for example a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma, and programmes which share a considerable portion of the curriculum). . In these cases the programme specification should indicate which text refers to which programme. The use of clear sub-titles is encouraged.

1.8. Additional notes are provided on the document in **orange**. Notes in orange should be deleted from the final programme specification.

2. Award

2.1. The qualification(s) which students who complete the programme can expect to achieve. This should be written as an abbreviation e.g. *BEng* or *MSc* or *MPH* etc.

3. Programme Title

3.1. The name given to the programme of study e.g. *Molecular Biology with German* or *Computing (Specialisms)* or *Materials Science & Engineering,* etc.

4. Programme Code

4.1. The programme code**.**

4.2. Programme Specifications for proposed new programmes which are seeking approval should be 'TBC'. The programme code will only be allocated once Senate has approved the programme.

5. Awarding Institution/Teaching Institution

5.1. The name of the institution that delivers the programme and the name of the institution that confers the award.

5.2. For non-collaborative programmes the awarding institution is always Imperial College London and the teaching institution is always Imperial College London.

5.3. For collaborative programmes, please consult the Quality Assurance Team for further advice.

6. Department/Faculty

6.1. The name(s) of the Department, Institute or School responsible for managing the programme. This should be written in full e.g. *Department of* Mathematics or *Imperial College Business School*. The relevant Faculty should also be written in full.

6.2. For programmes which cross departmental or faculty boundaries please list all relevant departments and faculties. The primary department should be indicated by adding '(lead)' after the name e.g. *Department of Materials (lead)*

7. Mode and Period of Study

7.1. The number of years typically required to complete the programme by the relevant mode or study.

7.2. Undergraduate programmes should specify the period of study in terms of 'academic' years e.g. *3 academic years full-time.*

7.3. Master's level programmes should specify the period of study in terms of 'calendar' years, where a calendar year represents 12 months. The total number of months should be indicated in brackets e.g. *1 calendar year full-time (12 months).*

7.4. Master's level programmes which are available part-time should also specify the number of years typically required to complete the programme as a part-time student. The total number of months should be indicated in brackets e.g. *2 years part-time (24 months).*

7.5. Programmes which are available via distance-learning should also specify the number of years typically required to complete the programme as a distance-learner. The total number of months should be indicated in brackets e.g. *2 years distance learning (24 months).*

7.6. Programmes which do not run to a fixed timeline should specify the minimum and maximum periods of registration required to complete the programme e.g. *minimum 2 years (24 months) maximum 4 years (48 months).*

8. Cohort Entry points

8.1. The frequency with which cohorts are registered and the months in which the programme begins e.g. *annually in October* or *twice a year in October and April.*

9. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s) and/or other external/internal reference points

9.1. A list of relevant subject benchmark statements. The name of statements should be written in full e.g. *Master's degrees in Business & Management*

9.2. A full list of subject benchmark statements is available at: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements

9.3. Any other relevant external reference points should also be listed e.g. *UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence.*

10. External Accreditation by Professional/Statutory Bodies

10.1. The names of any professional, statutory or regulatory bodies by which the programme is accredited or regulated e.g. *General Medical Council* or *Royal Aeronautical Society,* etc.

11. Total Credits

11.1. The total number of credits awarded for the programme.

11.2. The total credit value is the sum of credits assigned to the individual modules within the programme. Credit values should be assigned to modules based on a calculation of 25 'study hours':1 ECTS.

11.3. Where the credit value of a programme may vary according to elective module or pathway selection the credit value should specify the minimum and maximum credit values available e.g. *180-186 ECTS* or *240-270 ECTS*

11.4. ECTS (European Credit Transfer & Accumulation System) is awarded according to the ECTS User Guide. Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme credit (CATS) is awarded according to the Higher Education Credit Framework for England.

