



Division of Strategic Communication and Engagement Guide to Creating Catalog Course Descriptions

The Division of Strategic Communication and Engagement offers the following best practices for developing course descriptions.

Competitor Research

Before drafting your course description, we recommend that you conduct competitor research:

- Identify 3-5 top competitors in your field.
- Review the courses these programs offer: What information is provided in the descriptions? What market-relevant terms are being used?

Crafting Course Descriptions

Course descriptions should be written in a way that best helps current and prospective students get the most accurate information when researching schools and programs.

- Content should be current, relevant, and clearly communicate the main topic(s) the course covers.
- Descriptions should comprise 2-4 complete sentences, with key terms included.
- Use present tense instead of future:
 - No: *Students in this course will learn how to analyze large data sets.*
 - Yes: *Students in this course learn how to analyze large data sets.*
- Use active (strong) language instead of passive (weak):
 - No: *This course is designed to equip students with many skills.*
 - Yes: *This course equips students with many skills.*

Sample Course Description

(Key terms underlined in blue)

PSYC 292 Introduction to Brain and Behavior

This course covers the foundation for the physiological basis of human behavior. Topics include the structure and function of different brain regions, how neurons communicate, sensory and motor function, and complex brain functions such as speech and cognition. This course also serves as an introduction to the neurobiology of various psychological and neurological diseases.