



ICHAS

Section 8 - Student Supports

Subject:	Policy on supporting students to engage with Blended Learning		
Applicable Standard	QQI	Core	Supports for Learners
Date Approved by Board of Directors:			July 2019
Policy Version	1/2019	Date due for Revision	February 2024

CONTEXT

The benefits of flexibility offered for learners by blended learning is balanced by its demands for learner autonomy, commitment, and self-regulation. Procedures exist to communicate to students that blended learning may differ from their previous learning experiences; to ensure students are appropriately prepared for blended learning; and that their progress and engagement is monitored, encouraged, and supported. Students are supported to pre-assess their own readiness to engage with blended learning programmes.

POLICY STATEMENT

ICHAS implements a robust digital skills induction and orientation process taking in all key educational technologies to teach students about blended learning and ensure they have a strong foundation of digital skills as teaching commences. The College is committed to ensuring students engaging with blended learning have a positive experience and, in that context, recognises its responsibility for supporting students, as groups and as individuals.

Support shall be provided at pre-enrolment for learners to assess their digital literacy. Information is available on the ICHAS website and in promotional material and communications with administrative staff in relation to the necessary software and skills to engage with blended learning, so that potential learners can make an informed decision. Additional supports during induction and orientation ensures that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to use and engage with blended learning. Ongoing opportunities are provided for students to develop their digital literacy throughout their programme.

SCOPE

Applies To	Staff	Students	Both	
			✓	
Responsible for Implementation	Educational Technologist, Information Systems Manager			

Responsible for Monitoring & Review	Vice President (Corporate Affairs)	Vice President (Academic Affairs)	Registrar	Quality Assurance & Enhancement Officer
		✓		✓

DEFINITIONS

Synchronous Blended Learning: A blended learning teaching event, resource or interaction that is delivered synchronously; i.e. in real-time, with participants present and engaging simultaneously.

Blended Synchronous Learning Environment (BSLE): a mode of synchronous blended learning where students may choose to attend a class either face-to-face or via a virtual classroom. A lecturer in the BSLE approach teaches to both F2F and virtual classroom students simultaneously.

Virtual Classroom: The online environment that allows students and lecturer to collaborate, ask questions, view presentations, share documents, complete polls or work in groups in real-time.

Asynchronous Blended Learning: A blended learning teaching event, resource or interaction that is delivered asynchronously; i.e. over a defined period, with participants engaging as instructed. E.g. engaging with online discussion forums, completing interactive online learning activities, maintaining an online reflective journal or e-portfolio, completing online MCQs or assessments and submitting assignments.

Learning Management System: The virtual learning environment where ICHAS students find notes, learning resources, collaboration tools, student email & Office 365, libraries and upload assessment material.

RELEVANT GUIDELINES/ POLICIES INFORMING THIS POLICY

- Charter for Inclusive Learning (AHEAD, 2009)
- Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines (QQI, 2014)
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed by QQI for use by all Providers
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) et al (2015) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Sector Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines Developed by QQI For Independent/Private Providers Coming To QQI On A Voluntary Basis
- Government of Ireland (2012) Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education and Training Act).

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Policies & Criteria for the Validation of programmes of Education.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2015) QQI Policy Restatement Policy and Criteria for Access, Transfer and Progression in Relation to Learners for Providers of Further and Higher Education and Training.
- National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (2005) – re-published by QQI, 2015) Principles and Operational Guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Further and Higher Education and Training June 2005
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2018) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes
- Protection of Enrolled Learners: Protocols for Implementation of Part 6 of the 2012 Act.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2013) Assessment and Standards, Revised 2013
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (revised 2018) Quality Assuring Assessment: Guidelines for Providers
- Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (Text with EEA relevance
- Government of Ireland (2018) Data Protection Act 1988 Revised 2018.
- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2016) Policy on Quality Assurance Guidelines

Linked Policies and Procedures

Linked Policies	Policy on Teaching and Learning
Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with supporting students to engage with Blended Learning

