Blended and Fully Online Learning

Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board

COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION & TRAINING

Blended and Fully Online Learning Policy & Procedures

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Contents

Introduction 3
Purpose 3
Scope 3
Objectives 3
Principles 4
Organisational Context 5
Definitions 5
Action Plan 5
Infrastructure, Resources and Supports 5
Quality Assurance of Blended and Fully Online Learning 13
Programme Context 23
Programmes, Modules or Courses 23
Learning and Curriculum Design 24
Learning Materials and Resources 25
Assessment & Feedback 26
Evaluation and Continuous Improvement 27
Learner Context 29
Thinking about Study 29
Learner Supports 29
Evaluation and Feedback 31
Reviewing the policy 31
Procedures: Blended and/or Fully Online Learning 33
Appendix 1 – Glossary 44
Appendix 2 – College of FET Support Services 48
Appendix 3 - Reference 49

Introduction

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's[1] College of FET is committed to increasing opportunities for learners to access education by introducing thoughtfully designed, quality-assured, blended and fully online learning courses[2].

This policy supports the implementation of the College of FET's Blended and Fully Online Learning Action Plan 2025-2028 and operates alongside existing College of FET policies and procedures. It is also informed by QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes (2023) and QQI's Core Statutory QA Guidelines (2016) as well as research papers, projects, examples of international good practice and guideline documents developed at European level (see Reference section for more detail).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the College of FET's approach to the design, development, implementation and evaluation of blended and fully online learning courses to ensure consistency, accessibility and quality across all programmes of study.

The College of FET will ensure compliance with any legal, regulatory or statutory obligations required for blended and fully online learning.

Scope

This policy applies to all provision within the College of FET and encompasses all awards made by any awarding body for whom the College of FET is an approved provider, e.g., QQI, City & Guilds, CISCO, Cambridge, etc.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To set out the principles that will guide the implementation of blended and fully online learning in the College of FET.
- To ensure that staff are provided with the necessary professional learning and development opportunities and support to successfully design, develop, implement and evaluate their blended and online courses.
- To ensure that sufficient documentation, resources, supports and infrastructure are in place to support blended and fully online learning for both staff and learners.
- To ensure compliance with the College of FET's existing policies, procedures and guidelines.

[1] For the purpose of this document, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board is referred to as 'the ETB'.
[2] For the purpose of this document, a 'course' refers to QQI programmes or modules and courses offered by other awarding bodies

Principles

The introduction of blended and fully online learning will be guided by the following principles:

1. **Equivalency:** Learners studying in both online and face-to-face learning environments have access to similar learning experiences and outcomes. While the method of delivery may differ, the quality of education, resources, interaction and assessments will be equivalent across all formats.
2. **A planned and collaborative approach**: Programme and course approval processes within the College of FET are defined by the Programme Delivery, Development and Validation policy ensuring effective and consistent processes for strategic approval and quality assurance governance of all provision, this policy explicitly references governance requirements associated with Blended and Fully Online programmes..
3. **Pedagogy before Technology:** Any use of technology will be guided by the pedagogy and selected to support teaching and learning.
4. **Supports for Learning Practitioners**: Learning practitioners[3] teaching a blended or fully online learning course will be supported to design and develop their blended or fully online course.
5. **Supports for Learners:** Learners will have access to a variety of supports as a registered learner with the College of FET. They will be assisted in developing skills to work both collaboratively and independently as they study online (see Learner Supports).
6. **Access to a Quality Learning Experience:** To ensure a quality learning experience, processes will be put in place to evaluate and review the teaching and learning experience. These processes will be integrated within the College of FET quality systems.

[3] The term 'Learning Practitioner' refers to a teacher, tutor, adult educator or instructor.

Organisational Context

Definitions

The following definitions highlight that blended or fully online learning is not just about the enhancement of face-to-face teaching and learning with technology, but rather involves a deliberate process of designing a course where learner needs, subject matter requirements, teaching practices and technology are carefully integrated.

Blended Learning

Blended Learning is the replacement of **some**, but not all face-to face teaching with designed, learner-centred, synchronous and asynchronous online subject-matter activities and assessments. A blended learning course will always **include** some face-to-face on-campus classroom learning.

Fully Online Learning

Fully Online Learning is the replacement of **all** face-to-face on-campus teaching with designed, learner-centred, synchronous and asynchronous online subject matter, activities and assessments. A fully online learning course will **never** include face-to-face on-campus classroom learning.

See Appendix 1 for additional definition and terms.

Action Plan

The Action Plan for Blended and Fully Online Learning (2025-28) outlines a framework to guide the integration of blended and fully online learning at the College of FET. Key priorities include:

1. Expanding access to education and promoting lifelong learning;
2. Enhancing learner autonomy and collaboration;
3. Fostering quality and innovation in educational practices;
4. Developing the proficiency and confidence of our learning practitioners;
5. Building capacity for blended and fully online learning by ensuring the necessary infrastructure, resources, and support systems are in place.

Infrastructure, Resources and Supports

1. Information & Communication Technology (ICT)

The Information & Communication Technology (ICT) department is responsible for providing a high-quality ICT service for staff, learners and external partners.

The ICT department, Formula Networks and the TEL Support Service work closely together to ensure that the College of FET's hardware, software and systems are designed, installed and configured to the highest standard to ensure seamless delivery of all programmes of study. As blended and fully online learning courses are introduced, additional services may be needed, which will be carefully planned, integrated, reviewed, and monitored.

2. Technical Support

The College of FET provides technical support for staff through Formula Networks. Learners can receive technical support via their teachers and the learning hubs.

3. Contingency arrangements

The ETB's Business Management Policy outlines how it will continue to offer business operations, including education and training services, during disruptions or emergencies.

The Disaster Recovery Plan further details specific steps for IT infrastructure recovery, ensuring that blended or online programs can be quickly restored. The ETB's Disaster Recovery Plan includes specific protocols for restoring IT services, including prioritising critical systems and ensuring backup data is secure and accessible. The plan also involves co-ordination with third-party service providers to ensure a rapid recovery.

The College of FET supports two Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) – Moodle and MS Teams. Having two VLEs provides a backup option in case of outages or limitations with one platform.

4. Updates and Migration to New Technology

The FET Steering Group approves updates and migration to new technology. This process is managed by the ICT department and Formula Networks and supported by the TEL Support Service.

All upgrades are planned and detailed work plans are put in place to minimise disruption. Where outages are essential to facilitate upgrades, the outages are planned on dates and times where disruption is minimal (for example, during holiday periods or at times when course activity is low) and all impacted learners are informed using multiple means of communication (emails, notifications in Teams/Moodle, direct communication from/with Learning Practitioners etc.)

5. Learning Technologies

Office 365: Office 365 is the core platform for learners and staff in the College of FET. The College of FET provides extensive training opportunities through the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) & Professional Learning & Development (PL&D) Support Services.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE): A VLE is a digital platform that supports teaching and learning activities. The selected VLE will be used to deliver course content, interact with learners, administer assessments, facilitate collaboration and track learning progress and participation. The College of FET supports two VLEs – Moodle and MS Teams.

MS Teams was selected as a VLE because it seamlessly integrates with Office 365 tools and apps. It is familiar to learning practitioners, easy to use and promotes collaboration and communication amongst learning practitioners and learners. MS Teams supports integration with 3rd party apps e.g. Vevox, and provides insights and reporting information. It is scalable and provides strong security features and data protection. In addition, it is cloud-based and therefore it can be accessed from anywhere and on multiple devices.

Moodle is being made available to all ETBs by SOLAS supported by Enovation Solutions Ltd. Since its introduction there has been considerable investment in upskilling learning practitioners to use the VLE in face-to-face courses. Moodle is an open source and cost-effective which can be customised to fit with the College of FET requirements. It has extensive community support and is regularly updated with improvements and additional features. It is compatible with a variety of standards, e.g. SCORM, and is mobile friendly.

By supporting two VLEs the College of FET can leverage the unique strengths of each platform and provide a more comprehensive and flexible learning experience for learning practitioners and learners.

The chosen VLE must contain at a minimum the following course information:

- Course induction information;
- Learning practitioner welcome video that provides an overview of the course;
- Contact details;
- Course outline;
- Course and assessment timetable;
- Access links to online synchronous sessions;
- Access to chat or discussion forum;
- Options to submit assessment work;
- Course material and activities.

Consistency: It is important that learners have a consistent learning experience across all provision. Work is continuing in the development of:

- A consistent look and feel for the supported VLEs.
- A learner portal within the College of FET SharePoint site which will give all registered learners access to supports and resources.
- An induction process for learners studying on a blended or fully online learning course.

Software & Apps: Learners and learning practitioners have access to the Microsoft Educator Suite of Microsoft 365 software tools including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Teams, Outlook, OneNote, Forms, Sway, OneDrive, Stream Viva Insights, To Do, Whiteboard, Planner and Delve. Other apps licenced by the college include Canva, Vevox, Padlet, Ellii, Easygenerator and MindMeister.

6. Security & Privacy

The College of FET recognises the importance of safeguarding the personal information of all learners, staff and stakeholders.

It complies with relevant data protection laws and regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Learners will be informed (e.g. through the learner handbook) of how their data is collected, used and stored and there are processes in place for learners to access their data (see Privacy Notice).

The College of FET has in place a Learner Management System Policy. This policy outlines information relating to user access controls, adequate security and data protections (GDPR), verification of learner identity with a unique identifier, and maintaining accurate and up-to-date data.

In addition, the College of FET has a number of processes in place to ensure that learner information and data is kept secure and is compliant with relevant legislation and policies. These include: Acceptable Usage Policy, Privacy Notice for Learners (available on StaffConnect), and staff training through the Privacy Engine platform.

Learner registrations are conducted online via the Further Education and Training Course Hub (FETCH) website. As part of the registration process proof of identity is sighted and recorded. Learners' PPSN acts as a unique identifier.

All registered learners are issued with an ETB learner email and password. These credentials are used to access Microsoft 365 suite, College of FET supported apps and Moodle. Learners are requested not to share their login credentials with others.

Assessment and learning activities conducted online are kept private, with access restricted to the learners within the class group, the learning practitioner, and other relevant individuals e.g. co-ordinator, internal verifier and external authenticator. The Secure Storage Procedure outlines the process for tracking, storing and safeguarding learner assessment evidence and outlines the College of FET's record retention schedule. The Digital Assessment for QQI Certification document provides guidance on the storage of learner video evidence for assessment.

Software and apps recommended for use in the College of FET go through a Critical Review process. When approved many of these apps can be accessed by staff and learners through a single sign-on (SSO) process using their ETB credentials.

