

Module Descriptors

Use and updating of module descriptors

- 1 Module descriptors (see template C7) must be provided for:
 - Initial validation of new modules;
 - Existing modules where these contribute to a new field for validation (updated where necessary);
 - Existing modules where these form part of an Internal Subject Review (ISR).
- 2 It is not a requirement to routinely update module descriptors every year, but “definitive” parts of module descriptors which are required to be included in the module guide must be updated if changes have been made and approved. See section G for information on making changes to validated fields/modules.

Guidance note on completion of the module descriptor template

- 3 The standard template must always be used and is available as template C7.

Module code

- 4 Advice on module coding should be sought from the relevant faculty office.

Level, Credits, Pre-requisites, Co-requisites

- 5 Advice can be found in the University Modular Schemes documentation (Undergraduate Modular Scheme (UMS) and Postgraduate Credit Framework (PCF)). Level should be indicated as 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7. In order to achieve maximum flexibility in the University’s modular schemes, it is advised that pre-requisites should only be used when absolutely essential. If pre-requisites and co-requisites are used they should be entered as a list of module codes or ‘none’ if there are none.

Module summary (Indicative)

- 6 This should be student-focused and designed to summarise the level and purpose of the module (and should be approximately 200 words). It might contain statements such as “This module is a core requirement for students taking (x) in level 5, but may be of interest to students who have studied (y) at level 4 and are looking for an option that will expand their knowledge of this subject area. The module introduces students to.....(etc). The main features of the module are...(etc)”.

Note: module summaries can be extracted and put together into catalogues to provide summary overviews of modules for publicity purposes etc.

Guidance CG(vii)

Completing module descriptors and module guides

Aims

- 7 These must be completed in bullet point format. They should reflect the level of the module and its credit volume (a standard 15 credit module should not normally contain more than 4 aims).

Learning outcomes

- 8 These must be completed in bullet point format. They should reflect the level of the module and its credit volume (a standard 15 credit module should not normally contain more than 6 learning outcomes). Outcomes relating to key skills requirements must be clearly indicated so that overall key skills delivery as required by the University (and found within the KEYS guidance – GG(xiv)) can be mapped across programmes. Guidance on levels can be found in the UMS, and a guide to writing learning outcomes is available from the Academic Development Centre (ADC).
- 9 The link between learning outcomes and assessment should be clear in the module descriptor. An overview of assessment for the module can be provided at the start of the section on assessment strategies and this should be followed by a more detailed statement showing how the module learning outcomes are linked to assessment strategies. It is recommended that the tabular format shown in template C7 is used, but it is recognised that other formats could be devised (eg. bullet points on each learning outcome and the associated assessment strategy). It is strongly recommended that a consistent format be adopted at Faculty or School level (ie. to ensure consistency for the benefit of students within a field/course and where modules can be chosen from those that make up a range of related fields/courses). See guidance CG(xi) for an example of a completed module descriptor. Learning outcomes should also be clearly related to the field/course learning outcomes. It should be possible to map the field/course learning outcomes onto the modules the field/course contains. (See guidance CG(ix) for the University's policy and requirements for mapping learning outcomes).

Curriculum content (indicative)

- 10 This must be presented in bullet point format illustrating the key curriculum areas covered in sufficient detail to give the reader a clear view of the subject/topics/activities covered. The length of this section should reflect the credit value of the module by comparison with other modules in the same subject area.

Teaching and Learning Strategy

- 11 This should be a maximum of 150 words describing the strategies to be employed clearly indicating those associated with developing key skills and taking into account potential needs of disabled students as appropriate. This should be followed by a brief indicative list of hours of different types of activity which should total 10 hours for each credit associated with the module (therefore including independent study time, which will include time spent on

Guidance CG(vii)

Completing module descriptors and module guides

assessments eg. a maximum of 55 hours 'taught' time for a 15 credit module and an overall 'learning' time of 150 hours).

Assessment Strategy (Indicative)

- 12 This section should be demonstrably linked to learning outcomes e.g. tabulated as indicated in template C7 and in the exemplar in guidance CG(xi). Strategies for measuring key skills outcomes must be identified. (A skills mapping template to assist with this can be found in the KEYS guidance CG(xiv)). This section can also give an introductory overview of the elements of assessment that are likely to make up the major categories and which items are "summative", ie: carrying marks, or "formative", advising students that they are developing outcomes which will be assessed later in their programme of modules (see paragraph 24 for more information on summative and formative assessment). Due consideration should be given to ensure disabled students are not disadvantaged by assessment strategies and unless otherwise stated due to professional standards or equivalent, appropriate adjustments should be made to assessment requirements on a case by case basis.

