

# Textual module. Instructions for creating the content

This document sets out the guidelines for authors commissioned with the task of creating basic teaching content for a course or training unit at our University. Some brief instructions on structure, form and style will now follow that authors should take into account before starting to write up the requested content. They include some recommendations to ensure that the content created is inclusive, respectful, non-discriminatory and non-sexist.

## 1. Structural characteristics

The submitted originals must all have the same specific structure. The text content of UOC subjects is structured into different units called **modules**. Each module consists of an entirely separate textual content of 10 to 50 pages, which is submitted separately.

The structure of each module is as follows: the cover, the index and the developed **syllabus**. There may also be other optional items, such as an introduction, a glossary, references and annexes.

## 2. Formal characteristics

UOC modules use a series of resources that define their content by their importance or the way in which they must be presented.

Therefore, we need to take a number of resources into account that we can indicate in the text to help the editing team in their task.

### 2.1. Hierarchies and bullet points

The UOC's own learning resources can have a maximum of four section levels in each module, three numbered (which means that they appear in the table of contents) and a fourth that is not numbered:

1. Section title

## 1.1. Section title

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#### Section title

Bulleted lists can have up to four levels (although a four-level structure makes any classification difficult to understand).

We recommend that the section titles be as short as possible (around 20 words), so that they can be adapted to the different reading devices that students may use.

Formally, the order of the bullets is as follows:

1. Example paragraph to show how a paragraph is displayed in a list.

a) Example paragraph to show how a paragraph is displayed in a list.

· Example paragraph to show how a paragraph is displayed in a list.

Example paragraph to show how a paragraph is displayed in a list.

– Example paragraph to show how a paragraph is displayed in a list.

Example paragraph to show how a paragraph is displayed in a list.

To indicate hierarchies in the text, always use automatic bullets in Word. If you want to use numbers, add them. The automatic hierarchy is a number, then a letter, then a bullet and finally a dash. If there are only two, it will be a bullet and then dash.

## 2.2. Resources for text processing for learning

Below is a list of possible resources that modules can contain. None of these is obligatory. As authors, it is important for you to indicate the resources to help the student to assimilate the study contents, because you are the real experts in the field.

In general, we do not recommend using one resource inside another (a quote in an example, an image inside a “highlight”, etc.), to ensure optimised display on different devices.

This is why we recommend using these resources sparingly, both in terms of quantity and their extension.

We should distinguish between main content/text, complementary content, and universal elements.

## Main Text

### *a. Key idea*

A text containing the key ideas for understanding the content. It contains key information for the student, such a definition.

It should be a short text, like the "highlights" we sometimes see in press articles (approximately 40 words). Note that if we have too many key ideas they will be less effective.

These texts can have a title if you wish. We recommend that this be no more than 5-7 words long.

### *b. Bold*

Used to emphasise key words or ideas. For highlighting whole sentences, the key idea might be a more appropriate resource.

## Additional text

Additional texts are there to make reading more enjoyable, clarify difficult concepts or connect the content with the real situation through case studies or examples.

In a second reading of the material, it should be possible to ignore the additional texts and read the module through without losing the thread.

Additional texts may be slightly longer than highlighted ones. The recommended length for these texts is around 100 words.

There are various types of additional text; we explain them all below, but you are not limited to these types. If you wish to incorporate additional content under another title, you may do so. In this case, the titles should also be kept short (about 5-7 words). Below are some examples of additional content.

### *a. Additional or developed content or further details*

A text that develops the idea of the main text. It contains anecdotes, author biographies, explanations, further notes, etc. It is best to provide a brief title. It is best to provide a brief title.

### *b. Example*

It is used to illustrate or provide examples of an idea, concept, procedure or evaluation in the basic content of the material.

### *c. Bibliographical reference*

Bibliographical citation that is integrated into the text which may be entitled Further Reading, References, Recommended Reading, etc.

### *d. Reflection*

Used to identify an open question to make the student think about the content.

### *e. Brief note*

What is traditionally termed a footnote; in UOC materials it is placed as close as possible to the word that gave rise to it.

## Cross-cutting elements

### *a. Quotation*

Literal quotation of a text by an author that we want to highlight. The source must be given (name of the author, bibliographical reference, etc.).

### *b. Code*

Part of an executable code (or pseudocode) to include in the material.

### *c. Figures: charts, images, illustrations, graphics and tables*

Figures are generally used to structure content graphically. Do not use images that do not add information to the written content. They must be necessary and justified in the explanation.

As a general rule, we cannot use images taken from the Internet for legal reasons, except for logos or public domain images. They can be provided as a guide but it is always important to explain which concept you want to illustrate or the reason for suggesting a figure in order to find alternatives.

If images, illustrations or graphics are embedded in the text, always indicate that they are royalty-free.

Tables should generally be included with their data and not as an image.

For the most part, titles or captions must be added to illustrations, tables, etc.

#### *d. Videos*

Authors can incorporate videos into the material in the following cases:

- When the video has an open broadcasting license permitting that specific use.
- When the video is copyrighted and the copyright holders have been asked for their authorisation for that specific use.
- When the video is used as a citation or to make an analysis, comment or critical judgement (except for quotes).

#### *e. Links to external sources*

We advise against including links to external sources from the text; if you have to, then they should be kept to the bare minimum. In this case, make sure that they are URLs to documents that can be used (rights) and that they are permanent (the link will not change over time and will always work, with no need for the content to be reviewed, updated or edited).

