Module Descriptor Guidance

Overview

Title	You are encouraged to keep this short and descriptive. It might be helpful to consider how staff and students are likely to refer to the module in everyday life – if the title is too long, people are less likely to use it and may choose to abbreviate. If possible, avoid generic titles such as 'Professional Practice' which could apply to a number of disciplines. It may be helpful to cross-reference with the wider module portfolio in your Division to ensure titles are not shared or overlapping. Examples of suitable titles include: • *Contemporary Food and Drink* • *Media and Society* • *Biochemistry I*
Code	Module codes for new modules are assigned by the School Office following approval. If a modification is made to an existing module, the School Office may assign a new code so as to distinguish between the old and new versions.
Coordinator	Indicate who the module leader will be, if known. Franchised modules run at a number of different partners. For validation and review, the module descriptor should list the module leader at that partner. For the VLE, it may be useful to list both the partner and the QMU module leader.
SCQF Level	Please refer to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level descriptors. Levels are defined as: <table><tr><th>SCQF level</th><th>Description</th></tr><tr><td>7</td><td>First year of a standard undergraduate degree; HECert</td></tr><tr><td>8</td><td>Second year of a standard undergraduate degree; HEDip</td></tr><tr><td>9</td><td>Third year of a standard undergraduate degree (Ordinary degree)</td></tr><tr><td>10</td><td>Final year of a standard undergraduate degree (Honours degree)</td></tr><tr><td>11</td><td>PgCert / PgDip / Masters level</td></tr><tr><td>12</td><td>Doctorate level</td></tr></table>
Credits	Modules that make up a QMU programme are usually worth 20 credits. Modules may also be offered as multiples of 20 credits up to a usual maximum size of 60 credits. Sometimes a module can be developed that does not fit within the 20 credit structure (15 credits for example). Prior approval must be sought from the Dean.

	The Division of Governance and Quality Enhancement can offer further guidance.

Modules that are offered separately as microcredentials may be of different sizes. (See separate microcredential guidance.)

1 credit equates to 10 hours of student effort, so a 20 credit module equates to 200 hours of effort. Most of this will be independent study, including working on the assignment.

UK credits can be converted into European credits (ECTS) by dividing in two. In other words, a 20 credit module is worth 10 ECTS. (It is slightly less straightforward for postgraduate credits due to the way ECTS are calculated.) |
| Period of delivery | Indicate the semester in which the module is normally delivered. This is important for students selecting electives or making up an individual programme. For QMU-delivered programmes the semesters are:

- Semester 1 (September – December)
- Semester 2 (January – April)
- Semester 3 (May – August)

Year-long modules may be delivered over both semesters 1 and 2.

Collaborative partners with different academic calendars may have different semester dates, or may prefer to express segments of the year in quarters. In some cases, modules run on a carousel basis and are delivered at different times from one year to the next. In this case you may say 'carousel' or 'variable'.

Changes to the time of delivery need to be approved by the relevant committees as sometimes changing the semester of delivery has knock-on effects for other modules or programmes. |
| Mode of Study | Select from the drop down list. In considering which option best describes your module, please consider the following:

Is the module mainly designed to teach academic content?

- Select **On campus** if the module is mostly delivered face-to-face. Students may be required to engage in some asynchronous online activities, such as discussion boards, but primary contact* is all in class (including practical activities).
- Select **Blended** if some of the primary contact hours* (lectures, tutorials etc) are delivered online and some in the classroom. Students may be asked to relate the theoretical content taught in the module to their workplace or to engage in directed independent learning activities outside the classroom.
- Select **Online** if the module is delivered entirely online. Students may have some optional in-person contact but all mandatory content is online.

Is the module mainly designed around the student undertaking independent activities that will enable them to learn by doing?

- Select **Assessed placement** if the student requires to undertake a placement at an external organisation, where their competency is assessed by a supervisor. There may be some associated lectures or tutorials to support students.
- Select **Work-based learning** for modules in which a) the student undertakes activities in their normal workplace, possibly involving development of competencies; b) the student engages in an experiential |

placement which is assessed by a separate piece of academic / reflective work. There may be a small number of initial lectures for guidance.

