
Guidance 3xviii Writing a module narrative

Please note:

- Whether the module runs in blended or distance education mode the different pathways need to be clearly identified – e.g. a separate teaching and learning strategy would be required for each mode.
- Modules (their outcomes, teaching/learning modes and assessment) are integral to the programme outcomes as laid out in the programme specifications. Verify for each module the role that it is intended to play in the programme(s) that it serves and ensure consistency and compatibility between the module and such programme(s). For further information on programme specifications refer to Guidance 3xiii and Appendix 3f.

Module details (as for Appendix 3l – New Module Form/Module Narrative)

1. **Module code:** the module code consists of three letters (the subject identifier) and four digits and is supplied by Student Records.
2. **Title:** the title should indicate the field and academic content of the module.
3. **Credit points:** this is the weighting assigned to each module. The standard taught module has a value of 30 credit points, although other credit point modules are occasionally used. The credit points allocated should reflect the student's total study commitment to the module.
4. **FHEQ level:** please indicate whether the module is level 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8.
5. **Start term:** for new modules, state first run.
6. **Module leader:** enter name.
7. **Accredited by:** please indicate if the module is accredited by a Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body.
8. **Module restrictions:**
 - a. **Pre-requisite:** identify other modules which have to be taken prior to this module (level 5 modules will not normally have pre-requisites).
 - b. **Programme restrictions:** please indicate if this module may only be taken by students on certain programmes (including the programme code).
 - c. **Level restrictions:** please indicate if this module may only be taken by students on PG or UG programmes, for example a level 6 module only used on a postgraduate masters programme would be restricted to "PG".
 - d. **Other restrictions and/or requirements:** insert here any other information which should be available to the student in order to aid module choice (e.g. non-module pre-requisites such as possession of a foreign language or an IELTS qualification; obligation to do a placement/spend time overseas; or PSRB identification of core modules, or minimum grades, for PSRB recognition).
9. **Aims:** It would be helpful for the website course catalogue if all aims began "module aims: to [verb]" followed by a brief description (60-80 words). The statement of aims carries a dual function: it helps show the module's ethos, nature and intentions, and it indicates to students the potential opportunities and

benefits, short-term and long-term, that they can gain by taking the module. Aims may address:

- reasons why teaching staff believe the students should take the module (because it contains core material? because it is a professional requirement? because they have to be informed concerning this material before they can tackle other specific modules? etc.)
- ways in which this module will contribute to the general development of the student, beyond the actual content of the module itself.

Aims, therefore, are *aspirational* and show how the module is concerned with more than short-term goals (such as the mastery of information, much of which may have very temporary value to the student) and are intended to reflect the module's potential to promote broader *aptitudes*, *attitudes* and *values* that will have a validity long beyond the period of study of the module. It follows that aims indicate learning potential of the module which is not, and maybe cannot be, assessed.

10. Learning outcomes: Learning outcomes are the essence of the module, and their statement is fundamental to the other aspects of module operation – notably, the learning/teaching strategy and the assessment modes. Unlike aims, learning outcomes have to be *specific* in defining what successful students are expected to be able to demonstrate as a result of taking this module - i.e. they are *short-term* and are expressed in terms of *demonstrable and assessable student performance and/or abilities*¹. Learning outcomes additionally are important because they make explicit to students what the module will enable, and call on, students to do, and because they form the basis of a "contract" between academic and student. Accordingly, students can select modules on the basis of how their knowledge and skills will be enhanced and of how they will be enabled to progress along their chosen path. Learning outcomes should be numbered to enable cross referencing with learning, teaching and assessment. It is essential that learning outcomes are clear to students and therefore vague or overly complex language (outside of the discipline) should be avoided. Module learning outcomes are also not expected to be a large 'list' but instead comprehensively demonstrate what a student will be able to achieve on completion of the module. As students study a programme it is essential that there is consistency across the modules within a programme in terms of how these are developed and written to ensure a 'programme feel'. Should one programme contain 2 or 3 learning outcomes and another 9 or 10, consistency would be called into question. As a programme team consideration should be taken to ensure modules do not appear in isolation of one another.

Learning outcomes should be stated explicitly and briefly as a list in terms of knowledge (understanding) and skills (competences). However, the knowledge and skills learning outcomes may be integrated where appropriate.

