

Programme specification

Guidance notes 2023/24

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Before you get started ...

Introduction

This guidance has been developed to assist with the completion of the university's programme specification proforma (previously known as programme/course template). Programme and course have both been used within the terminology on the programme specification proforma. This is because the programme specification will normally be for a complete programme, eg BA (Hons) English, single honours, but in some cases may refer to joint honours. We refer to joint honours as a course because it doesn't form a programme until linked with another joint honours subject. When developing your specification, please contact your faculty's Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality who can provide exemplars to assist you.

Validation service

For support and guidance on completion of module specifications by partner institutions for validation service provision, please contact Educational Partnerships.

Compliance with consumer rights legislation

The university is subject to consumer rights legislation in relation to the accuracy of information we provide to applicants and students about their programme, including information about programme content and structure, tuition fees and other costs. This guidance document relates to programme content which may impact on information to

applicants and students and includes advice about making such information easily accessible and transparent. Please refer to the [Competition and Markets Authority \(CMA\)](#) guidance to HE providers on consumer rights legislation for more information if necessary.

Higher and degree apprenticeships

If your programme provides the academic content for a higher or degree apprenticeship, please refer to the additional [Programme Specification Guidance notes for Apprenticeships](#) which should be read in conjunction with these guidance notes.

If your programme provides the academic content for a higher or degree apprenticeship, please ensure that the knowledge, skills and behaviours listed in the [apprenticeship standard](#) are included in the outcomes section of the specification and the apprenticeship standard referenced in other sections as appropriate. Where the programme is delivered to both apprentices and non-apprentices, a separate programme specification with a different programme code should be developed for the apprenticeship version.

Completing the programme specification

Basic programme information

Programme/course title

Enter the name of the new programme here. The name of the programme should take into account how easily it can be found by potential applicants searching on a web search. For example, someone searching for a programme on DMU's alphabetical list might not find BSc (Hons) Advanced Techniques in Data Management if looking for a degree in data management (not a real example).

Short programme/course code

A short-form title (of no more than 40 characters including spaces) is required for inputting into the student record system, SAP.

Programme/course code

Your Faculty Office or programme administrator will assist with allocating the code.

Level

Please state whether the programme is undergraduate or postgraduate. For your reference the university adheres to the Office for Students (OfS) [sector-recognised standards](#) which equates to DMU years of study as follows:

Levels	Equivalent to
4	Year one of full-time undergraduate study
5	Year two of full-time undergraduate study
6	Year three of full-time undergraduate study
7	Taught postgraduate study
8	Doctoral study

Type

Please state whether the programme is single honours programme or joint honours (Subject A and Subject B) major minor (Subject A with Subject B), or if it is a pathway or specialisation within an overarching programme.

Mode(s) of delivery

This section should identify which mode(s) of delivery the programme will be offered in. The options are:

Full-time: For undergraduate programmes, study normally equates to 120 credits per year based on the academic session running up to 36 weeks a year, but should be as a minimum 90 credits per year and at least 24 weeks duration. For postgraduate programmes full-time study equates to a minimum of 120 credits per year. Students in employment may also be engaged in full-time study if their programme of study is based upon work-based learning.

Full-time with sandwich placement: as above, with the addition of a sandwich placement year, normally between levels 5 and 6 for undergraduate programmes.

Part-time: study normally equates to less than 90 credits per year.

Full-time by distance learning/part-time by distance learning: if delivery and assessment is undertaken at the university or a partner institution the study mode is not distance learning, even if a proportion of online material is utilized. This does not preclude a distance learning student attending the university or a partner institution on an occasional basis.

Please note that 'blended learning' is not a formal mode of delivery but a description of a method of delivery. Mode of delivery may have implications for student finance and must therefore be recorded accurately.

Mode notes can be used to indicate, for example, whether a sandwich year is optional or compulsory on a programme.

