



ANNEX D

**GUIDELINES
AND TEMPLATES
FOR COURSE
SPECIFICATIONS
AND ANNUAL
COURSE REPORTS**

Annex D

Guidelines and Templates for Course Specifications and Annual Course Reports

Preface

1. The objective of these guidelines is to assist higher education institutions in compiling course specifications and the associated annual course reports in accordance with international standards for assuring their quality. It is one of the sets of guidelines produced by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project (QAAP).
2. The forms for course specifications and reports have been prepared with the cooperation of consultants from the United Kingdom. The guidelines and templates were developed in association with representation of institutions in January and June 2004.
3. Each section of the guidelines has been divided into two parts. The first part contains the general rules presenting the basic requirements which educational institutions will have to meet and the practices, which they will have to follow in order to assure the quality of their provision. The second part is a collection of basic elements, which are suggested for each section. The general rules as well as the titles of the basic elements are shadowed in grey to distinguish them.
4. In order to prevent any misunderstanding, each item of these guidelines is accompanied by an explanation of the meaning of the item and its connection with the basic requirements and practices, which have to be put into place to assure the quality of their provision.
5. The course specification template contains eight main items. These are: basic information; the overall aims of the course; its intended learning outcomes (ILOs); the course content; teaching and learning methods; student assessment methods; a list of books and references and the facilities required for teaching and learning.
6. The course report template contains eleven main items. These are: basic information; statistical information; topics taught; methods of teaching and learning; student assessment methods; constitution of examination committees, including the role of the external evaluator; administration constraints; student evaluation; comments of external evaluators; enhancement proposals; and finally, a formal action plan.
7. The course specification has to be provided when the faculty academic by-laws document is authorized. The course report should be provided within two weeks after the publication of students' results.
8. The course specification template is given in annex (1).
9. The course report template is given in annex (2).
10. The published documents of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in the UK and the accrediting agency for mid and west USA universities were used for guidance when these guidelines were prepared.

Introduction

11. Recent developments in science and in other fields, have resulted in the enhancement of education standards and quality becoming one of the most important challenges facing all nations. Such enhancement enables nations to cope with the consequences of globalization policies. Thus, education has become a matter of national strategic concern for both developing and developed nations. The need is to fulfill the main aim of education, which is to provide society with graduates capable of meeting its professional and research needs and of effectively participating in drawing-up and implementing the intended policies and plans of investment.

12. Egyptian higher education quality reform policies have been developed to assure the production of graduates conforming to internationally recognized standards. Implementation of these policies will increase the skills of graduates and enhance their competitive capacity in the national and regional labour market. For these reasons, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project (QAAP) was included in the 25 projects agreed upon by the National Higher Education Conference in 2000. The (QAAP) has also been chosen as one of the six higher education (HE) development projects implemented by the end of the year 2002. The academic programmes are considered to be the core of the educational system. It is therefore essential that all programmes are specified according to international standards and on the basis of intended learning outcomes (ILOs). It is also essential to demonstrate, by means of an annual report, that the operation of the programmes has resulted in the specified quality and standards being achieved. This must be done with reference to the standards and benchmarks that are carefully chosen by the HE institution in accordance with its mission. These guidelines have been prepared through the (QAAP) aiming at satisfying certain performance standards. They also aim at standardising the concepts among faculty members when compiling the course specifications and reports covered by these guidelines.

Glossary

Some of the terms appearing in these guidelines and / or used in writing course specification and course report in the higher education institutions may have more than one meaning according to its context. This might cause confusion in understanding, and consequently affect the compilation of specifications and reports. It is very important for the reader of these guidelines to be aware of the meaning, in this context, of the terms used. Therefore, this section defines the terms used in the compilation of course specifications and reports.

Academic standards:

Specific standards decided by the institution, and informed by external references and including the minimum knowledge and skills to be gained by the graduates from the programme and fulfilling the stated mission of the institution.

Accreditation:

The recognition accorded by the Agency to an institution which can demonstrate that its programmes meet acceptable standards and that it has in place effective systems to ensure the quality and continuing improvement of its academic activities, according to the criteria published by the Agency.

The impact of accreditation at course and programme level will be to require an assurance of the existence of a specific quality level in accordance with the institution's mission, the objectives of the programme(s) and the expectations of similar academic institutions, the students and the labour market.

Benchmarks:

Reference points with which to compare the standards and quality of a programme. Therefore, benchmark statements represent general expectations about the standards of achievement and general attributes to be expected of a graduate in a given subject area.

Course aims:

A collection of the course-specific goals that are derived from the overall objectives of the education programme. They are written in a general manner concentrating on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the course intends to develop in the students.

