



## Guidelines and Procedures for Writing Course Outlines

The course outline template is provided as a checklist and form for teachers to use in preparing course catalog for inputting to the Chinese University Student Information System (CUSIS) for undergraduate and/or postgraduate courses and for preparing course outline for students. It gives a ‘road map’ or rationale to students about the purpose and structure of the course, and it explains to them how their learning performance in the course will be assessed and graded. It is important that course catalog and outline are consistent with the University’s teaching and learning policy. The 14 sections in a course outline are described below. Sections 1–10 are required in course catalog for course approval; these sections will be stored in CUSIS. Information in sections 11–14 should be provided each time a course is offered. Please feel free to adapt this current template format, especially sections 11–14, to suit the needs of your course(s).

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Course code                             | 8. Assessment type                          |
| 2. English title                           | 9. Required and recommended readings        |
| 3. Chinese title                           | 10. Feedback for evaluation                 |
| 4. Course description                      | 11. Course schedule                         |
| 5. Learning outcomes                       | 12. Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s) |
| 6. Course syllabus                         | 13. Details of course website               |
| 7. Course components (Learning activities) | 14. Academic honesty and plagiarism         |

### 1–3. Course code, English title and Chinese title

**Key points:** This is a straightforward section. Provide the basic information about the course code and name of your course at the beginning of the course outline.

**Course Code:**  
**Title in English:**  
**Title in Chinese:**

### 4. Course description

**Key points:** Explain concisely in your statement(s) what the course is about and how the overall course will support student learning in the discipline(s) of the programme. The purpose of a course description is to provide a holistic view of your course with coherent information for your students. It is useful to give details of the background of the subject: the prior knowledge the students should have, the overall aims of the course, and/or how the course relates to the other courses in the programme.

#### Course description:

##### *Example 1*

*Physical activity has now been firmly linked to the reduction of health risks and is therefore an important strategy in health promotion. While exercise and general activity seem to be a simple remedy for the possible reduction of illness later in life, the prevalence of inactivity continues to rise in modern industrialized countries as more and more people crowd into urban areas. Urban lifestyles and habits seem to reduce the amount of exercise in which individuals choose to participate. While efforts are now being made to promote active lifestyles as a way of combating the inevitable rise of disease later in life, increasing numbers of people continue to do no regular exercise and it is becoming more difficult to understand the psychology behind these trends.*

*This course will explore the current issues in school physical education from a sociological perspective. The course will focus on the meaning of sport and physical activity in society and how it fits into the physical education programmes in Hong Kong schools. Because most of the students taking this course are training to be physical education teachers, the course will emphasize issues that relate to the role of physical education teacher and challenges that are expected when they enter schools as practicing professionals.*

*(Extracted from a Sport Science and Physical Education course, CUHK)*



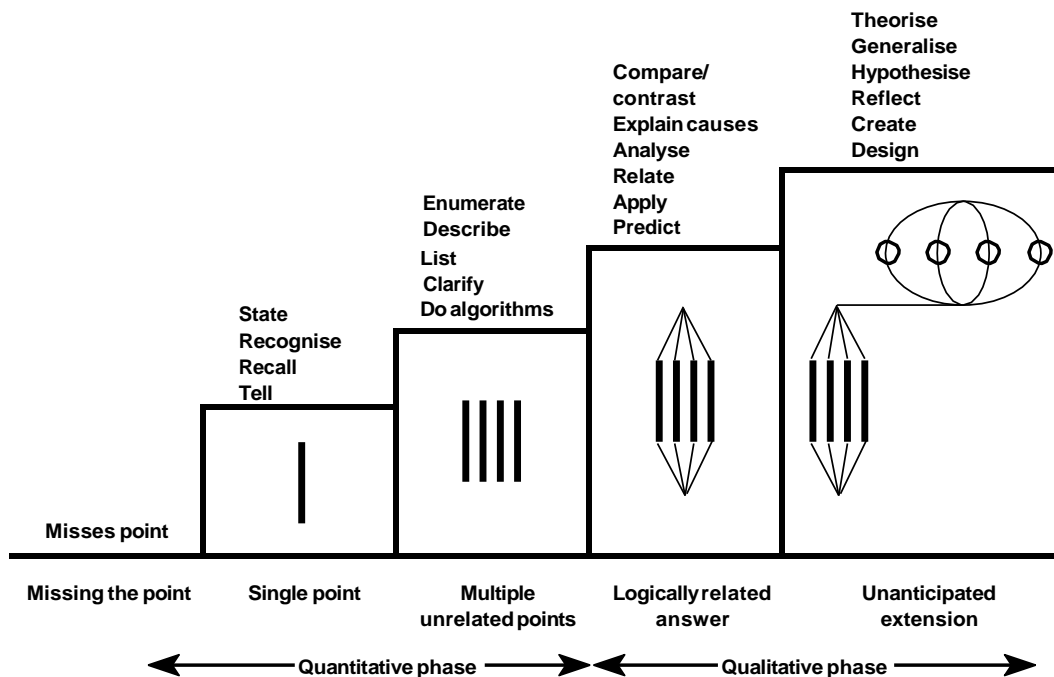
**Remark:** The statement above is in a course for students who will become physical education teachers. The first paragraph effectively puts the course into perspective by relating it to problems and concerns in real life, and explaining how the course will help students understand the issues and challenges faced by physical education teachers. The second paragraph describes the core areas/ main content of the course. It is worth noting that this description aligns with the learning outcomes in a later part of this course outline (see Example 3).