11.5. Information regarding the allocation of ECTS at Imperial is available at: www.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/ectsinformation

11.6. Bachelor's programmes (BSc, BEng and MBBS) must be awarded no fewer than 180 ECTS or 360 CATS.

11.7. Integrated Master's programmes (MSci and MEng) must be awarded no fewer than 240 ECTS or 480 CATS.

11.8. Master's programmes (MSc, MBA, MRes and MPH) must be awarded no fewer than 90 ECTS or 180 CATS.

11.9. Postgraduate Certificates (PGCert) must be awarded no fewer than 30 ECTS or 60 CATS.

11.10. Postgraduate Diplomas (PGDip) must be awarded no fewer than 60 ECTS or 120 CATS.

11.11. CATS should be calculated using the ratio 1 ECTS:2 CATS

12. FHEQ Level

12.1. The FHEQ level at which the programme is awarded.

12.2. All programmes must be awarded at the relevant level of the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) (FHEQ). Further information regarding academic standards is available in the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter A: Setting & Maintaining Academic Standards](#).

12.3. Bachelor's programmes (BSc, BEng and MBBS) are awarded at level six.

12.4. Integrated Master's programmes (MSci and MEng) are awarded at level seven.

12.5. Master's programmes (MSc, MBA, MRes and MPH) are awarded at level seven.

12.6. Postgraduate Certificates (PG Cert) and Postgraduate Diplomas (PG Dip) are awarded at level seven

13. EHEA Level

13.1. For Bologna compatibility all programmes must be awarded at the relevant cycle of the Framework for Qualifications in the [European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA](#)). The FHEQ (see 12. above) is 'fully compatible' with the QF-EHEA[1] and therefore programmes are automatically awarded at the relevant cycle where they are also awarded an FHEQ level.

13.2. Level six Bachelor's programmes (BSc, BEng and MBBS) are awarded at 1st Cycle.

13.3. Level seven integrated Master's programmes (MSci and MEng) are awarded at 2nd Cycle.

13.4. Level seven Master's programmes (MSc, MBA, MRes and MPH) are awarded at 2nd Cycle.

13.5. Postgraduate Certificates (PG Cert) and Postgraduate Diplomas (PG Dip) are not end of cycle awards however credit is awarded at 2nd cycle.

14. External Accreditors

14.1. The names of any professional, statutory or regulatory bodies that have accredited the programme e.g. *The Royal Aeronautical Society* or *The Institution of Engineering and Technology*.

15. Student Cohorts Covered by Programme Specification

15.1. The student cohorts to which the programme specification applies by academic year e.g. *2012-13* etc.

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[1] http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/QF/FHEQSelfCert.pdf

15.2. A programme specification remains valid for the duration of a student cohort's programme of study, regardless of the student's mode of study. Any changes made to the programme between cohorts will require a new programme specification to be completed for the new student cohort. A single programme specification may therefore be applied to multiple student cohorts but only when there have been no modifications to the programme between cohorts.

15.3. In-session modifications to programmes which affect student cohorts during the year in which they are registered are not permitted without approval from Senate. Senate approval must be granted before any modifications can be made to the programme specification for the current year of a student cohort.

16. Responsible Officer

16.1. The name and role of the person tasked with producing and updating the Programme Specification. This must be a named individual who is a College employee and may be either a member of academic or support staff from the department. The responsible officer should be a person who has the relevant knowledge and authority to update the document e.g. *a Director of Undergraduate Studies* or *an Education Manager* or a *Programme Director*.

17. Date of Introduction of Programme

17.1. The month and year in which the programme of study was first introduced e.g. *January 1995*.

18. Date of Programme Specification and Revisions

18.1. The month and year in which the Programme Specification was most recently updated and approved e.g. *26/08/2014*

19. Description of Programme Contents

19.1. A brief description of the programme contents. This should be covered in approximately 4-5 sentences.

19.2. The description of programme contents should reference any collaborative elements to the programme, placement opportunities and other unique selling points.

20. Learning Outcomes

20.1. Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of the programme.

