Creating your Master’s programme handbook

GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE TEMPLATE
About this guide

This guide is intended to be used when completing the template for your Master’s programme handbook. We update the template regularly; the latest version is always available online at:

www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-reference/quality-assurance-enhancement/programme-information/programme-handbooks

This guide provides advice on completing each section of the programme handbook template, including checklists and suggestions on content.

About the template

The template contains lots of pre-written content about the College and its services. We encourage you to retain this text to help with consistency of our messaging for the purposes of remaining compliant with consumer law.

However, the template is not intended to be fully prescriptive, so you still have flexibility to add information that is relevant to the individual programme and to your Department.

Items in red in the template indicate opportunities for you to provide your own department-specific information.

When providing information about your Department, we encourage you to address students directly, i.e. using ‘you’ rather than ‘the student’ or ‘students’, as active writing is easier to understand than the passive voice; it also has more impact on the reader.

The Communications and Public Affairs Division have created a Writing Style Guide which provides a set of guidelines and suggestions, to ensure that all material written on behalf of the College reflects our high standards. You can access this on our Brand and Style Guide website:

www.imperial.ac.uk/brand-style-guide/writing

If you have any questions about the Writing Style Guide, please contact the Digital and Creative Media team:

graphicidentity@imperial.ac.uk

Tips

What should programme handbooks contain?

Programme handbooks are a key resource for providing information to applicants and current students about:

- the academic programme
- the Department
- College support services

They are designed to be a point of reference for students throughout their programme.

What format should they take and where should they be published?

Programme handbooks should:

- be clear and transparent.
- be user friendly and clearly structured.
- contain a contents page.
- be available in print and digital formats.
- refer to relevant College webpages, where appropriate, to avoid duplication of information.
- be publicly available on departmental websites, in line with HEFCE requirements – see Wider Information Sets (WIS). However, items highlighted in yellow should be made available internally only.

Does consumer protection law apply to programme handbooks?

Depending on when the handbook is published, it may be considered under consumer protection law to form part of the pre-contract information provided prior to student enrolment. It is therefore important that programme handbooks:

- are clearly identified as applying to a certain cohort of students (e.g. 2016–7 entry).
- make it clear which procedures students on collaborative programmes must follow and when.
- are consistent with information previously provided elsewhere for the same cohort, such as the prospectus, College and departmental websites and programme specifications (these are considered to be material and pre-contract information).

The programme handbooks provide an opportunity for you to clarify information that students may have been given before, for example more information about the content of modules or the staff involved in the delivery of modules, as long as this is not a change to pre-contract information. For more information on consumer protection law see:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/higher-education-consumer-law-advice-for-providers-and-students
Use of photographs and the Digital Image Library

Photographs in your handbook can support and enhance your message. Images are particularly useful for new students as they help you to represent the campus and facilities, as well as helping with the identification of key staff.

The College has its own digital image library which is free to use for all members of the College. You can choose from more than 120,000 images covering all aspects of College life: https://imageslib.cc.ic.ac.uk

If you require advice or training on using the image library please contact Image Manager Thomas Angus:

t.angus@imperial.ac.uk

Completing each section in the template

Much of the template is already complete but elements that are specific to the programme or your Department will require your attention. In this guide, we highlight these elements accordingly:

- Items to check and make appropriate additions/amends to the information provided

Styles and Table of Contents

Styles have been set up in the template for consistency and for ease of automatically updating the table of contents. Pasting in text from other sources, including from this guide, may disrupt these styles. If this happens, please reinstate the template styles from the Styles task pane. The Styles task pane can be found under the main Home tab in Word. This is illustrated below.

NB: this screengrab is taken from a Mac version of Word – appearance on a PC may vary.

To update the table of contents, right click on the top of the table and follow the drop down menu that appears.
WELCOME TO THE COLLEGE

Introduction from the President of Imperial College Union
The text for this is currently unavailable but will soon be available here:
www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-reference/quality-assurance-enhancement/
programme-information/programme-handbooks

Introduction from the President of the Graduate Students’ Union
The text for this is currently unavailable but will soon be available here:
www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-reference/quality-assurance-enhancement/
programme-information/programme-handbooks

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE DEPARTMENT

Welcome from Head of Department and/or Programme Director
Please insert your own text here and add a headshot.

