



TYPE: POLICY AND PROCEDURE	
SUBJECT: ONLINE LEARNING	REFERENCE: LWPO6
DATE OF POLICY: 1 st October, 2020	
LAST REVIEWED:	
APPROVED BY: Board of Directors	
<p>POLICY AND PROCEDURE</p> <p>Scope: Learning works will use E Learning/blended learning where appropriate to support experiences that are flexible, responsive and effective and meet the needs of all its stakeholders mostly of the students themselves.</p> <p>Introduction to Learning Definitions</p> <p>eLearning</p> <p>The term “e-learning” is referred to when learning is taking place using both a computer and the Internet. There are several facets to eLearning including the Hardware (computers, mobile phones, digital cameras), digital resources (the web, materials presented via Virtual, and online communication tools (e mail, chat forums etc)and Learning Environments, online libraries etc), software (tutorials, ‘office packages etc).</p> <p>Blended Learning</p> <p>The term blended learning is commonly referred to as a combination of face to face learning along with eLearning.</p>	

Different Forms and services

Products and services may vary and take different forms. These may be:

- Single courses and/or entire programs
- Entire courses and/or course units, lessons or components
- Aimed at individuals or entire groups in classes
- Offered for credit at 'Learning Works' and/or for general interest without credit

By eLearning the educational Institution referred to as 'Learning Works' shall refer to both terms using synchronous and asynchronous ways for the delivery of its training and learning programmes.

Whether synchronous or asynchronous the Lecturer/Tutor is responsible for the module being delivered while the student has the freedom to access the VLE anytime as it is available 24/7 and the synchronous sessions are recorded and made available on demand by the student. Among the e learning pedagogy there are discussion forums, recorded webinars and peer to peer comments.

Each student has their own assigned ID and student-generated password to log into learning management system.

Strategic Management

The strategy is to include both eLearning and Blended learning so it can move towards a student-centred learning covering all MQF levels. Learning Works shall therefore commit itself to offer ways that students may choose to enrol and select the best possible option including the pattern or timeframe most suitable to them apart from the traditional way of face to face learning. Learning Works is also offering eLearning and blended learning to cater for student diversity. This shall also result in having Teachers/ Lecturers and support staff engaged in the process of enrolment and admission including teaching and learning using ICT and other resources which ultimately present e-learning/blended learning options apart from the face to face system.

The key features of the above are:

- Stakeholder Oriented – developed with particular attention on having a return on investment in eLearning especially for the learners.
- Consensus-based – developed through consultation with a balance of provider and stakeholders in Malta and beyond.
- Comprehensive – inclusive of all elements of the learning system: outcomes and outputs, processes and practices, inputs and resources.
- Futuristic – describing a preferred future rather than the present circumstances
- for design and delivery
- Distinctively European – reflecting the highest of European values and learning priorities
- Adaptable – best used for adult and further and Higher education and training, but adaptable to other levels of learning services
- Flexible – not all the above will apply in all circumstances and when E Learning involves activities or resources beyond Learning works, such as Virtual mobility of students, institutional partnerships or development of open resources, the roles and responsibilities will be clearly defined and controlled by operational agreements where appropriate.

The eLearning and Blended learning are also governed by Ethical and Legal considerations to be in line and conformity with GDPR.

Policy and Procedures

The Policy and Procedures pertaining to eLearning and Blended learning are the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer of 'Learning Works' after discussing them with necessary stakeholders of the educational Institution and any advisors that might be required for review.

The Strategy for the Policy and Procedures are compatible with 'Learning Works' plans and 'mission statement' including National Education Policies and International practice.

These are made available for public knowledge through the website.

The Policy and Procedures address:

- Management, responsibility and accountability
- Staffing and staff development
- Financial, physical and technical resources (including software)

Designing and Development of eLearning and Blended learning Programmes

The eLearning and blended training programmes are designed according to the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) framework as stipulated in the Referencing report 4th Revised Edition February 2016 where reference is also made to 'The Bologna Process, in relation to the upholding of the ECVET and ECTS system, credit accumulation and transfer while respecting the workloads.