MFA is used to confirm the identity of staff when logging in to Microsoft 365 apps and Moodle. MFA is being explored for learners.

Recruitment

The ETB's Recruitment and Selection Policy sets out the process by which the ETB recruits, inducts, and retains the most suitable candidates. Job descriptions for roles within blended and fully online learning are developed in conjunction with Human Resources (HR) and the TEL Support Service to ensure that a suitable candidate is selected with skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the area of blended and fully online learning.

The HR Department is responsible for onboarding all new staff. The TEL Support Service offer digital induction sessions for staff (Staff Digital Induction Handbook) and the QA Support Service also offer QA induction sessions for new staff.

7. Contracted Training

The College of FET engages contracted trainers to deliver courses on its behalf. Contract training is seen as a flexible, innovative and responsive option for provision wishing to deliver courses which cannot be provided using existing resources.

All providers who are contracted by the ETB are required to adhere to the College of FET Quality Assurance (QA) systems and processes and are bound by the scope of this document.

8. Staff Resourcing

The College of FET is committed to providing a comprehensive range of supports for staff and learners. A number of support services have been established to focus on key areas, such as quality assurance, learner supports, technology-enhanced learning, professional learning and development, employer engagement and planning and evaluation.

There has been considerable investment in people and resources by the College of FET to ensure that the support services are fit-for-purpose and able to respond to both the needs of staff and learners. Figure 1 in Appendix 2 provides an overview of the supports services and staff numbers (accurate as of January 2025).

Within the TEL Support Service, four staff members were employed with responsibility for the implementation, evaluation and review of blended and fully online learning in the College of FET. More information on the TEL Support Staff can be found on StaffCONNECT.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

The College of FET

The College of FET is responsible for:

- Supporting and facilitating the implementation of this policy and fostering initiatives that support learners and learning practitioners.
- Developing reliable, secure, and scalable technology infrastructure.
- Ensuring appropriate resources, supports, technologies, tools and products are available for staff, learners and other stakeholders e.g. external authenticators.
- Taking all practical steps to ensure continuity of service delivery of its online learning and support system as outlined in the supplier service level agreements.
- Identifying and managing the risks associated with blended and fully online learning.

Blended and Online Learning Support Service

The Blended and Online Learning Support Service (a branch of the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Support Service) supports learning practitioners in designing and developing blended or fully online learning courses. This involves carefully planning all parts of a course that will be delivered either through a mix of synchronous class sessions (on-campus and/or through Teams) and asynchronous online activities. The focus is on design for learning and course structure, with digital tools simply being used to provide access to learning activities.

The Blended and Online Learning Support Service is responsible for:

- Designing and developing Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) opportunities for learning practitioners involved in blended and fully online learning (in conjunction with the PL&D Support Service).
- Promoting and leading a Community of Practice (CoP) for blended and fully online learning including standalone workshops, staff book clubs, teaching squares/rounds, and other initiatives relevant to LPs teaching blended and fully online courses.
- Providing pedagogical and technological support to learning practitioners and advising them on the design, development, implementation and review of a blended or fully online learning course.
- Supporting and advising learning practitioners as they design learning resources and activities e.g. eLearning modules, videos, e-tivities etc.
- Working with the Quality Assurance Support Service (QASS) in the development of new blended and fully online learning courses for the College of FET.
- Working with QASS as they update previously validated modules for the College of FET.
- Working with the other support services and staff to develop new policies and to ensure that existing policies and procedures e.g., Assessment Procedures, Programme Approval, Learner Support Framework, Access, Transfer and Progression are updated for blended and fully online delivery.

- Evaluating, reviewing and updating the blended and fully online learning policy and procedures and any other relevant policies and procedures.

Technology Enhanced Learning Support Service

The Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Support Service supports learning practitioners in integrating digital technologies into a face-to-face course.

The aim of TEL is to meaningfully enhance the learning environment and overall experience of the face-to-face class setting with the use of digital hardware like interactive multimedia screens and learner devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones) and software such as presentation platforms (PowerPoint, Prezi, Canva, etc.); interactive polling platforms (Vevox, Mentimeter, etc.); gamification platforms (Kahoot, Bamboozle, etc.); and collaborative whiteboard platforms (MS Whiteboard, Miro, etc.).

TEL can also involve using Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) (like Moodle and MS Teams) in a face-to-face course for the purposes of hosting digital assessment practices; relevant or required subject-matter resources (eBooks, videos, infographics, podcasts, etc.); asynchronous activities (e.g. discussion boards, learning journals, audio/video diaries, etc.); and homework. TEL makes face-to-face courses more interactive, accessible, and engaging.

The Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Support Service is responsible for:

- Licensing and supporting core technologies including choosing technologies aligned to College of FET values (critical evaluation), procurement, license management and support of chosen platforms and tools.
- Providing advice and support with regards to the use of technology to enhance teaching and learning.
- Delivering training sessions to staff on the recommended technology e.g., Moodle, Microsoft 365 tools, Teams, Vevox, Padlet etc.
- Working with the Blended and Online Learning Support Service as they develop PL&D opportunities for learning practitioners.

Provision Co-ordinators/Managers

Provision Co-ordinator/Manager is responsible for:

- Working with the Blended and Online Support Service to identify courses suitable for blended and fully online learning, and planning for implementation prior to commencement.
- Identifying the learner profile for a blended and fully online learning course.
- Submitting requests to design and deliver a blended or fully online learning course to the Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) or the Strategic Regional Planning Network (SRPN).
- Liaising with the Blended and Online Learning Support Service to plan the design and development of the requested course.
- Enrolling learning practitioners teaching a blended or fully online learning course on the recommended PL&D programme(s).
- Allocating time for both face-to-face sessions (physical or virtual) and moderation of asynchronous activities when organising a learning practitioner's timetable.

- Organising the timetable for learners on a blended or fully online learning course.
- Managing blended and fully online teaching and learning, which are subject to operational and quality processes i.e., programme approval, academic integrity, IV and EA like traditional face-to-face teaching and learning.
- Participating in the evaluation and review of blended and fully online learning courses.

Learning practitioner

Learning practitioner is responsible for:

- Completing the PL&D badged Credential in Design for Blended and Fully Online Learning and any other relevant badges.
- Attending an induction session organised by the Blended and Online Learning Support Service.
- Informing learners of what is expected of them when studying on a blended or fully online learning course in relation to attendance, participation and engagement through the development of a code of conduct or class agreement document.
- Designing and developing engaging blended and/or fully online learning courses.
- Developing the necessary assets for teaching a blended and/or fully online learning course e.g., backward design, course outline, learning resources and activities.
- Fostering engagement and building a sense of community.
- Communicating with the learners promptly to give feedback and support.
- Ensuring they have a working knowledge of the chosen VLE e.g., MS Teams or Moodle and can confidently use the system.
- Guiding and supporting learners when studying on a blended and fully online learning course.
- Sharing of practice and contributing to the development of a bank of blended and online resources.
- Creating an effective, engaging and collaborative learning environment.
- Reviewing data analytics within the VLE to monitor learner engagement and participation in the course.

Learner

The learner is responsible for:

- Reading all the information provided by the College of FET and selecting an appropriate course of study.
- Completing an online induction.
- Ensuring they have access to a quiet study space for virtual classroom sessions, and to complete set asynchronous (self-paced) and homework activities.
- Managing and organising their time effectively to ensure they complete all assigned learning and assessment tasks.

- Being present and engaged in all synchronous sessions; for virtual sessions cameras should be switched on.
- Working collaboratively with other learners and learning practitioners when required.
- Taking part in course activities such as class discussions, polls, surveys, forums, chats etc.
- Evaluating and judging their own performance and identifying areas for improvement.
- Seeking help and guidance where necessary.
- Helping to create a positive, engaging and collaborative learning environment.

Information & Communication Technology Department

The Information & Communication Technology Department is responsible for:

- Creating emails and passwords for learners.
- Re-setting staff passwords.
- Managing the ICT infrastructure across all College of FET campuses.
- Managing IT network including the Wi-Fi network.
- Managing the ICT Helpdesk.
- Managing staff electronic devices.
- Sourcing and supplying technology, hardware and software.
- Ensuring the reliability of the recommended VLEs e.g., MS Teams and Moodle.
- Maintaining the security and reliability of the ETB infrastructure, e.g. VLEs, technology, hardware and software.
- Managing outsourced IT Support and Help Desk.
- Troubleshooting issues with emails.
- Managing larger projects such as the setting up of PCs, moving of PCs etc.

Active Inclusion Support Service

Active Inclusion Support Service is responsible for providing supports to all registered learners in respect of device equity, access to counselling and Disability Needs Assessments for non-PLC learners. They also support the delivery of supplemental provision through a network of on-campus Learning Hubs (Learner Support Framework, 2023).

The Quality Assurance Support Service

The Quality Assurance Support Service is responsible for the quality assurance and academic standards of courses delivered in the College of FET. All courses offered under blended and fully online learning will be subject to the same core quality processes that underpin all programmes offered within the College of FET.

Professional Learning & Development Support Service

The Professional Learning & Development (PL&D) Support Service works in collaboration with staff, co-ordinators and other stakeholders to identify and organise professional learning opportunites in a range of priority areas.

Quality Assurance of Blended and Fully Online Learning

10. Governance

The College of FET has a specific framework structure for QA governance, which consists of the FET Strategic Regional Planning Network (SPRN), the Quality Council and two sub-groups – Quality Assurance and Programme Governance.

The role of the **FET Strategic Regional Planning Network (SPRN)** is to facilitate integrated curriculum planning with a cross-provision and cross-campus development.

The role of the **Quality Council** is to oversee all Quality Assurance aspects related to the design, development, approval, implementation, monitoring and review of the Further Education and Training provision and support services offered by the College of FET.

The **Quality Council Sub-Group (Quality Assurance)** has responsibility for the development, oversight, planning, co-ordination, and improvement of quality assurance policies, procedures and processes.

The **Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance)** has responsibility for the oversight, planning, co-ordination, development and quality of all the programmes of the College of FET.

All validated programmes, modules or courses (from other awarding bodies) designed to be delivered through blended and fully online learning will be subject to recommendation by the Quality Assurance Sub-Group (Programme Governance) and approval by the Quality Council.

11. Programme Delivery, Development and Validation

The College of FET provides quality assured programmes for learners. All courses offered by the College of FET are subject to local QA governance through the Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) and/or the SRPN (see Programme Context for more information).

