



# ICHAS

## Section 3 - Policies and Procedures associated with Quality in ICHAS

Subject:	Policy on assuring the Quality of the Online Only Learning Environment.		
Applicable QQI Core Standard	Teaching and Learning		
Date Approved by Academic Council:			August 2021
Policy Version	1/2021	Date due for Revision	February 2024

### CONTEXT

There is considerable evidence of the growth of online education internationally, although there are equally some suggestions that the growth in online provision has not attracted new students to higher education, but more so facilitates existing students to complete their studies in more flexible ways (Jaggars & Xu, 2013<sup>1</sup>). However, Grifoll, (in Grifoll, Huertas, Prades, Rodríguez, Rubin, Mulder & Ossiannilsson: 2009)<sup>2</sup> also contends that “E-learning has emerged onto the global higher education stage as a leading means of gaining a respected education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)”.

Interest in and debate surrounding online learning has been accelerated (perhaps somewhat artificially) because the enforced adjustments associated with the Covid-19 pandemic required educational institutions to embrace at least the concept or some form of either distance/remote or online only learning. In tandem with that forced expansion of technologically facilitated teaching and learning, there has been an evolving embrace of online teaching and learning with evidence that the introduction of online learning offers opportunities to address access issues as well as some pedagogical challenges for higher education institutions and students (c.f. Kirp, 2019<sup>3</sup>; Patterson, 2009<sup>4</sup>).

In addition to opportunities, the lessons learned internationally from the forced movement to online learning equally point to the importance of Quality Assurance in Online Education. While studies prior to the pandemic certainly point to the benefits of online education through offering greater levels of flexibility in terms of schedules, facilitating a better home/life/study balance (Fisher, Cox, and Gray 2008), both national and international

<sup>1</sup> Jaggars, Shanna, and Di Xu. 2013. “Predicting Online Student Outcomes from a Measure of Course Quality.” Community College Research Center (CCRC)- Working Paper 57. NY: Teachers College, Columbia University. <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/predicting-online-student-outcomes.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Grifoll, J., (2009) in Grifoll, J., Huertas, E., Prades, A., Rodríguez, S., Rubin, Y., Mulder, F. & Ossiannilsson, E (2009) European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Helsinki

<sup>3</sup> Kirp, David. 2019. The College Dropout Scandal. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> Patterson, Natasha. 2009. “Distance Education: A Perspective from Women’s Studies.” Third Space 9 (1).

evidence points to the challenges for student engagement as well as assuring the quality of teaching and assessment. There are consistent arguments in academic literature pointing to the different pedagogical approaches and knowledge necessary to teach in a fully online environment, the willingness, capability or otherwise of teaching staff to adapt to using technology and more fundamentally, their ideological worldview of their roles which will influence the quality of the experience of online teaching, learning and assessment. Likewise, in the case of student engagement, home facilities and availability of resources emerged consistently as either enablers or barriers to student engagement (Meler, 2021<sup>5</sup>). Therefore, bearing in mind the multitude of factors that can impact the quality and experience of such education, having appropriately orientated Quality Assured processes, specifically focussed on Online pedagogies and requirements, should, at very least, provide comfort to all stakeholders, that programmes of education offered fully online meet national and international best-practice standards, are fit for purpose and have comparable standards with existing programmes based in a physical campus.

## Definition

The definition of online learning can be varied, depending on the institution, approach, and audience and definitional clarity is not aided by the interchangeable use of terms such as 'distance' and 'remote' learning. The US Department of Education's Data Collection System IPEDS defines a distance education course as "A course in which the instructional content is delivered exclusively via distance education. Requirements for coming to campus for orientation, testing, or academic support services do not exclude a course from being classified as distance education" (Allen and Seaman 2016). This does not preclude courses being offered remotely in modes other than through 'online' means.

A useful definition of online learning, applicable to the College's approach, comes from Sener (2015), who defines online learning as an approach wherein "all course activity is done online; there are no required face-to-face sessions within the course and no requirements for on-campus activity" (Sener, 2015).

According to Allena and Seaman (2016) "An online course is defined as one in which at least 80% of the course content is delivered online. Face-to-face instruction includes courses in which zero to 29% of the content is delivered online; this category includes both traditional and web facilitated courses. The remaining alternative, blended (or hybrid) instruction, has between 30% and 80% of course content delivered online."