Learning Outcomes

The intended learning outcomes for each training programme are:

- Clearly stated
- Relevant, i.e., useful and appropriate for the intended learners
- observable / demonstrable
- Measurable
- Achievable and realistic
- Appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the award, certificate, Diploma, Degree or Masters awarded
- Consistent with the mandate of the provider

Curriculum and Training Programme Content

The Curriculum content is:

- Credible with sources identified
- Accurate
- Relevant
- Balanced and free of bias

- Updated consistently and routinely. documented
- Appropriate to the learning outcomes
- Culturally sensitive
- Consistent with current copyright laws in the jurisdiction of the provider

Training and Teaching Materials and other Research Resources

Both the teaching and learning materials are:

- Prepared by qualified content experts (author identified, recorded and documented) working with qualified design experts where appropriate (identified, recorded and documented)
- Readily available
- Learner friendly
- Interesting in content and layout
- Well-organized
- Free of cultural, racial, class, age and gender bias
- Accessible to those with disabilities
- Free from errors
- Adaptable to learner needs and abilities but still respecting the learning outcomes

Learning Aids and Technology for The Teacher and the Learner

Learning technologies provided are appropriate to:

- The field of study or subject matter content and skills
- The intended learning outcomes
- The relevant characteristics and circumstances of the learner
- The cost and benefit for the learner
- Provide multiple representations of content
- Enable concept mapping within the learning environment
- Make available real-world situations and simulations
- Provide assistance and guidance including communications to the learner

Learning materials and the delivery reflect sound technical design so that they are:

- Navigable
- Easily updateable and frequently updated
- Complemented by multimedia, rather than distracted by them
- Inclusive of “live” links to relevant and previewed documents subject
- In line with copyright law
- Reliable
- Sensitive to bandwidth constraints of students
- Compliant with current technology and ICT standards

Student Centred and User-Friendly Technology

The comprehensive course package (all materials and technologies) is:

- Appealing in appearance
- User-friendly
- Customizable
- Inclusive of all institutional services and activities (registration, payment, advising, tutorial assistance and library services)
- Complete
- Reviewed and evaluated routinely

Design of Assessments

The design of e-Learning/Blended courses uses a balance of formative and summative assessments to assess the intended learning outcomes against agreed marking criteria. Moreover, the timetable is formulated in a way to allow the student concentrate week by week and includes weekly readings where appropriate while the assessment is indicated up front, so the student has ample time to prepare.

e-Learning/Blended offers the student the opportunity to study at one's own time, place and pace. The learning Management system (LMS-AXONE) is available 24/7. However, the programmes have a starting date and a finishing date. The same applies for assessment. However, the Mitigating policy will apply should a student require extension of times. Programmes will be offered on full time or part time according to application for accreditation where applicable.

The design might also be flexible by combining e Learning and face to face to a programme or even a module on its own. The flexibility may depend on factors such as nature of learning outcomes or modes of assessment. In such cases the students are also informed up front if their attendance needs to be compulsory or participation may be beneficial but optional.

The design also allows student to student and Lecturer to student communication through the chat and Forum. The students are also informed beforehand if peer interaction/ discussions are essential to successful completion of the programme making this more student centred. Students will interact through the platform (ZOOM) used for live sessions for Synchronous learning.

Students will also interact via e mail and (What's App) application for virtual and traditional learning. For asynchronous learning the Lecturers and students will be using a platform including a Forum Discussion board and a Chat system while still being able to use the e mail for any type of communication.

The design is also friendly to Research, since Learning Works offers online libraries and web-based research.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism intentional or non-intentional is not allowed. 'Learning Works' is against Plagiarism and informs the student through its Policy and procedure on Plagiarism in the student Handbook which is also found online on its website. 'Learning Works' has its Plagiarism software to detect any plagiarised documents , assignments , long essays , etc.

Use of Technological Devices and Technical Assistance

The Development of online learning material is as such to be accessible and usable via a variety of devices including mobile phones. The material used is made up of videos, recorded webinars, power points, links to webs and you tube etc

All videos to be used as a mode of delivery in synchronous teaching are to be sent to administration for approval prior to use. If 'youtube' social media videos are to be used the lecturer should submit the link to that video for approval from the CEO to determine its quality. Once approved the link can be part of the pedagogy used in teaching and learning.