- Select **Independent Study** for modules in which the student undertakes a piece of research / project work on their own, with supervision / guidance from the lecturer (eg Honours Projects, dissertations). There may be a small number of initial lectures for guidance.

* The following guidance from the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management may be helpful in terms of understanding what is meant by primary contact:

Primary contact hours would mostly include synchronous timetabled activities in which the module tutor was actively involved in the delivery/facilitation and with which the students are required to take part at a set time. These would include:

Face-to-face lectures	*Demonstrations*	*Fieldtrips*
Face-to-face seminars	*Practical Classes*	*Supervised time in a studio/lab*
Face-to-face tutorials	*Online lectures (live)*	*Masterclasses*
Workshops	*Online seminars (live)*	*Project supervision meetings*
Rehearsals	*Online tutorials (live)*	*Film screenings facilitated by a tutor*

Summary for students (100-150 words)	This section should explain to a potential student why they might want to take this module. This is particularly important for students who are selecting electives or exchange students constructing a programme of studies. This section should be written in the second person Focus on who the module is designed for and what they would gain from studying it. It can be useful to indicate how the module relates to other modules in the programme. Since this section is primarily for the benefit of students, try to avoid using educational jargon. Writing in the second person can be appropriate here. Examples: *This module deepens the learning and work within Studio Practices and Performance Practices at Level 1, as well as building on core knowledge acquired through T1162 introduction to Theatre Production. This is a practice-based module which allows you to explore elements and processes of stage craft.* *This year long module is for SCPHN Health Visitors and School Nurse students. It is a work-based learning module where you will undertake experiential practice, activities and learning in their practice learning environments. Evidence will be gathered throughout the programme that demonstrates your competence against the NMC (July 2022) SCPHN practice standards as you progress and transition to your professional role of Health Visitor or School Nurse. You will engage in lectures, seminars and field specific critical conversations over Semester 1 & Semester 2.*
Previous study required?	It is useful for exchange students or those selecting electives to know if any previous knowledge is required to understand the module. For example, a module at SCQF 10 might assume that students had a solid background in under-pinning theory. However, in practice many electives can be taken successfully with relatively little previous study, as long as students are willing to

	undertake additional study to catch up. Module coordinators are encouraged to be flexible here.
	Specific pre-requisites may be listed in this section but only where these are absolutely necessary. It may be that programme specific regulations are a more effective way of defining the order in which certain modules must be taken, or restrictions on undertaking a higher level of placement before the previous one has been passed.
	It may be helpful to use the word 'normally', eg an advanced microbiology module might state: *Students should normally have passed Introduction to Microbiology or an equivalent module.*

Aims and outcomes

Aim	Each module should include a single aim. This should be kept succinct, ideally no more than two lines of text. The aim should express the purpose of the module within the wider programme (or in its own right if a microcredential). It may be useful to state whether the module is introductory or advanced, general or specialist.
	Be careful to avoid overlap with the learning outcomes. The aim is the goal; the outcomes are the building blocks that help the student to achieve that goal.
	Some examples of suitable aims include:
	To introduce students to the legal and practical implications of the employment relationship. *To introduce students to current research into key issues and opportunities relevant to the food industry.*
Learning outcomes	Learning outcomes articulate what the student should know or be able to do upon successful completion of the module. Outcomes must be measurable, realistic and relevant to the module. (For more information, see this [screencast](#) on learning outcomes.)
	Most modules will have four or five learning outcomes. It may be appropriate to have more for a professional module that needs to include specific named competencies for the purpose of mapping against an external framework. Try to keep your outcomes fairly high-level. This is not the place to detail the content of what students will learn – that goes in the Content section.
	For example, an anatomy module might list separate learning outcomes as follows:
	Provide an account of the origin, course, insertion and function/s of all muscles that affect the lower limb and lumbar spine. *Provide an account of the sensory and motor nerve distribution to the lower limb.*
	These are essentially the same outcome but for slightly different aspects of anatomy.
	A more high-level outcome could be worded:
	Identify, list and explain the anatomy of the lower limb, including musculoskeletal, neurological and endocrine systems.
	Further detail of these systems would be provided under Content.