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<sup>5</sup> Meler, T. (2021) 'A room of one's own': remote learning among Palestinian-Arab female students in the Israeli periphery following the COVID-19 crisis. *Gender and education*. [Online] 1–17.

<i>Proportion of Content Delivered Online</i>	<i>Type of Course</i>	<i>Typical Description</i>
0%	Traditional	Course where no online technology used — content is delivered in writing or orally.
1 to 29%	Web Facilitated	Course that uses web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. May use a learning management system (LMS) or web pages to post the syllabus and assignments.
30 to 79%	Blended/Hybrid	Course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions, and typically has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings.
80+%	Online	A course where most or all of the content is delivered online. Typically have no face-to-face meetings.

As such, online learning can be viewed as one of several course-delivery modalities which Graham, Woodfield and Harrison (2014) classify as Traditional Face to Face, Technology Enhanced, Blended Learning, Mostly Online and Completely Online.

This policy applies Sener's definition quoted above where the concept of online programmes refers to courses where all content will be delivered online with no requirement for traditional face-to-face or on-campus forms of engagement.

Like Blended Learning, online learning implies that teaching is conducted synchronously and asynchronously with all elements of the programme from admission to graduation delivered remotely. The distinction is therefore primarily locational whereby student access to educational engagement and attainment is broadening because it is no longer restricted geographically. This in turn is one of the key points of rationale for developing online-only provision.

**Synchronous Online Learning:** An online learning teaching event, resource or interaction that is delivered synchronously, i.e., in real-time, with participants present and engaging 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 Online Learning:** An online learning teaching event, activity, 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, collaborating in groups using digital media, completing online MCQs or assessments and submitting assignments.

### **Environments for Online Teaching and Learning Experience**

The college will ensure that optimum supports and technologies are in place to facilitate online-only teaching. Similarly, students who participate on these programmes will also be required and supported to be online-ready as set out in the procedures accompanying this policy and further described in Procedures associated with Code of Conduct for Engagement in Virtual Learning Environments.

From a technical standpoint, mechanisms will be in place to ensure that both on-campus and off-campus systems including hosting arrangements and infrastructure are fit for purpose, routinely evaluated, and regularly backed up. Appropriate disaster recovery mechanisms will be in place to minimise and quickly recover from on-site and off-site hardware or software failures.

**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.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

The College recognises that the environment for online learning programmes is distinctive both from on-campus and blended learning programmes. The College commits to ensuring the quality of the online learning environment and will ensure that the online learning environment is benchmarked against appropriate standards. The Online- policy is oriented toward a value-added approach as much as it is oriented toward accessibility, adaptability and innovation. In developing such programmes, the College will ensure that design takes due cognisance of the specific requirements of online delivery, that such programmes and learning design are learner centred, subject aligned and that technologies are employed in the service of pedagogy.

Similarly, GDPR requirements will be adhered to, with control of learning and support systems continuously monitored and managed by staff qualified in educational technology and IT systems management as well as appropriate academic leaders. The College will ensure that all students wishing to pursue such programmes have appropriate information available to them regarding the nature, expectations and requirements necessary to effectively participate in such educational approaches and will also ensure that technical disruptions to teaching are minimised, that continuity of service is ensured as far as practicable, that technical failures are appropriately risk managed and that security and reliability are prioritised. The overriding policy objective is therefore to support students and faculty with an online teaching and learning experience that is efficient, secure, collaborative, reliable and highly effective.

## **Principles for Assuring the Quality of Online Learning**

The structure of the policy is anchored in the following key international standards and policy documents.

The Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-learning (ACODE, 2014) developed the following benchmarks to assist institutions deliver a quality technology enhanced learning experience for students and staff, which cover the following eight topic areas:

1. Institution-wide policy and governance for technology enhanced learning.
2. Planning for institution-wide quality improvement of technology enhanced learning;
3. Information technology systems, services and support for technology enhanced learning;
4. The application of technology enhanced learning services;
5. Staff professional development for the effective use of technology enhanced learning;
6. Staff support for the use of technology enhanced learning;
7. Student training for the effective use of technology enhanced learning;
8. Student support for the use of technology enhanced learning.