The requirements for videos are as follows:

Resolution	Name	Quality
2560x1440	1440p	2K
1920x1080	1080p	Maximum resolution for HD
1280x720	720p	Minimum resolution for HD
854x480	480p	Standard definition

Technology Technical Assistance

Technical assistance with the technologies being used and provided shall be applied to:

- The purpose of the technology(ies)
- The etiquette involved
- Skills and knowledge required to manipulate and interact with the technologies being used

Technology, computers and other ICT – are appropriately used to:

- Engage and support learners
- Accommodate and promote individualization
- Create opportunities for students to do meaningful work
- Increase proficiency at accessing, evaluating and communicating information
- Improve student abilities to solve complex problems
- Nurture artistic expression
- Enable active engagement in the construction of knowledge
- Meet National and International standards for students with disabilities

The following are engaged to provide technical assistance for e-learning staff and users at the three main stages i.e. production, delivery and access.

HIVE- which is a third party ICT specialist gives the technical assistance for the website
Right Brain another third party company gives the technical assistance through LMS-AXONE
IT Department from (Vassallo Group) also gives technical assistance where needed and applicable.
The administration also gives technical assistance where applicable.

Mode /s of Delivery for eLearning and Blended Training Programmes

Zoom is used for synchronous non-traditional online teaching whereas the preferred virtual learning platform for asynchronous is AXONE.

Students are provided with a password to access sessions on Zoom. They will also be provided with same for asynchronous eLearning courses.

Delivery of E Learning and Blended Training Programmes including Feedback

Feedback to student assignments will be delivered in a timely manner by the lecturer. Lecturers should also respond to all submitted work within two weeks (10) working days from the date of submission.

Student Contact Hours for courses will be determined according to the credit hours assigned to the course. The VLE also records amount of time students spends on VLE.

New students enrolling on a training programme with 'Learning Works' are required to attend the e-Learning environment training during the first week of student orientation. Students may also attend on-going e-Learning orientation throughout the semester should they wish to.

Staff Recruitment and Support

Staff recruitment of instructors / teachers / professors will be based on:

- Recognized qualifications in the subject area
- Teaching experience at the relevant level (e.g., secondary, adult)
- Relevant work experience and/or current knowledge in the field
- Appropriate skills to teach online (or have to go through a CPD)
- Content support persons, e.g., course tutors
- Tutors and mentors (lecturers or work based mentors)
- Process support persons, e.g., administration technical support
- Learning skills support (lecturer acting as Tutor)
- Career planning and employment counselling (to be referred to third parties if necessary)
- Problem-solving (CEO)

Programme Management Support

The person that is accountable for program management shall be 'The Chief Executive Officer' (CEO) and is accountable for:

- Student management and students' rights
- Learning management
- Technology planning and utilization
- Recruitment and selection of appropriate personnel
- Planning and evaluation of all aspects of the product/service
- Responsiveness and flexibility to the student and to changing learning requirements
- Maintaining links within the education and business communities
- Research and continuous improvement
- Financial viability and continuity

Since there can be usability issues of online environments, students and Lecturers encountering difficulties in navigating and learning, 'Learning Works' shall have pre-recorded videos to assist students before engaging. Moreover, real time support is also provided by the IT department of 'Learning Works' on ctabone@learningworks.edu.mt or jbonello@learningworks.edu.mt or telephone 00356 22107219

Student Communications Support

Though 'Learning Works' is committed to provide the best services possible in relation to communications support there are shared responsibilities that students are made aware of. These include:

☐ Own responsibility for ensuring the minimum technology requirements to complete online courses, including access to a computer and printer and not less than a stable DSL Internet connection. Students may check with the CEO or Administrative Executive to ensure that they have access to accessible technology.

☐ Students and 'Learning Works' will answer all forms of communications in a timely fashion. 'Learning Works' (CEO or Administrative executive) must communicate with students prior to the time of lecturers' absence for a synchronous session by e mail.

☐ 'Learning Works' is committed to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities and complies with the provisions of the 'Equal Opportunities Act for any required support'.

☐ 'Learning Works' will offer free one-to-one or group training and support to students in all the three areas

Tutor and Mentoring Support

Lecturers acting as tutors are all qualified and currently using the 'Online Learning Platform' Axone. When new Lecturers are recruited, they are either required to be already conversant with a Virtual Environment system or have the opportunity of attending any CPD whether with 'Learning Works' or any other third party to become competent in using pedagogy which is appropriate for online teaching and Learning.