12. Criteria for admission to a Blended and Fully Online Learning course

Learners must be self-motivated, organised and able to take responsibility for their own learning. They must be capable of working autonomously with guidance and support (if needed), as well as collaborating with other learners in an online setting. Good communication skills are required, as they will be expected to engage with other learners and the learning practitioner through online forums, emails and chat platforms.

Learners must be able to use a computer or laptop, a mobile device, navigate the internet and use software applications such as word processing and online learning platforms.

This information is made available to learners through the College of FET and FETCH websites.

13. Learner Identification

The College of FET Learner Management Information System Policy outlines the policy for learner identification. Validation of learner identification must be sighted and recorded (type of evidence presented e.g. photo ID, PSC card, letter, etc.). For learners studying on a fully online learning course, MS Teams will be used to engage with learners regarding validation of identity and verification of PPSN ownership. The Procedure Section C of this document outlines the process.

14. Learner Numbers

Learner numbers will have a direct impact on learning activities and methods of feedback and assessment for blended and fully online learning courses. Therefore, the number of learners enrolled will not exceed 20. This is to ensure meaningful interaction between learners and learning practitioners.

15. Technical requirements

For Learners: The College of FET adopts a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy. Learners will be asked to have the following:

- A relatively modern computer or laptop with a microphone and camera (webcam). The computer or laptop must be capable of running Windows 10 and MS Office;
- Good internet connection, a minimum connection speed of 3 Mbps (megabytes per second);
- An internet browser - MS Edge v77 or above, installed.

Note: The duration of this policy and procedure document is from 2025-28. During this time as technology improves and is updated the technical requirements outlined above will also update.

For learners unable to access a device such as a laptop they can use the resources available through the hubs or apply for a device through the Device Equity Scheme. (See Learner Supports on the College of FET website for more information).

For Learning Practitioners: The College of FET will ensure that learning practitioners will have access to the following equipment:

1. Personal Computer (PC), laptop or tablet
2. Two monitors - minimum screen size 27”
3. Headphone
4. Microphone

16. Contact Teaching Hours

The College of FET acknowledges that the term ‘contact hours’ for blended and fully online teaching includes both live synchronous and asynchronous teaching. Asynchronous teaching includes but is not limited to the moderating of asynchronous learning activities such as e-tivities, quizzes, discussions etc.

17. Timetabling

When designing a blended or fully online learning course a learning practitioner will determine the number of hours of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning. This information will be used to timetable teaching hours through the Timetabler app like traditional classroom teaching.

The timetabling of online synchronous sessions will require careful planning and consideration and should be discussed with the learning practitioner, so that they can plan the online and on-campus synchronous sessions accordingly as they design the course.

When scheduling the timetable for both the learning practitioner and the learner, every effort should be made to arrange online synchronous sessions when learners are not on campus. If a learner needs to attend an online synchronous class session while on campus, individual learning

spaces or booths should be provided to enable their active participation. Similarly, the learning practitioner will need a quiet space on campus to effectively teach their online class.

18. Integrity of Assessment

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy outlines the College of FET's approach to ensuring fair and consistent assessment, quality and standards. Formative and summative assessment are seen as integral to the learning process. Learning practitioners judge the quality of the learner's work according to assessment criteria and the linked learning outcomes. Assessments are designed to support learning and encourage learners to reflect and monitor their own learning.

At the start of the course, learners will be informed of the assessment requirements, deadline dates and submission methods. Learning practitioners are encouraged to use the selected VLE for assessment submission as these systems are regularly monitored, secure and reliable.

The College of FET's Secure Storage Assessment Procedure outlines the requirements for the secure storage and tracking process for assessment evidence.

19. Critical Review of Technology

Before any app is licensed for use by the College of FET, it goes through a Critical Review process. The app is evaluated under several criteria, such as the educational value of the app/software, how it supports teaching and learning, how it meets the needs of the learner, any risks associated with its use, and any implications in the context of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in Ireland. Following this initial review process a full Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is undertaken. Apps that successfully complete this process are piloted for one year and evaluated before the licence is renewed.

20. Attendance and Engagement

The College of FET's Attendance & Engagement Policy outlines the College of FET requirements regarding attendance and engagement for all registered learners. Learners enrolled on a blended or fully online learning course are encouraged to actively participate in all scheduled classes, including both on-campus and virtual sessions and to engage with digital course content, activities, and assessments. There are a variety of ways to monitor attendance and engagement, these include but are not limited to the following:

1. Attendance taken in live classroom sessions;
2. Data analytics from the selected Virtual Learning Environment (VLE);
3. Activity logs;
4. One-to-one check-ins;
5. Time spent online;
6. Activity & exercise completion;
7. Assignment submission.

Attendance and engagement will be taken into consideration when evaluating overall attendance.

21. Library Resources

Learning practitioners and learners can access the Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) Digital Library. The library provides a wealth of resources including access to ebooks, other library resources i.e. ProQuest, study guides, subject specific guides and academic writing and referencing

information. They offer the option to sign up to a newsletter which provides updates on new resources, guides and eBooks.

22. Hyflex Teaching and Learning

A Hyflex course is a flexible hybrid course format where learners and the learning practitioner meet synchronously, with some learners attending on-campus while others attend virtually. The concept combines elements of hybrid (mix of in-person and online) and flexible learning.

This model may be used by a provision that operates across two campuses. Hyflex courses require a high level of planning and resourcing. The learning practitioner must ensure that course materials and activities are equally accessible and engaging across both modes. The provision will need to ensure that the classroom is setup for Hyflex teaching. Resources should include but are not limited to:

- High quality audio and video equipment to ensure remote learners can see and hear everything that happens in the physical classroom;
- Microphones and speakers (distributed around the room) e.g. ceiling or wall-mounted;
- TV screens at the back or side of the classroom to ensure remote learners can be seen both by the learning practitioner and other learners in the classroom.
- MS Teams for screen sharing, breakout rooms and interactive tools e.g. polls;
- Access to collaboration tools e.g. Whiteboard, Padlet;
- Reliable internet connection and IT Support.

Learning practitioners teaching a Hyflex course will need to complete the Hyflex Class Design badge (in addition to the compulsory PL&D badges listed below).

23. Professional Learning and Development (PL&D)

When designing a blended or fully online learning course, it is not enough to merely replicate traditional classroom practices. Courses need to be designed so that they can be truly effective and engaging. To do this successfully, learning practitioners will need to be given time and space to design and develop their course, learning resources and activities.

The College of FET is committed to supporting learning practitioners and has developed the Credential in Design for Blended and Fully Online Learning. This is a PL&D programme designed to support learning practitioners as they prepare to deliver a blended or fully online learning course.

The credential is made up of five badged micro-credentials, three of which are compulsory, along with two other badges, where learning practitioners can choose from a suite of options.

The compulsory badges are:

1. Backward Design
2. Course Outlining
3. Virtual Class Design

Learning practitioners may choose two additional badges from the list below in any sequence or concurrently:

1. Asynchronous Online Learning Design

2. Classroom Assessment Techniques
3. Intelligent Teaching Assistant Design
4. AI for Teaching, Learning & Assessment
5. Hyflex Class Design
6. Virtual Learning Environment Design
7. Mixed-Reality Design for Learning
8. Collecting and Analysing Learning Data
9. Infographics & eBooks for Learning
10. Video Animation for Learning
11. Audio for Learning
12. Multimedia eLearning Design

Other badges may be added in the future to reflect changes to delivery requirements.

For each badge, learning practitioners design and create at least one relevant artefact (e.g. a course design, a complete VLE, a video, etc.) and post it in their ePortfolio. Each badge will be customised to meet the learning practitioners scheduling and discipline-specific needs.

The three compulsory badges will need to be completed before teaching a blended or fully online learning course and the final two badges within one year.

This PL&D model is designed to be:

- **Collaborative**: Learning practitioners work together to design and develop their course, content and resources;
- **Guided**: Learning practitioners have access to a variety of resources and templates to guide the design and development process;
- **Iterative**: Learning practitioners are encouraged to implement and reflect on their work and adjust where necessary;
- **Responsive**: The credential is designed to be flexible to meet the needs of the learning practitioner and provision within which they work;
- **Quality Assured:** Learning practitioners will complete an ePortfolio of work which is reviewed by the facilitator and, where appropriate/relevant, other learning practitioners undertaking the credential.

24. Community of Practice (CoP)

A key component of the Credential in Design for Blended and Fully Online Learning is the development of a CoP. Learning practitioners will be encouraged to work collaboratively and explore new ways of teaching and learning. Learning practitioners can join two CoP teams:

1. The CFET TELSS Blended and Fully Online Learning team is dedicated to providing resources, expert support and a community for learning practitioners. It is currently built around the badges for the PL&D but over time we will work to add opportunities for a book club, meetups and visiting speakers.

2. The second team is CFET TELSS Digital Learning Content Creators. This team was created to support learning practitioners as they develop learning resources using different apps and tools. Here they can ask for help, post questions and share their work with their peers and ask for feedback.

25. Teaching and Learning Strategies

In line with the College of FET's Blended and Fully Online Learning Action Plan 2025-28, this policy does not recommend any specific model or framework but offers examples of different strategies that learning practitioners can implement based on learner, course requirements and good practice.

Additionally, the policy does not mandate a specific percentage of face-to-face or online components for blended learning courses. Focusing on a percentage reinforces the idea that there are two separate modes of delivery. Instead, the emphasis should be on how these two modes complement and integrate with each other.

Teaching and learning strategies play a key role in supporting learners on a programme of study. Learning practitioners are encouraged to experiment with different techniques and reflect on their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the learner and the intended learning outcomes of the course. Examples of teaching strategies include collaborative learning (group projects), flipped classroom, simulations, role-playing, skills demonstrations, experiments, problem-solving activities, reading, discussions and direct instruction.

Teaching strategies should be engaging, incorporate real-world challenges or scenarios, and allow learners to develop their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Teaching strategies should also consider the diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as the needs and experiences of the learners.

The course design should include opportunities for learners to practice different learning strategies to help them improve their understanding and retention of course content. Examples include, note taking, active reading, practice tests, visual imagery, collaborative learning, mnemonics, reflection and goal setting.

26. Learning Activities

Learning activities need to be planned to ensure what is being taught directly contributes to the intended learning outcomes of the course. When planning learning activities practitioners are encouraged to consider the learning goals, evidence of achievement and the range of learning activities that need to be designed and developed.

27. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

The College of FET promotes the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to support learners with diverse learning needs, abilities, and interests. The following should be considered as part of course design:

1. **Multiple Means of Representation** – Offer content in various formats, such as written text, videos, simulations, or podcasts, to suit different learning preferences.
2. **Multiple Means of Engagement** – Provide different ways to engage and motivate learners, such as allowing them to choose how they demonstrate their knowledge.
3. **Multiple Means of Action and Expression** – Enable learners to express their understanding in various forms, like written work, drawings, multimedia presentations, or audio, according to their strengths.

28. Safe Learning Environment

The College of FET is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all learners and staff. Harassment, discrimination or any form of inappropriate behaviour in synchronous sessions and the selected VLE communication channels e.g. forum or chat, will not be tolerated.

The College of FET will ensure that digital tools, and the VLEs used, comply with data privacy regulations and protect the personal information of all learners and staff. Learners and staff are encouraged to report any concerns or violations, and appropriate action will be taken to maintain the integrity and safety of the blended and fully online learning environment.

29. Academic Integrity

The College of FET promotes high standards in relation to academic integrity. All learners are required to complete their own work, provide proper attribution when using others' ideas and avoid any form of academic misconduct including plagiarism.

Several resources are available to support good academic integrity practices, these include:

- The College of FET Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- The College of FET Guidance on AI use
- A Learner's Guide to Academic Integrity – ETBI
- Referencing Handbook for Further Education and Training (FET) sector – FESS & ETBI
- Academic Writing Handbook for Learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) sector – FESS & ETBI
- The College of FET's Assessment Malpractice Procedure.

These resources are made available through the QA Support Services – Assessment of Learners page on StaffCONNECT.

The use of a plagiarism checker is not a requirement at the College of FET; the advent of Generative AI apps have made these tools less effective. Learning practitioners are encouraged to develop assessment tasks that engage learners more deeply and discourage simple copying e.g. project-based learning, case studies, and oral presentations. The QA and PL&D Support Services offer information and support for learning practitioners in the development of assessment tasks.

30. Learner and Learning Practitioner Presence

Establishing a strong teaching presence online, through regular communication, timely feedback and active participation in chat and forum discussions, will help learners stay motivated and on track.

Equally, encouraging learners to be present and active will help them to take part and contribute to discussions (both verbal and written), engage with other learners, ask questions and share their experiences. It will also deepen their understanding of course material and in the process create a dynamic learning experience.

Through the design of a blended and fully online learning course, learning practitioners will explore and put into practice different approaches for creating a supportive and interactive online learning environment that mirrors the connectedness of traditional face-to-face learning.

31. Teaching a blended or fully online learning course

The four modes of online course delivery include:

- **Blended Synchronous Only** – a course is designed with a mix of on-campus and virtual classroom (VC) sessions.
- **Blended Synchronous and Asynchronous** – a course is designed to include on-campus and VC sessions together with asynchronous course content.
- **Fully Online Synchronous Only** – a course is designed to be fully online with VC sessions replacing the traditional on-campus class sessions.
- **Fully Online Synchronous and Asynchronous** – a course is designed to be fully online and includes both VC sessions and asynchronous course content.

Prior to the commencement of a blended or fully online learning course, a learning practitioner must complete the three compulsory badges of the Credential in Design for Blended and Fully Online Learning. These are the Backward Design, Course Outlining and Virtual Class Design badges.

Through these badges, the learning practitioner will design and develop the course in line with one of the scopes of provision outlined above. As they develop the course, they will have access to the necessary resources, expert support and a community of practice.

Teaching a blended or fully online learning course may include (depending on the design of the course) teaching synchronously and asynchronously.

32. Synchronous and Asynchronous Teaching

As previously stated the College of FET acknowledges that the term contact teaching hours for blended and fully online learning includes both direct synchronous and asynchronous teaching.

Synchronous teaching

Synchronous teaching involves the learning practitioner, in a physical or virtual classroom, teaching the learners the subject-matter content (often through direct instruction), activities and discussions.

Learning practitioners when designing their virtual class sessions may decide to also include one-to-one sessions with learners. For example, if a virtual class session is timetabled for 2 hours, a learning practitioner may teach the subject matter content for the first hour and then conduct one-to-one sessions with the learners in the final hour.

Asynchronous teaching

Where asynchronous teaching is included as part of the design of the course, the learning practitioner teaches through asynchronous activities such as, e-tivities (asynchronous online collaborative activities), self-paced multimedia eLearning modules, videos, podcasts, infographics, and other interactive learning aids. Learners can access this material and work through the learning content and activities in their own time and at their own pace.

With asynchronous teaching, interaction with other learners and the learning practitioner occurs through the selected VLE or through apps such as Padlet. It is important to note that asynchronous activities are not the traditional 'homework' which is often used to reinforce learning in the synchronous session.

Even though the learning practitioner is not engaging with the learners directly, in a physical or virtual classroom, they are still teaching through the asynchronous subject-matter content, social learning activities, and assessments (formative and/or summative).

If a learning practitioner has designed for asynchronous teaching, they will design some of the timetable classes to moderate the asynchronous activities, for example, respond to posts, give feedback, moderate discussions or connect directly with learners through one-to-one sessions.

For example, 60-90 minutes is an optimal length for a virtual classroom session for adult learners. Where a class is timetabled as a 3-hour session, a learning practitioner may design the session to include both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. They may also choose to use the time to conduct one-to-one tutorials. The learning practitioner is teaching but in a different way.

Learning practitioners who choose to design the course where some direct teaching is replaced with asynchronous teaching and learning will be asked to consider the principle of substitution[4] and use workload calculators/tools to ensure that learner workload is not increased. They will also be supported to create asynchronous learning material.

It is recommended that the decision to include asynchronous teaching is guided by the needs and ability of the learner group, the learning practitioner, the learning outcomes and the subject matter content. Asynchronous learning demands from the learner a higher degree of self-regulation and independent learning skills. Asynchronous teaching requires knowledge, skill and time to develop quality asynchronous material and to moderate the learning activities. Learning practitioners wishing to include asynchronous teaching and learning in their course will need to complete the Design for Asynchronous Online Learning and the Multimedia eLearning Design for Learning badges.

33. Synchronous and Asynchronous Assessment

Assessment activities will be determined by the module descriptor or course syllabus. Synchronous assessments will take place in real-time with the assessor and learner present at the same time. This can be done on campus e.g. an examination or through MS Teams e.g. a presentation skills demonstration. Asynchronous assessments are completed by the learner in their own time and without the presence of an assessor. A learner can submit the assessment tasks e.g. project through the selected VLE (Moodle or MS Teams).

34. Virtual Classroom

A virtual classroom session is a pre-designed, synchronous online, active learning session, hosted through MS Teams. As part of the Virtual Class Design badge, learning practitioners will explore how to design and create interactive virtual sessions.

The recording of a virtual classroom session is at the discretion of the learning practitioner, they are under no obligation to record a virtual classroom session. The Teaching and Online Safe Practice Guidelines for Online and Blended Learning provides guidance on class recording. MS Teams has the functionality to create a lobby/waiting room. It is recommended that learning practitioners use this option to verify the learners before entering the classroom session (particularly at the start of a course).

[4] The principle of substitution refers to the purposeful replacement of direct teaching time and related learning materials with more engaging, flexible or appropriate digital content, rather than adding to existing teaching methods and resources with no consideration of any increase to the workload and study time for learners. (QQI, 2023)

The recommended length of time for a virtual classroom session is between 60-90 minutes, a break should be included to give everyone the opportunity to step away from the screen.

Programme Context

Programmes, Modules or Courses

35. Programme Delivery, Development and Validation

The College of FET provides quality assured programmes for learners. All courses offered by the College of FET are subject to local QA governance through the Quality Council Sub-Group (Programme Governance) and/or the SRPN.

The Programme Delivery, Development and Validation Policy applies to all provision regardless of mode of delivery. It outlines the process for provision to:

1. Develop a new certified QQI programme or module.
2. Request to offer a new programme, module or course.
3. Request to take a programme, module or course that was previously approved for classroom delivery and offer it for blended or fully online delivery.

Applications are submitted to the QA Support Service for review and to the Programme Governance sub-group of the Quality Council for approval.

For courses delivered through blended or fully online means, provision must plan well in advance of the course start date (in line with FARR planning), to ensure that the relevant technology is available and accessible to both the learning practitioner and the learner, that the learning practitioner has completed the relevant PL&D and that learner supports are in place. Provision will be supported through this process by the relevant support services.

36. Principles for the appropriateness for blended or fully online learning

The principles outlined below will guide the decision on the most appropriate delivery mode e.g. blended or fully online.

1. **Target learner group:** The needs and preferences of the target learner group can be met through the selected mode of delivery.

   Understanding the needs and preferences of the target learner will ensure the most appropriate delivery mode is selected. Provision will need to research the target learner group and consider the level of the course, learner demographic, prior knowledge and experience, digital skills, accessibility, industry demands and access to reliable broadband.

2. **Learning practitioners:** There are qualified and capable learning practitioners available to deliver the programme through the selected mode of delivery.

   Learning practitioners' confidence, expertise, digital skills, level of support and teaching experience will determine the delivery mode. Provision need to ensure that learning practitioners have completed (at a minimum) the compulsory badges of the Credential in Design for Blended and Fully Online Learning and that time is set aside to allow learning practitioners to complete any additional badges they require.

3. **Learning outcomes:** The intended learning outcomes, learning content and assessment can be achieved through the selected delivery mode.

   Provision will need to review the learning outcomes of the course to assess if they can be achieved through the selected mode of delivery. They will also need to review the learning content and assessment techniques. The College of FET does not support exam proctoring

for QQI examinations. All QQI examinations and skills demonstrations that require specialist equipment must take place on campus.

4. **Resources:** There are sufficient resources to implement the programme.

   Provision will need to consider the resource implications (i.e. budget, staffing and facilities) required to offer the course through the selected mode of delivery. They will need to consider learning practitioner qualifications and experience, as well as the lead-in time to the course as the learning practitioner may require time to upskill, design the course, and develop learning resources. Provision will also need to consider timetabling and allocation of classes on Timetabler for both learning practitioners and learners, particularly for full awards.

Learning and Curriculum Design

37. New QQI Programmes or Modules

The Programme Delivery, Development and Validation Policy document outlines the criteria for the development of curriculum for a new QQI programme or module. The programme team tasked with developing the curriculum must consider the following:

a) A learner-centred approach has been taken in the design of the curriculum.

b) The design of the curriculum purposefully considers the most appropriate teaching and learning opportunities and assessment methods.

c) The design considers accessibility and inclusive practices to ensure that all learners can fully participate and benefit from the curriculum.

d) The curriculum design has been guided by evidence-based research.