Note: In the formal module descriptor the assessment strategy should be relatively brief with sufficient information to illustrate the linkage with learning outcomes and the principles applied. This should not then restrict the module team in changing the detail year on year (eg. numbers of questions, reports etc that are included within the definitively defined major categories of assessment). Each year more detailed information (updated if necessary) should be provided in module guides for students (see paragraph 19). Comparison between the example module descriptor in guidance CG(xi), as presented for validation and review, and the same example expanded for student use in the annually produced module guide should illustrate this.

Major Categories of Assessment

- 13 This section should indicate the major categories of assessment in bullet point form together with their % contribution to the module total. Major categories of assessment might include course work, examination, project report etc. It is not required that individual elements within each category should be included (eg. the number and length of coursework essays, number of practical reports, internal structure of examinations). More information should be produced in the assessment strategy section and further details for each year provided in the module guide (see paragraph 19). If it is a requirement that an assessment must be passed to pass the module overall it must be included as a major category. The amount of assessment should reflect the credit value of a module, and modules with similar credit values should have a similar overall weight of assessment.

Achieving a Pass

- 14 Unless there are clear justifications otherwise, such as Professional Statutory Body requirements, it is expected that the rules for modules will be 'pass on aggregate' (for example: where there is more than one element of

Completing module descriptors and module guides

assessment, it should not be a requirement that any major category of assessment is passed separately in order to achieve an overall pass for the module).

Bibliography (Indicative)

- 15 This section should contain a small number of core texts (*ie.* recommended for purchase and essential reading) and a more extended reference reading list. The reading list should give a clear indication of materials that it may be necessary for students to consult to complete the module. The nature and number of items is likely to vary with level.

Module Guides

Use and updating of module guides

- 16 Up-to-date module guides must be provided to students every year. The following information should be included in module guides:
- **Module summary** (approx 200 words). This should be student-focused and designed to summarise the level and purpose of the module. It might contain statements such as “This module is a core requirement for students taking (x) in level 5, but may be of interest to students who have studied (y) at level 4 and are looking for an option that will expand their knowledge of this subject area. The module introduces students to.....(etc). The main features of the module are...(etc)”. (*Note: module summaries can be extracted and put together into catalogues to provide summary overviews of modules for publicity purposes etc*).
 - **Definitive elements of module descriptor**, updated if changes have been made and approved since the previous guide was produced (see Note 2 in Appendix 1 below for guidance on “definitive” and “indicative” elements of module descriptors)*;
**note: this is the minimum requirement: some field teams may prefer to annually update the entire module descriptor (definitive and indicative elements) and include this in the module guide.*
 - **Detailed timetable for all classes** (including details of sub-groups for tutorials, seminars, practical classes, workshops etc.);
 - **Name of the module leader** and names of module teaching team and their locations, telephone extensions and email addresses;
 - **Outline of assessment tasks/assessment strategy** (consistent with the module descriptor) and the dates when these will be set, hand-in dates where appropriate and timing of return of assessed work to students. Assessment strategies should be mapped to learning outcomes.

Guidance CG(vii)

Completing module descriptors and module guides

See paragraph 19 for detailed guidance on presentation of assessment strategies in module guides.

- **Feedback on assessment tasks.** It is good practice to provide students with detailed guidance on how and where they gain feedback on both formative and summative assessments. The National Student Survey has clearly demonstrated that students are less satisfied with assessment feedback than other parts of their experience, and further investigation has shown that they are not always aware of the various forms that feedback is given.

See paragraph 20 for detailed guidance on providing information to students in module guides about feedback on assessment.

- **Information on changes made as a result of student feedback** from the last group of students who took the module;
 - **General information on learning, teaching and assessment**, for example learning and teaching strategies and how StudySpace will be used, how module learning outcomes can be achieved by students in the module etc.
- 17 It is not a requirement for all the information to be provided in hard copy, but it should all be available on StudySpace in advance as this will benefit disabled students and other protected equality groups.
- 18 If any of the information (eg: details of timetables) is not available by the time the hard copies of the module guides are printed, the module guides should indicate that this information will be made available on StudySpace as soon as it is available.

Guidance notes on completing module guides

Presentation of assessment strategies in module guides

- 19 Following initial approval of the module, the assessment strategy becomes part of the main body of the module guide. It should be expanded to illustrate for the benefit of students how the details of assessment actually work within the definitive and summative major elements and where formative assessment occurs. An example of a presentation, table format, is shown below. As noted in paragraph 9, other formats can be developed provided that similar levels of detail are provided. It is strongly recommended that the alternative format is used consistently across a Faculty or a School to ensure that all modules that might be chosen by a student are in the same format.
- 20 The example in the boxed text below is taken directly from the exemplar module in guidance CG(xi). It also illustrates the way in which field/course learning outcomes are mapped across modules and not every module learning

Guidance CG(vii)

Completing module descriptors and module guides

outcome is necessarily linked to a summative assessment (*ie.* there may be formative assessment building towards summative assessment in a later module in the field/course). For further guidance on mapping field/course learning outcomes onto modules see guidance CG(ix).

