



# Writing and Revising Module Specifications: A Guidance Booklet



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## Introduction

This has been written to provide you with some guidance when you are writing or revising your module specifications. The module specification should be written to the student so it must be easy for them to understand, clear and focused and provide essential detail about the programme as well as promote the student's enthusiasm and interest in the programme.

Remember the module specifications will be published on the web and read by those who cannot ask questions about the content.

The guidance has been written using an undergraduate template but there is an indication of any differences between undergraduate and postgraduate programme specifications and then an example module specification is given in appendix 1 using the MA Academic Practice Programme which is for postgraduate students.

It is particularly important that each specification makes explicit reference to the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications by using the wording in the descriptor statements (appendix 2) in overall module aims. In addition, learning outcomes should also demonstrate that the module requirements are at the appropriate level and the verbs used in these outcomes should reflect this. There is guidance for wording included in appendix 3.

The module specification has some links in it to support you with writing aspects of your module specification. Do also note the additional guidance in the module specification below which should not be included in the final draft.

Please use the template undergraduate/postgraduate module specification available in the [Quality Manual](#) alongside this guidance when drafting/revising your specifications.

## MODULE SPECIFICATION – UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

Module name	
Module code	
School	Choose an item.
Department or equivalent	
UK credits	
ECTS	
Level	Choose an item.
Pre-requisites	<a href="#">Provide any details of this if required if not delete</a>
Co-requisites	<a href="#">Provide any details of this if required if not delete</a>
Delivery location (partnership programmes only)	
<b>MODULE SUMMARY</b>	
<u>Module outline and aims</u> <a href="#">The module rationale should tell the student what the module is about and why they would want or need to do this module, and how this fits within the programme they are doing.</a>	
<a href="#">Module Educational Aim should provide the student with the main aims of the module and, this should be kept to two or three only. These should relate to the academic level of the module.</a>	
<u>Content outline</u>	

Module Indicative Content needs to provide the student with the key areas that will be covered on the module but should not attempt to be exhaustive.

### **WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?**

The student needs to know what they will achieve from this module or what they will be able to do as a result of taking the module. This means not including a learning outcome for every session but what they will achieve at the end of the module. They should be measurable and specific and link to the assessment you will outline. You should therefore only have five – fifteen learning outcomes dependent upon the credit for the module.

Remember the level your student needs to achieve by the end of the module (further guidance on level and verbs that can be used to write these are available in appendix 2 & 3).

Writing learning outcomes can sometimes be difficult but for them to be meaningful the following points should be taken into account:

- **Specific** – provide detail about particular aspects of expectation
- **Meaningful** – written in a language that is clear to students and staff
- **Appropriate** – to the learners abilities and experience
- **Realistic** in terms of achievement, time and resources
- **Testable** – some measure of achievement can be made

(Butcher, Davies & Highton 2006).

All learning outcomes should start with a verb that requires the student to do something.

There are three headings that outcomes are written for and they must all relate to the sentence below.

#### **On successful completion of this module, you will be expected to be able to:**

##### Knowledge and understanding:

- What knowledge will the student have at the end of this module? What will the student be able to do with this knowledge at the end? How will they use it?

etc

##### Skills:

- What skills will they develop that can be transferred beyond the module and to their future? What skills that are specific to the discipline or profession will they develop?

etc

##### Values and attitudes:

- What values and attitudes will the student develop from this module? Consider areas related to equality, diversity, ethical issues and professional values.

etc

### **HOW WILL I LEARN?**

Here you need to describe how the student will learn. The learning and teaching strategies used are important and this is a chance to review what you use and why. Why are you using a lecture or group work and what should the student be doing? If you are using on line learning to support the module tell them why and how this compliments the face to face contact. Make clear the contact they might still get through doing this such as discussion boards and blogs. If there is self directed study, tell them why and what

they should be doing such as reading, on line activities and their assessment work. Make the how they will learn interesting but also why you use these approaches.

