



ICHAS

Section 3 – Policies and Procedures associated with Quality in ICHAS

Subject:	Procedures associated with assuring the Quality of Blended Learning Environment		
Date Approved by Board of Directors:			February 2021
Policy Version	1/2021	Date due for Revision	February 2024
Parent Policy	Policy for assuring the Quality of Blended Learning		

INTRODUCTION

Within the approaches to Blended Learning used by the College, there are procedures set out in this section relating to the key areas of:

- Developing Online Resources
- Respectful Discussion Forum Use
- Monitoring and Supporting the Virtual classroom

RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLE/ PERSON	RESPONSIBILITY
Educational Technology Manager	Support and monitor the virtual classroom. Ensure students and lecturers are trained to use tools. Review and evaluate operation of procedures.
Programme Director	Liaise with the Educational Technology Manager, IS Manager and programme staff relating to the overall quality of the Blended Learning teaching and learning experience and make appropriate reports to Programme Boards and the relevant Director of Studies.
Lecturer/ Module Leader	Liaise with colleagues in the development of online resources, delivery of virtual classroom sessions and use of discussion forums.
IS Manager	Ensure the IS infrastructure is suitable and appropriately maintained so as to adequately support Blended Learning Environments
QAE Officer	Quality reports. Review procedures in collaboration with Educational Technologist.

PROCEDURES

Procedure for Developing Online Learning Resources

The development of online learning resources and activities at ICHAS uses an adapted ADDIE model. Online Learning Resources typically include podcasts, narrated presentations, interactive resources and activities such as discussion fora, quizzes and self-directed online learning components of blended learning.

The Adapted ADDIE model refers to the following processes:

- **Analyse:** This phase clarifies the instructional objectives of the learning resource(s) and its place in the wider context of the module or programme.
Ownership: Lecturer, Educational technologist, Module or Programme Lead
- **Design:** Appropriate modes of learning and instruction to meet the learning objectives are considered and settled upon.
Ownership: Lecturer, Educational technologist, Module or Programme Lead
- **Develop:** The development phase is where the lecturer or other subject matter expert works with the Educational Technologist to develop content and learning interactions in line with what was discussed during the design phase. During this phase, content is written, and graphics, audio, readings and other multimedia are produced or curated.
Ownership: Lecturer, Educational technologist
- **Implement:** The learning resource(s) or activities are delivered to the Learning Management System (LMS) for use by students. Direction is provided by the instructor around the use and objectives of the resource.
Ownership: Lecturer, Educational technologist
- **Evaluate:** Learning resources are evaluated both formatively and summatively. Formative evaluation is iterative and is done throughout the design and development processes. Peer review is an important aspect of this formative evaluation. Summative evaluation utilises student feedback, analysis of student engagement with learning resources.
Ownership: QAE Officer

Procedures to Support Respectful Discussion Forum Use

Lecturers sometimes use discussion forums as a means of asynchronous blended learning. The forums are monitored by the lecturer and programme coordinator. Lecturers respond to posts and moderate academic discussion. The Programme Co-ordinator ensures discussion is taking place respectfully and in accordance with the respectful use procedures, which suggest that;

- It is not acceptable to use the forums or any other area of the site to 'sound off' or complain about issues. Any serious concerns about the course are discussed privately with a relevant member of ICHAS staff.
- Abusive comments of any sort anywhere in the online environment are not tolerated. All posts to online discussion forums are monitored and the College reserves the right to delete posts of an inflammatory nature. Discussions of a political or religious nature, unless germane to a topic of study, should be avoided.
- Communications in an online environment lack the visual signals that participants can pick up on in a face-to-face conversation, and it is easy for misunderstandings

to arise. Before responding, participants should first consider if they are misunderstanding what is being said or the intention of the originator. If still concerned, students should alert their lecturer or the site moderators. In heated instances, students should avoid a protracted discussion, which is likely to make things worse.