Welcome from PG Student Representative
If available, please insert your own text here and add a headshot.

Welcome from Programme Representative
If available, please insert your own text here and add a headshot.

Welcome from Departmental Representative
If available, please insert your own text here and add a headshot.

Academic and administrative staff
Please insert relevant contacts here and add headshots. You can refer to the Roles and Responsibilities webpage:
www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-reference/quality-assurance-enhancement/good-practice
Delete or add table cells as appropriate.

English language requirement
Please supplement the above with departmental guidance on procedures for exemption and arrangements for taking the test.

Attendance and absence
Please include a clear statement of your department’s attendance requirements and how attendance is monitored and recorded (including T4 arrangements).

Key dates
When known, please complete the missing dates. You may wish to add your own or add some more dates from the College Year Card:
www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/secretariat/information-for-staff/college-year-card

SECTION 2: PROGRAMME INFORMATION

This section needs to include the information below. Programmes which are now using the revised programme specification template can either include their programme specification in this section or as an appendix to the handbook.

Programmes which have not yet moved to the new programme specification template should include the information below and include a link to the following site where the revised programme specification will be located once it is available:
www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-reference/quality-assurance-enhancement/
programme-information/programme-specifications

Please include:
• An overview of the programme and module content
• The aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the programme
• Information on the full-time/part-time programme structure (if applicable)
• Links to competency statements
• Details of accreditation (if applicable)
• Description of how the programme will be delivered (e.g. lectures, seminars, field trips, practicals)
• Where/how professional skills development is delivered through the curriculum e.g. teamwork, presentation skills, problem solving skills, etc.
• Links to module handbook or descriptions
• Deadlines for choosing elective modules
• An employability statement/ information about relationships with employers
• Opportunities for study abroad, work-based learning, placements, etc. [See section below on Placements for further detail]
• Timetable [this can be supplied separately at a later date if not available before start of term]
• Information on practicals [detailed protocols should be available internally only]
• The procedure for how to apply for field trips (name of contact person)
• Information on supervision arrangements
• List of suggested projects and how they are allocated/chosen
• Information on thesis/project/dissertation
• A reading list, where appropriate
SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT

A brief outline of assessment arrangements should be included here (Departments using the new programme specification template can refer to the programme specification).

Please expand on this information below:

- Information on how students will be assessed, including how group projects are assessed (if applicable).
- Key dates for submission of work/examination dates
- Information on how students can access past examination papers and/or model answers

Please provide a link to the College’s Academic and Examination regulations:
www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/exams-and-assessment

- Assessment information needs to include the criteria for Pass, Merit, Distinction or Fail for Master’s Level programmes including marking criteria/grade descriptors.
- Ensure that the processes for marking and moderation are explained.
- Provide a statement on how borderline marks or grades are defined and treated, both in individual assessments and in overall results for a module and programme.
- Where anonymity is used in assessment arrangements/exam boards, the department should specify the point at which anonymity is lifted. This should include a statement on whether the examination board is anonymous or not.
- Progression rules (where applicable)
- Re-sit/re-entry information

Penalties for Late Submission of Assessed Work:
www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/registry/academic-governance/public/academic-policy/marketing-and-moderation/Penalties-for-late-submission-of-assessed-work.pdf

- Mitigating circumstances policy and procedures:
  www.imperial.ac.uk/about/governance/academic-governance/academic-policy/exams-and-assessment/
- Information on the purpose and conduct of viva voce examinations (if applicable)
- Information on assessment feedback including timescales for providing feedback and what form feedback may be given in
- College policy on exams and religious obligations:

SECTION 4: BOARD OF EXAMINERS

- Board of Examiners
  Please include the names of all the examiners for the programme.

- For external examiners
  Please include the names and affiliated institutions (but not contact details) of all external examiners.

- External examiners reports
  Please let students know how to access external examiner reports. These reports are published internally. The relevant link to include in your handbook is:
  www.imperial.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-reference/quality-assurance-enhancement/external-examining/information-for-staff
  Do not directly to the reports themselves. This is to ensure information contained in the documents is password protected and only be accessed by staff/students with College login credentials.