You also need to outline the teaching pattern choosing teaching components so how many hours in lectures, workshops, on line etc with an outline of the topics so sociology or maths.

Teaching Types should be chosen from the HESA list on the module template and should reflect one of the following categories: Lecture; Seminar; Tutorial; Project Supervision; Demonstration; Practical classes and workshops; Supervised time in studio/workshop; Fieldwork; External Visits; Work-based learning; Guided independent study; Placements; Year abroad

The teaching component is a short description and is free text.

Teaching component	Teaching type	Contact hours (scheduled)	Self-directed study hours (independent)	Placement hours	Total student learning hours
	Choose an item.				
	Choose an item.				

**TOTALS:**

#### WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

##### Assessments

Here your students want to know how you going to assess your module with specific details such as word limit and length of exam and, it helps to provide an outline of why you are using this. If there is more than one include the same detail for each and ensure the proportion of each type of assessment is clear. Provide information about any help so personal tutor role, specialist tutorials or revision sessions.

Assessment Types should reflect those on the HESA list which is at the front of the template and reflects the following categories: Written exam; Written assignment, including essay; Report; Dissertation; Portfolio; Other project output; Oral assessment and presentation; Practical skills assessment; Set exercise.

In the boxes ensure you include all information so include weighting,if there is a minimum pass mark, or if the assessment is pass/fail.

The assessment component is a short description of the assessment and is free text.

Assessment component	Assessment type	Weighting	Minimum qualifying mark	Pass/Fail?
	Choose an item.		40%*	N/A
	Choose an item.		40%	N/A

*\*change to 50% for postgraduate*

*You need to include word limits, examination and presentation length of time. Clearly set out how the assessments will enable to student to achieve the learning outcomes of the module. You will note that assessment types are determined by HESA so there is a drop-down menu to choose an item.*

*If there is only one assessment component the Minimum Qualifying Mark (MQM) will typically be the module pass mark. If there are more than one assessment components MQM = 0% (if students only need to pass on aggregate) or can be specific, i.e., students need 40% in all assessment components to pass overall. If an assessment component is pass/fail then weighting and MQM should be N/A.*

#### Assessment criteria

In this section there is an opportunity for you outline specific information or provide a link to where students can find information about their assessment criteria and grade related criteria so programme or modules handbooks. Students want to know what they have to do to pass and the criteria that will be used to assess their work.

#### Feedback on assessment

In this section you need to add information about how this will happen for your module. Students want to know when they will get their feedback and how this will be provided so in writing with comments just a grade and class feedback or audio.

You should provide advice on how students might use the feedback and any opportunities to follow up feedback with module leaders or personal tutors.

#### Assessment Regulations

This is a standard paragraph for this section.

The Pass mark for the module is 40%. Any minimum qualifying marks for specific assessments are listed in the table above. The weighting of the different components can also be found above. The Programme Specification contains information on what happens if you fail an assessment component or the module.

**NB change the pass mark for postgraduate programmes.**

#### **INDICATIVE READING LIST**

Students like to get advice on what to read so in this section make clear if there is essential reading such as one book or a key article but also make clear if there are a range of books that would cover the same issues. Provide an indication of useful journal titles rather than a long list and any key websites. Include recent texts and a broad range of cultural authorship.

Remember that your subject library contact can help with this but also it is essential that they are given copies of your reading lists.

Version: Add which version this is  
Version date: Month Year  
For use from: Academic Year (e.g. 2013-14)

#### **Appendix** JACS Codes

Please complete the following table which is required for correct set up on SITS and for external reporting. Further information is available on HESA Cost Centres ([here](#)), JACS Codes ([here](#)) and HECoS Codes ([here](#)). Guidance is available in the [Quality Manual](#).

CODES		
HESA Cost Centre	Description	Price Group
HECoS Code	Description	Percentage (%)

**Further Guidance and Support**

Guidance and support can also be provided by your LEaD Academic School Liaison person and staff from the Student and Academic Services.