External evaluator:

An external experienced person in the field of specialization who is invited to review the structure and content of a programme, its relevance to the ILOs, the standards

and appropriateness of student assessments and attainment against the specification, and also evaluating the existing learning resources and whether or not they satisfy the programme requirements. The institution is responsible for specifying the evaluators' role and appointing them.

Institution:

A faculty or higher institute providing HE programmes leading to a first university degree (B.Sc. or B.A.) or a higher degree.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

The ILOs are the knowledge, understanding and skills which the institution intends for its programmes that are mission-related; reflect the use of external reference standards at appropriate level.

Internal system for quality management:

The system adopted by the institution to improve the level of the educational programmes and other elements affecting them. Such an outcomes-related system involves precise specifications for quality, the identification of good practice as well as of learning deficiencies and obstacles, performance follow-up, suggestions for development and enhancement, and the systematic review and development of processes for establishing effective policies, strategies and priorities to support continuing improvement.

Peer reviewer:

A person who is professionally equal in calibre and subject specialism to those delivering the provision but not from the same institution, without any conflict of interest, who can contribute to the review of an educational programme either for internal quality assurance (QA) or for accreditation purposes.

Programme evaluation:

The methods used to obtain the opinions of the stakeholders of the programme, including students, faculty members, the graduates, and the governing council, etc with the aim of improving and developing the programme to cope with the advances in subject matter and the needs of society and the environment.

Strategic objectives:

A collection of institution-specific objectives that are derived from its mission. They are written in a general manner concentrating on the knowledge and skills that the institution intends to develop in its students.

Student assessment:

A set of processes , including examinations and other activities concluded by the institution to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of a course / programme. Assessments also provide the means by which students are ranked according to their achievements. The students are well informed on the criteria by which they are assessed and given appropriate structured feedback that supports their continuing learning.

Teaching and learning methods:

The methods, which are used by teachers to help students to achieve the ILOs for the course. Examples would be: a case study to teach students how to analyse information and reach a decision; writing a review paper for the students to gain the skills of self-learning and presentation; practical sessions for the students to gain practical skills and executing experiments to train the students to analyse the results and reach specific conclusions.

GUIDLINES FOR COMPILING A COURSE SPECIFICATION

General precepts

1. The institution should have a file for each course "Course File" containing the course specification, samples of previous examination sheets, results of student evaluation of the course as well as the percentages of students dropping out, passing and failing the course. The file should include any other relevant information.
2. The institution should ensure the existence of two copies of the course file, one for the course lecturer and the other for the head of the department or program coordinator. This will help in performance follow-up.
3. The institution should provide a system for course evaluation.
4. The Department Council should approve the course specification when preparing/reforming/developing an educational programme and before authorization of the programme by higher authority or, in case of reviewing a course to cope with novel topics or to add/delete some of programme academic standards.

A-Basic Information:

1- Programme title:

Write the title of the programme(s) which contain the course, and identify if major/minor elements, where relevant

2- Department offering the programme(s):

Write the name of the department responsible for the programme(s).

3- Department responsible for the course:

Write the name of the department responsible for teaching the course.

4- Course code:

Write the code (the letter(s) and the number that identify the course in the faculty by-laws). If there is no code, leave the space blank.

5- Year/Level:

Write the year of the programme for the students in the case of a daily scheduling system or the level in a credit-hour system.

6- No. of hours/units:

Referring to the faculty by-laws, write the number of weekly contact hours of the course for the daily scheduling system and credit hour units for credit hour system divided into lectures, exercises and lab.

7-Authorization date of course specification:

Write the year in which the course specification has been authorized.

B- Professional Information

1- Course aims:

Overall course aims should be expressed as the outcomes to be achieved by students completing the course as significant, and assessable qualities.

2- Intended Learning Outcomes from the course:

Express the ILOs of the course in terms of:

a- Knowledge and understanding

The main information to be gained and the concepts that should be understood from the course.

b- Intellectual skills

Explain the intellectual skills, which the course will assist in developing in the students such as: analysis, capability for creative thinking, problem identification and solving,etc

c- Professional skills

These skills are demonstrated by the ability of the student, after completing the course, to apply and adopt the topics into professional applications.

d- General and transferable skills

Skills of a general nature, which can be applied in any subject area, including: written and oral communication, the use of new technological tools, ICT, group working, problem solving, management, .. etc.

3- Course content:

Write in the main course topics, the number of semester hours allocated for teaching each topic for lectures as well as for seminars, tutorials, exercises, laboratory work, etc. The topics should comply with the content written in the faculty by-laws.

4- Teaching and learning methods:

- Identify the methods used in delivering the course such as lectures, discussion sessions, information collection from different sources, practical, research assignment, field visits, case studies. ...etc.