More recently, the third iteration of The European Association of Distance Teaching Universities' Quality Assessment for E-Learning: a Benchmarking Approach (2016) covers similar priority domains for e-learning:

- Curriculum Design – incorporating Flexibility, Academic Community Development, Assessment Procedures
- Course Design – incorporating Educational Strategy, Course Design Process, Materials and Production Design, Assessment
- Course Delivery – incorporating Technical Infrastructure, VLE,
- Staff Support – Technical Aspects, Educational Aspects, Resources
- Students Support – Student Support Organisation, Support Staff, Technical Support, Pedagogical Support, Support Resources

**Most recently, the** European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA, 2018) recommend a number of constituting elements of quality in the context of online provision which include the following:

- Institutional support.
- Course development.
- Teaching and learning (allowing for educational objectives and shifts in pedagogical models).
- Course structure.
- Student engagement and support.
- Faculty support with compulsory e-learning training for new members of staff.
- Technological infrastructures and requisite resourcing (allowing for rapid technological change).
- Student assessment (learner authentication, work authorship and examination Security) and certification.
- Electronic and data security measures.
- access or those students affected by disability, illness, and other mitigating

circumstances.

- protection of data privacy.
- intellectual property rights.
- Public Information.

### **Design and Approval of Programmes**

The design of online programmes is oriented toward what Van de Heyde & Siebrets term an ecosystem of e-learning (EeL) (2019)<sup>6</sup> which envisages online learning as a habitat with “inhabitants”, “interrelationships” and “components” that must be balanced and integrated if the system is to thrive. Academic developers and lecturers are seen as mediators between components and relationships and thereby “must align the tools and their appropriate pedagogies with the needs of their students, in supporting the institutional goals and societal imperatives” (Van de Heyde & Siebrets, 2019 p.3). The concept of “constructive alignment” (Biggs, 2003)<sup>7</sup> whereby online teaching and learning activities and assessment regimes are matched to explicitly stated learning outcomes remain essential to this design strategy.

The College is cognisant of the somewhat polarising positions taken in professional literature. On the one hand, there have been consistent arguments in the literature that Online Education is inherently no different from traditional educational approaches and that the key distinguishing feature is the mode of engagement. Likewise, there have been trenchant arguments that fully online programme design and delivery are fundamentally distinctive. The College finds the latter argument more compelling and therefore the design and development of online programmes will need to be quality assured, and the unique aspects of the delivery modality will address compatibility with published Award Standards and sectoral educational goals; alignment with modular and programmatic outcomes; and evidence based online teaching, learning and assessment methods founded upon solid pedagogical principles and practices. It is therefore imperative that programme design teams incorporate dedicated e—learning expertise, in this instance the Educational Technologist and IT manager and account for levels of faculty competence and capacity to deliver and assess through online-only programmes.

Similarly, teaching staff should have the required competencies for online only delivery and be in a position to make informed decisions when assessing the feasibility of this model of delivery for the proposed disciplinary/subject area. The College relies on a structured approach to any programme development activity, which is outlined in the Policy on and Procedures associated with Programme Design and Development The policy incorporates all necessary adaptations

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<sup>6</sup> Van de Heyde V. and Siebrets, A. (2019) The ecosystem of e-learning (EeL) model for Higher Education *South African Journal of Science* 115, 5/6.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17159/sajs.2019/5808>

<sup>7</sup> Biggs, J.B. (2003). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. Buckingham: Open University Press/Society for Research into Higher Education. (Second edition)

required for online delivery outlined herein. Additionally, the development of specific teaching learning and assessment activities will be supported by evidence-based models of practice such as Young & Perović's ABC Model, Laurillard's Conversational Framework, Salmond's 5- Stage Model<sup>8</sup>. On a more granular level, the ADDIE model is preferred for supporting specific modular outcomes. Given the rapid progression and emergent character of technological affordance, the policy also accounts for structures to facilitate an adaptive and innovative approach based on evidence informed currency, genuine need, appropriate change and feasibility.

design of online-only programmes should therefore account for:

- A collaborative approach drawing upon all necessary strands of expertise across pedagogical, subject content and technological spheres.
- Existing structured approaches to programme development.
- Universal design principles defined by choice and flexibility to ensure optimal and inclusive access for a diverse student population.
- Programmatic and Modular Alignment.
- Implications for the entire Online Academic Ecology prioritising a student-centred perspective throughout the design phase.
- Expertise or training needs of those delivering the programme.
- Online assessment methods.
- Integrating knowledge competencies and skills development.
- Personalised instruction, guidance, and feedback to meet different teaching and learning needs.
- Cyclical review patterns to consider, review and evaluate existing practice and assimilate appropriate innovations.