The policy document details how this may be achieved and asks the development team to consider a variety of models and frameworks, e.g. constructive alignment, active learning design, and reflective practices. The Blended and Online Learning Support Service will support the programme team as they design the curriculum for blended or fully online learning courses.

38. Programme Team Induction

As part of the development of a new QQI certified programme or module for blended or fully online delivery, the programme team will take part in an induction session with the Blended and Fully Online Support Service. The induction session will include information relating to:

- The College of FET, Blended and Fully Online Learning Action Plan 2025-28;
- The College of FET, Blended and Fully Online Learning Policy and Procedures 2025-28;
- Relevant templates and resources;
- Guidance on minimum standards relating to the VLE;
- College of FET, Assessment Procedures and guidance relating to academic integrity and Quality Assurance;
- College of FET, Data Analytics Policy (in development);
- College of FET, Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Policies;
- Examples of good practice.

39. Existing Programmes, Modules or Courses

As part of the approval process to offer existing QQI programmes and modules and courses (offered by other awarding bodies) through blended or fully online means, co-ordinators/managers are asked to ensure that learning practitioners are given sufficient time to design and develop the course. The learning practitioners are also required to complete the Credential in Design for Blended & Fully Online Learning.

Learning Materials and Resources

40. Learning Resources

Learning practitioners have access to a range of supported technologies and apps including Canva, Easygenerator, Ellii etc. A full list of supported software can be found on the TEL Support Service StaffCONNECT page.

Learning practitioners wishing to develop learning resources e.g. e-tivities (asynchronous online collaborative activities), self-paced multimedia eLearning modules, videos, podcasts, and other interactive learning aids are encouraged to complete the Multimedia eLearning Design for Learning badge. This badge gives the learning practitioner time and access to resources, templates and expertise (specifically a Learning Content Developer) as they design and develop the learning resource. On completion of the badge the learning practitioner will continue to receive help and support through the Community of Practice and the relevant support service.

Digital technologies provide opportunities to implement a variety of ways to deliver content and communicate with and assess learners. Therefore, the use of technology to support learning is encouraged. The Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Support Service offers a variety of supports for learning practitioners considering the use of technology in the classroom. These include, face-to-face practical training sessions, one-to-one clinics, and the TEL Learning Zone Community of Practice. For more information, please visit the TEL Support Service page on StaffCONNECT.

Learning resources developed are reviewed by the Blended and Online Support Service or other participants completing the Credential, feedback is given and amendments made if necessary. Evaluation of the learning resources by the learner is also encouraged.

41. Production Studio

The College of FET Ennis campus has a production studio which learning practitioners can use to create learning resources. It is a self-service studio and is designed to allow learning practitioners record and edit quality audio and video.

The studio is soundproof with additional special acoustic panels for better quality recording. It is equipped with sit/stand desk, computer with high specification graphics card, Sony 4K Ultra Handycam, Sennheiser Digital Wireless microphone, Blue Yeti microphone and webcam. Software installed on the computer includes Camtasia (screen recorder and video editor) and Audacity (free, open-source audio software). The studio can also be used for remote teaching.

42. Copyright

Learning resources co-created by the Blended and Online Learning Support Service and the learning practitioner will be made available to all learning practitioners through StaffConnect and licenced under the Creative Commons (CC) license - **CC BY-NC-SA 4.0**

The **CC BY-NC-SA** licence "enables reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format for non-commercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. If you remix, adapt, or build upon the material, you must license the modified material under identical terms. CC BY-NC-SA includes the following elements:

BY: credit must be given to the creator.

NC: Only non-commercial uses of the work are permitted.

SA: Adaptations must be shared under the same terms".

(Creative Commons, 2024)

Learning practitioners will also be asked to share resources, particularly those created as part of the PL&D for blended and fully online learning. The intellectual copyright of the owners will be respected and credited under the same or similar licence.

The Creative Commons website provides more information about Creative Common licences and how to apply a CC license to their work.

43. Resource Bank

The learning resources created will form part of a resource bank which will be made available to learning practitioners through StaffConnect. The resources include, but are not limited to, images, infographics, videos, audio files, e-books, simulations, eLearning material, worksheets, exercises etc. This approach to resource development is in direct response to actions outlined in the TEL Action Plan 2022-2025 and requests made by learning practitioners in relation to the co-creation and sharing of resource material.

Assessment & Feedback

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy outlines the College of FET's approach to ensuring fair and consistent assessment, quality and standards and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Learning practitioners should also refer to the QA Support Service Assessment of Learners (Templates & Procedures) as these are applicable to blended and fully online learning programmes of study.

44. Assessment for Blended or Fully Online Learning Courses

If an assessment activity is required to take place on campus e.g. an examination or skills demonstration, the course must be designed as a blended learning course.

If an assessment activity can take place fully online e.g. submitting assignments through the selected VLE, the course can be designed as either a fully online or blended learning course.

45. Design & Development

Assessments created for blended and fully online learning will meet the standards outlined in the programme, module or course specification. The design and development of assessment tasks will form part of the design process and is subject to existing Quality Assurance processes.

Assessment tasks can include, but are not limited to, presentations, assignments, group or independent projects, skills demonstrations, learner evaluations, discussions, quizzes.

Learning practitioners are encouraged to apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning when developing assessment tasks. They are also encouraged to design authentic assessment activities which could include group work, the use of case studies, role play, or the development of an ePortfolio of work. By developing assessment activities that connects learning to real-world scenarios will encourage deeper learning and engagement, promote problem solving and will help to develop critical review and evaluation skills.

Feedback and Feedforward are complementary processes that help learners understand and learn from past performance while providing guidance and direction for future performance. As part of the teaching and learning process, learning practitioners can give feedback/feedforward to learners in a variety of ways and include, but are not limited to, verbal, written, or video, through the VLE, online quizzes and software apps e.g. Padlet.

Learners can apply for Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment. The Reasonable Accommodation Assessment Procedure outlines the process for application.

46. Conducting Assessment

Assignments: In line with the College of FET's Digital Assessment for QQI Certification 2024, learners will submit assignments via the chosen VLE. As part of the submission process, learners will complete a Learner Declaration where they declare that the work is their own except where referenced. Learning practitioners will mark and provide feedback directly through the VLE.

Skill Demonstrations: It is at the discretion of the learning practitioner (in the first instance), provision co-ordinator and QA Support Service to decide if a skills demonstration (as part of an assessment task) can take place online. However, some practical skill demonstrations where specialised equipment and materials are required, e.g. in the area of healthcare, must take place on campus.

Examinations: All QQI examinations will take place on campus. The College of FET does not support online proctoring[5] for QQI examinations. For other awarding bodies, please refer to their QA guidelines.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The College of FET Learner Voice Policy outlines how the College of FET seeks and responds to feedback from learners and staff. There are a number of structured feedback and evaluation methodologies in place, which collect input from learners and staff in a consistent and transparent way. These include annual surveys, mid-course and end of course questionnaires and focus groups.

Learning practitioners regularly evaluate their course design and make amendments where required.

[5] Online proctoring uses technology to monitor and analyse learner activity during an examination. Online proctoring allows a learner to complete the exam remotely.

47. Data Analytics

Moodle, MS Teams and many digital tools generate data analytics and reports that the learning practitioner can use to review learner engagement, attendance and achievements in a blended or fully online learning course.

48. Research & Evaluation

The College of FET supports the Blended and Fully Online Learning Support Service in conducting pilot projects for research and the sharing of findings with colleagues and peers at conferences, webinars and training events.

These research projects include feedback from learning practitioners and learners which helps the support service to improve how they design and manage professional learning and development and develop guides, resources and supports for learners and learning practitioners.

More information on past and current projects, conference papers and presentations can be found on StaffCONNECT.

Learner Context

Thinking about Study

The College of FET's Learning Support Framework outlines the structures and processes in place for all College of FET learners to ensure they receive the necessary information, advice, guidance and supports.

A number of information channels are available to learners. These channels (listed below) will be used to provide information to learners interested in studying on a blended or fully online learning course. Examples include:

- The Further Education and Training Course Hub (FETCH courses)
- Information Recruitment and Guidance Support Service
- College of FET website
- Learner Handbook
- Campus open days

Learner Supports

To foster learner success and belonging, a variety of learner supports are available. All College of FET learners can apply for supports by registering with the Active Inclusion Support Service (AISS) through the College of FET | Learner Supports webpage. Learners can receive both on-course and assessment supports. Learning hubs are located on several campuses and provide help with access to technology, development of digital and study skills, as well as advice and a quiet place to study. Several supports are also available through Moodle and include academic writing and referencing, digital skills, maths and study skills support. These supports are available to all registered users. Learners studying on a blended course can come to a learning hub on campus. Learners who are studying fully online can contact the hubs through the campus with which the course is registered and every effort will be made to make the supports available to them.

49. Accessibility

As part of the course design and development process learning practitioners are required to consider accessibility. In addition to this, the PL&D Support Service together with the TEL Support Service organises training and information events for staff in accessibility.

50. Online Induction

All learners registered for a blended or fully online learning course will be given the opportunity to complete an online induction programme. Learners will access this induction programme using their ETB credentials. The online induction will provide the learners with information such as:

- Technology requirements;
- Access to Microsoft 365 apps;
- Technology supports;
- How to be successful on a blended and fully online learning course;
- Learner supports – on-course and assessment supports;
- Academic integrity;

- Appeals procedure;
- Health & Safety;
- Privacy notice.

The TEL Support Service together with the learning hubs have developed a Digital Induction web page on the College of FET site for learners. Learners can access a range of videos and guides to help them access and use the range of College of FET approved apps. Links to this page will also be made available to learners through the online induction.

51. Course Induction

As part of a blended or fully online learning course, learning practitioners will provide a course-specific induction. Course induction information can be accessed through the selected VLE and will include information such as:

1. Contact details – how to contact the learning practitioner;
2. Course requirements (with course overview, attendance requirements, code of conduct);
3. Course timetable (specific days on-campus and online for virtual class sessions or one-to-one tutorials);
4. Assessment timetable (specific assignment deadline dates or examinations).

52. Positive Learning Environment

As part of the induction process, learning practitioners are required to inform learners of the course requirements, learning outcomes, activities and assessment. They will provide the learners with a timetable which will clearly outline the days the learners will be on campus (for blended learning courses) or attending live virtual classroom sessions. They will also provide an assessment schedule which outlines deadline dates for the submission of assessment evidence, skills demonstrations or examinations.