### 3. Style

Try to use a direct style that motivates the student without losing the appropriate register for the university material. As a reference, you can adopt these general style norms:

- a. The author's involvement of the student to attract their attention is done using the first person plural:

We will show, we will see, we have seen

- b. Students should be addressed in the second person plural:

check, remember, refer to

- c. Paragraphs should not be too long (maximum fifteen lines).

- d. Do not reference other subject materials as they must be able to work independently.

- e. Sections should be as balanced as possible in terms of length (for example, try to avoid situations where one section has one page and another has fifteen).

- f. Check that all references cited in the text are included in the bibliographical references of the module.

g. Do not overuse **bold**, **italics** and **double quotation marks**:

i Bold type is reserved for **key words** in a paragraph. Do not overuse it; if an entire paragraph is in bold, it may be better to create a key text.

ii Italics are reserved for **words in languages other than that** of the body of the work and for concepts (metalanguage).

iii Double quotation marks are reserved for **quotes**.

## 4. Diversity and gender

The contents that appear in the textual module, whether they are in text, graphic or audiovisual format, must respect equality and dignity, guaranteeing representation of the diversity in our society. This entails using language that respects people, thus avoiding terms or expressions that could marginalize certain social groups.

When it comes to choosing examples, we should reproduce everyday situations with an equal representation of both sexes. Try to avoid disseminating messages that promote stereotypes, except in cases in which the example is actually intended to highlight a discriminatory situation.

Similarly, the images or visual resources provided (photographs, videos and illustrations) should ensure that, across any given hierarchical level, there is balanced representation in terms of gender, culture, religion, race, etc.

In bibliographical references, the same visibility should be given to both men and women. The full name should be given instead of simply the initial.

For example:

Cortés, Josepa; Pons, Vicent (1993). "La biblioteca jurídica de Jaume d'Eixarc (1479)". Saitabi (XLIII, p. 181-194)

On the Language Service website, you will find basic advice on how to use gender-neutral language in your writing.

## 5. Presentation of originals

The length of the original must be appropriate to the required task, between 10 to 50 pages for each module, with 270 words/page (or 2,100 characters with spaces). A good reference to use for the text length is the standard A4 page, 1.5 line spacing and Verdana 10 or Arial 12 font.

For presentation requirements, it is best to distinguish between newly created learning resources or revisions of existing resources (updates, errata, etc), and also between resources that are multi-format and those that are not.

### Newly created, multi-format

- a. We consider that no specific template is required, since the author needs to think about the content and not about the text's format or final layout, as this is done differently for each use. We recommend using delimiting tags like [Start key text] / [End key text] to identify the different teaching resources, or any other unambiguous system that is easy to understand.
- b. We prefer original documents written in Word or equivalent, for example, OpenOffice.
- c. Figures (for example tables or images) can be embedded in the text (in the Word document) or they can be submitted separately with a reference in the main text.
- d. We ask the author or authors to put their name at the beginning of each module.
- e. If there are formulas, they should be edited preferably in Mathtype. The alternative is the Word formula editor. They should never appear as images, or using other applications that cannot be exported to .mml, nor should they be handwritten, etc, as this would require rewriting them, increasing the margin of error.
- f. Instructions, comments or general notes for the editors should be given in a separate document.

### Newly created, not multi-format

The UOC does not recommend creating learning resources that are not multi-format, due to accessibility and usability reasons. The creation of learning resources that are not multi-format should be limited to very specific, justifiable cases.

At present, a newly created text-module learning resource would not be published in multi-format in these two cases:

1. When it has to have a specific, non-standard structure that it would not be possible to generate in .xml.
2. When the authors have chosen to write it with LaTeX and it is a text with a large number of formulas.

The final format of a learning resource that is not multi-format" can only be .pdf.

The general instructions for submitting originals are the same as for multi-format texts, except for formulas when the original is LaTeX.

## Revisions of existing learning resources

Irrespective of whether or not it is multi-format, the first thing to consider is how extensive the update of the existing resource will be. If it is a correction of errors with very few changes, how the originals are submitted will be much less important than in the case of a complex content update.

When identifying the changes, we ask authors to use the latest version of the PDF (including multi-format texts) as the basis for reference. It is important to make sure that the latest version is used.

We recommend making changes to the PDFs using the tools provided by Acrobat (insert, replace, comment). Very brief remarks, notes and changes can be made directly on the PDF, but sentences, paragraphs and longer contents should always be written in separate documents, referenced as "text 1", "text 2", for example. Any other method that is easy to understand and consistent may be valid. The important thing is to avoid ambiguity or contradictions.

In revisions with very few changes, it is also practical to create a document listing the changes referenced by page, section, etc (eg, a list of errata).

If the revisions apply to resources in more than one language, it is sufficient to submit the updates and changes in just one of the versions. The editors will transpose them to the other versions as required.

The updates must always be made on the latest version of the final documents; they must never be made on draft originals or any earlier version. However, if the author wishes to work on a Word document and decides to convert the latest version of the resource into Word (converting from PDF to Word), the changes must be visible in the text (for example, with track changes enabled).

When converting the final PDF into Word, sometimes the format and the images are changed with respect to the original PDF, but the authors are not required to fix it if this happens.



In highly complex revisions, to assess specific cases or whenever it is considered desirable, we recommend consulting with the contact person at the Library.