

Course titling guidance

A key aim of the University's award frameworks is to ensure that employers, schools, parents, students and others understand the achievements and attributes represented by our awards, and that these are consistent with national usage. Course teams need to ensure that the course title accurately represents the field of study.

- 1.1 The title of a course should accurately describe its subject focus. There should be a clear rationale for the title. This should demonstrate that the curriculum content is relevant to the title and is sufficiently distinct from other University courses to merit a separate title.
- 1.2 **Relevance.** Course teams need to demonstrate that the curriculum is relevant to the title by reference to the established 'subject territory'.

Notes

- There are no generic criteria. Subjects have their own characteristics and approaches; consequently, the boundaries of 'subject territories' will vary. QAA's Subject Benchmark Statements provide useful guidance to support course teams in presenting their own justification for relevance. Where relevant, standards and frameworks of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) may also provide useful guidance. In the vast majority of cases this should be straightforward.
 - Relevance is not a straitjacket – course teams are encouraged to innovate and emphasise their own themes within the subject territory. Relevance will therefore be applied flexibly in keeping with subject conventions and the need to innovate.
- 1.3 **Distinctiveness.** We need to ensure our courses are sufficiently distinct from one another to merit a separate title.

Note

- This particularly concerns 'named' pathways and 'bracketed' titles within a broad subject cluster or course. Each pathway should have a distinctive focus that legitimises the separate title, and also shows that the curriculum content is sufficiently different from other pathways in the cluster or course.

1.4 Succinctness. Wherever possible a course title should be simple and succinct:

- a. The title should be appropriate for the current market but not over-specified since this might limit its market 'shelf life', e.g., overly precise descriptions of subject sub-sets or specific reference to target client or sector groups.
- b. The title should not include reference to professional accreditation or other external recognition that is not conferred by the University's Academic Board. This information may be included on the student's transcript or diploma supplement. Occasionally the award designation will also convey information about the external recognition of the course (e.g., BEng).
- c. In promotional material, it is acceptable to use a descriptor alongside the formal title that includes reference to external recognition or application so long as students are aware that the formal title on their parchment will not include such reference. For example, a course may be promoted as a Postgraduate Certificate in Architecture Management (Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 1), but the formal title would simply be Architecture Management.
- d. Where a title includes reference to European, international or comparable studies, the course curriculum should contain relevant perspectives. At undergraduate level this should include appropriate opportunities for the study of a foreign language, and/or a period of residence abroad as part of the course.

1.5 There are four generic styles of course title which are subject to the following broad principles:

- a. **Single subject titles** should be used where a substantial amount of the curriculum is located within a subject.
- b. **Named pathways:** a broad subject cluster may be designed with many common modules and within which a number of pathways lead to separate course titles. In such clusters, each pathway should demonstrate that the curriculum is relevant to the cluster and to the subject described in the pathway title. The curriculum should also have a distinctive focus on the pathway title, which sets it apart from other pathways in the cluster – such distinctiveness may be achieved through pathway specific modules, the orientation of assessment tasks to the pathway within common modules, the focus of the capstone project, the use of dedicated seminar groups etc. (typically the weighting towards the named pathway in such components will be greater than that expected in a cluster with bracketed titles).
- c. **Bracketed titles:** A course or subject cluster may be designed with many common modules and within which students can study a particular subject

specialism or emphasis. The pathway title is placed in brackets after a common single-subject title. In such courses or clusters, each 'bracketed' pathway should demonstrate that the curriculum is relevant to the single-subject. The curriculum should also have a distinctive focus on the 'bracketed' title, which sets it apart from other bracketed titles in the course or cluster. Such distinctiveness may be achieved through specific modules, the orientation of assessment tasks within common modules, the focus of the capstone project, the use of dedicated seminar groups, etc. (typically the weighting towards the bracketed title in such components would be less than that expected in a cluster with named pathways).

- d. **Two subject titles:** Combined Studies or Joint Honours Schemes may have course titles that include two subjects as follows:

'A and B'

(where there is an approximate balance between the subjects);

'X with Y'

(where the major subject provides the majority of the curriculum).

- 1.6 The course title will be considered via a Design as part of the approval of the overall course, based upon a documented rationale. The approved title will become part of the definitive course information in CourseLoop. The course title should first be considered and signed-off as part of the Business Evaluation process. The academic match between the title and the course as specified will be considered through the University's **course design and approval process**. If there is a mismatch, the course team may be required to make changes to the course design, but the title of the course cannot be altered unless a change in course title is approved through the Business Evaluation process.
- 1.7 Following completion of the course change form and the Business Evaluation Process, it is possible to change the title of a course that is already operating. A proposed change in course title must be approved through the **course design and approval process**. There should be a rationale for the change together with evidence that students and external examiners have been consulted.

Policy owner
CADQ

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