

Introduction

- 1) The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) expects degree-awarding bodies to maintain a definitive record of each programme and qualification that they approve. This record is intended to provide the reference point for delivery and assessment of the programme, for monitoring and review, and for the provision of records of study to students and alumni (UKQC Advice and Guidance – Course Design and Development). The definitive record is commonly referred to as the programme specification.
- 2) The QAA has from time to time published guidance on what should be included in a programme specification. The programme specification format adopted by SGUL is based on QAA guidance.

Compliance with consumer protection law

- 3) Universities have a duty to provide upfront, clear, transparent and accurate information that allows students to make informed choices about where to study. That information includes statements about the structure of a programme, its content, the way in which the programme will be delivered, assessment requirements and applicable regulations. This information must be accurate because, since it forms part of our contract with prospective students, it is binding.

Programme specifications – uses

- 4) Programme specifications are designed for a number of audiences:
 - a) for academics: programme specifications promote discussion and reflection among members of the teaching staff of the courses; they enable external examiners to understand the aims of the programme in terms of assessment criteria; they act as reference points in the processes of internal and external audit of the quality of teaching provision;
 - b) for employers: programme specifications detail the skills and other transferable intellectual abilities fostered by the programme;
 - c) for potential students; programme specifications are part of the Key Information Set. Key Information Sets are comparable sets of information about full or part time undergraduate courses that are designed to meet the information needs of prospective students;
 - d) for students: in their discussion of outcomes, teaching methods, progression and assessment, programme specifications assist students both to make choices designed to realise their own learning aspirations, and to reflect on the process of learning;
 - e) programme specifications are included in the information available to external examiners.

Policy on programme specifications at SGUL

- 5) SGUL policy on programme specifications is as follows:

- a) for new programmes, a programme specification will be prepared and issued as part of the validation process (see section A of this Quality Manual);
- b) programme specifications will be produced using the standard format (although headings irrelevant to a particular programme need not be used);
- c) course teams can continue to use other promotional and other leaflets, provided the leaflet states that programme specifications are available to applicants on request;
- d) course teams will be asked (by the Quality and Partnerships Directorate) to review each programme specification annually and confirm that it remains up-to-date;
- e) if changes are reported during this process, the Quality and Partnerships Directorate will check whether the change has been approved in accordance with SGUL's modifications process (see section D);
- f) the Consumer Law Compliance Group (a subgroup of QAEC) will review each programme specification prior to publication and check that the programme specification is consistent with other published material about each programme;
- g) the usefulness of the programme specification will be reviewed during periodic review (see section C);
- h) QAEC will also review policy relating to programme specifications from time to time.

Format of the programme specification

- 6) The format for programme specifications and guidance notes for the preparation of the programme specification are available from the Director of Quality and Partnerships (Appendix J1).