

Guidelines for Course Specification

Undergraduate and
Graduate Programs

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Quality Assurance Center



Introduction

Course Specification is a document which is prepared for setting out the plans for each course ([Course Specifications, T4](#)), stating clear guidelines to the course instructors about the course objectives and learning outcomes, the course contents helping in achieving the course learning outcomes, its contributions to the overall program, and how its effectiveness should be assessed.

The course specifications also apply on a continuing basis, subject to changes required as a result of experience.

Individual course specifications must be prepared for each course in a program and kept on file with the program specifications. The purpose is to make clear the details of planning for the course as part of the package of arrangements to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the program. Consequently, course specifications include the knowledge, skills, and values to be developed in keeping with the National Qualification Framework (NQF) and the overall learning outcomes of the program, the strategies for teaching and assessment in sufficient detail to guide individual instructors. Course learning outcomes, teaching strategies, and teaching methods are to be in alignment. The structure of course specifications is like that for a program.

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Cover Page

Write the following on the cover page:

Course Title, Course Code, Name of the Program, Department, College, and the Institution.

Course Title:	xxx
Course Code:	xxx
Program:	Bachelor of xxx
Department:	Department of xxxx
College:	College of xxxxx
Institution:	Prince Sultan University (PSU)

Section A

Course Identification

1. Credit Hours:

Write the Credit Hours in terms of (L, T, P) as mentioned in the University Bulletin and/or website.

2. Course Type

Identify whether the course is a Required/Core or Elective. Also mention whether the course is offered at the University level or College level or Department level.

3. Level/Year at which this course is offered:

Mention in which academic Level/year the course is offered e.g., Junior (6th)/Third Year.

4. Pre-requisites for this course (if any):

Mention the pre-requisites for this course as mentioned in the University Bulletin and/or website.

5. Co-requisites for this course (if any):

Mention the co-requisite (if any) for this course as mentioned in the University Bulletin and/or website.

6. Mode of Instruction (mark all that apply)

Write the contact hours and percentage for different mode of instructions, adopted in the course aligned with the course description and its teaching strategies such as Traditional classroom, Blended, E-learning, Others.

Note: Distance Learning is not applicable at PSU.

References: Appendix-A

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No	Mode of Instruction	Contact Hours	Percentage
1	Traditional classroom	42 hours	70%
2	Blended	18 hours	30%
3	E-learning	0	0%
4	Distance learning	0	0%
5	Other	0	0%

For other examples refer to [Appendix -A \(Learning Hours.pdf\)](#).

7. Contact Hours (For undergraduate Program)

Write explicitly the Contact hours for various teaching strategies or activities such as Lecture, Laboratory/Studio, Tutorial, Others (Studio/Mentoring). The total number of contact hours including exam time matches with that of 15 weeks.

No	Activity	Contact Hours
1	Lecture	45 hours
2	Laboratory/Studio	
3	Tutorial	15 hours
4	Others (specify)	
	Total	60 hours

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7. Actual Learning Hours (based on academic semester) –

For Post-Graduate Programs for 3 credit hour course (3,0,0)

No	Activity	Learning Hours
1	Lecture	$(3 \times 15) + (45 \times 2) = 45 + 90 = 135$ hours
2	Laboratory/Studio	
3	Seminars	
4	Others (specify)	
Total		135 Hours

Note: A good rule of thumb is to expect to spend at **least two hours a week per credit hour**. If you are going to university full-time to get your degree, you will minimum as 15 credits per semester.

For a 3 hour credit course 3(3,0,0), the number of learning hours will be $(15 \times 3) + (25 \times 2) = 135$ hours

References: [Appendix -A](#) (Learning Hours.pdf)

Section B

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

1. Course Description

Write the course description as stated in the university bulletin and website.

2. Course Main Objective

Mention the course main objective as stated in the university bulletin and/or website.

Course objectives describes what a faculty member will cover in a course. They are generally less broad than goals and broader than student learning outcomes.

Examples of objectives include:

- Students will gain an understanding of the historical origins of interior design.
- Students will learn and apply object-oriented programming concepts.

3. Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning outcomes are specific statements of what students will be able to do when they successfully complete a course. They are always written in a student-centered, measurable fashion that is concise, meaningful, and achievable.

List the Learning Outcomes of the course (CLOs).

CLOs should be well aligned with the new NQF Learning Areas. They are:

- Knowledge & Understanding
- Skills (Cognitive, Communication, IT and Numerical Skills)
- Values (Autonomy, Ethics, Teamwork)

Also show the contribution of each CLO to a specific Program Learning Outcome (PLO).

Note: Kindly ensure that a CLO is not mapped to more than one PLO or in some cases two PLO, otherwise it will be difficult to assess its achievement.

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Example:

CLOs		Aligned-PLOs
1	Knowledge and Understanding	
1.1	CLO 1 Statement	PLO A
1.2	
2	Skills :	
2.1	CLO 3 Statement	PLO C
2.2...	...	
3	Values:	
3.1	CLO 5 Statement	PLO F
3.2...	...	

Note:

1. The CLOs for the university courses are mapped with Institutional learning Outcomes (ILOs).
2. If a core course is offered by the other department as a program requirement, the CLOs should be mapped with the PLOs of the program.

Section C

Course Content

List explicitly all the course topics along with the corresponding contact hours for teaching each course topic.

No	List of Topics	Contact Hours
1	Topic 1	1 weeks (4 hours)
2	Topic 2	2 weeks (8 hours)
3	...	
4	...	
5		
...		
Total		e.g., 60 hours (for 4 contact hours)

Section D

Teaching and Assessment

1. Alignment of Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) with Teaching Strategies and Assessment Methods

List the CLOs and write the appropriate teaching strategies for achieving these skills among students as well as the assessment methods for measuring their achievement in every CLO.

The word appropriate means the teaching strategies mentioned with each CLO should be aligned with three domains of learning (Knowledge & Understanding, Skills, and Values) as well as the verb used for achieving and assessing the CLOs.

Code	Course Learning Outcomes	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
1.0	Knowledge and Understanding		
1.1			
...			
2.0	Skills		
2.1	Develop conceptual modeling concepts and notations of the using Entity Relationship or UML diagrams to analyze and design complex database applications.	Concept presentation, Lectures, Labs, problem solving sessions	Direct Assessment Tool Quiz Exams Assignments Indirect Assessment Tool Course Exit Survey
...			

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Code	Course Learning Outcomes	Teaching Strategies	Assessment Methods
3.0	Values		
3.1			
...			

2. Assessment Tasks for Students

Clearly mention the Assessment Tasks (e.g., Quiz, Major, Project, Finals etc.), the week number and the percentage of Total Assessment Score i.e., 100%.

#	Assessment task*	Week Due	Percentage of Total Assessment Score
1	Major Exam 1	Week 7	15%
2	Major Exam 2	Week 13	15%
3	...		
4	...		

Section E

Student Academic Counseling and Support

Clearly explain all types of arrangements for availability of faculty and teaching assistant (if any) for individual student consultations and academic advice such as office hours, messaging groups on Moodle or emails.

Example

- *5 hours in pre-determined office hours*
- *By appointment on per need basis.*
- *Moodle Learning Management system is used to allow students to access all course materials online and stay connected to the course through forums and messaging service.*
- *Student may also email instructors.*
- *Students may use group or individual chat messaging using Hangouts.*

Section F

Learning Resources and Facilities

1. Learning Resources.

Briefly describe the title of the required **textbook(s)**. In addition to that a list of **essential references materials, electronic materials** and/or **other learning materials** can also be mentioned, which will help the instructors to prepare lessons.