## Teaching Learning and Assessment

Technologically enhanced learning is viewed within the broader historical context of various pedagogical traditions including behaviourism, cognitivism, social constructivism and significant derivations of major learning theories (e.g., Gardner's multiples intelligences, styles theory, Knowles work on distinctions between andragogy and pedagogy). Philosophically and practically, teaching and learning within the College is influenced by both Bloom's and, more recently, Fink's taxonomical indicators on the nature of successful pedagogical engagement. Fink's (2003) Taxonomy of Significant Learning implies a realignment of emphasis

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<sup>8</sup> Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives handbook: Cognitive domains*. New York: David McKay.

Knowles, M.S., Holton, E.F. & Swanson, R.A. (1998). *The adult learner* (5th Edition). Houston: Butterworth-Heinemann Publishers.

Fink, L.D. (2003). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Laurillard, D. (2013). *Rethinking university teaching: A conversational framework for the effective use of learning technologies*. Routledge.

Young, C., & Perović, N. (2016). Rapid and creative course design: as easy as ABC? *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 228, pp. 390-395. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.07.058>

Salmon, G. (2020). *The 5 Stage Model*.

Available: <https://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html>. Last accessed June 2021.

from didactic knowledge acquisition to more active forms of learning prioritising application and integration as much as acquisition. The social or relational aspect of learning or what Fink terms the “human dimension” is of particular importance as is the concept of “caring” which emphasises motivation engagement and energy for learning. Autonomous learning or “learning how to learn” is a further taxon - teaching students to become “self-directed learners.”

The challenge therefore is to ensure that online programmes must deliver on these pedagogical priorities replacing on-campus ‘face-to-face’ interaction with equally meaningful relational engagement and extensive interactional opportunities. Online programmes must also offer comparable flexibility and range with respect to learning pathways, mode of delivery, pedagogical method, and fully integrated assessment strategies. Further, unique challenges associated with online assessment, notably assessment integrity and process, learner authentication, authorship, and codes of behaviour, must be afforded due and detailed procedural consideration. Online learning may well offer unique opportunities for autonomous and self-directed learning, but it is equally acknowledged that this can only occur in a fully supported learning and interactional context. The College contends that where feasibility and suitability has been established, where the distinctive properties of online-only delivery is carefully aligned with programme design and where innovative tools to support creativity, problem solving, critical thought, knowledge application and integration are employed, that online learning has the potential to enhance and expand learning for students. Rather than being adjunctive, the policy acknowledges that online learning is increasingly viewed as a distinct pedagogy supported by tailored theoretical conceptualizations such as Garrison Anderson and Archer’s Community of Inquiry (2000)<sup>9</sup>, or modifications of that model (e.g. Shea & Bidjerno, 2009<sup>10</sup>; Shea et al., 2011); Siemens’ Connectivism (2004<sup>11</sup>) Harasim’s Online Collaborative Learning (2012)<sup>12</sup> and Anderson’s Online Learning Model (2011)<sup>13</sup>.

While various models for online learning exist (Picciano, 2017)<sup>14</sup>, the College identifies a natural synergy between Fink’s taxonomy and Anderson’s Online Learning Model (2011) Laurillard’s (2012) Conversational Framework and subsequent evidence-supported elaborations notably Young and Perović’s ABC Learning Design (2014). Rejuvenation of Bloom’s Taxonomy for Online Learning and Salcido & Cole’s Best Practices for Teaching Online (2019) similarly guide policy in this respect.

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<sup>9</sup> Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2, 87–105. doi: [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516\(00\)00016-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7516(00)00016-6)

<sup>10</sup> Shea, P. & Bidjerno, T. (2009). Community of inquiry as a theoretical framework to foster ‘epistemic engagement’ and ‘cognitive presence’ in online education. *Computers and education*. [Online] 52 (3), 543–553

<sup>11</sup> Siemens, G. (2004). *Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age*. <http://www.elearnspace.org/Articles/connectivism.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Harasim, L. (2012). *Learning theory and online technology: How new technologies are transforming learning opportunities*. New York: Routledge Press.