Duration

Please indicate the normal duration of the programme in months, for example 12 months, 36 months

Relevant QAA subject benchmark statement(s)

If there is a Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) subject benchmark statement, or more than one statement, which has informed the development of the programme, please list it/them here. Please also include the date of publication of the statement. A definitive list of benchmark statements can be found on the [QAA website](#).

Note: if you are developing a foundation degree, higher or degree apprenticeship or a master's programme there are additional QAA characteristics statements which can support you, on the [QAA website](#).

Details of accreditation by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB)

If applicable please list the name(s) of any PSRBs accrediting the programme, and briefly describe what graduates will receive as a result of this accreditation (eg license to practice; exemptions from professional examinations).

If the programme differs from the generic university academic regulations the differences should be explained here. Normally any differences, known as **programme-specific regulations**, arise to meet the requirements of a PSRB. Common programme-specific regulations include not allowing compensation for marginal failure in modules (undergraduate scheme only) and differences in reassessment regulations. If you are unsure whether your programme requires programme-specific regulations please refer to the [Academic Regulations](#). You can also discuss the perceived need for programme-specific regulations with the faculty Associate Dean (Academic).

University-level approval is required for new programme-specific regulations, which are recorded in a faculty programme-specific regulations register. Please discuss this with your faculty's Associate Dean (Academic) in the first instance.

Owning department

The department which the programme will belong to should be listed.

Highest award

Please list the highest award a student can gain by completing the programme. This will most often be BSc (Hons) or BA (Hons) at undergraduate level and MA/MSc at postgraduate level, although the university offers a number of other awards as outlined in the [Academic Regulations](#).

If you believe you may be introducing a new award type not currently included in the [university's ordinances](#), please contact your faculty's Associate Dean (Academic) Studies in the first instance, who will liaise with the Department of Academic Quality. All new award types must be approved by the Academic Board before being included in the ordinances. This scenario is most likely when developing an integrated master's programme, as there is some flexibility in award titles.

All possible award aims

Please list all possible award aims for the programme. For example, on an MA/MSc programme some students may be aiming to achieve a postgraduate certificate or diploma, as opposed to exiting with a lower award due to academic failure or personal circumstances.

All possible exit awards

Please list all possible exit awards, which are likely to be as follows. The university expects all appropriate exit awards to be listed on the specification and approved at validation unless a strong rationale to the contrary is put forward.

Award	Exit awards
Master's degree (MA/MSc/LLM/MBA)	Postgraduate diploma Postgraduate certificate
Postgraduate diploma (PgDip)	Postgraduate certificate

Award	Exit awards
Postgraduate certificate (PgCert)	None *
Integrated master's degree (MDes, MPhys)	Honours degree Non-honours degree Diploma of higher education Certificate of higher education
Honours degree (BA/BSc/LLB)	Non-honours degree Diploma of higher education Certificate of higher education
Graduate diploma (GradDip)	Graduate certificate
Non-honours degree	Diploma of higher education Certificate of higher education
Graduate certificate (GradCert)	None *
Foundation degree (FdA, FdSc)	Certificate of higher education
Diploma of higher education (DipHE)	Certificate of higher education
Higher National Diploma (HND)	Certificate of higher education
Higher National Certificate (HNC)	None *
Certificate of higher education (CertHE)	None *
University Certificate of Professional Development (UCPD)	None *

* Where there is no formal exit award, the university issues institutional credits at undergraduate or postgraduate level, as appropriate.

Offered at the following campuses

This will normally be DMU, but if the programme will be offered at collaborative partner(s) please list these.

Programme leader

The name of the person who will be the programme leader once the programme is running should be listed.

Please note that the person who authors the programme may not necessarily be the programme leader. It is the person who will manage and lead the programme when it is running who should be named in this section.

Entry requirements

This section should include both the standard entry requirements for the programme, including UCAS tariff points, minimum entry requirements and arrangements for considering non-standard applications. Please identify any specific English language level requirements, for example International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Please also indicate whether or not applicants will be interviewed. Completion of this section may require liaison with your faculty's admissions team.