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY (example of an entry in a module guide)

Overall there are two major elements of assessment in this module. The first is an examination which counts for 50% of the module total (half the marks for short answer questions and half the marks for longer problem solving questions). The second is coursework which also counts for 50% of the module total (half the marks for practical reports and half the marks for a short answer test). There are also two learning outcomes for the module which are informally, “formatively” assessed and feedback provided to students. These are the accurate and safe use of equipment and developing presentation skills. These provide students with the opportunities to develop skills in preparation for later modules where they will be formally, “summatively” assessed.

Learning outcomes and assessment

LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of the module students will be able to:

1. describe the structure and organisation of the nervous system and its gross micro anatomy;

2. describe and explain how the accompaniments of the nervous system communicate with each other;

3. use practical equipment accurately;

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

One short answer text in week six of the module contributing to a total of 25% of the module marks (and half of the total marks for coursework)

and

short answer section final examination contributing 25% of the module marks (and half of the marks for the examination)

(Note: examples of short answer questions will be made available and students will be offered the chance to practice a formative test in seminar time in weeks 4 or 5)

Problem solving and interpretation question section of the final examination paper contributing 25% of the module marks (and half of the total marks for the examination).

(Note: opportunities for formative assessment will be provided by completing and discussing practice questions in seminar groups)

Formative assessment only; skills will be acquired during practical classes, (practical reports (see 4) will illustrate

Guidance CG(vii)

Completing module descriptors and module guides

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| | successful use of equipment). Skills gained will be used in later modules and assessed summatively in module HB2202 in level 5 by practical examination and in the final year project. |
| 4. write succinct, accurate laboratory reports; | 8 practical reports will be required during the module. The final 2 will be formally marked and will contribute 25% (12.5% each) to the total mark for the module (and half for the total coursework). (Note: to gain the summative mark at least 6 practical sessions must be attended, including the final two, and six practical reports submitted in each case at the next practical session; formative feedback will be provided on the reports submitted to prepare students for the summative assessment of the final two) |
| 5. present oral reports clearly and succinctly | Formative assessment only. Students will have the opportunity to give presentations on analysis of problem solving questions in seminar groups. Presentation skills will be summatively assessed in two core modules at level 5 (LS2204 and 2207) and in presentation of findings of the level 6 major project. |
| NOTE: an alternative presentation to a table may be used, see paragraph 19 | |

- 21 In many instances a summative assessment has a formative element to it in that similar assessment may be set for students at a future date and the marks/grades and feedback provides opportunities for reflections on progress (in the same modules or later modules). In many instances assessments carry summative marks as a means of encouraging students to take the practice element seriously. However, there are other ways of encouraging participation and keeping the summative “calibration” aspect of assessment to a minimum. In the example above students cannot gain the marks for the final two summative practical reports unless they have attended a series of practical classes and completed reports for formative assessment).

Guidance notes on providing information about feedback on assessment in module guides

- 22 In addition to a detailed explanation of how assessments in a module relate to the module’s learning outcomes, it is also good practice to provide students with information on how they will receive feedback on performance in both summative and formative assessments. (In some cases it is difficult to provide feedback on assessment by formal examination because scripts are not returned to students, but there are ways of overcoming this problem).

- 23 The examples below in the boxed text are again taken from the example module detailed in guidance CG(xi).

FEEDBACK ON ASSESSMENT TASKS (MODULE GUIDE ENTRY)

The details given above in “Learning outcomes and assessment” give you some information on how you will receive feedback on your progress on all the assessment in the module. This section describes how and when you will receive feedback on each of the assessment tasks.

1. Short answer test (week six)

During week 4 or 5 of the module there will be a practice test in your seminar group and a discussion of model answers by the lecturer leading the seminar. This formative feedback should equip you to tackle the formal test timetabled for all students taking the module that will take place in week six. The test itself will be returned to you with your marks in week 7. It is very important to note that only marks for each question will be given on your answer sheets. Feedback to help you improve in preparation for the final examination short answer section will be carried out by discussing answers and providing model answers in seminar groups in week 8. It is therefore very important that you attend the seminar sessions if you want to improve your knowledge and understanding of the subject.