5- Student assessment:

- Write down the assessment methods used, such as written examinations (mid-term, regular, at the end of term), class activities (reports, discussions, practicals...etc). Match the methods used with the course ILOs (item No. 3).
- Time schedule: specify the date for each assessment in the semester/year span.
- Weighting system: identify the percentage of marks allocated to each assessment tool mentioned above
- Formative only assessments are those, which do not contribute to the overall grading system, but are important in the learning process.

6- List of text books and references:

- a- Lectures notes: When notes are available, specify whether they are prepared in the form of a book authorized by the department or are handed out to the students part by part.
- b- Essential books (Text books): When the lecturer uses one book that covers most of course contents, specify the book.
When the lecturer uses more than one book, which contains parts of the course, specify the books and the topics covered by each.
- c- General references, journals, periodicals, newspapers, web sites, which enrich the learning process should also be listed.
The references that should be identified in the above items should be written in a standard way (publisher, edition, year, author(s)...etc). Refer also to locations for reading or buying the specified references.

7- Facilities required for teaching and learning:

The facilities include: appropriate teaching accommodation, including teaching aids, laboratories, laboratory equipment, computers etc., facilities for field work, site visits etc., which are necessary for teaching the course.

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING COURSE REPORTS

General precepts

1. The academic institution should have a file for each authorised programme containing the specification of its courses. Two copies should be available, one with the academic coordinator and the other with the vice dean for education and student affairs.
2. The institution should provide the necessary mechanisms to ensure continuous reviewing and updating of the programmes including readjustments of the structure, adding/deleting specific skills from the courses, ILOs...etc.
3. The institution should have clear academic standards and benchmarks for each education programme.
4. At the end of the semester/year, the lecturer/coordinator of a course should submit a course report to the head of the department.

A-Basic Information:

1- Course title and code:

Write the title and the code (the letter(s) and the number that identifies the course in the faculty by-laws). If there is no code, leave the space blank.

2- Programme:

Write the title of the programme(s) to which the course contributes.

3- Year /Level:

Write the programme year(s) of the students attending the course in the case of a daily scheduling system or the level in credit-hour systems.

4- No. of hours/ units:

Referring to the faculty by-laws, write the number of weekly contact hours of the course for the daily scheduling system and credit hour units for credit hour system divided to lectures, exercises and lab.

5- Teaching staff:

Write the name(s) of lecturer(s) teaching the course.

B- Statistical Information

6- No. of students starting the course:

Write the number of students starting the course at the beginning of the semester.

7- Results of students' assessment:

Write the number and percentage of pass students as well as fail students.

8- Distribution of passed students according to:

Fill in the allocated space, the number as well as the percentage of students for each grade.

C- Professional Information

1- Course topics taught:

In the first column of the table, write the topics actually covered in the semester/year. In the second column of the table, write the actual hours spent in covering each topic. In the third column, write the name of the lecturer covering each topic. Write in the space provided the percentage of the specified topics actually covered. State the reasons for the failure to cover any of the specified topics. If topics, not included in the course specification, were taught, justify this action.

2- Teaching and learning methods:

Tick in the appropriate rectangle, the method used. Write any comments.

- Lectures
- Practical training/lab
- Discussion sessions.....
- Class activities.....
- Case studies
- Other assignments.....

3- Student assessment:

a- Methods of assessment

Tick in the appropriate place the method(s) used.

b- State the rules applied for the selection of the examination committee.

State the names of the members of the examination committee.

c- State the involvement of the external evaluator in:

- The match between the examination and the topics taught.
- The existence of grading criteria in examination sheets
- The allocation and distribution of marks and weighting
- Effectiveness of the overall assessments in measuring the achievement of the intended learning outcomes (ILOs).

4- Facilities and teaching materials:

Tick the boxes provided to indicate whether or not the facilities for learning and teaching materials are adequate. If there are any inadequacies, identify them, together with any problems in the delivery of the course or achieving the ILOs, which resulted.

5- Administration constraints:

State any administrative constraints related to teaching and learning (lack of: some facilities or funds, teaching aids, site visits, qualified personnel for laboratory and administration). Also mention any management problems or regulations, which impeded the delivery of the course and the achievement of the ILOs.

6- Results of course evaluation by students:

State the main points resulting from the analysis of students' evaluation of the course, and the response to any criticisms by the faculty members delivering the course, together with their proposals for dealing with those issues.

7- External evaluator's comments:

State the issues raised by the external evaluator and the responses from the faculty members delivering the course, together with their proposals for dealing with those issues.