SECTION 5: LOCATION AND FACILITIES

- Main location of study
  Please include the relevant campus address(es) in full.

- Facilities
  Please include key facilities the student will need and where they can be found.
  Details of where the Postgraduate Office is located and when it is open will be very helpful.

SECTION 6: PLACEMENTS

- Departmental Placement Manager
  Please include the full contact details. All study and work placements should have a Placement Manager appointed by the student’s Department.

- Department-specific information
  Please include department-specific information relating to placements e.g. process of approval, example placements etc.

SECTION 7: WORKING WHILE STUDYING

No action required.
SECTION 8: HEALTH AND SAFETY

☒ Departmental safety contact
   Please include the full contact details for every person in this role.

☒ Inductions/training
   Please include any inductions or training that may be required for the student to study safely – e.g. lab safety training, fire prevention and fire safety at work, information on protective clothing, hygiene, accident procedures, working with UV light, handling human tissue.

☒ Departmental Disability Officers
   Please include contact details for your Department’s Disability Officer. If you’re not sure who this is please consult:
   www.imperial.ac.uk/disability-advisory-service/support/ddos

☒ Occupational Health requirements
   The provided text is to be supplemented with department-specific risks (where applicable) which require postgraduate students to be notified to the Occupational Health Service for example:

   Health clearance for work with pathogens, GMOs or unfixed human tissue
   If you will be handing human pathogens, GMOs of class 2 or higher or unfixed human tissue, including blood, in a laboratory environment you must be health cleared for this activity.
   You must complete a Biological Agents Health Questionnaire to be sent to the College Occupational Health Service. The questionnaire is available for download from the Occupational Health website:
   www.imperial.ac.uk/occupational-health/health-surveillance/working-with-pathogens
   Most students will be cleared through submission of the questionnaire. We will only call you in for a clinic attendance if you need a vaccination or you declare a health problem that requires further assessment. After you are cleared you will receive email confirmation. This is copied to whoever is named as the principal investigator on the questionnaire and to the College Biological Safety Officer.

   NHS health clearance
   All students who will have contact with patients in a clinical environment have to complete NHS infection control clearance. This health clearance is carried out by College Occupational Health.
   All students involved in observation in a clinical environment or clinical projects will be notified of this requirement by their course co-ordinator. The process involves completion of a health and vaccination history questionnaire.
   Some students may need to attend an appointment with an Occupational Health Adviser at the Occupational Health Clinic at our South Kensington Campus. Where this applies, you should bring to the appointment copies of any childhood/occupational vaccination records and relevant serology tests.

SECTION 9: COLLEGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

☒ Fitness to practise medicine
   Include if relevant or delete.

☒ MRes Code of Practice
   Include if relevant or delete.

SECTION 10: ANIMAL RESEARCH

☒ Animal research section
   Include if relevant (incorporating department-specific information) or delete.
   The section numbering should automatically update if styles have been retained (see page 3).
   If you remove this section, don’t forget to update the contents table by right clicking on it and selecting ‘Update field’.

SECTION 11: WELL-BEING AND ADVICE

☒ Postgraduate tutor
   Please add department-specific information.

☒ Disability support
   Please include any relevant department-specific information for disabled students.

SECTION 12: STUDENT RECORDS AND DATA

No action required.

SECTION 13: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

No action required.

SECTION 14: STUDENT FEEDBACK AND REPRESENTATION

☒ Feedback from students
   Please include any relevant department-specific information.
   Specific changes implemented as a result of student feedback will be of interest.

☒ Student representation
   Please include any relevant department-specific information.
SECTION 15: STUDENT SURVEYS

- Please include the PG SOLE lecturer/module Survey or departmental equivalent
- Please include The PG SOLE lecturer/module survey or equivalent and confirm over how many terms it runs.
- Please insert departmental examples of changes that have been made as a result of the PTES.

SECTION 16: AND FINALLY

- Opportunities for further study
  - Please include information on opportunities for further study within the College. Note examples of the type of further study undertaken by graduates of this programme.