Programme/course description

Characteristics and aims

The text should enable prospective students to make comparisons and informed choices about the programme they wish to study and provide guidance for recruiters of graduates. It should indicate perspectives, themes and concerns that are central to the programme including, where appropriate, the relevance of the programme to:

- Subject-based research or consultancy (either internally, nationally or internationally)
- Employment needs and career opportunities
- Development of skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum

The text in this section will form part of the [Higher Education Achievement Report](#) (HEAR) which students will receive on graduation and will share with prospective employers. Because of this some additional constraints and advice apply:

- The maximum word length for this section is 500 words. Where the specification is for a joint honours course, so that the HEAR will contain descriptions relating to two different subject areas, the limit is 250 words.
- The section should be written in plain English to communicate to a wide/non-HE audience.
- The text should be self-contained and should not refer the reader to other areas of the specification for further information, as this will not be available via the HEAR.
- If referring to levels of study, please remember to use the nationally-recognised FHEQ levels (eg 4, 5, 6 and 7) rather than years of study (1, 2, 3 etc).
- Please don't write in the future tense or address the student directly (eg 'you will study...').
- Keep formatting to a minimum – please see the below table for advice on appropriate formatting, as using any of the symbols indicated below may result in the text not being accepted into the HEAR document.

Character	Name	Notes
&	Ampersand	
<	Less-than sign	
>	Greater-than sign	
–	En Dash	Use the ASCII version of a dash instead: -
•	Bullet	
·	Middle dot	Sometimes used as a bullet.
§	Section sign	Sometimes used as a bullet.
Ÿ	Capital Y with diaeresis	Seems to appear sometimes if a bulleted list is copied and pasted from Word.
' '	Single smart quotes	Use the ASCII version of a single quote instead: ' '
" "	Double smart quotes	Use the ASCII version of a double quote instead: " "
http://...	URL	Causes a problem in the XML processing. Should be OK if the http:// is omitted.

For any accredited programme which also has a non-accredited exit route, please include a paragraph at the end for the non-accredited/non-clinical award, which makes it clear that the exit award(s) does not convey professional qualification.

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies

This section should outline the approach taken to teaching, learning and assessment in the programme:

- **Strategy:** to include learning approaches and the demonstration of consistency between teaching and learning methods and the aims/outcomes of the programme.
- **Key skills:** articulate the essential and desirable skills (and at what level) the programme will develop, with particular reference to employability.
- **Methods:** articulate the range of methods used to deliver learning to the students (eg lectures, laboratory work) and reference any opportunities for placements and work-based learning or work-based simulations.
- **Assessment:** explain how the assessment strategies enable students to demonstrate the learning as per the programme outcomes, and identify the opportunities for formative assessment.

Programme outcomes

This section is intended to convey the level of intellectual demand and challenge set by the programme. It should be worded in terms of what you would expect a typical student to be able to do when they finish the programme. When writing programme outcomes please refer to the level descriptors in the Office for Students (OfS) [sector-recognised standards](#). This document outlines the national qualification descriptors and provides for each descriptor a statement of outcomes, which is a statement of the national threshold academic standards for the qualification. It is extremely important to refer to the relevant qualification descriptor when drafting your programme outcomes, to ensure that they conform to national standards. Please also refer to the OfS [sector-recognised standards](#) typical skills and attributes for each classification at level 6, if developing an honours degree.

The following areas should be covered:

- **Knowledge and understanding:** an overview should be provided of the knowledge and understanding of key concepts within the subject area.
- **Cognitive skills:** cognitive skills that a graduate of the programme should display should be articulated, for example the ability to process information, reason and relate and to undertake critical analysis and evaluation.
- **Subject specific skills:** these outcomes demonstrate the application of subject-specific knowledge. Sample outcomes might reference, for example, laboratory skills for science graduates or performance, production and creative skills for performing arts graduates
- **Transferable skills:** this refers to high level skills expected in a graduate in the areas of communication, numeracy, problem solving and IT, teamwork and interpersonal skills, and self-management and professional development.