## MODULE SPECIFICATION WORD TEMPLATE – POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

### KEY FACTS

Module name	Learning, Teaching and Assessment
Module code	EDM120
School	Department for Learning Enhancement and Development
Department or equivalent	Department for Learning Enhancement and Development
UK credits	15
ECTS	7.5
Level	7

### MODULE SUMMARY

#### Module outline and aims

This foundation module has been designed for both new and inexperienced staff working in either academic or learning support roles. The module will enable you to explore the fundamental principles of teaching, learning and assessment in Higher Education and related contexts and on successful completion will provide you with Associate Membership of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

The aims of the module are to:

- Critically discuss learning, teaching and assessment principles in education.
- Analyse and apply generic principles in a disciplinary context.
- Develop a reflective approach to teaching in education.

#### Content outline

This module is the first module for the programme and acts as an underpinning foundation for all the other modules.

The module content is therefore structured around this foundation and your engagement with the following areas:

- Critical evaluation of learning styles and strategies, including learning cycles and learner motivation
- Development and evaluation of teaching and learning methods and environments, including critiquing your current practice and exploring where changes could be made.
- Critical evaluation and synthesis of assessment and feedback methods, including formative and summative assessment, formal and informal feedback.
- Good academic practice and lecturer-student relationships, including ethics and plagiarism issues
- Your development as a reflective practitioner.
- You will also be asked to consider and share your own learning and teaching experience together with contributions from the lecturers.
- Assessment for the module will be discussed. You will explore the assessment criteria by undertaking some microteaching related to a specific learning, teaching or assessment challenge in your discipline.

## WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

**On successful completion of this module, you will be expected to be able to:**

### Knowledge and understanding:

- Critically and systematically appraise key theories and approaches to learning, teaching and assessment.
- Evaluate and synthesise critical insights into the principles and theories that inform and develop effective approaches to assessment and feedback.

### Skills:

- Evaluate, Apply and synthesise relevant theories and concepts of learning, teaching and assessment in order to enhance pedagogic and professional practice
- Develop skills as an independent learner to support your continuing professional and academic development
- Justify and evaluate the judicious use of a variety of applicable approaches to teaching and learning within your specific disciplinary context.
- Critically evaluate and apply assessment and academic conduct issues to your specific disciplinary context

### Values and attitudes:

- Promote and discuss reflective practice concepts to teaching in education and for continuing professional development
- Discuss the importance of co-operation and tolerance in promoting an effective and just learning environment

## HOW WILL I LEARN?

A variety of learning and teaching methods will be used including: lectures, workshops, group work, case studies, technology-supported learning, self-reflection, peer review, academic reading and evidence-based practice. These methods will provide you with examples of different ways of learning and teaching that you might reflect upon and use in the future.

We will encourage you to contribute to the module through actively participating within the class setting in case studies and group work. You will be asked to relate to and draw upon your professional practice and share these with others.

As part of the module activity you will be asked to undertake a microteaching exercise which is a short presentation to your peers, based on challenges associated with your teaching practice. This will be a valuable formative exercise which will help to inform your final assessment.

Key learning and teaching resources will be put on the module website on Moodle. In the independent study time you will be encouraged and supported by lecturers, to read widely and in depth around particular topics and to critically share your understanding and experience with others using the online forum on Moodle.

### *Teaching pattern:*

Teaching component	Teaching type	Contact hours (scheduled)	Self-directed study hours (independent)	Placement hours	Total student learning hours
Seminars	Seminar	22	128	0	150

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**TOTALS:      22                      128                      0                      150**

## WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

### Assessments

The assessment for this module is a 3,000 word essay focused on addressing a teaching, learning and assessment challenge related to your practice and a self-assessment of the essay. As the module contents invites you to reflect on your specific discipline the extent of your learning might go further than outlined in this specification.

