

SAMPLE AIMS

The following guidance is designed to enable academic members of staff write focused and useful aims for programmes. It is aimed at helping academic colleagues to update programme specifications. A programme specification needs to be completed when a new programme is approved. Existing specifications need to be updated if a programme is amended, say, as a result of Departmental review activity.

Programme aims serve as broad purposes and are generally a statement of the intention of the programme team or department when designing or running the programme. They are not intended to be statements of what students will learn or do but rather of the overarching intentions of the programme. Aims should be brief, succinct and give students a reasonable idea of what to expect from the programme.

For core courses aims should give the students a brief idea of what the intention of the course is, ideally in relation to the programme students are studying. For optional courses, aims help students make decision about whether this is a course they wish to take.

The following list offers examples of aims to help you to compile question 10 of the programme specification. It has been compiled using information from QAA Audit activity conducted at LSE. You are free to adapt relevant aims to suit the needs of your programme or to simply use the list as an aide-mémoire. Please note that you should provide at least three to five broad aims for a programme and possibly more for a vocational subject.

Programme level Aims

1. To offer research-led teaching programmes to high-ability undergraduate and postgraduate UK/EU and international students, fostering an independent and critical approach to learning.
2. To enable students to develop the necessary analytical and theoretical sophistication, and breadth and depth of understanding, within their field of study.
3. To encourage students to develop intellectual flexibility and powers of rigorous analysis, by placing a premium on developing minds and on bringing forward their analytical reasoning ability.
4. To enable students who go directly into non-academic careers (e.g. government, the voluntary sector, international organisations, business and media) to become articulate, clear-thinking individuals, able critically to analyse complex bodies of material.

Aims of Master's Degrees

5. To provide specialist study opportunities to students with a first degree in a cognate area.
6. To develop an interdisciplinary perspective on relevant issues for students from diverse intellectual backgrounds.
7. To provide advanced postgraduate research training in the social sciences, of the highest academic standards.
8. To prepare students for senior positions in public policy organisations such as finance ministries, central banks and international financial and regulatory organisations, or in the private sector.

For additional information, please see the QAA's 'Guidelines for preparing programme specifications':

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/guidelines06.pdf>.