- "*knowledge*" (for the purpose of module narratives) is more than mere possession of data or information. It covers the ways in which students can *use* and *interact with* the information they possess or can acquire. So "*knowledge*" outcomes are not restatements of module content or syllabus. Rather they identify the academic or intellectual abilities with regard to module content that the student will have to demonstrate in the course of the module if he/she is to pass. 'Understanding' is merely the first stage of such information management, and should be demonstrated not in regurgitation of memorised data but through appropriate use of information.

¹ For more specific guidance on writing learning outcomes, refer to the section 11 text in *guidance 3xiii: writing a programme specification* in the *Learning and Quality Enhancement handbook*.

It is recognised, however, that knowledge may well have significant value for its own sake in areas of professional expertise and registration.

- “skills” (also referred to as ‘competences’) should reflect primarily the “generic” abilities being promoted by the module (i.e. abilities that will feature in student assessment but which are not module-specific). Skills outcomes should address all/some of the university “graduate competencies”, as appropriate to the module and as prescribed in the programme specification/curriculum map. To these, some modules may add other “generic” skills (e.g. research skills) and/or some subject-specific skills. But for the purposes of the module narrative, skills outcomes exclude the “intellectual skills” that come under the “knowledge” category, other relevant *employability skills might also be included in this section.*

An illustration of a statement of learning outcomes for a fictional module might be:

“Knowledge (understanding) - On completion of this module the successful student will be able to:

- provide a critical outline of the development of xxx from its beginnings in the C17 to the present day
- compare/contrast the main competing theories of current debate
- evaluate the respective strengths and weaknesses of such theories
- critically analyse their applications in practice
- explain the diversity of international thinking and perspectives.

Skills (competences) - On completion of this module the successful student will be able to:

- conduct effective small-scale research (library use, information elicitation and handling, etc.)
- make a positive contribution to group (team) working
- effectively present ideas verbally
- contribute effectively to argument and debate with peers
- evaluate judgements of work produced (by self and by peers)."

The statement of learning outcomes requires the development of a teaching/learning context to ensure that the outcomes can be delivered, and the development of an assessment scheme to show (test, observation) that they have been achieved. The statement of learning outcomes provides the teacher, the student and the external examiner with the means to see how the achievement of the outcomes (in whole or in part), and qualitative differences in the achievement of outcomes, can contribute, through the assessment provision, to the grading of students in the module as a whole.

[Note: Module learning outcomes should accord with the demands placed on this module by any *programme* outcomes (and be made explicit in the programme specification curriculum map)]

11. Syllabus: list the main topics covered by the module.

12. Learning and teaching strategy: This section of the proforma indicates how achievement by students of the stated learning outcomes will actively be promoted by the chosen modes of teaching adopted by teaching staff. The section should be cross referenced to the numbered module outcomes. The use of e-learning should be considered wherever appropriate and it should be stressed that the learning and teaching should fully utilise the affordances of the virtual learning environment (MyLearning) in order to provide a blended learning environment. It is not sufficient to state “lectures, seminars, tutorials, etc” without indicating clearly *how* these will each contribute to the outcomes stated – if possible, by aligning each teaching method with specific outcomes. Strategies could include resource-based learning (e.g. to acquire knowledge), e-learning, classroom situations (to develop communication skills), field enquiry (to develop independent learning). Where, for example, lectures are a feature of the teaching approach this should be stated and elaborated, with statements such as:

“the bulk of the syllabus will be addressed in directed reading, with lectures used interactively to supplement basic sources, assess student difficulties and promote critical analysis.”

In developing the learning and teaching strategy, programme teams should also be mindful of the Middlesex Competencies, which requires curriculum design to demonstrate:

- Leadership and Influence;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Communication, Empathy and Inclusion;
- Curiosity and Learning
- Collaborative Innovation
- Resilience and Adaptability
- Technological Agility
- Problem solving and Delivery.

Note 1: Where the module will operate in both on-campus/blended and distance education modes, it will be necessary to provide two statements of teaching strategy to show how the different modes will be equally effective in leading students to achieve the stated module outcomes.

Note 2: Verify that the teaching/learning strategies of this module make their expected contribution to the teaching/learning strategy of any associated programme.

Note 3: This section should indicate any special arrangements with respect to students with disabilities.

13. Assessment Scheme:

• **Assessment criteria:** The assessment process must be such that it is capable of allowing the student to show achievement of module outcomes. The key requirement is demonstration, hence the importance of outcome statements being couched in terms of (for example - list not complete): compare/contrast; evaluate; analyse; explain; conduct (research); contribute (positively); construct (arguments); cope; make judgements; etc.