2. Facilities Required

Briefly mention the course requirement with respect to

a. Accommodation

- Classrooms, laboratories, demonstration rooms/labs, etc.

b. Technology Resources

- (AV, data show, Smart Board, software, etc.)

c. Other Resources

- (Specify, e.g., if specific laboratory equipment is required, list requirements or attach a list)

Section G

Course Quality Evaluation

Clearly mention all the required information

- a. Evaluation areas (e.g., Effectiveness of teaching and assessment, Extent of achievement of course learning outcomes, Quality of learning resources, etc.)
- b. Evaluators (Students, Faculty, Program Leaders, Peer Reviewer, Others (specify))
- c. Assessment Methods (Direct, Indirect)

Evaluation Areas/Issues	Evaluators	Evaluation Methods
Achievement of Course Learning Outcomes	Instructor	Direct Method (Rubrics) Indirect Method (Course Exit Survey)
Achievement of Course Learning Outcomes	Students	Indirect Method (Course Exit Survey) Course Evaluation Survey (CES)
Effectiveness of Teaching and class management	Chairperson Peers	Class Observation (using Rubric)
Effectiveness of Teaching and class management	Students	Course Evaluation Survey (CES)
Quality of Assessments	Reviewer (faculty from the same department)	Reviewing the exam paper Co-signing the grades. Unified Mid-term/Final Exams
Effectiveness of Assessment Results	Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Report • (Grade Report Analysis) • Course Evaluation Survey (Indirect)
Quality of Learning resources	Instructor Student	Course Report. Course Evaluation Survey (CES)

Section H

Specification Approval Data

The Course Specification should be approved by the Curriculum Committee, Department Council. The reference number and the date of the meeting minutes should be mentioned in the following table.

Council / Committee	Curriculum Committee Meeting
Reference No.	CC/202/03
Date	23 rd May 2021

Appendix-A

Mode of Instruction and Learning Definitions for Prince Sultan University¹

Mode of Instruction	Definition
Traditional Learning	Traditional learning can be in a face-to-face or online environment where the instruction occurs in a physical or remote location, such as the use of digital presentation tools using smartboard, jam board, whiteboard, or starboard. It is lecture-based, and <u>the teacher is the focal point of the class.</u>
Blended Learning	Blended Learning is a pedagogy, which combines formal classroom teaching (face-to-face instruction) with different methodologies, and technologies which should support and allow the asynchronous mode of learning. All these activities contribute to student outcomes (course learning outcomes) where the student is the primary focal point of the class like flipping the classroom. <u>(Consists of both Traditional Learning and E-Learning)</u>
E-Learning	Online learning is where 100% of the learning materials and activities are conducted online, supporting both synchronous and asynchronous learning. <u>(A portion of the course is completed using online tools like Coursera, Publisher tools like Connect)</u>
Distance Learning	Distance learning is a formalized teaching system specifically designed to be carried out remotely. The students and teachers are in different locations, and face-to-face meetings may or may not occur. Also, this may or may not be online.
Other Mode of Instruction	

¹ Approved by DQAD

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Mode of Instruction	Definition
Experiential learning	Experiential learning is a process through which students develop knowledge, skills, and values from direct experiences outside a traditional academic setting. (adapted from UCD website) [This kind of learning can be achieved through our COOP program.]
Studio Learning	Studio-based learning is found in the fields of architecture, design, and engineering. Although diverse in its forms, studio-based learning always focuses on learning through action and developing an assessable creative and/or design process, performance, or product. (adapted from UNSW website)
Service Learning	It is a process of learning through experience, more specifically learning through reflection on doing via community service activities that incorporate instruction and reflection. It allows students to practice and develop attitudes such as resilience, curiosity, and self-direction. [This type of learning can be achieved through community service activities (e.g., Masar and Mishkat programs).] (adapted from Learning Clearinghouse)

Examples:

TEFL 454 (3,0,0)

No	Mode of Instruction	Contact Hours	Percentage
1	Traditional classroom	11	25%
2	Blended	33*	75%
3	E-learning		
4	Distance learning		
5	Other		

*Without Exams[1hour]

CS 340 (3,1,0)

No	Mode of Instruction	Contact Hours	Percentage
1	Traditional classroom	15	30%
2	Blended	40*	70%

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No	Mode of Instruction	Contact Hours	Percentage
3	E-learning		
4	Distance learning		
5	Other		

*Without Exams [5hours]

Appendix -B

Guidelines for National Qualification Framework (NQF)-KSA

[Link](#)