**Module Descriptor Guidance**

The Postgraduate Shortfall Task Force is supportive of providing more information about our modules, as competitor universities are doing so, and as feedback from colleagues in Admissions and from the PG Decliners’ Survey suggests that enquirers are being deterred from Aston as a result of not having enough information about the course they are interested in studying. This is illustrated in the verbatim comment from the Postgraduate Decliners’ Survey:

*“… add more course details because many business courses are similar, so it's a bit difficult to specify the right one.”*

The following guidance is for the design and presentation of module descriptors. Guidance is not meant to be prescriptive but is intended to support consistency and quality and compliance with relevant CMA requirements.

The module descriptor can be considered as equivalent to an abstract for an academic paper and should:

1. Clearly and concisely describe the subject and context of study (40-60 words overall);
2. Outline key topics and related learning and teaching activities;
3. Highlight the key outcomes/benefits of participation.

In addition, descriptors should:

1. Be written mindful of the intended audience and avoid using any unnecessary specialist terminology;
2. Use language such as ‘*this module aims to’* or ‘*this module introduces’*, but avoid language such as *‘this module will’*;
3. Be designed to engage interest as well as to inform.

E.g. Quantitative Methods for Finance

‘We examine the main statistical and econometric techniques that underpin finance and investment models and their application in practice. We use real-world data and apply this to problems in finance and investment. This gives you valuable practical experience using quantitative research methods which will help with your dissertation project and for roles within the financial sector.’

Further useful sources of information include:

Plain English campaign guides: <https://www.plainenglish.co.uk/free-guides.html>

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