### 5. Learning outcomes

Although the term ‘learning outcome’ is often used interchangeably with terms such as ‘learning objectives’, ‘educational objectives’, and ‘instructional objectives’, there are some differences that are worth mentioning. Learning outcomes are student-oriented, referring specifically to what students are expected to achieve or learn at the end of the course. Objectives are usually used to describe course design in terms of what teachers want to teach or how they view the course as contributing to the content areas covered by the entire programme.

**Key point:** State clearly **what** you expect/ intend students to achieve. This is usually more helpful than stating what the teacher is planning to teach. Teachers can indicate different levels of students’ expected learning outcomes. The model below may be helpful in distinguishing basic and higher-order desired learning outcomes (after Biggs, 2003).

Biggs, J. B. (2003). *Teaching for quality learning at university* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.



### Learning outcomes:

#### Example 2

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- compare and contrast language development in bilingual and monolingual children
- deepen their appreciation of the significance of bilingualism in the individual and society
- analyze bilingual data and evaluate the bilingual situation in the local community

(Extracted from a Linguistics course, CUHK)

**Remark:** This statement shows that students are expected to gain more than basic understanding of the linguistic concepts in the course. Students are expected to be able to analyze, compare and contrast different phenomenon using the knowledge learnt. Moreover, students are expected to deepen their appreciation of bilingual issues after finishing the course. The learning outcomes of the course cover students’ gains in knowledge, skills and attitudes.



**Learning outcomes:**

**Example 3**

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- be familiar with the philosophy, models, organization and implementation of the general curriculum in schools
- critically evaluate curriculum models in order to appraise the efforts being made to improve educational practice in modern schooling
- develop and defend a curriculum of physical education.

(Extracted from a Sport Science and Physical Education course, CUHK)

**Remark:** The outcome statements identify what the student will achieve through the subject knowledge of the course. The learning outcomes are succinct and helpful to them in their learning. The course demands learning at higher cognitive levels. Students not only need to understand the concepts and models, but are also required to critically evaluate and apply the learned concepts by developing and defending their own curriculum. They reach the qualitative phase in the diagrammatic model.

**Learning outcomes:**

**Example 4**

- Demonstrate the ability to perform comprehensive and focus assessment of pediatric clients and clients with emergency health conditions, medical or psychiatric alternations.
- Critically analyze health assessment data to identify problems and priorities as well as plan care.
- Demonstrate effective communication with clients, their families, and health care team members.
- Deepen critical decision-making skills in the provision of client-centered care.
- Demonstrate the reflective skills in self and peer appraisal of nursing care.

(Extracted from a Nursing course, CUHK)

**Remark:** The outcomes cover both attainments in nursing knowledge and also general learning capabilities. Students are expected to be well acquainted with the knowledge and also be able to critically analyze the concepts learnt. In addition, the course also looks into the development of appropriate learning skills such as communication and students' ability to solve problems in the field.

**6. Course syllabus**

**Key point:** Highlight the fundamental concepts involved in each topic in order to help students better understand what is and what is not covered in the course.