	Note that learning outcomes are expressed in the form *On successful completion of the module the student will be able to ….* This means that they should be written in the form of a command verb, eg: ***Critique*** *contemporary and post-modern perspectives of leadership theory.* ***Apply*** *contemporary concepts and models in thinking critically and strategically about strategy, products, competition, customers, and value.* The verbs used depend on the academic level of the module. It is essential that the learning outcomes align with the definitions set out in the [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework.](#) The SCQF Level Descriptor tool provides examples of learning outcomes at different levels. A link to Bloom's Taxonomy is also provided. This [graphic](#) provides examples of verbs for different levels. When framing your learning outcome, consider how it would be measured and assessed. Avoid vague verbs such as 'understand' or 'recognise'. The form asks you to specify how each learning outcome is assessed. Name the assessment component that assesses each outcome. Some outcomes may be assessed by more than one component. (If you have two components that assess all the same outcomes it may be worth reflecting on the value of the second component.) Normally all outcomes will be assessed summatively. If an outcome is only assessed formatively, indicate this in the table.

Assessment
Note that this section is for summative assessment only. Formative assessment is covered later.

Components (individual assessments within a module descriptor)	Normally there will be one or at most two components of assessment for a 20 credit module. Sometimes there are more components for practical modules. Additional rows are provided for these cases. Sometimes an assessment component might be made up of smaller tasks, eg a portfolio of reflective pieces and other evidence. When considering whether to define a task as a separate component or not consider whether you would be comfortable with a student passing the module even if they scored 10% in this task. (See rules on compensation below.) If it is important enough that you want to see the student achieve a minimum level, then it may be worth defining the task as a separate component. Consider also how you would want the student to resit if they failed one of the smaller pieces of work. Would you want them to resubmit the entire task? Or only the part they failed? The Board of Examiners will normally require students to retrieve only those components which were failed. School Managers and Academic Administration staff can provide advice on the best way to split up or combine assessment tasks and the implications for exam boards and progression.
Type	A drop-down list of assessment types is provided. These categories align with the categories required for reporting to [Unistats](#)[1].

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[1] The UNISTATS is published by HEFCE (The Higher Education Funding Council for England) and HESA (The Higher Education Statistics Agency). It provides a set of comparable figures which students, parents and advisors can use to help make their Higher Education decisions.

	- Coursework – covers any piece of work which is prepared in the student's own time and then submitted for summative assessment: essays, reports, case studies, reflective essays, dissertations, leaflets, care plans, lesson plans, wikis, blogs, videos, group projects (including peer assessment), portfolios, bibliographies, creative works and others. - Written – includes essay-type exams, Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) and short answer - Practical – placements (supervisor's grade, sign off of competencies, logbooks of completed procedures); Objective Structure Clinical Exams (OSCEs) and equivalent (eg OSPRIES); presentations (including the live defence of a poster presentation); vivas, performances, live events, roleplays and simulations.
Brief description	In this section you can provide more detail on the assessment format. The amount of detail should be enough for a validation panel or committee to confirm that the assessment aligns with the learning outcomes. (For more information, see this screencast on constructive alignment.) However, you should avoid providing so much detail that it makes it difficult to adjust the assessment in future years without seeking committee approval. It is important to leave some scope for creativity and enhancement. The following examples are succinct but sufficient: *Essay* *Critical case study* *Group Presentation* *Online Exam (MCQ and short answer)* *Written exam based on case study seen in advance* If you plan to use a more innovative assessment format, perhaps involving a practical task with a real-world application, it is helpful to provide more detail in order to make clear how the assessment would work. Validation and review panels may want to hear more about you will ensure fairness and reliability in marking, or how you will support students who have to retrieve.
Volume	In this box you must indicate the size of the assessment. This allows the panel / committee to reassure themselves that the overall assessment workload is in line with any relevant guidance and consistent between modules. - Written work – provide the maximum word limit - Presentations – indicate the length of the presentation (including time for questions); for group work indicate the expected time for each member to present. - Posters – indicate a word limit; if an oral defence of the poster is required, state the time - Exams / Practical exams – indicate the length of time allowed for the exam - Portfolios – Indicate approximate word limit (this can be harder to define for portfolios so estimates are accepted) - Films – indicate duration - Leaflets / web pages / other artefacts – use the best method of describing the size of the piece of work that you can.
Individual or Group	State 'I' if each student is assessed individually; 'G' for group assessments.
Weighting	State what proportion of the total module mark each component contributes. The weighting should normally be in proportion to the amount of student work that each assessment task requires. So, for example, if a module was

