

UNIT GUIDES

Learning and Teaching Quick Guide



The unit guide provides prospective and enrolled students with an understanding of the unit coverage, purpose, the intended audience, the level, intended learning outcomes, activities, assessment, delivery methods and time commitment.

COMPONENTS

The main components of a unit guide are:

- Unit description: Provides a rationale for the unit and overview of unit coverage (more details on the right).
- Learning outcomes: detail the level of knowledge required, how the desired skills are to be applied, the expected observable outcome, and where this will be situated in a disciplinary or professional context. See the Quick guide to writing learning outcomes.
- Assessment tasks: details of the assessment tasks used to judge student learning in the unit.
- Learning Activities: The type(s) of delivery methods used, when and where activities will take place.
- Student workload: the time commitment that will be required – to be specified for each activity (more details on the right).

The classic 7 elements of circumstance, attributed to Aristotle's ethics (Sloan 2010), can provide signposts to ensure all the basic questions are answered for the reader:

- What: are intended learning outcomes, the topics, knowledge and skills to be covered.
- Who: for whom - student perspective, to becoming a professional, and by whom it is taught.
- Why: unit rationale/significance/purpose.
- Where: context/place of teaching and context of learning - discipline/profession/workplace.
- When: duration, deadlines, and the temporal focus of the unit i.e. historical, contemporary or future focus.
- How: Format and the main educational activities and assessment tasks that will be used.
- With what: tools/technologies to be used.

Some suggested places to cover each element is below.

Seven elements to the whole

Element	Unit guide section(s)
What	Unit description (and Learning outcomes, assessment tasks).
Who	Unit description and Staff/department details.
Why	Unit description.
Where	Learning activities (and possibly the Unit description).
When	Learning activities, student workload and session(s) offered (with details in the schedule/timetable).
How	Learning activities (scheduled and non-scheduled) and the assessment tasks.
With What	Learning activities (and modes of offering).

UNIT DESCRIPTION STATEMENTS

The primary audience is prospective and current students. Unit descriptions are public and may be used by:

- Students to guide their selection courses and units, and to substantiate their educational, knowledge and experience when applying for employment.
- Staff in the transfer of unit convenorship, for review purposes, when evaluating recognition of prior learning and for benchmarking with other providers.
- Employers to gain insight into the educational background of job applicants, or to assess the suitability of courses and units for staff professional development.

Include:

- A brief summary of the purpose, subject matter, educational approach and learning experiences to be had in the unit.
- Outline the contribution the unit will make to student's education. This may be with reference to learning outcomes and assessment (but not full details), career skills, employability, and/or disciplinary depth and/or breadth).
- Make it attractive, but it must be accurate and concise (max 1400 characters).

Avoid:

- Discipline-specific jargon and acronyms
- Detailed unit specifications (credit points, designations, prerequisites, co-requisites, NCCWs, offerings, PACE status, capstone status, a formal listing of Unit Learning Outcomes, or detailed descriptions of individual assessment tasks - these are all captured elsewhere).

Explore this topic further ...

Curriculum Manual Team (2019) Unit Design, MQ CMS Wiki, <https://wiki.mq.edu.au/x/yIKqEg>

Quick guide: Learning outcomes (writing)

Quick guide: Constructive alignment

Quick guide: Unit Activities (specifying)

Quick guide: Unit Assessment (specifying)

Quick guide: Feedback Methods (specifying)

Quick guide: Student workload (specifying)

REFERENCES

Sloan, M.C. (2010). "Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics as the Original Locus for the Septem Circumstantiae". Classical Philology. 105: 236–251. doi:10.1086/656196.

Acknowledgement: MQ CMS Team, MQ CMS Wiki.

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