**Course syllabus:**

**Example 5**

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Contents/ fundamental concepts</b>
Introduction to Business Forecasting	This chapter presents a broad overview of business forecasting
The Forecast Process, Data Considerations, and Model Selection	This chapter establishes a practical guide to implementing a successful forecasting process stressing evaluation of data for trend, seasonal, and cyclical components. In addition, basic applied statistics are reviewed.

(Extracted from a Business Administration course, CUHK)

**Remark:** The course description above not only provides information on the broad topics but also indicates relevant chapters of a text book in order to provide more assistance to students.



### 7. Course components (Learning activities)

Indicate the course components of the course, examples of which includes: lecture, interactive tutorial, laboratory, field studies/field-trip, web-enhanced teaching, and also the instructor contact hours.

**Key point:** Consideration should be taken into regarding “instructor contact hours” and “workload hours”. Considering student workload is an important part of course design. Here are some examples of rough calculations one might make for a 3-credit-point course.

A student might do five 3-credit-point courses in a semester. Working on approximately 60 hours of actual study per week, this implies that students might be expected to spend about 12-13 hours a week on work associated with a 3-credit-point course. Only a small number of these hours might be in class.

- How do you anticipate students will apportion the remaining hours?
- Will this vary significantly throughout the term?

Answers to these questions should assist students in planning their work and also assist the programme as a whole in assessing likely variation in student workload.

#### Course components (Learning activities):

*In the examples below, the hours are mapped for the main teaching weeks only. Towards the end of term students will obviously spend more time in finishing their major assignments and/or studying for examinations. In courses where there is significant change in the teaching format throughout the term, this format may not be useful and a weekly schedule may be more appropriate. The key point is that providing some map to students about the learning activities that are planned for them is likely to be helpful.*

#### Examples 6 (Learning activities in mainly lecture-based courses - 1)

<i>Lecture</i>		<i>Discussion of case</i>		<i>Project discussion</i>		<i>Project presentation</i>	
<i>In class</i>	<i>Out of class</i>	<i>In class</i>	<i>Out of class</i>	<i>In class</i>	<i>Out of class</i>	<i>In class</i>	<i>Out of class</i>
<i>2-3 hours</i>	<i>6 hours</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>1 hour</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>1 hour</i>	<i>1 hour</i>	<i>1 hour</i>
<i>M</i>	<i>M/O</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>M</i>

*(Hypothetical example)*

*M: Mandatory activity in the course                      O: Optional activity                      NA: Not applicable*

#### Examples 7 (Learning activities in mainly lecture-based courses - 2)

<i>Lecture</i>		<i>Interactive tutorial</i>	
<i>In class</i>	<i>Out of class</i>	<i>In class</i>	<i>Out of class</i>
<i>3 hours</i>	<i>8 hours</i>	<i>1 hour</i>	<i>1 hour</i>
<i>M</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>M</i>

*(Hypothetical example)*

*M: Mandatory activity in the course                      O: Optional activity                      NA: Not applicable*

**Remark:** *The above examples illustrate the class hours specified for each type of learning activity. The course in both examples is mainly lecture-based. On average, there are 3 hours of lecture per week. Students are expected to spend about 6-8 hours a week in preparing and revising materials related to the lectures. In Example 6, there are also discussion activities, project work and work associated with presentations that mainly takes place outside the lecture hours, but may occasionally replace a lecture. In Example 7, tutorials are the only additional planned activity and so students are expected to do more work associated directly with the lectures. Altogether, students are expected to do about 13 hours' work per week in the learning activities.*



**Examples 8 (Learning activities in laboratory courses, which are often 2-credit-point courses)**

Interactive tutorial		Laboratory		Self-study	
In class	Out of class	In class	Out of class	In class	Out of class
1 hour	NA	3 hours	3 hours	NA	1 hour
M	NA	M	NA	NA	O

(Hypothetical example)

M: Mandatory activity in the course      O: Optional activity      NA: Not applicable

**Remark:** This course has tutorials, laboratories, and also self-study sessions. These altogether occupy a total of about 4 hours' (1+3) time of the students in the tutorial and laboratory. The students are also expected to self-learn or do a significant amount of group work. Students are expected to spend about 3 hours a week on preparing and revising lab reports probably with their group mates, and also 1 hour self-study per week, in lab-related work.