	assessed by two essays, both of 1500 words, it would be unusual for one to be weighted at 60% and the other at 40%. Note that some components will be marked as pass or fail, not as a percentage. This is appropriate for assessments based on meeting professional competencies, or submitting required evidence. It is not possible to produce an aggregate mark if one component is pass / fail and the other is marked as a percentage, as there aren't two marks to combine. In these cases, the mark for the module is based entirely on the percentage-marked component. Students still must pass the other component.
Pass mark and compensation	QMU standard assessment regulations state that the pass mark for a module is 40% (undergraduate) / 50% (postgraduate). Additionally, students must achieve a minimum mark of 30% (undergraduate) / 40% (postgraduate) in each individual component. This ensures that students have achieved a minimum level in all the learning outcomes. For some modules, especially those relating to professional competence, it may be appropriate to require that students pass each component independently, ie achieve a minimum mark of 40% / 50%. If so, state this here. Otherwise, standard rules will apply. There are some assessments where a significantly higher pass mark is set. This is usually in order to protect the public, for example, in assessments related to drug calculations or accuracy of image interpretation in radiography. In such cases, the component no longer uses the QMU marking scheme and it is not appropriate to combine this mark with other components – attempting to combine the marks will skew the calculation. Instead, the component should be recorded as pass / fail and the minimum mark required noted in this section. For example: *Numeracy exam – minimum pass mark 100% (pass / fail)*
Anonymous marking	Most assessments can be marked anonymously. It is recognised that some assessments cannot be anonymous, eg presentations, OSCEs, performances. In some cases, the student will be identifiable as the marker has worked with them during the semester, eg Honours Projects. Indicate any assessment components that cannot be marked anonymously, and if the reason why is not obvious, add some explanation. Otherwise mark this section 'n/a'.

Other details

Learning experiences	There are three broad HESA categories: - Scheduled – includes all activities that take place at a specific time (including synchronous online sessions). These may include lectures, tutorials and seminars, practical workshops, clinical skills labs, rehearsals, project supervision, field trips and demonstrations. - Independent – all work that students do in their own time, either singly or in groups, such as reading, preparing assessments, enquiry-based learning, preparing presentations for seminars, or jointly devising creative work. - Placement – all forms of work-based or experiential learning that take place outside the university, including assessed placements,

experiential placements, work-based professional development, shadowing and year abroad arrangements for language students.

All directed learning activities that can be undertaken asynchronously at the time of the student's choosing should be included under independent learning. More detail can be provided in the next column (brief description). An example might be:

Type of activity	Brief description	Number of hours
Independent	Directed asynchronous online learning activities including micro-lectures, set reading, group discussion, digital content and formative / summative assignments	105
Independent	Self-directed learning	45

Work-based learning should be classed as Placement. If there is a minimum number of supervised placement hours to be completed you can include this here or under Other Important Details.

You do not need to be too specific about the breakdown of scheduled learning experiences. It is acceptable to state something like:

- *Lectures, seminars and workshops (36 hours)*

However, you may wish to provide more detail about certain specific activities when these are crucial to the module experience or if it is necessary to evidence the number of hours of practical work for a professional body. For example, if a selling point of the module is that students will have six hours of field trips, you may wish to state this here. Similarly, it may be essential to identify that students will undertake 12 hours of laboratory experience in order to meet certain external criteria.

The School of ASSaM provides the following guidance on the amount of scheduled contact time for modules at different levels:

- UG Level 1-2: Between 30 and 40 hours of primary contact time over the ten teaching weeks (if a single semester module) or between 40 and 50 hours of primary contact time over twenty teaching weeks (if a 'year-long' module)
- UG Level 3-4: Between 20 and 30 hours of primary contact time over the ten teaching weeks (if a single semester module) or between 30 and 40 hours of primary contact time over twenty teaching weeks (if a 'year-long' module)
- Taught Postgraduate: Between 20 and 30 hours of primary contact time over the ten teaching weeks

('Primary contact time' includes synchronous online content.)