20.2. The learning outcomes should be holistic outcomes and not simply the sum of the relevant module learning outcomes.

20.3. The Learning outcomes should be consistent with the programme descriptors for awards at the relevant level of the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) (see 7. above).

20.4. The learning outcomes should also be consistent with the relevant QAA subject benchmark statement(s) (see 17. above). Learning outcomes should not be transposed from the subject benchmark statement(s) into the programme

specification, rather the statement(s) should be used as a reference and point of comparison.

20.5. Learning outcomes should be expressed as statements of a student's ability e.g.

Upon successful completion of the programme a typical student should be able to;

- *Analyse and solve sustainable retirement problems using an integrated multidisciplinary approach*
- *Demonstrate an understanding of the factors which influence DC arrangements design and their influence on administration*

20.6. Further support and guidance for defining learning outcomes is available from the Educational Development Unit at:

http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/edudev

and from the QAA Publication, Understanding Assessment, available at:

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/understanding-assessment.pdf

21. Academic Requirement

21.1. The academic entry requirement specific to the programme.

21.2. Undergraduate programmes should express the academic requirement in terms of A-level grades.

A*AA to include A* in Mathematics, A in Physics and A in Biology, Chemistry or Further Mathematics or equivalent.

21.3. Postgraduate programmes should express the academic requirement in terms of UK degree awards.

Normally a UK Bachelor's degree at 2:1 in Chemical Engineering or a related discipline or equivalent.

21.4. The Colleges minimum entrance requirements for Master's level programmes including Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas are detailed in section 1.3 'Entrance Requirements' of the Academic Regulations for Master's Level Programmes which are available at:

http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/regulations

21.5. Equivalent qualifications including IB scores and accepted international qualifications should not be listed.

22. Additional Entry Requirements

22.1. Any additional entry requirements specific to the programme e.g. *3 years relevant work experience*, or *a GMAT score of 700 or higher*.

23. Special Qualifying Examinations (SQE)

23.1. Postgraduate programmes wishing to offer 'Special Qualifying Exams' (SQE's) should include the following text;

Applicants who do not meet the entry requirements above but who have substantial relevant industry experience may be admitted following completion of a 'special qualifying examination'.

23.2. Postgraduate programmes which do not wish to offer 'Special Qualifying Examinations' should remove this text.

23.3. **Interviews**

23.4. Programmes wishing to offer interviews should include the following text;

Home/EU/international [delete as appropriate] *students will be invited to attend an interview.*

23.5. Programmes which do not wish to offer post application interviews should remove this text.

24. English Requirement

24.1. The English language requirement specific to the programme. The requirement should be expressed in terms of IELTS scores.

24.2. English language requirements must be set at either the College's standard or higher entry level; either;

IELTS 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each element or equivalent

Or;

IELTS 7.0 with a minimum 6.5 in each element or equivalent.

24.3. Equivalent qualifications and accepted alternative test scores should not be listed.

25. Competency Standards Document

25.1. A link to the publically available competency standards document for the relevant programme.

26. Learning & Teaching Strategy

26.1. A bulleted list of the learning and teaching methods employed across the programme.

26.2. Scheduled learning and teaching methods refers to methods of learning and teaching where learning is facilitated directly by an academic. These methods include time often referred to as 'contact time' e.g. *lectures*, *seminars* or *laboratory teaching*.

26.3. E-learning and blended learning methods refer to methods of learning and teaching where learning is facilitated by or via an on-line resource or programme. These methods may include occasions where learning is supported or delivered indirectly by

an academic through the resource of programme e.g. *discussion forums*, *pre-lecture quizzes* or *on-line video materials.*

26.4. Project and placement learning methods refers to methods of learning and teaching where learning is facilitated by the student independently or via a non-academic third party e.g. *independent research project*, *business internship* or *industry work experience.*

27. Assessment Methods

27.1. A bulleted list of the summative assessment methods employed across the programme as described in the module outlines for the relevant modules e.g. *written examination*, *literature review*, *extended essay* or *dissertation*.

