Programme Specifications – Quick Tips

In the past, when Programme Specifications have been submitted for the approval many of them have needed referral back to College (previously Faculty) often due to minor errors. The following points highlight common mistakes which, if avoided, will lessen the number of referrals back to College and therefore speed up the approval process.

1. Avoid vague and non-specific ILOs (e.g. '*display the key attributes of a global citizen*') and make sure they are written in terms that are assessable / measurable.

2. Also ensure that ILOs reflect the Programme Aims and are appropriate to the level of the award. Help is available in our online Guidance Notes (www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_106193_en.pdf) and directly from staff in the Learning & Teaching Centre (www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/resourcesforstaff/goodpracticeresources/programmeandcoursedesignandreview/)

3. The Programme Structure and Features section should include a list of available courses (both core and optional) which is often best presented in tabular form. This should clearly show the credits and level for each course (H or M). Exit awards should also be noted. A good example is given in this programme specification: www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_176775_en.pdf.

4. The Programme Structure and Features section should also be used to make it clear when the programme is to be delivered entirely online versus face-to-face.

5. Avoid repeating or quoting regulations in the programme specification – there is always a risk that regulation updates might not flow into the programme specifications leading to the publication of out of date information.

6. Avoid duplication of information presented in different sections of the document e.g. between the Aims and ILOs.

7. Ensure the document is written in impersonal language throughout (e.g. avoid 'we will offer one week…'; instead use 'one week will be offered…')

8. Ensure correct terminology is used e.g. don't use '*module*' or '*class*' to mean course. The University's Glossary of Terms is available online at: www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/policies/general/glossaryoftermsoccurringintheregulationsfortaughtdegrees/terminology/

9. Ensure all abbreviations and acronyms are given in full when they are first used.

10. Avoid content that will become out of date (e.g. 'new', 'this year').

11. Proof read the document to avoid typos, omissions and other small slips - these will be picked up for correction as the approved Programme Specification is a public document.

12. Don't create too many documents – a single programme specification can be created to cover a suite of related degrees if there is sufficient commonality in the Aims and ILOs of the various awards (section 3.4 of the Guidance Notes explains further when Programme Specs are required.