In completing this section, it is important to consider outcomes for the highest (intended) award but also outcomes for all possible exit awards. Outcomes for exit awards can be included in this section of the specification or under the structure notes section, if you prefer. Your faculty Associate Professor (Quality)/Head of Quality can provide examples of completed specifications to assist with this task.

Structure and regulations

Modules and credits

Please list all the modules which comprise the programme in the table provided.

- **Module code:** the four letter, four number unique identifier assigned to each module

- **Module title:** the name of the module
- **Credit value:** the credit value assigned to the module, for example 15, 30, 60 credits
- **Level:** the FHEQ level of the module: 4, 5 or 6 for undergraduate; 7 for postgraduate
- **SAP delivery session:** please choose the most appropriate duration of delivery from the table at the end of this section of the guidance. Education 2030-compliant undergraduate programmes will be delivered over the autumn and spring sessions and postgraduate programmes over autumn, spring and summer sessions. If you have non-standard intakes, please remember that Block 1 will always run in October. If your programme starts in February, the first block will be Block 3.
- **Must take:** only mark the module as must take if in the context of the programme it must be studied (a core rather than optional module). Must take does not mean that the module must also be passed – it may be a module for which compensation can be awarded for a marginal failure.
- **Must pass:** only mark the module as must pass if in the context of the programme a student must achieve the pass mark of 40%. This only applies to undergraduate modules, where an element of compensation for marginal failure is allowed. Marking the module as must pass means that no compensation will be allowed. It is not relevant to postgraduate programmes where a student has to pass all the modules to gain the award.
- **Pre-requisite:** if there is a module(s) at a previous level of study which must have been studied in preparation for the module in question, please list the module code(s) of the pre-requisite(s).
- **Location:** please list DMU and/or a partner institution campus.

For Education 2030-compliant undergraduate programmes, please note that no module choice should be offered at level 4 (undergraduate first year) and limited choice at level 5, which will normally be offered in teaching block 3.

Block delivery

ID	SAP session name	Approx from/to dates	
601	Block 1	Oct	Mid Nov
602	Block 2	End Nov	Beginning Feb
603	Block 3	Mid Feb	End April
604	Block 4	End April	Mid June
605	Block 5	Mid June	Beginning Aug
606	Block 6	Beginning Aug	End Sept
611	Block 1 and 2	Oct	Beginning Feb
613	Block 3 and 4	Mid Feb	Mid June
615	Block 5 and 6	Mid June	End Sept
620	Block 1 to 4	Oct	Mid June

Non-block delivery

ID	SAP session name	Approx from/to dates	
501	Autumn session	Oct	Dec/Jan
502	Spring session	Jan	June
509	Full year (autumn)	Oct	Sept
518	Full year (spring)	Jan	Dec
519	Summer session	June	Sept
520	Autumn and spring session	Oct	June

Any programme-specific differences or regulations

Please see the [PSRB section](#) for further information. Where a programme-specific regulation has been approved for the programme, please indicate this. Please don't list the regulation in detail but refer to the definitive record which is the faculty's programme-specific regulations [register](#). This will prevent potential version control issues should the programme-specific regulation be changed.

Please also use this field to indicate the intake(s) for the programme, for example October, February.

Programme intake codes in SAP

Please leave this field blank. Once the specification has been set up in SAP, intake codes will form part of the output when the programme specification is downloaded from SAP via a BILP report.

What happens to the programme specification after completion?

Initially your completed specification will be approved by the owning programme management board (PMB) or equivalent faculty committee. The proposal to introduce the new programme will be considered by the faculty's Development and Review Committee (DARC) and at university level by the Academic Portfolio Strategy Committee (APSC). If approval to go forward to validation is received from these committees, your specification will form part of the documentary submission for the validation event.

Assuming successful validation the programme specification will be entered onto the SAP student record system. This is the definitive version of the specification and supersedes any paper or electronic version held by individual members of staff.