<sup>13</sup> Anderson, T. (2011). *The theory and practice of online learning* (2nd Edition). Edmonton, AB: AU Press

<sup>14</sup> Picciano, A. G. (2017). Theories and frameworks for online education: Seeking an integrated model. *Online Learning*, 21(3), 166-190. doi: 10.24059/olj.v21i3.1225



Online Teaching and Learning in the College is also supported by key international standards and policy statements specifically ENQA's Considerations for quality assurance of e-learning provision (2018) ACODE Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning (2014) and the EADTU 's Quality Assessment for E-Learning: a Benchmarking Approach

### **Academic Integrity Issues**

The College is committed to ensuring that all members of the College community including learners adhere to the principles of academic integrity, producing work that is original and which builds open the work of others in a respectful, appropriate, and properly referenced manner. All learners, including those on fully online programmes will be directed to resources outlining the College's policies and procedures on academic integrity, delineating what is expected in relation to academic work, and the consequences of failing to adhere to high standards of academic integrity. Programme Validation documents will address this issue more comprehensively in relation to individual Programmes.

### **Learner Identity Issues**

#### **Pre-Enrolment**

Learners apply to the college through a secure online portal, using identification data including name, address, e-mail address, home or work address or telephone number, date of birth, country of birth, PPS number, relevant supporting statements & declarations, and personal photograph.

### **GDPR Issues**

The College will comply with all requirements with regard to its data protection obligations. This includes the General Data Protection Regulation (2016) and the Data Protection Act (2018).

### **Collection & Processing of Data**

The College will only collect & process data where the person has explicitly consented to such processing & collection; where it is necessary to fulfil programme requirements (including any statutory obligations in relation to qualifications and/or accreditation to which the College is subject). The College will ensure that such data is processed lawfully and for specified purposes; that only the required data is collected; that data is accurate; that data is retained for the specified time periods and that data is processed in a secure manner.

### **Storage and Retention of Data**

The College will ensure that data is stored securely. <Tech details of same?>  
The College will only retain data for necessary purposes, including legal and reporting purposes. To determine the appropriate retention period for personal data, the College will consider the amount, nature and sensitivity of the personal

data and the reasons processing such data.

### **Maintaining Accurate Data**

The College is required to maintain accurate and up-to-date records for any data subject for whom the College holds personal details, which includes both students and graduates. The College is required to alter such data in the event of a request from the data subject regarding the veracity or accuracy of such data.

### **Teaching Staff – Recruitment and Professional Development**

The college is committed to fair and transparent policies and procedures governing the recruitment and professional development of staff for online only training - clearly outlining particular implications for role, workload, teaching plans and structure. This will also be communicated to prospective staff at the point of recruitment and should form part of job descriptions and role profiling. All staff, including new staff will have ongoing access to experts in induction and training in e-learning and e-assessment modalities and will be furnished with the necessary technologies and tools required for high quality online teaching and learning. Particular support will be directed to those transitioning from other modes of delivery most especially from fully Face to Face to fully online with ongoing professional development supporting mastery of learning technologies, technological and pedagogical integration and optimum strategies for the development of online programmes and training. The College also commits to creating fora that will facilitate collegial sharing of good practices and teaching and learning experiences and achievement. Ultimately, the college will ensure that the structure, profile, and role of the teaching staff is aligned with the pedagogical model and to their duties. To this end, the College will also ensure that it has capacity to identify training and development needs of the teaching staff.

### **Student admission, transfer, progression, RPL, and certification**

Policies and procedures associated with student Admission, Transfer, Progression, RPL, and Certification apply across all modes of delivery. There are however a number of policy issues associated with the unique aspects of online only programmes that require statement. Applicants will be informed as to the admissions criteria highlighting those aspects that may differ from other modes of delivery such as online Admissions Interviews. To facilitate fully informed decision making, the college will provide clear detailed information and advice - supported by content and diagnostic samples on all and any pre-requisite technologies, skills, or competencies particular to online only learning to all applicants prior to enrolment. Students will also be informed of expected effort and workload as well as any expectations of synchronous and asynchronous engagement and completion, group engagement or any other course requirements.

### **Learning resources and student support**

The College commits to a centralised planning strategy for technological maintenance and development incorporating electronic security and reliability measures as well as structures for the sustention, expansion, and improvement of the infra-structure for online delivery. The priority is therefore both optimum

service provision and virtual mobility for all staff and students. To this end, electronic learning management systems or VLEs should be sufficiently resourced, interoperable, auditable, and robust and will normally have the following capabilities:

- Enrols, registers, and inducts students for courses and programmes.
- Disseminates e-learning materials to all students including students with special educational needs.
- Supports a variety of methods and tools.
- Provides students with necessary learning resources especially -e-library services.
- Maintains, updates, and secures records of student performance.
- Sufficiently secure to guarantee information integrity, reliability, and validity.
- Facilitates communication between the institution, its students, and staff.
- Provides accurate data for quality management.
- Integrable with the institution's other technical infrastructure.
- Based on non-proprietary web standards and is updatable and updated to employ enhancing technological innovation.