### *Assessment pattern:*

Assessment component	Assessment type	Weighting	Minimum qualifying mark	Pass/Fail?
Coursework - 3,000 word essay and self reflection	Written assignment, including essay	100%	50%	

### Assessment criteria

Assessment Criteria are descriptions of the skills, knowledge or attributes you need to demonstrate in order to complete an assessment successfully and Grade-Related Criteria are descriptions of the skills, knowledge or attributes students need to demonstrate to achieve a certain grade or mark in an assessment. Assessment Criteria and Grade-Related Criteria for this module's assessment will be made available to you at the beginning of the module in the handbook available on Moodle. The module leader will also discuss these in one of the face to face sessions.

### Feedback on assessment

Feedback will be provided in writing via Moodle following the marking and moderation of your assessment in line with the Assessment Regulations and Policy. This will happen within three weeks from your submission.

You can arrange to see the module leader or your personal tutor about any feedback you have been given and are advised to use this in future modules when the criteria relate to transferable areas such as presentation, use of literature and theory and ability to analyse, evaluate or synthesise.

### Assessment Regulations

The Pass mark for the module is 50%. The Programme Specification contains information on what happens if you fail an assessment component or the module.

### **INDICATIVE READING LIST**

#### Essential Reading

Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. & Marshall, S. (2009). A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education: enhancing academic practice. (3rd ed.). Abingdon: Routledge.\*

Gibbs, G. (1988). Learning by doing: a guide to teaching and learning methods. [online]. Available at: <<http://www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/gibbs/index.htm>>. [Accessed 17 February 2011].

\* Please note this reference is available in electronic form via the module website on Moodle.

#### Recommended Reading

Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2007). Teaching for quality learning at university. (3rd ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press / McGraw-Hill Education.

Bloom, B.S. (1956). The taxonomy of educational objectives: cognitive domain. New York: McKay.

Boud, D., Cohen, R. & Sampson, J. (1999). Peer learning and assessment. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 24(4), 413-426.

Brockbank, A. & McGill, I. (1998). Facilitating reflective learning in higher education. Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press.

Bulman, C. & Schutz, S. (2008). Reflective practice in nursing. (4th ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Exley, K. & Dennick, R. (2004). Giving a lecture: From presenting to teaching. London: Routledge Falmer.

Exley, K. & Dennick, R. (2004). Small group teaching: Tutorials, seminars and beyond. London: Routledge Falmer.

Honey, P. & Mumford, A. (1982). The manual of learning styles. Maidenhead: Peter Honey.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Fleming, N.D. (n.d.). VARK: a guide to learning styles. [online]. Available at: < <http://www.varklearn.com/english/index.asp> >. [Accessed 17 February 2011].

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning. Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

Prosser, M & Trigwell, K. (1999). *Understanding learning and teaching: The experience in higher education*. Buckingham: SRHE and Open University Press.

Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to teach in higher education*. London: Routledge.

Schon, D. (1987) *Educating the reflective practitioner*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Further reading will be provided in class and on-line in the website for this module on Moodle ([moodle.city.ac.uk](http://moodle.city.ac.uk)).

#### Useful On-line Resources

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk> The Higher Education Academy website is a very good resource for guidelines, case studies and policy documents for lecturers including the National Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education.

<http://www.nmc-uk.org> The Nursing and Midwifery Council website is essential viewing for those in nursing education particularly with regards to the quality assurance requirements and the publications relating to education of students.

<http://qaa.ac.uk/> The Quality Assurance Agency website is highly recommended viewing. The QAA is responsible for ensuring that the quality of academic standards in UK higher

education are upheld. Their guidance include a number of codes of practice e.g. assessment practice and standards.

<http://www.seda.ac.uk/> The Staff and Educational Development Association is professional body for Higher education staff and education developers involved in promoting good practice.

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For use from: 2013-14

**Appendix:** see <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos> for the full list of Higher Education classification of subjects

HESA Cost Centre	Description	Price Group
136	Continuing Education	B

JACS Code	Description	Percentage (%)
X342	The study of teaching and learning, the arrangement of the curriculum, and the investigation of the learning process in order to improve learning ability and efficiency in people in higher education.	100%

HECOS Code	Description	Percentage (%)
100461	The study of teaching and learning, the arrangement of the curriculum, and the investigation of the learning process in order to improve learning ability and efficiency in people in higher education.	100%

**Qualification descriptors (QAA 2014)**

QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (October 2014) provides guidance about overall expectations for programmes at different levels. Some brief guidance is included in the table below.