28. Academic Feedback Policy

28.1. A statement outlining the department's or programme's policy towards the marking of assessed work and the receipt of academic feedback by students. This should include a maximum time-scale in which students should expect to receive feedback on summative and formative assessment as well as any other mechanisms used for academic feedback.

29. Programme Structure

29.1. Details of the number and type of modules taken during each term of the programme. In most cases each term equates to one of the standard academic terms, where 'Term One' is the autumn term and 'Term Four' is the summer break.

29.2. For programmes which do follow the standard academic year each 'term' should refer to approximately a three month period.

29.3. The name used to describe each term may be amended to reflect the timeline of the specific programme.

29.4. Pre-session refers only to modules taken before a student's registration date including, for example, on-line 'primer' or 'pre-sessional' modules. For programmes with a registration date in September, modules conducted in September form part of 'Term One'.

30. Assessment Dates & Deadlines

30.1. Indicative timing of assessments in each year with deadlines expressed in months.

31. Assessment Structure

31.1. A description of the programme weighting structure per year including a description of each programme component, the total ECTS per programme component and the total weighting per programme component.

31.2. The description of the programme component should detail the relevant modules which form the component as well as their respective weighting e.g.

Component A
Mechanics 1   *25%*

Vibrations & Waves	*25%*
Electricity & Magnetism	*25%*
Electronics 1	*25%*

Or

<u>*Spring Component*</u>	
Energy Economics & Strategy	*40%*
Climate Change & Governance	*25%*
Change Management	*25%*
One Module from Elective Group A	*10%*

31.3. Programme components should be formed of modules only. Where a programme component consists of assessments from a number of modules you should contact the [Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team](#) in Registry for advice. This structure was previously known as 'elements', where an element was formed of a group of assessments e.g. *Coursework Element*.

31.4. The 'elements' structure no longer enables the College to demonstrate that the programme meets the requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the ECTS User Guide. As such the use of elements is no longer considered best practice.

31.5. Where a programme does not group modules together but weights modules individually you should contact the [Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team](#) in Registry for advice. A simplified version of the assessment structure will be available for these programmes.

32.   Rules of Progression

32.1. Details of the progression rules for the programme e.g.

Progress to Year Two:
A percentage score of at least 40% in each programme component.

32.2. Progression rules should be provided for all undergraduate programmes.

32.3. Progression rules should be provided for Postgraduate Programmes which offer a postgraduate certificate and/or postgraduate Diploma.

32.4. Progression rules should be provided for postgraduate programmes which span more than one calendar year, including part-time programmes, where a progression decision is made at the end of each calendar year.

33.   Marking Scheme

33.1. Details of the classification rules for the programme. Where a programme allows compensation within a programme component this should be clearly specified e.g. for an undergraduate programme

Upper Second Class honours:
A percentage score of at least 60% in each programme component AND
A percentage score of at least 40% in each module AND
A percentage score of at least 30% in each assessment

Or

Upper Second Class honours:
A percentage score of at least 60% in each programme component AND
A percentage score of at least 40% in each module*
*Compensation will be granted for a percentage score of 30% in up to one module within each programme component

Or

Upper Second Class honours:
A percentage score of at least 60% in each programme component AND
A percentage score of at least 40% in each module*
*Compensation will be granted for a percentage score of 30% in modules equivalent to no more than 5 ECTS within each programme component

Or for a postgraduate programme

Merit:
A percentage score of at least 60% in each programme component AND
A percentage score of at least 60% in the Independent Research Project AND
A percentage score of at least 50% in each module AND
A percentage score of at least 40% in each assessment

Or

Merit:
A percentage score of at least 60% in each programme component AND
A percentage score of at least 60% in the Independent Research Project AND
A percentage score of at least 50% in each module*
* Compensation will be granted for a percentage score of 40% in up to one module within each programme component, excluding the independent research project

Or

Merit:
A percentage score of at least 60% in each programme component AND
A percentage score of at least 60% in the Independent Research Project AND
A percentage score of at least 50% in each module*
* Compensation will be granted for a percentage score of 40% in modules equivalent to up to 5 ECTS within each programme component, excluding the independent research project

33.2.   For further advice regarding marking schemes please contact the [Quality Assurance & Enhancement Team](#) in Registry.