The College will ensure that students' pedagogical, well-being, technological and administrative supports are fully aligned with and reflect the distinctive characteristics of online-only delivery. The College also commits to an individuated approach to students' needs that addresses the specific challenges of increased autonomy such as self-management skills associated with timing and pacing, reflection, motivation and engagement. The College will also give close attention to the management and structure of these supports and that access to supports is co-ordinated and arranged around student needs.

### **Information Management and Public Information**

Information management systems will be sufficiently secure, comprehensive, and agile to provide a complete record of the e-learning experience within the College. The system should therefore be able to capture all data required to comparatively assess and evaluate online programmes with the use, purpose and application of this data clearly outlined (see Policies and Procedures Associated with Information Management). The policy on Information Management should reflect principles of ethical governance in addition to being GDPR compliant by respecting and protecting the data and privacy of students and staff.

The College commits to the publication of accurate, reliable, and current information on online programmes including detail on pre-requisite and special requirements; required technical skills and technological equipment; the extent of technical supports; qualification and certification; learning objectives and workload; credits and transferability; assessment methods and requirements and relevant scheduling and time-framing. The College also will publish appropriate analytics such as completion rates, grade attainment rates, and attrition rates.

## Monitoring and Review:

It has been noted that monitoring quality assurance where there is a lack of on-campus presence comes with additional challenges (ENQA, 2018). However, the College is committed to adapting current monitoring procedures to deliver comparable standards of Quality auditing. In addition to ensuring online programmes are regularly reviewed, updated, and improved, the College is also committed to ensuring that pedagogical innovation is carefully aligned with the College's overall institutional vision, mission and strategy. The creation and completion (including communication of how feedback is acted upon) of meaningful feedback loops involving all stakeholders are considered critical to quality enhancement as well as a commitment to the appropriate use of auditing data through cyclical systematic analysis and viability testing.

All Online learning programme materials are regularly reviewed for effectiveness using monitoring and feedback mechanisms including (but not limited to):

- Ongoing monitoring and review of virtual classroom sessions and asynchronous learning materials as well as programme related online activities for pedagogical quality.
- The use of learning analytics and other reporting capabilities within the LMS and Student Information System to monitor Learner engagement with learning activities.
- Student and Lecturer feedback during and after modules accessed online through the LMS as well as overall programme evaluation and External Examiner feedback.
- Reports by the Educational Technology Manager and Information Systems Manager for the Quality & Standards Committee concerning the effectiveness, maintenance, usability, enhancement, and security of the technologies underpinning online learning.
- Assessment of continued alignment between e-learning delivery and programmatic objectives.
- Completion of feedback loops through dissemination of implementation of action points.

The purpose of monitoring and review is to acknowledge and respond to issues that may arise; enable incremental improvement to the online learning approach over time; enhance innovation using learning technologies as part of the college's commitment to learning; and to capture student and lecturer interactions with learning technologies for the ongoing improvement of same.

### SCOPE

Applies To	Staff	Students	Both	
			✓	
Responsible for Implementation	Educational Technology Manager. Information Systems Manager			

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

## RELEVANT GUIDELINES/ POLICIES INFORMING THIS POLICY

- Quality and Qualifications Ireland (2018) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes
- 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.
- National Forum (2015a) Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education: A Roadmap for Enhancement in a Digital World 2015-2017. Dublin. Available at: [www.teachingandlearning.ie](http://www.teachingandlearning.ie).

## Linked Policies & Procedures

Linked Policies	Policy on supporting students to engage with Blended Learning. Policy on Programme Design and Development Policy on Data Collection, Usage and Management Policy on Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
Linked Procedures	Procedures associated with assuring the Quality of the Physical Learning Environment. Procedures associated with assuring the Quality of the Blended Learning Environment. Procedures associated with supporting students to engage with Blended Learning. Procedures associated with Programme Design and Development Procedures associated with Data Collection, Usage and Management Procedures associated with Staff Recruitment, Management and Development

	Procedure Associated with Assuring the Quality of the Online Learning Environment
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