Learning practitioners are required to develop online etiquette or a code of conduct document for learners which gives information on expectations regarding engagement, attendance, punctuality, cameras, responding to chat and discussion forums, security, privacy and the sharing of information.

The Learner Handbook provides information for learners on creating a positive learning environment, as well as what is expected of them studying on a blended or fully online learning course. The handbook can be found in the Information for Learners folder on StaffCONNECT.

53. Attendance & Engagement

Learners are expected to attend all scheduled classes, whether on-campus or online. It is essential for learners to engage meaningfully with the digital course content, activities and assessment.

The College of FET's Attendance and Engagement policy outlines the process to support learners who may be in danger of falling behind with their studies.

54. Assessment

Learners will be informed of all assessment activities and will receive instructions (through an assessment brief) on what they will be expected to do as part of an assessment task. At the start of the course, they will be given an assessment timetable which will specify all deadline dates for assignments and dates for any examinations. This information will be made available by the learning

practitioner through the selected VLE. The Blended and Fully Online Learner Handbook also provides information on extensions, reasonable accommodation and how a learner can appeal a result.

Evaluation and Feedback

Learners are given the opportunity to give feedback to the College of FET through planned mid-course and end-of-course evaluations, focus groups and the annual learner voice survey. Information regarding the evaluation process is circulated to the learners via the provision co-ordinator or learning practitioner, through the learning hubs, posters and Signagelive.

Mechanisms are in place as part of the Learner Voice Policy to give learners the opportunity to make a complaint.

The QA Appeals process gives learners the opportunity to appeal their results or the assessment process, if necessary. This information is made available to the learners while studying on the course, through course induction and the Learner Handbook.

Data Analytics

Moodle, MS Teams and many digital tools generate data analytics and reports that a learner can use to reflect on their progress and seek support, if necessary.

Reviewing the policy

This policy and procedure document will be implemented over a three-year period from 2025 to 2028 in line with the action plan document. A review will be conducted after 18 months to evaluate policy statements and procedures, address challenges, and make necessary adjustments. This review will ensure that the policy stays aligned with our goal for blended and fully online learning as outlined in the Blended and Fully Online Learning Action Plan 2025-28.

Procedures

1. Planning 33
2. Course design 35
3. Course delivery 37
4. Course completion & digital housekeeping 43

Procedures: Blended and/or Fully Online Learning

1. Planning

For blended or fully online learning courses, provision must plan well in advance of the course start date (in line with Funding Allocation Requests Reporting (FARR) planning), to ensure that the relevant technology is available and accessible to both the learning practitioner and the learner, the learning practitioner has completed the relevant PL&D and learner supports are in place. Provision can contact the Blended and Online Learning Support Service for support and guidance.

Programme approval process

For blended and fully online learning, the Programme Delivery, Development and Validation Policy outlines the process for provision to:

- Develop a new certified blended or fully online QQI programme or module;
- Request to offer a new blended or fully online programme, module or course (not previously validated to deliver);
- Request to take a programme, module or course that was previously approved for classroom delivery and offer it for blended or fully online delivery.

Provision will need to complete the relevant application form which can be accessed on StaffConnect – QA Governance | Programme Approval.

Information to Learners

The following information needs to be included in the 'Published Description' section on PLSS.

- Course description to include certifying body, NFQ level, type of award and award outcomes.
- Course structure – day(s) on campus or online;
- Assessment requirements;
- Skill requirements;
- Technical information.

This information will appear on FETCH and will help learners to select the correct programme of study. Additional information on blended learning courses can also be found on the College of FET website - Blended Learning. [The College of FET Online Learning page is currently under development].

Guides and information sheets can be found on StaffConnect.

Professional Learning and Development (PL&D)

The learning practitioner teaching the blended or fully online learning course will need to complete at a minimum the three compulsory badges (Backward Design, Course Outlining and Virtual Class Design) of the Credential in Design for Blended and Fully Online Learning, prior to the course start date. They must complete the remaining two badges within one year. Provision can check with the individual learning practitioners regarding completed badges or with the Blended and Online Learning Support Service.

Learning practitioners will need to be confident in the use of the basic functionality of the selected Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) e.g. how to create a Team, how to request a course in Moodle,

how to schedule a virtual class session, how to post in chat or a forum, how to upload documents, and how to create an assignment in the VLE. Learning practitioners can contact the TEL Support Service for one-to-one support, group training sessions or access to on-demand video tutorials (see Where can I get software training).

The Professional Learning and Development (PL&D) Support Service offer a range of PL&D opportunities for staff e.g. Academic Integrity, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), AI in Assessment and upskilling in a range of digital tools. Updates on upcoming training and courses are emailed to all staff. More information on how to stay informed can be found on the PL&D Support Service StaffCONNECT site.

Quality Assurance Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

Learning practitioners will need to be aware of the College of FET's QA policies and procedure documents including the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy, Attendance Policy, Learner Discipline Procedure, Anti Bullying Policy, the Assessment Procedures, the Certification Process, Academic Integrity and the Guidance on AI Use. More information on QA processes and procedures can be found on the QA Support Service StaffCONNECT site.

The Staff Digital Induction Handbook also provides practical guidance on policies and procedures.

Equipment

Learning practitioners will need the following equipment to teach their blended or fully online learning course.

1. Personal Computer (PC), laptop or tablet
2. Two monitors - minimum screen size 27"
3. Headphone
4. Microphone

2. Course design

Course variation

The learning practitioner (in the first instance), guided by the Blended and Online Support Service and the provision co-ordinator, must decide on the type of course. This will be determined by multiple factors including the learner, subject matter content and assessment requirements and the skills of the learning practitioner. The type of course will have an impact on how the course will be designed and developed.

- **Blended Synchronous Only** – a course is designed with a mix of on-campus and virtual classroom (VC) sessions.
- **Blended Synchronous and Asynchronous** – a course is designed to include on-campus and VC sessions together with asynchronous course content. In this scenario, the learning practitioner may not be interacting directly with the learners for all timetabled sessions as the learners work through the asynchronous tasks. However, they will use this time to e-moderate course content e.g. respond to posts, follow up with learners or meet individual learners (one-to-one tutorials).
- **Fully Online Synchronous Only** – a course is designed to be fully online with VC sessions replacing the traditional on-campus class sessions.
- **Fully Online Synchronous and Asynchronous** – a course is designed to be fully online and includes both VC sessions and asynchronous course content (see explanation scenario for Blended Synchronous and Asynchronous).

Module descriptors and course syllabus

When designing a blended or fully online learning course, a learning practitioner will follow the same QQI module descriptor or course syllabus (for other awarding body) used for a traditional on-campus face-to-face course.

For QQI modules, learning practitioners must download the relevant descriptor from Programmes | StaffCONNECT. To access a course syllabus for other awarding bodies, please speak with the provision co-ordinator or Training Standards Officer (TSO).

Learning practitioners will follow the instructions outlined in the descriptor or course syllabus when designing their course and adhere to the guidelines relating to the learning outcomes, assessment and grading. The learning practitioner must ensure that learners are given every opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes as outlined in the descriptor or syllabus.

Indicative content in a QQI module descriptor is provided as guidance only and learning practitioners can add or update learning content if required.

Following a review of the module descriptor or course syllabus, learning practitioners will need to complete an outline of the course (refer to Backward Design and Course Outlining badge).

Course Information

On completion of the course outline, the learning practitioner will be able to determine:

- The number of synchronous sessions e.g. the days on-campus (for a blended course) and synchronous online sessions. This information will be used to develop a learner timetable for the course.
- Assessment deadline and examination dates.
- Days for one-to-one tutorial sessions (if applicable).
- For blended courses, the percentage breakdown of online and classroom hours. This information is required for PLSS.

Learning resources

Learning practitioners wishing to develop learning resources can complete the Multimedia eLearning Design for Learning badge.

Learning resources co-created by a learning practitioner and the Blended and Online Learning Support Service will be made available to all learning practitioners through StaffCONNECT and licenced under the Creative Commons (CC) license - **CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.**

Learning practitioners will be encouraged to share resources particularly those created as part of the PL&D for blended and fully online learning. The intellectual copyright of the owners will be respected and credited under the same or similar licence.

In the context of CC licencing, it is important to note that once the licence is applied to the work it cannot be revoked. Only the copyright holder or someone with permission can apply the licence.

There are different formats for displaying the licence. Sample formats are given below.

- **Copyright © [learning practitioner name], [year].** This work is openly licenced via **CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 [you must hyperlink to the licence on the Creative Commons website]**
- **Copyright © [learning practitioner name], [year]**

  [you must hyperlink to the licence on the Creative Commons website]

The Creative Commons website provides more information about Creative Commons licences and how to apply a CC license to work.

The learning resources will be stored in a resource bank [under development] on StaffCONNECT. If a learning practitioner would like to amend an existing resource, they are asked to refer to the CC licence.

Learning practitioners can access support[6] through the Blended and Online Support Service to develop asynchronous learning resources e.g. eLearning modules, videos, podcasts, infographics, and other interactive learning aids.

Technical Support

Learning practitioners can also access technical support through Formula Networks IT Support. To log a ticket phone 061 575400. The Staff Digital Induction Handbook provides more information (section 5 – IT Support page 14).

[6] Learning practitioners can request assistance through the two Community of Practice (CoP) team sites – Blended and Fully Online Learning Team and the Digital Learning Content Creator Team

3. Course delivery

Learner Identity and PPSN Ownership

Blended Learning course

- The identity of the learner will be validated on-campus in a one-to-one meeting either before the start of the course or during the first session.
- Learner to be notified in advance of validation and verification requirements, consider the use of PLSS communications channels (SMS and email) to maintain an audit trail.
- Learner to be advised of the need to have appropriate documentation/evidence to hand for the meeting on-campus.

Fully Online Learning Course

- The identity of a learner will be validated through an online video one-to-one meeting either before the start of the course or during the first session. MS Teams to be utilised to engage with individual learners regarding the validation of identity and verification of PPSN ownership.
- Learner to be notified in advance of validation and verification requirements, consider the use of PLSS communications channels (SMS and email) to maintain an audit trail.
- Learner to be advised of the need to have appropriate documentation/evidence to hand for scheduled video call.
- MS Teams to be used to call each learner in turn. Maintain a call history only (audit trail with date/time stamp) that call took place, but **do not** record the actual call with learner.
- Learner identity to be validated e.g. via learner holding photo ID (passport, driver's licence, PSC card, etc.) to face and screen (camera) in turn while staff member sight validates learner identity and records document type presented (e.g. via tick on induction sheets or attendance tracker).
- PPSN ownership to be verified e.g. via learner holding appropriate documentation to screen (camera) while staff member sight verifies PPSN number.
- Validations and verifications may take place via mobile phone or computer-based devices (laptop/tablet/computer).
- **IMPORTANT**: calls to take place on a one-to-one basis only, no group calls to take place.