The forum should not be used to:

- Post illegal material
- Defame, abuse, harass, stalk, threaten or otherwise violate the rights (such as rights of privacy and publicity) of others
- Solicit personal information from or about anyone under 18
- Solicit passwords or personally identifying information for unlawful purposes
- Collect or store other users' personal data for purposes other than establishing contact that is reasonably expected to be welcomed by such other users
- Post irrelevant material, repeatedly post the same or similar material or otherwise impose an unreasonable or disproportionately large load on the forum servers or infrastructure
- Post any unsolicited or unauthorised advertising or any other form of commercial publicity
- Post any abusive, harmful, vulgar, obscene, sexually explicit, indecent, profane, inappropriate, or racially, ethnically or otherwise objectionable material, except where the content is appropriate to the content of the forum and you have been granted specific permission to do so and subject to the College's guidelines on said content
- Post material that contains violence or offensive subject matter or links to an adult web site
- Post material that promotes or encourages illegal activity
- Post material that infringes any patent, trademark, trade secret, copyright, rights of privacy or publicity or other proprietary right of any party
- Post material that contains software viruses or harmful programs intended to interrupt, destroy or limit the functionality of computer software or hardware or telecommunications equipment

Procedures for Supporting and Monitoring the Virtual Classroom

The following procedures are in place to ensure quality in the technology supporting the synchronous virtual classroom service:

- Members of the information systems team are present during all Virtual Classroom sessions to assist online learners. This ensures lecturers are free to focus on teaching.
- Support staff monitor classrooms for technological issues. Minor issues are resolved as quickly as possible. Major issues are logged and documented, so that they can be investigated.
- ICHAS staff provide support through the chat facility in the virtual classroom, via e-mail and/or via telephone as appropriate to the specific technical problems and learner need or preference.
- ICHAS staff also utilise remote login technology, with the student's consent, allowing them to access the student's device and solve their technical problems as quickly as possible.
- All end-of-year student and lecturer feedback surveys forms contain explicit questions concerning student and lecturer experiences using the virtual classroom. The responses from these surveys feed into the Annual Review process, and lecturer in-service training, where appropriate.
- Log files, which record student activity and other learning analytics, are recorded and kept on file for all virtual classroom events. Analytics can be useful tools in triangulating problematic interactions with resources.
- Attendance records for all BSLE sessions are logged automatically and maintained for 12 months.

A review of virtual classroom technology is performed on a six-monthly basis. During this review, feedback is considered, other technologies trialled, and incident report logs/ error logs considered.

GRAPHICAL PRESENTATION OF PROCEDURE

The following Chart outlines a graphical representation of the ADDIE Model

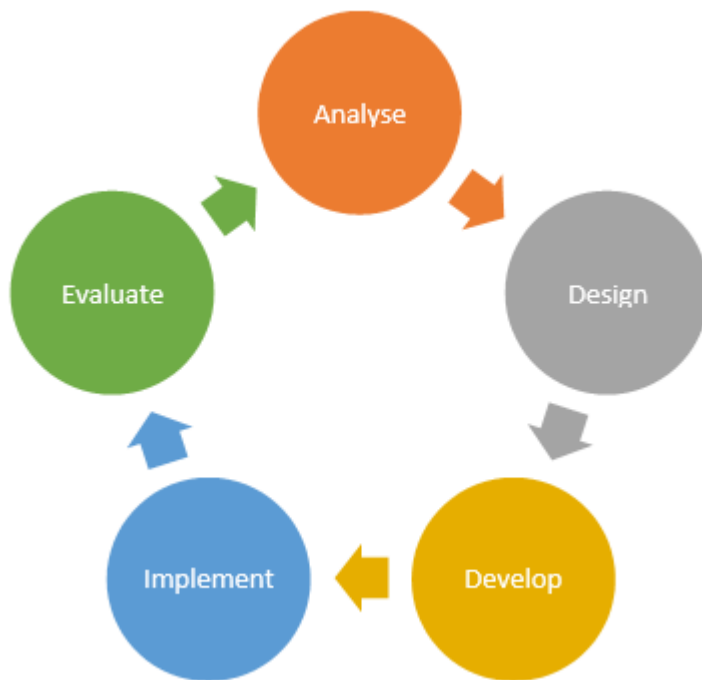


Figure 1 - ADDIE Model used to develop online learning resources

The following diagram presents a graphical representation of the processes involved in the monitoring, review and quality assurance of the Virtual Classroom BSLE experience:



Figure 2 - Monitoring, review and quality assurance of the Virtual Classroom

Linked Policies & Procedures

Linked Policies	Policy on assuring the Quality of Blended Learning Environment Policy on supporting students to engage with Blended Learning
Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with assuring the Quality of the Physical Learning Environment. Procedures associated with supporting students to engage with Blended Learning.

