

Generic statement for students about the role and purpose of a programme specification

What are programme specifications?

Programme specifications focus on single programmes of study (or courses), and outline the intended knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes of a student completing that course. A programme specification also gives details of teaching and assessment methods as well as linking the course to the framework for HE qualifications and any subsequent professional qualification and career path. The University of Manchester has programme specifications for the courses that it offers.

Not all programme specifications need to look the same. While there is no set template for programme leaders to follow, programme specifications should contain specific topics. Schools publish programme specifications and may make these available on their web sites. Programme specifications form one part of a set of different types of documents about a programme and its components, which include prospectus, programme handbook, unit specifications and information on websites.

There may be concern that 'specifying' what a student will have learnt at the end of the course or programme might inhibit innovation within that course. For this reason it is important not to see programme specifications as 'tick lists'. They offer broad indications of the types of things students might be expected to learn and the types of skills and abilities they might be expected to gain.

Adapted from Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) guidance to students on understanding courses (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>)