Learning practitioner information session

Prior to the commencement of the course, the Blended and Fully Online Learning Support Service will organise an information session for learning practitioners, to give them an overview of where they can access supports and guides, and to address any questions they may have. Information will also be made available through StaffCONNECT.

Learner induction (email and password)

From within PLSS, the provision will forward the learner details to the ICT department, and they will create the learner email and password.

The ICT department forwards the list of emails and passwords to the provision.

The provision will send an email to the individual learners and will include the following information:

- A welcome message
- College of FET credentials i.e. email and password
- Instructions for learners on how to reset the password on first login
- Link to the online induction

Guide document available on StaffCONNECT which includes a link to online induction [under development].

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

The College of FET supports two VLEs – Moodle and MS Teams. Learning practitioners are asked to check with the provision co-ordinator regarding which VLE to select.

The Digital Assessment for QQI Certification 2024 document outlines:

- How to request a Moodle course.
- The naming convention for a Moodle course.
- How to use Teams within Moodle.
- How to create a team in MS Teams.
- The naming convention for a team in MS Teams.

The team or Moodle course must contain at a minimum the following information:

- Learning practitioner welcome video;
- Contact details – how to contact the learning practitioner;
- Course requirements (with course overview, attendance requirements, code of conduct);
- Course timetable (specific days on-campus and online for virtual class sessions or one-to-one tutorials);
- Assessment timetable (specific assignment deadline dates or examinations);
- Access links to online synchronous sessions;
- Access to chat or discussion forum;
- Option to submit assessment work;
- Folder(s) for assessment documentation (IV and EA);
- Course material and activities.

Course induction

A course induction will need to form part of the blended or fully online learning course. Learning practitioners will need to ensure that learners can find and access information regarding the course, learning outcomes, assessment requirements, timetable etc.

Shared expectations

Learning practitioners should create a shared expectation/code of conduct document in collaboration with the learners. This document should clearly outline requirements for attendance, punctuality, engagement, communication, privacy and security.

Example topics to be included in the code of conduct document:

- **Behaviour**: Learners need to be dressed appropriately, blur the background particularly in a public space or in a busy space within the home. No other person should be visible on camera. If a family member becomes visible, learners must switch off their camera and ask the person to move out of view.
- **Respectful communication**: Allow everyone to contribute to the conversation, avoid language that might be offensive, use the raise hand feature to join the conversation, accept that others may have different perspectives.
- **Respect the teaching environment**: Learners should be present in the moment, avoid multitasking or working in a busy area which may be distracting. Learners should make every effort to keep their cameras switched on during all online class sessions.
- **Respect everyone's privacy**: Online class sessions should not be recorded by the learners. If a class session is being recorded by the learning practitioner, learners should be given the opportunity to switch off their cameras. However, for breakout room activities cameras should be switched on.

  If a learner is accessing an online session in a public space they must wear headphones. They must ensure that all conversations are private and cannot be heard by members of the public.
- **Consequences**: Be clear about the consequences for violations of the code of conduct.

Guidance on the development of a code of conduct can be found in the Teaching and Learning Online Safe Practice Guidelines.

Safe learning environment

Ideas for how to create a safe learning environment.

- Establish expectations for the course (see Shared Expectations section).
- Outline netiquette rules in relation to virtual discussions (both in and outside of class sessions), use positive language, and maintain everyone's privacy and confidentiality.
- Encourage learners to share and contribute to discussions.
- Acknowledge learner contribution through feedback.
- Build an active community to include activities, such as, 'getting to know you' discussions, poll and group tasks.
- Provide contact details and availability time and dates.
- Design breaks into the course design.
- Share information on learner supports.
- Make learning content and activities accessible to all learners.

- Consider Universal Design for Learning (UDL) when developing assessments.
- If an incident of unacceptable behaviour occurs in a blended or fully online learning course, please refer to the College of FET procedures. For example,
    - Assessment malpractice - Assessment of Learners
    - Mental health & wellbeing - Learner Supports | College of FET
    - Bullying and harassment – College of FET Policies
    - Discipline – College of FET Policies
    - Child safety – Children First eLearning Programme (Privacy Engine)

Attendance

The College of FET Attendance & Engagement Policy outlines the requirements for attendance and engagement. For blended and fully online learning courses, learning practitioners can monitor attendance and engagement in several ways. For example,

- Attendance taken in live classroom sessions;
- Data analytics from the selected Virtual Learning Environment (VLE);
- Activity logs;
- One-to-one check-ins;
- Time spent online;
- Activity & exercise completion;
- Assignment submission.

Learners will need to be informed of the process for contacting the provision or learning practitioner if they are unable to attend a session, the consequences of non-attendance and of falling below the minimum attendance requirements. The policy also outlines the process for supporting learners who may be in danger of falling behind with their studies.

Course timetable

Once the course timetable has been set and shared with the learners it needs to remain in place and be consistent. Learners will organise their schedule around the dates they should be on-campus or online. The learner's experience on the course could be negatively impacted if the course timetable is changed. Any changes made should be in response to an emergency e.g. Red weather alert.

Learning practitioner presence

It can be challenging to teach online as it is different to teaching in the traditional classroom. However, learning practitioners can use a variety of different strategies to engage learners and maintain a presence in the online class. For example,

- Learning practitioners should have a working camera and microphone and know how to switch them on and off;
- Learning practitioners should have their camera switched on during the class session;
- Include a welcome introduction and a hook or ice breaker;
- Outline the outcomes for the session;

- Plan their virtual sessions to include active learning techniques e.g. 3-2-1, small group work, role plays, scavenger hunts (see Resources - Techniques Archive - The K. Patricia Cross Academy);
- Encourage discussion;
- Include breakout sessions;
- Respond to feedback and comments in chat;
- Pause to give learners time to ask questions or take a poll to gauge understanding;
- Send a summary or follow-up material, encourage learners to reach out and ask questions and explain what is coming up in the next session.

Assessment

The Quality Assurance (QA) Support Service outlines the process for assessment for all programmes, modules or courses regardless of delivery mode. Assessments created for blended and fully online learning will meet the standards outlined in the programme and module specification or course syllabus. The design and development of assessment tasks is subject to existing Quality Assurance processes.

- Learning practitioners must download QQI module descriptors from StaffCONNECT or request a copy of the training specification from the Training Standards Officer (TSO). These documents will outline what assessment techniques must be used, and provides information on assessment activities, grading and assessment criteria.
- Learning practitioners who are required to develop assessment tasks e.g. examinations or assessment briefs must adhere to information regarding the assessment activities, grading and assessment criteria outlined in the QQI module descriptor.
- Learning practitioners using the pre-prepared assessments as part of the Assessment Instrument Specification (AIS) for the course must adhere to the assessment documentation/instructions.
- Learning practitioners must familiarise themselves with the College of FET's Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy.
- The Digital Assessment for QQI Certification 2024 document outlines the instructions relating to how evidence is to be presented for QQI certification. The document outlines the storage of video evidence, grading in Moodle, GDPR regulations for learner digital evidence, technical support etc.
- For other awarding bodies, contact the provision co-ordinator or the Training Standards Office (TSO) for guidance on assessment requirements and how evidence is to be presented.

Skill demonstrations and examinations

- Skill demonstrations that require specialist equipment, e.g. in the context of healthcare courses, must be completed on campus.
- QQI examinations are to be carried out on campus. The College of FET does not support online proctoring for QQI examinations.
- For other awarding bodies, contact the provision co-ordinator or the Training Standards Office (TSO) for guidance on examination requirements.

Academic integrity

1. As part of course induction, learning practitioners should inform learners of the College of FET's requirements for academic integrity. They should guide learners to the Academic Writing and Referencing Handbooks.
2. Learning practitioners are asked to read the College of FET Guidance on AI Use. They should inform learners if and how AI can be used. Information and guidance on the use of AI can be found on StaffCONNECT – AI in Assessment.
3. Learners must complete the Learner Declaration (cover sheet) when submitting assessment work. They must declare that the work is their own and all sources of information have been referenced as required (see QA Assessment Templates). A digital version of the Learner Declaration (cover sheet) is available and can be embedded into Moodle and MS Teams.

The Quality Assurance | Assessment of Learners page on StaffCONNECT provides all the relevant information.

Internal Verification (IV) & External Authentication (EA)

The QA Support Service outlines the process for IV and EA for all programmes of study offered by the College of FET. Learning practitioners delivering a blended or fully online learning course will follow the same process. The QA Support Service provides guideline documents on the following:

- IV guidelines for QQI assessment in FET;
- Moodle IV process;
- MS Teams IV process;
- EA guidelines and procedures.

These documents can be accessed via Quality Assurance | Assessment of Learners Certification section.

Certification

Following the EA process, learner results go forward for approval at the Results Approval Panel meeting. Once approved, the learner will receive their provisional results. Learners have the right to appeal their result and provision will inform learners of the appeal procedure when notifying them of their provisional results.

Following appeals, learners will be notified by the provision of the date(s) for the College of FET conferring ceremonies.

4. Course completion & digital housekeeping

As outlined in the College of FET Secure Storage Procedure, all learner evidence and assessment material will be disposed of securely following the appeals process (unless stated otherwise by the relevant awarding body or due to funding requirements). Any records that must be retained are stored in line with current legislation and GDPR requirements.

A course evaluation and review will take place in line with current College of FET practices. If improvements or changes are identified, supports will be put in place to make the necessary adjustments.

Learning practitioners are encouraged to undertake yearly digital housekeeping to organise and remove digital documents. The TEL Support Service has produced a Digital Housekeeping Infographic (Infographics |Digital Housekeeping-MS 365) which gives guidance on how to manage our digital spaces.