All Lecturers shall act as tutors and support 'ad hoc' in several ways like direct face to face support before or after a lecture, through e mails or other type of social media. This is usually determined between lecturer and the student so that the communication is enhanced in the best way that suits the student, while considering the lecturer's availability and therefore this should finally be decided between the lecturer and the student. Any 'ad hoc' feedback is done within a minimum of 48 hours to 72 hours that a student makes a request for assistance. Tutors are to keep an eye on who makes contact or not and will ask those who do not make or seek contact to see and check if any assistance is needed. Tutors shall be active rather than passive.

Regular student support comes through feedback after every assessment whether formative or summative. The feedback can be in the form of e mails or any other means that helps the student learn. An example is group feedback or group discussion in class after a typical assessment or at the beginning of a course for induction purposes.

Mentoring tutors refers to the support given during on the job training where students are under supervision as they are still in a 'learning curve'. This type of support is usually engaged in the face

to face situation, however this can be also adapted, depending on the nature of on the job according to a specific module. Example if marketing jobs are being done through computer and from any other place but the workplace this is also considered on the job training and mentoring can be through phone calls, emails, Zoom meetings etc.

A report is finally presented by the Mentor to 'Learning Works' both to the lecturer carrying out the module and the administrative executive

Learning Works will offer CPD to focusing on online teaching to all lecturers. This training will cover both the pedagogical aspect as well as the technical areas.

These skills will be asked for in the recruitment and interview process of new lecturers. For the current lecturers CPD training will be provided to ensure all lecturers are up to speed with the technology used for online teaching

Institutional Support, Archiving and Back up Plans

The management and implementation of the online (virtual) aspect of Learning Works' programmes will be handled by the institution's administration department located within the The Training Hub, The Landmark, Qormi.

'Learning Works' offers an open space and also provide laptop/s that can be used by students for e-Learning, research purposes and also to access 'online library' with photocopying facilities on demand at the Administration.

These services are provided for reasons of limited domestic band with availability, software licensing or specialist video conferencing. The area might also be used for 'online examinations' purposes where the identity of the student needs to be verified. Same can be done with the actual classrooms.

'Learning Works' has a website which offers support for students who are still in the process to apply. The Prospectus can be found on the website, but can also be found as a hard copy.

The Prospectus has three direct e mail links for any support required and has a telephone number in case someone needs to speak and enquire directly.

The emails provided for direct student support are:

Academy Principal and CEO: cbonnici@learningworks.edu.mt

Administrative Executive: ctabone@learningworks.edu.mt

Administrative assistant: jbonello@learningworks.edu.mt

Telephone number: 00356 22107219/00356 21584229 or 00356 79584200

The current LMS has the capability to store most of the data requested i.e. students' records, assignments and assessments. Other statistics are kept in Excel format.

Learning works guarantees that has a relevant data protection system and back -up mechanism using 'OneDrive' and supported also by our third partie software and ICT technical support provider 'Right Brain'.

Admissions

To apply students need to visit the 'Learning Works' website on www.learningworks.edu.mt , select and choose the course they would like to follow by clicking the 'learn more 'and then click on the 'apply now' button and present a digital copy the following documents after payment is complete:

- ID Card (both sides) or Passport
- Recent Photo or selfie
- Police Conduct (not older than 2 months)

- Certificates as per eligibility criteria

If the student is not sure of possessing the right qualifications student support is given by writing an email on info@learningworks.edu.mt

The students will be informed by an e mail if they have been enrolled or not and also includes a Learning agreement.

Once students are enrolled students are given a link to access the online Platform. The mail will also have an e mail address to contact should the student encounter any technical difficulties with the online platform.

Applicants submit their application forms and pay their tuition fees online. Once the process is completed our administration department gets in touch with them with further details on the course. Each student is uniquely registered in our Learning Works System called Axone.

Collecting Student Feedback

The student questionnaire will include a question about the Policy and procedure for e - Learning/Blended learning so that the answers can be used in the Quality Cycle for the revision of Policies and Procedures

Quality Cycle for Revision of Training Programmes

An annual audit shall report if the Policies and Procedures are executed and exercised into practice and if the policy procedures needs to be arranged, re-written or re-arranged if these need to be enhanced. This report is carried out by a consultant for 'Learning Works 'who is qualified in Quality Assurance, having a number of years of expertise in the area.

Following feedback from the students and lecturers as well as external experts contracted by the institution, programmes would need to go through a review process to ensure that they are updated according to the latest technologies available for virtual teaching and learning

Data will be collected through online surveys which are carried out from time to time recorded and documented at the Administrative executive office to be made available for the annual audit