It is recognised that practical modules may require additional contact time, especially where there are minimum numbers of hours set by a professional body.

Note that the figure in the box marked 'total' is an automated function. To update it, highlight the figure and press F9.

Opportunities for formative feedback	Some feedback will be provided on in-class activities. It is also advised that modules should include elements of formative assessment that link directly with and scaffold the knowledge and skills required to be successful in a

summative assessment. This normally involves students completing a piece of academic work that is directly related to the format of summative assessment and receiving an indication of how well they have done and how they can improve prior to undertaking their summative assessment. This can be particularly important if students are attempting a type of assessment that they haven't done before. For example, if the module is assessed mainly by an OSCE there should be opportunities for students to undertake some elements of the OSCE formatively first.

Most module leaders like to leave the exact nature of the formative assessment flexible so that they can develop it from year to year without going back to the programme committee.

Examples might include:

Formative feedback will be provided in seminars and lab activities, for example through case study analysis and class discussions. Feedback will also be given throughout the duration of the assessment case, during and after group negotiations.

Formative feedback will be provided during clinical skills lab sessions. Students will be given the opportunity to practise filming simulated procedures and feedback will be provided.

Content	This should be a bullet point list of topics covered (approximately 75 to 120 words). For PSRBs it may be important to provide more granular detail here than in the learning outcomes. It can be helpful to highlight content relating to the development of graduate attributes, eg - higher level academic skills such as reflection and critical thinking - research skills - equality, diversity and inclusion - sustainability In some cases the content may not vary much from year to year. If you need to build in some flexibility to adapt content to reflect current topics of debate in the field, you are advised to word this accordingly, rather than pin yourself down. For example, it is more flexible to state the module will discuss 'current trends in reality-based television' than to specify it will cover Love Island and The Traitors.
Essential texts	Identify up to **four** key texts that you would expect all students to read. You may also identify key journals or specific articles. Note that students may consider buying these titles. It is important that any texts named should be readily accessible and not overly expensive. Preference may be given to texts that are available as e-books. If there are no specific texts you would describe as essential, it is acceptable to leave this section empty. State: *There are no essential texts for this module.* Some modules will be based around current journals. You may simply say something like: *There are no essential texts for this module. Instead, students are expected to read widely from current journals in the field.*

	If there are some key journals that you recommend as a starting point, you may list these.
	Please consult your liaison librarian before committing to texts added to this section. They can advise as to any issues with accessibility, or availability of e-books. They may also know if a more recent edition has been published.
	Texts should be up to date (normally published within the last 10-15 years) unless they are seminal.
	The information in this section should be presented in line with the referencing format used in your programme. See the library's Referencing Guide for details. It is important that staff model good referencing practice and that there is consistency within and across module descriptors contributing to a programme.
Additional reading	Identify between **four** and **six** main texts that you would recommend students to read. You may also identify key journals or specific articles.
	Please consult your liaison librarian before committing to texts added to this section. They can advise as to any issues with accessibility, or availability of e-books. They may also know if a more recent edition has been published.
	Texts should be up to date (normally published within the last 10-15 years) unless they are seminal.
	The information in this section should be presented in line with the referencing format used in your programme. See the library's Referencing Guide for details.
Resource list	It is recommended that you set up a Talis Resource List for this module and include a link to it here, if available. (Note that the resource list may contain more titles than are listed on the main descriptor.)
Other important details	This is a catch-all section for any important information that doesn't fit in elsewhere. It is common to leave this blank. Some examples of the type of information that might be included here are: • Information about external accreditation • More detail about any unusual learning experiences for which the student might require to prepare • Clarification of any requirements for access to specific workplace settings or clients
Form completed by	State the name of the person completing the form
Date	This is an automated field. It will update when the document is saved. (Press F9 to update.)
Version number	Updating the version number can be useful to identify the most recent version of the descriptor and to ensure that everyone is using the same one.