



Course Prescriptor Guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to assist staff in the writing and reviewing of Prescriptors for Courses (Papers) normally as part of the process of developing a Course Descriptor.

The purpose of a course prescriptor is to provide a holistic overview and scope of the course with coherent information that is meaningful for an external audience.

Course prescriptors are a driving force behind the enrolment decisions our students make. Please keep this in mind when constructing each description, ensuring it is clear, concise, easy-to-read and conveys the how each course will benefit the student.

1. **Length** – Must be concise but meaningful - should be no more than 75 words or 500 characters unless necessary. If too short or generic, then in most cases the description will not be meaningful unless the title is well understood (e.g. Thesis).
2. **Level** - This is reflected in the wording e.g. 'An introduction to....' or if at a higher level 'An examination of.....', 'An investigation' etc. The level of critical analysis expected should be reflected.
3. **Scope** - It needs to include the full *scope* of the course - that is the key academic content or subject matter. This is important to differentiate the course but also to attract students and enable the establishment of equivalences – recognition of prior learning, exemptions, etc.

Proceed from the general to the specific in describing the content of the course. Start by describing broader concepts, and the more important ideas that will be examined in the course.

4. Start with a **noun** or **verb**. A prescriptor is not an aim statement. It should not start with 'Students will' or 'The course

Start with a **noun** e.g. 'An overview of....' 'An introduction to....', 'An exploration of....' or a **verb** e.g. 'Focuses on....'

5. Avoid using pronouns like 'we' and 'you' when writing prescriptors and always write in the present tense e.g. not 'In this course, you will learn the fundamentals of human resources management.' Instead say 'The fundamentals of human resources management are explored' or 'Explore'

6. Prescriptors need to avoid obvious, repetitive or redundant language (such as 'this course will...' or 'students should expect to...') AND avoid marketing language e.g. 'concept X is a critical part of success in industry Y' or 'Course A will change the way'.

Key things to include if relevant

7. Detail significant learning experiences i.e. a description of the activities in which students will be engaged if these are a specific feature of the course e.g. field work, clinical placement or a significant project.
8. Any prior knowledge or co-requisites required for this course should also be explained here. e.g. 'This course builds on....'. Essentially you would be explaining how the course is connected with other relevant courses.
9. The wording must reflect the funding category of the course i.e. why a course is eligible for higher funding.