34.   Module List

34.1.   A list of modules available on the programme including the module code, module title, designation (core or elective), year, number of dedicated learning & teaching hours, number of independent study hours, number of placement hours, total number of hours, percentage of the total mark derived from 'written examinations', percentage of the total mark derived from 'coursework' and percentage of the total mark derived from 'practical assessments', FHEQ level and ECTS credit value.

34.2.   The module code should be the official module code. In the case of shared modules, or modules taught outside the department, this should be the code specified by the home department.

34.3.   The module title should be the official module title. In the case of shared modules, or modules taught outside the department, this should be the title specified by the home department.

34.4.   The designation may be either 'core' or elective'. Core modules are modules which all students on the programme (or relevant stream within the programme) are required to take in order to complete the programme. All other modules are elective modules. Where elective modules are grouped these groups should be distinguished through the use of parentheses e.g. *Elective (Group A)* or *Elective (Research Methods)*.

34.5.   The year is the year of study in which a student may take the module. This may be more than one year e.g. *2 or 3*.

34.6.   Scheduled learning & teaching hours is the cumulative number of hours scheduled for lectures, seminars, tutorials, project supervision, demonstrations, practical classes, workshops, supervised time in workshops or laboratories, fieldwork external visits to locations outside of the learning space, work based learning (e.g. clinical placements), examinations and class tests. For undergraduate programmes the scheduled learning and teaching hours should be the same as specified in your Key Information Set (KIS).

34.7.   Independent study hours is the cumulative number of hours it is expected a typical student would require for guided independent study, unsupervised project work and exam preparation. For undergraduate programmes the independent study hours should be the same as specified in your Key Information Set (KIS).

34.8.   Placement hours is the cumulative number of hours scheduled for placements including any time in industry, on research placements or abroad. For undergraduate programmes the placement hours should be the same as specified in your Key Information Set (KIS).

34.9.   Total hours is the cumulative total of scheduled learning and teaching hours, independent study hours and placement hours. For undergraduate programmes the total hours should be the same as specified in your Key Information Set (KIS).

34.10. The percentage of the total mark derived from 'written examinations' is the total percentage weighting ascribed to written examinations for the relevant module including any multiple choice papers taken under examination conditions.

34.11. The percentage of the total mark derived from 'coursework' is the total percentage weighting ascribed to written assignments, essays, reports, dissertations, portfolios or other project outputs for the relevant module.

34.12. The percentage of the total mark derived from 'practical assessments' is the total percentage weighting ascribed to presentations, viva voce examinations, other oral assessments and practical skills assessments for the relevant module.

34.13. The FHEQ level is the level at which the module's credit is awarded on the [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) (FHEQ) based on the module learning outcomes.

34.14. ECTS is the total number of credits awarded for each module according to the European Credit Transfer & Accumulation Scheme (ECTS).

35.   Programme Handbook

35.1.   A link to the publically available programme handbook.

35.2.   Programme handbooks must be publically available to meet HEFCE's expectations regarding the [Wider Information Set](#) (WIS).

36.   Module Handbook

36.1.   A link to the publically available module information as required by HEFCE to evidence the Key Information Set (KIS).

36.2.   A module Outline Template is available at:

[www.imperial.ac.uk/registry/proceduresandregulations/qualityassurance/programme modifications](#)

36.3.   It is not necessary to copy the module information into this part of the programme specification.

Approved by Registry
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