Appendix 1 – Glossary

Term	Description
Active Learning	A term referring – typically, though not exclusively – to synchronous learning design that puts learners in the driver's seat, challenging them to collaborate with one another to develop and present ideas and solutions.
Asynchronous Online	A mode of delivery wherein learners access learning aids, e-tivities, and other resources in a virtual learning environment like Moodle or MS Teams, working at their own pace, but within a certain timeframe.
Backward Design	A practical, three-stage process of learning design at the lesson, unit, or course level, whereby the learning designer sets learning goals (results) before choosing the assessment (evidence) and instructional methods (learning events).
Blended Learning	Blended Learning is the replacement of **some**, but not all face-to face teaching, with designed, learner-centred, synchronous and asynchronous online subject-matter activities and assessments. A blended learning course will always **include** face-to-face classroom learning.
Checklists	A simple tool to help learners ensure they complete all necessary steps or elements of an assignment or project.
Collaborative Whiteboards	Flexible, web-based software applications where learners are able to collaborate asynchronously using embedded multimedia, virtual sticky notes, markers, tables, shapes, and other tools to visually represent their ideas.
Constructive Alignment	An approach to learning design in which the teaching methodologies employed are designed to optimise the learners' chances of demonstrating evidence of having met the pre-determined intended outcomes.
eBooks/Flipbooks	eBooks and flipbooks are simply interactive, often multimedia books that learners can read, and in which they can also follow hyperlinks, watch embedded videos, view galleries of images, and read text on a core topic, idea, assessment guide, process, procedure, etc.
Emergency Remote Teaching	A temporary emergency-initiated replacement of face-to-face teaching with virtual classrooms.
ePortfolios	A single digital online location or platform in which learners create and maintain 'living' versions of all of their activity work, assignments, and projects, complete with drafts; peer, self, and

	teacher-given feedforward; research materials; and other media that otherwise chronicles learners' journeys.
e-tivity	A pre-designed asynchronous online learning activity that encourages and supports two or more learners to work together to complete a task.
Discussion Forum	A location within a VLE (e.g. Teams or Moodle) consisting of post-and-reply/comment threads where learners share ideas, contributions to ideas, and/or responses to questions or other stimuli.
Face-to-Face	Learners and learning practitioners meet at the same time, physically in an onsite lab, work placement, or classroom.
Flipped Classroom	The learner is introduced to subject matter content at home, freeing up face-to-face class sessions for active learning.
Formative Assessment	Typically, lower-stakes or no-stakes frequent assessments designed to purposefully and frequently measure learner progress and process (i.e. quizzes, short papers, mock assessments etc.)
Fully Online Learning	Fully Online Learning is the replacement of **all** face-to-face on-campus teaching with designed, learner-centred, synchronous and asynchronous online subject matter, activities and assessments. A fully online learning course will **never** include face-to-face classroom learning.
Hybrid Flexible or HyFlex	The learners meet synchronously with the learning practitioner – some learners attending on-campus while some learners attend virtually (through MS Teams, for example).
Indicative Content	A general recommendation of what kind of subject-matter content should be included in a given course as presented in a QQI module descriptor.
Indicative Workload	An approved formula for calculating the number of hours a learner is expected to spend on a given course per credit hour (e.g. ten hours of synchronous and asynchronous work per credit hour).
Infographics	Standalone, single-page documents (usually PDFs or JPEGs) that visually display information about a topic, concept, process, or procedure.
Instructional Design	The process by which instructional events are designed, developed and delivered.
Interactive PDFs	Portable Document Files (PDFs) that have hyperlinked images, buttons, or text that are clickable and guide the learner through a core concept, theory, process, or procedure.

Learning Aids	Standalone, asynchronous online learning resources with which learners interact to aid with subject matter content acquisition and assignment or activity support (i.e. infographics, templates, podcasts, multimedia eLearning, interactive PDFs, videos, eBooks etc.).
Learner-centred Design	Learning design that takes into account the potential learner audience's articulated needs, concerns, interests, knowledge, experience, and skills.
Learning Design	The process by which learning experiences are designed, developed and delivered.
Learning Outcomes	A set of pre-determined, achievable, actionable, and demonstrable learning targets that specifically articulate what learners will understand, know, or be able to do upon their successful completion of the course.
MOOCs	Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are large-scale, fully asynchronous online courses hosted in a VLE that learners complete at their own pace and usually (though not always) within a certain timeframe (i.e. 5 weeks).
Multimedia eLearning	Asynchronous, interactive, online 'click through' learning modules created using an eLearning authoring tool (i.e. Easygenerator, Rise360, Storyline) and hosted on a VLE.
Podcasts	Standalone audio files or series of audio files that explore a core topic, idea, or theory to which learners can listen in their own time and at their own pace.
Programme	A programme of education and training encompasses various methods through which learners gain knowledge, skills and competence. This includes formal courses, apprenticeships and training. A programme provides learners with the opportunity to achieve specific, intended programme learning outcomes through various learning environments.
Programme Module	A programme module is a self-contained unit of study within a programme. It focusses on a specific topic and includes objectives, learning outcomes, content and assessments. Modules are designed to be flexible and can be completed independently or in conjunction with other modules to meet the overall learning outcomes of a programme.
Remote Teaching	Remote Teaching is a series of virtual classrooms that replace some but not all of the timetabled face-to-face teaching.
Scaffolding	The purposeful and logical sequencing of subject matter content, skills, activities, and assessments to best support learner outcomes.

Screencasting	The use of screencasting technologies to record personalised feedforward videos for learners.
Social Learning	Any kind of social activity (face-to-face or asynchronously online) that aims to make use of the 'crowd' to give learners regular opportunities for peer-to-peer feedback and feedforward.
Summative Assessment	Typically, high-stakes, end-of-course assessments to measure learner outcomes (i.e. examinations, assignments, projects etc.)
Synchronous Online	Learners and learning practitioner meet at the same time in a virtual space, using a video conferencing platform like Teams or Big Blue Button.
Templates	Documents or other structured tools designed to guide and direct learners through each phase of a scaffolded assignment or project.
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	A VLE e.g., Moodle or MS Teams is an online space that hosts and supports learning aids, learning activities, virtual classrooms, assignment uploads or other course resources.
Virtual Classroom	A pre-designed, synchronous, online, active learning session, usually hosted on a video conferencing platform like MS Teams or Big Blue Button.
Video Lectures	Short lectures or presentations on core concepts, ideas, theories, processes, or procedures that are chunked up into bite-sized, sometimes interactive (i.e. with an embedded quiz or branching scenario) series that learners can watch on their own time at their own pace.
Webinar	A large-scale, synchronous online learning session, usually including one or a panel of speakers/presenters, followed by a moderated Q&A and chat stream.
Workload Estimation	The process of carefully estimating how much time each assessment, activity, and instructional material or learning aid will take learners to complete. The sum total of these estimations should not exceed the expected learner time commitment for the course based on credit load.

Appendix 2 – College of FET Support Services

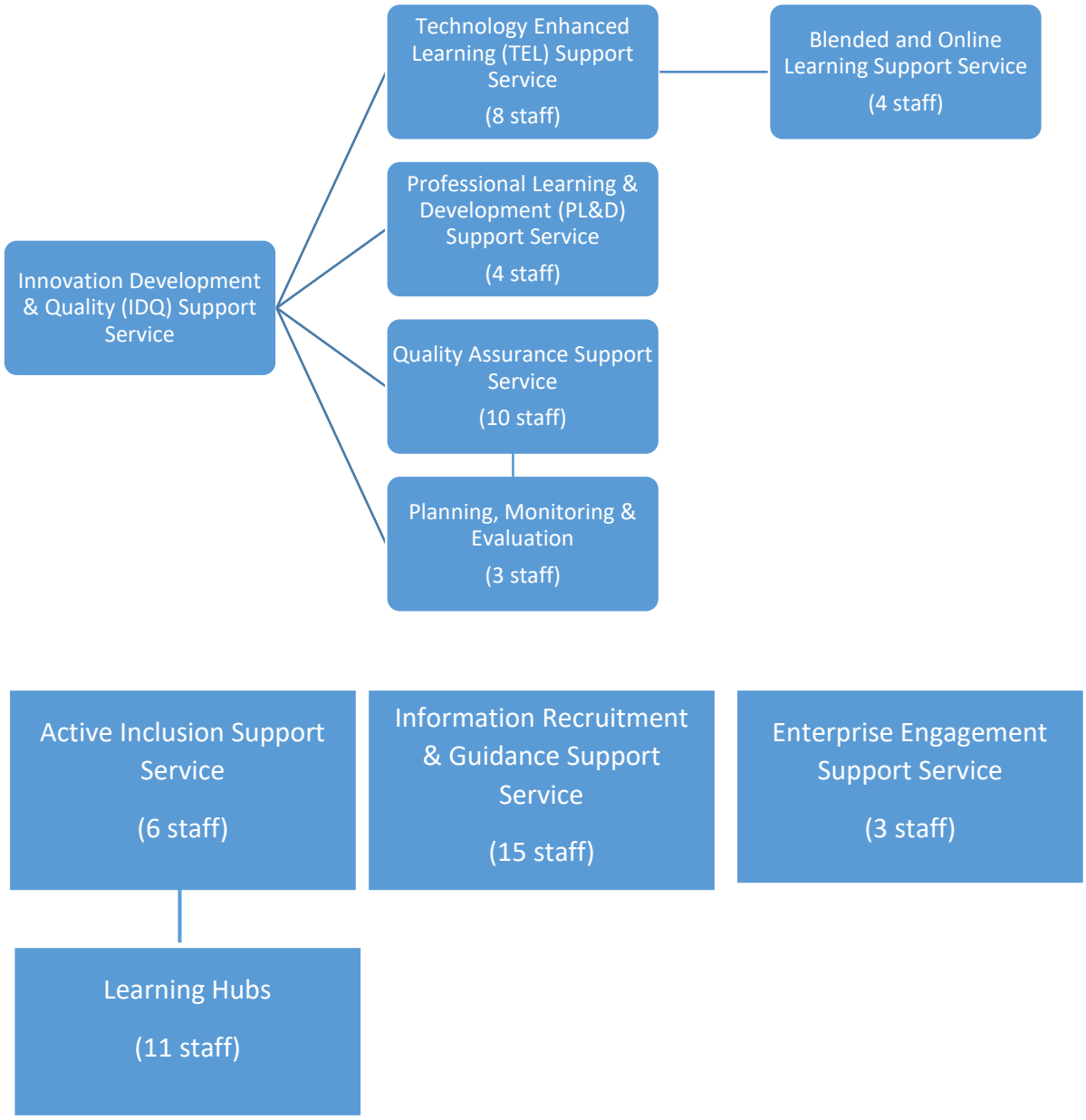

Figure 1 – January 2025

Appendix 3 - Reference

Creative Commons (2024) *About CC Licenses*. Available from About CC Licenses - Creative Commons [Accessed: 9th January 2025]

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Additional information

Research papers, projects and books reviewed as part of planning for the implementation of blended and fully online learning into the College of FET can be viewed in the following Padlet – Blended & Fully Online Learning Research (Collection of papers, books and reports)