**Examples 9 (Learning activities in courses with field work)**

Lecture		Interactive Tutorial		Discussion of cases		Field-work/ Practicum		Project		Web-based teaching	
In class	Out of class	In class	Out of class	In class	Out of class	In class	Out of class	In class	Out of class	In class	Out of class
2 hours	3 hours	1 hour	1 hour	NA	2 hours	1 hour	2 hours	NA	1 hour	NA	1 hour
M	M	M	M	NA	M	M	M	NA	M	NA	O

(Hypothetical example)

M: Mandatory activity in the course      O: Optional activity      NA: Not applicable

**Remark:** This is a professional experience course. It shows not only formal teaching situations such as lectures and tutorials, but it also includes web-based teaching (the teacher has a website set up with abundant learning resources) and field work or practicum. These activities are embedded in an overall plan to enable students to relate theory to practice.

**8. Assessment type**

**Key point:** If we consider assessment to be part of the learning activities in the course, then it is clear that assessment must be matched to the desired learning outcomes. You need to consider what and how the assessment task(s) are able to help students achieve the desired learning outcomes.

**Assessment type:**

**Examples 10**

Task nature	Purpose	Learning outcomes	Percentage
Reading-based assignment	To facilitate the students to conduct self-directed study on specific topics in neurological and real nursing, and to evaluate their abilities in applying the theoretical and scientific knowledge to care planning.	1. Conduct a critical analysis on assessment data to diagnose actual and potential alternations in functional health problems. 2. Design and implement a holistic, accurate and evidence-based nursing care plan at an individual and family level for patients with complex health needs.	20%
2.5 hour written examination	To evaluate the knowledge of the students on complex health problems, assessment of patients with complex health needs, identification	1. Apply a selected framework in studying the bio-psychosocial care of clients who have developed complex health problems across the life span. 2. Contrast between the health assessment and	80%





**11. Course schedule**

**Key point:** A matrix is suggested as a good way to represent a course schedule including class, date, topic and requirements so that students can prepare their own learning before classes. It is useful to highlight important dates for students, including holidays, dates when assessments are due and/or dates of tests and examinations.

<b>Course schedule:</b>			
<i>Examples 11</i>			
<b>Class</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Requirements</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	Jan 11 (W) Jan 13 (F)	1. Syllabus 2. Reviewing basic concepts in managerial accounting 3. Activity-based costing	• Reading: chapter 5 • Short case: Wong Association I and II
<b>Week 2</b>	Jan 18 (W) Jan 20 (F)	1. Activity-based Management 2. Determining how costs behave	• Reading: chapters 5 and 10 • Group exercise: IT Dept. • Group exercise: NAG-Measure supplier performance
<i>(Extracted from an Accounting course, CUHK)</i>			
<b>Remark:</b> The above example gives students a holistic picture of the timing and the topics to be covered. There is useful information such as class commencement date, details of each topic, required readings and so on. It is helpful to students in preparing their own reading or learning materials in advance.			

**12. Contact details for teacher(s) or TA(s)**

**Key point:** Help students to easily locate your contact information. The information allows students to arrange for any consultation after classes or receive support in terms of learning and teaching from teacher, tutors and/or teaching assistants. It is better to put both the teachers' and TAs' contact details such as name, office location, phone number and email address.

<b>Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:</b>	
Name:	
Office Location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Teaching Venue:	
Website:	
Other information:	

<b>Teaching Assistant/Tutor:</b>	
Name:	
Office Location:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Teaching Venue:	
Website:	
Other information:	



### 13. Details of course website

**Key point:** Information concerning the accessibility of the course website (if it exists). This might be an open website or the Blackboard platform hosted by the University. Teachers should also demonstrate the site in class so as to familiarize the students with the key functionalities. More information on setting up course websites can be found at: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/eLearning>

### 14. Academic honesty and plagiarism

**Key point:** Relevant information can be found via: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. A course outline may also include subject-specific requirements on plagiarism. A statement to be included in a course outline can be constructed from the following paragraphs, depending on the nature of the assessment tasks.

#### Academic honesty and plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

- In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.

- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.

Assignments without the properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work

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