8- Course enhancement:

- a- List the issues identified in the action plan from the previous year and whether or not they have been dealt with effectively. When issues have not been effectively dealt with, give reasons and include in the current year's action plan.

Write the issues not handled from those raised in the previous report and the reasons for overlooking such issues.

- b- Action plan for programme enhancement over the next academic year.

List:

- 1- Issues and actions required
- 2- Time schedule
- 3- Person(s) responsible for the successful achievement of the specified action.

The action plan is fundamental to the success of the quality system. It appears at the end of the report, because it is the result of all of prior analysis. Enhancement can only take place if issues are identified and then acted upon and resolved. The action plan identifies the issues, prioritizes them and dictates the necessary action to be taken. It is also clearly places the responsibility for the implementation of the action and the resolution of the associated issues, in a given time scale on named individuals.



APPENDIX D1

**TEMPLATES FOR COURSE
SPECIFICATIONS**

Appendix D1**Templates for Course Specifications****University...****Faculty ...****Course specifications**

Programme(s) on which the course is given

Major or minor element of programmes

Department offering the programme

Department offering the course

Academic year / Level

Date of specification approval

A- Basic Information**Title:****Code:****Credit Hours:****Lecture:****Tutorial:****Practical:****Total:****B- Professional Information****1 – Overall aims of course**

.....

.....

.....

2 – Intended learning outcomes of course (ILOs)

a- Knowledge and understanding:

a1-

a2-

a3-

b- Intellectual skills

b1-.....

b2-.....

b3-.....

c- Professional and practical skills

c1-.....

c2-.....

c3-.....

d- General and transferable skills

d1-.....

d2-.....

3- Contents

Topic	No. of Hours	Lecture	Tutorial/Practical

4- Teaching and learning methods

- 4.1-.....
- 4.2-.....
- 4.3-.....
- 4.4-.....

5- Student assessment methods

- 5.1..... to assess
- 5.2..... to assess
- 5.3..... to assess
- 5.4..... to assess

Assessment schedule

- Assessment 1..... Week
- Assessment 2 week
- Assessment 3..... Week
- Assessment 4..... Week

Weighting of assessments

- Mid-term examination %
- Final-term examination %
- Oral examination. %
- Practical examination %
- Semester work %
- Other types of assessment %
- Total 100%

Any formative only assessments

6- List of references

- 6.1- Course notes
.....
- 6.2- Essential books (text books)
.....
.....

6.3- Recommended books

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6.4- Periodicals, Web sites, ... etc

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7- Facilities required for teaching and learning

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Course coordinator:

Head of Department:

Date: / /



APPENDIX D2

**TEMPLATES FOR
ANNUAL COURSE REPORTS**

Appendix D2

Templates for Annual Course Reports

University..... Faculty..... Department.....

Course Report

A- Basic Information

1. Title and code:
2. Programme(s) on which this course is given:
3. Year/ Level of programmes
4. Units/Credit hours:

Lectures Tutorial/Practical Total

5. Names of lecturers contributing to the delivery of the course

- i
- ii
- iii
- Course co-ordinator
- External evaluator

B- Statistical Information

No. of students attending the course: No. %

No. of students completing the course: No. %

Results:

Passed: No. % Failed: No. %

Grading of successful students:

Excellent: No. % Very Good: No. %

Good : No. % Pass: No. %

C- Professional Information

1 – Course teaching

Topics actually taught	No. of hours	Lecturer

Topics taught as a percentage of the content specified:

>90 % **70-90 %** **<70%**

Reasons in detail for not teaching any topic

.....
.....
.....

If any topics were taught which are not specified, give reasons in detail

.....
.....
.....
.....

2- Teaching and learning methods:

Lectures:

Practical training/ laboratory:

Seminar/Workshop:

Class activity:

Case Study:

Other assignments/homework:

If teaching and learning methods were used other than those specified, list and give reasons:

.....
.....

3- Student assessment:

Method of assessment	Percentage of total
Written examination	<input type="checkbox"/>
Oral examination	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practical/laboratory work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other assignments/class work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total	100 %

Members of examination committee

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.....
.....

Role of external evaluator

.....
.....
.....

4- Facilities and teaching materials:

Totally adequate

Adequate to some extent

Inadequate

List any inadequacies

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5- Administrative constraints

List any difficulties encountered

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6- Student evaluation of the course: Response of course team

List any criticisms

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7- Comments from external evaluator(s): Response of course team

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8- Course enhancement:

Progress on actions identified in the previous year’s action plan:	
Action	State whether or not completed and give reasons for any non-completion
.....
.....
.....

9- Action plan for academic year 200X – 200Y

Actions required	Completion date	Person responsible
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Course coordinator:

Signature:

Date: / /