Assessment must be in line with:

- the module's learning outcomes
- the module's stated teaching/learning strategies
- the module's syllabus (content).

i.e. it must not only provide appropriate means whereby student achievement of all stated learning outcomes can be verified and evaluated but it should also be shown to be an aid and a stimulus to learning. [And, as appropriate, it should also play its part in promoting and recording student achievement of programme learning outcomes.]

Information should therefore be provided on:

- the detail of each type of assessment. For example, Coursework can be essays, individual and group projects, reports, laboratory reports, reflective diaries, spoken presentations, productions, products, etc. Please specify word counts / durations for written assessment / presentations or other guidance which sets out expectations etc. It should be noted that examinations are only permitted in exceptional circumstances (where Professional Bodies require them). It should be noted permission for use of examinations can only be granted by Assurance Committee by the Deputy Chair (Director of Academic Quality)) and that time limited (open book) assessments or other similar style assessment are also not a permitted form of assessment;
- If approval by Assurance Committee has been granted for the programme to use a modified 20-point scale then details of where this can be located should be included;
- the respective roles, and place, of formative as well as summative assessment and how the former feeds in to and supports students with the summative assessment;
- any particular arrangements for level 4 assessment;
- It should be made explicit which learning outcomes are mapped to assessments;
- provision (if any) for 'averaging' grades (possibly including a marginal fail in one component) across different elements of assessment within the module;
- identification of any essential assessment components that must be passed, irrespective of performance in other components, for an overall pass grade;
- identification of whether compensation is permitted at module level;
- identification of any modules that operate on a pass/fail basis only;
- an indication of which learning outcomes the various types and forms of assessment will address. For example, of the following one is clearly preferable in terms of detail provided:
 - (a) "student performance will be assessed by a 3 hour unseen written examination", or
 - (b) "students will be expected to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes via combination of written coursework

(60% of the overall marks, tutor assessed – outcomes 1 and 3) and seminar presentation (outcomes 2 and 4). Marks for the seminar presentation will be via peer group assessment (30% of the overall marks) and a written self-evaluation of performance (10%)” (outcome 5)

- any special arrangements for students with disabilities
- any special PSRB requirements (e.g. minimum pass grade for recognition by the PSRB)
- indicate where owing to the nature of the subject that tuition or assessment will take place in a language other than English
- indicate whether assessment will be anonymously marked
- indicate the ethics approval required.

[Note: verify that the assessment arrangements as specified accord with the demands placed on this module by any associated programme outcomes/curriculum map.]

- **Assessment weighting:** indicate the range of types of assessment to be used, and the weighting allocated to each type. Where assessment comprises more than one element or mode, make clear whether each individual component must be passed or whether some compensation or averaging is allowed between components.

14. Timetabled examination required: YES/NO

15. Length of exam: ____ HRS

16. Learning materials: The University is moving towards providing online reading lists. However, for the purposes of a validation / review event, please provide an indicative reading list on the module narrative. For more information please contact your Liaison Librarian: <http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/liaisonlibrarians>
For further information please refer to:

- Guidance 3xix (Designing a module reading list for in-house, franchise and joint programmes).
- Guidance 3xx (Designing a module reading list for validated programmes).

In addition, for in-house, joint and franchised programmes only

- 17. UNISTATS – assessment:** For information on UNISTATS assessment please refer to Section 16 of the Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook
- 18. UNISTATS – learning and teaching:** For information on UNISTATS learning and teaching please refer to Section 16 of the Learning and Quality Enhancement Handbook
- 19. Module run:** enter the term(s) and part of term in which the module will run, and the campus(es) on which it will be offered in any term. Indicate also the maximum student numbers applicable to each run of the module. Module runs should be set up four years in advance.
- 20. Timetabling information:**
- a. Please indicate which types of teaching activities will occur within this module from the list provided.
 - b. Please indicate if this module is to be included in the university timetabling process (allocated University space at a specific time for lectures, seminars, etc) and therefore appearing in the university timetable. [Normally the only exceptions to this are project/dissertation modules, DE modes and non-MU-campus locations.]
 - c. Please indicate if this module is to have students centrally allocated (i.e. specific students are allocated to various teaching activities within the module e.g. lectures, seminars, etc) ensuring students have a personal and clash free timetable

For more information on completing the proformas contact the Deputy Dean of the Faculty concerned.

For the most up to date guidance, please refer to the [CAPE intranet pages](#) (or contact CAPE@mdx.ac.uk)