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Students who have demonstrated</b>
Certificate of HE 4	<p>knowledge of the underlying concepts and principles associated with their area(s) of study, and an ability to evaluate and interpret these within the context of that area of study.</p> <p>an ability to present, evaluate and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, in order to develop lines of argument and make sound judgements in accordance with basic theories and concepts of their subject(s) of study.</p>
Diploma of HE or Foundation Degree 5	<p>knowledge and critical understanding of the well-established principles of their area(s) of study, and of the way in which those principles have developed</p> <p>ability to apply underlying concepts and principles outside the context in which they were first studied, including, where appropriate, the application of those principles in an employment context</p> <p>knowledge of the main methods of enquiry in the subject(s) relevant to the named award, and ability to evaluate critically the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems in the field of study</p> <p>an understanding of the limits of their knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge.</p>
Degree 6	<p>a systematic understanding of key aspects of their field of study, including acquisition of coherent and detailed knowledge, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline</p> <p>an ability to deploy accurately established techniques of analysis and enquiry within a discipline</p> <p>conceptual understanding that enables the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques, some of which are at the forefront of a discipline</li> <li>• to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research, or equivalent advanced scholarship, in the discipline</li> </ul> <p>an appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge</p> <p>the ability to manage their own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources (for example, refereed research articles and/or original materials appropriate to the discipline).</p>

<p>Masters 7</p>	<p>a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice</p> <p>a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship</p> <p>originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline</p> <p>conceptual understanding that enables the student:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline</li> <li>• to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.</li> </ul>
<p>Doctoral 8</p>	<p>the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication</p> <p>a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice</p> <p>the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems</p> <p>a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.</p>

### Levels of learning outcome

Using the information in the table below key words can be taken for each level to guide lecturers about the focus of the outcomes and the language that could be used. The key words match those from Bloom's taxonomy (1956) which is a classification of levels of intellectual behaviour. In this taxonomy synthesis and evaluation are in a different order with evaluation being placed as the highest level however it is generally accepted that synthesis is a higher level skill. Using Bloom's taxonomy (1956) the table provides some guidance of examples of verbs that can be used for each level when developing learning outcomes.

Qualification	Key Word	Helpful language for learning outcomes
Certificate of HE 4	Knowledge & Comprehension	<b>Knowledge:</b> arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorize, name, order, recognize, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce state <b>Comprehension:</b> classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognize, report, restate, review, select, translate
Diploma of HE or Foundation Degree 5	Application and Analysis	<b>Application:</b> apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, practice, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write. <b>Analysis:</b> analyse, appraise, calculate, categorize, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test
Degree 6	Evaluation	<b>Evaluation:</b> appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, defend estimate, judge, predict, rate, core, select, support, value, evaluate.
Masters 7	Synthesis	<b>Synthesis:</b> arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organize, plan, prepare, propose, set up, write.
Doctoral 8	Creation, interpretation and originality	<b>Creation</b> conceptualise, production, formation, inception <b>Interpretation</b> exposition, supposition, elucidation, construction <b>Originality</b> ingenuity, novelty, inventiveness, innovation

Using this table it is possible to write a learning outcome about an aspect of learning that could be applied at different levels. For example if one of the aims of a programme is that students can learn about the support services available at the university for students then learning outcomes may be:

**Level 4** - The student will be able to list the range of support services available at the University.

**Level 5** - The student will be able to analyse the role of each of the support services.

**Level 6** - The student will be able to compare the support services and evaluate which is the most appropriate to use for different problems and issues.

**Level 7** - The student will be able to propose a list of which support service to use for different problems/issues synthesising the knowledge of their roles.

**Level 8** - The student will be able to construct a new service based on conceptions of student support.