2. Practical reports

There will be eight practical sessions and you must attend at least 6 sessions and submit the practical reports for them to qualify for the marks for practical work that will be awarded for the last 2 of the practical sessions' reports only (12.5% of the total module marks for each one). If you do not attend either or both of the last two sessions, without good reason, you will not be awarded the associated marks for the reports. Before you start the practical work one session will be devoted to writing good practical reports (there are therefore 9 sessions in total). It is very important that you attend the first session. For each of the practicals leading up to the final two you must submit a practical report the following week (if you don't submit the report for the practical concerned it will not count as one of the required six sessions). At the start of each session you will work in your practical pairs to peer mark each other's work (this will be explained in the first session). This will provide you with formative feedback. Also during each session the lecturer in charge will advise you and give you more feedback and record your submission. The final two practical reports must be submitted one week after the practical sessions concerned. The reports will be marked by the lecturer who has looked after your practical sessions. Although you will have worked in pairs it is expected that your two practical reports for summative assessment will be individually produced and that there should be no collusion between members of pairs in their production (if in doubt refer back to the lectures and seminars on “academic misconduct” at the start of the field where you were provided with detailed information on good practice and how to avoid plagiarism, collusion. etc.).

3. Examination

Because this is a core module and a pre-requisite for core module HB2202, Neuromuscular Physiology, which is also a core module for the Applied Psychology field, we will spend one on the first session in HB2202 going through the examination with model answers and how marks were awarded for the longer examination questions. Students taking the module as an option will be emailed model answers. You will have had opportunities to tackle problem questions like those used in the examination in seminars and will receive feedback on how you are progressing with them in the seminars and with model answers subsequently posted in StudySpace.

4. Practical Skills and Oral Presentation Skills

During the module you will have the opportunity to develop practical skills (accurate use of equipment) and oral skills (presentations in seminars). No marks are specifically awarded for these activities, although in the case of practicals your reports will illustrate how successful you have been. You will also be given feedback informally in the seminars on how you are progressing with presentations. It is important to note the informal feedback because later in the field there will be a practical examination (module HB2207) and a final year practical project (HB3301) where use of equipment will be tested and marks awarded, and also two level 5 modules HB2204 and HB2208 where presentations carry marks and you will also make a presentation on your final project at level 6 which carries a significant part of the project marks (HB3301).

5. Use of StudySpace in feedback on assessment

You are strongly advised to check the StudySpace site for the module very regularly. Not only will learning materials be released weekly onto the site, but there will also be model answers posted for in-course assignments and seminar problems. It is very important that you look at the model answers and compare them to your own answers and work out for yourselves how to do better next time. If you are not sure, or need further explanation of a topic there will be every opportunity to discuss it at the next seminar.

Notes on summative and formative assessment and on definitive and indicative parts of modules

Summative and Formative Assessment

- 24 Both summative and formative assessment can be included in module assessment strategies but only summative elements are included in major categories of assessment. Formative assessment is intended to guide students on outcomes which are built into a module, for example to help develop skills. Normally, learning outcomes that are formatively assessed will be summatively assessed in a later module that students take. (For further information, see guidance CG(ix) on mapping learning outcomes for

Guidance CG(vii)

Completing module descriptors and module guides

fields/courses across the modules they contain). An example is provided in guidance CG(xi).

Definitive and indicative parts of modules

- 25 “Definitive” parts of modules are agreed at validation and can only be subsequently changed using the procedures for making changes to validated fields (see section G) or at a subsequent validation/ periodic review. “Indicative” parts of modules are those that can be changed at field/subject level without the need to seek formal approval beyond module/board of study level (faculties may develop local procedures for approval of changes to indicative parts of modules where appropriate). This allows for regular updating of, for example, the curriculum, bibliography and details of assessment. Many of the changes to the indicative content of modules may be delegated to module level, although there is a responsibility at field/subject level to maintain a watching brief to ensure that appropriate updating occurs.
- 26 The definitive (DEF) and indicative (IND) parts of modules are as follows:
- Code, indicating managing school, credits etc (DEF)
 - Credit level (DEF)
 - Number of credit points (DEF)
 - Title (DEF)
 - Pre-requisites and co-requisites (DEF)
 - Module Summary (IND)
 - Aims (DEF)
 - Learning Outcomes (DEF)
 - Curriculum (IND)
 - Teaching and Learning Strategies (IND)
 - Assessment Strategies:
 - general description of assessment strategy for each learning outcome (IND)
 - elements of assessment within Major Categories of Assessment (IND)
 - Major Categories of Assessment and % contribution to module total (DEF)
 - Achieving a Pass (DEF)
 - Bibliography (IND)
- 27 Although it is within the remit of course teams to decide upon the elements of assessment within major categories, there will be deadlines published annually for submission of details of elements of assessment. These will be entered on the record system so that marks can then be entered and complete grids can be provided for Module Assessment Boards. Each year a breakdown of elements of assessment and their weighting must be provided in the module guide.