



Aqueduto Quality Assurance Framework Version 3.0

The Institutional Domain

1. Institutional Strategy

- 1.1 Senior management can articulate the importance of blended / online learning to current and future Institutional strategy and this is reflected in a documented strategy
- 1.2 The institution invests in infrastructure for online learning, including technical and personnel capacity
- 1.3 All relevant local laws, specifically including Data Protection and Equality, Disability and Inclusion rights, are adhered to
- 1.4 Roles and responsibilities for online learning are clear and explicit within organisational hierarchy
- 1.5 Design of platform and materials for online learning is consistent with institutional branding guidelines
- 1.6 Online/blended learning strategy is developed and reviewed through consultation with key internal stakeholders and external consultancy / expertise
- 1.7 Blended learning approach (i.e. nature of blend) is documented, and supported by course or project design and strategic implementation

2. Staff Training, Development and Performance Management

- 2.1 Tutors are qualified in the subject in which they are providing training
- 2.2 All staff (tutors, technical and support staff) receive training in supporting and facilitating online learning
- 2.3 All staff (tutors, technical and support staff) are encouraged to take part in ongoing professional development.
- 2.4 Supporting and facilitating online learning is acknowledged as a key competence in regular performance reviews

3. Supporting the Learner Experience

Before Enrolment

- 3.1 Information is provided to participants before enrolling to enable them to make an informed choice on the **logistics** and **academic suitability** of the course. This should include (but is not limited to)
- Aims and learning outcomes
 - Cost
 - Timeframe and time commitment required
 - Entry requirements (e.g. prior qualifications and experience)
 - Assessment approaches and procedures
 - Policies on plagiarism and cheating
 - Application and enrolment procedures
- 3.2 Information is provided to participants before enrolling to enable them to make an informed choice on the **technical** suitability of the course. This should include (but is not limited to)
- Technical requirements (hardware, software, connectivity)
 - Additional costs for equipment and technology
- 3.3 In good time before the start of the course, participants are given information about
- Access to the platform (location, username, password, etc.)
 - Guidelines on use, interaction and netiquette

Enrolment

- 3.4 Participants receive guidance on successfully completing the course, including
- Time management
 - Autonomous learning
 - Managing deadlines
- 3.5 Participants are asked about their expectations of the course, and their responses guide enrolment advice and or tutor planning

During the Course

- 3.6 Course participants should benefit from sessions with the following characteristics
- There is an encouraging ethos
 - Participant contributions are managed effectively and inclusively.
 - Sessions cater for the diversity of learner needs
 - Feedback, praise and constructive criticism contribute to participants achieving learning outcomes
 - Netiquette and group communication are managed effectively
- 3.7 Participant numbers per course are appropriate for interaction types, and the ratio of tutors to participants is appropriate.
- 3.8 The online learning platform is user-friendly and navigation is clear
- 3.9 A digital resource library is provided for participants, within the course or platform
- 3.10 A community space for participants is provided for each course
- 3.11 Participants questions are responded to in a timely manner (e.g. through group or individual text chat, or offline messaging)

3.12 Participants have access to technical support, online, via e-mail or telephone

3.13 There is a clear complaints procedure

3.14 Systems are in place for ongoing feedback and response during the course

Post Course

3.15 Assessment and certification procedures are transparent, directly related to stated learning outcomes, and completed within a stated timeframe

3.16 Feedback is gathered from participants and staff systematically after the course, and it is analysed and acted upon

The Pedagogical Domain

4. Course Design

4.1 Course learning outcomes are clearly defined

4.2 Content of material and blend proportion (where applicable) is suitable for learning outcomes and course aims

4.3 Where external tools and multimedia are chosen, their use is clearly linked to learning outcomes

4.3 Methods of interaction are appropriate and their use is structured and guided

4.4 Assessments test learning outcomes; formative and summative methods are clear; and a range of methods are used as appropriate.

4.5 The course timetable is designed to ensure each unit/module, and the overall course, is achievable

4.6 For wholly online courses, the combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities is clear and pedagogically appropriate

4.7 For blended courses, the combination of face to face and online elements is clear and pedagogically appropriate

4.8 The overall course design and content is regularly reviewed and updated

5. Tutor Competencies

5.1 All tutors must be skilled in supporting, encouraging and evaluating independent and collaborative learning online

5.2 Tutors must be able to operate the platform (e.g. adding, editing, tracking, recording)

5.3 Tutors must be skilled in planning and preparing sessions, and evaluating the success of materials and activities to support participants' achievement of learning outcomes

5.4 Tutors should have the ability to establish their identity and presence in a course

5.5 Tutors differentiate according to participants' interests, competences and or prior experience

5.6 Tutors make use of communication channels provided and respond to participants within stated response times

The Technological Domain

6. Platform

6.1 A platform is used which:

- Is mobile responsive and, works across devices and operating systems
- Allows for integral participant grading, monitoring and feedback
- Has inbuilt accessibility features (e.g. sensory impairment; cognitive needs)

6.2 Higher level technical support for the platform is:

- Clear to internal stakeholders, with appropriate permissions for, e.g. superadmin, manager, tutor and participants.
- Clearly documented and communicated through policies and or procedures
- Periodically reviewed and changes documented

6.3 The platform is structured so it is clear when use of third-party web spaces (e.g. synchronous platforms, video-sharing platforms, websites) takes learners away from course platform

6.4 The platform is regularly upgraded to the latest version, or a clear rationale for not upgrading is provided