



ONLINE AND BLENDED LEARNING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

1. Context

1.1 This document outlines London School of Commerce & IT's (LSCI) policy for delivery of programmes leading to an academic award from partner awarding organisations, which is delivered, supported or assessed in an online or blended mode. This policy supports the development of flexible learning opportunities using non-traditional delivery methods, for access to higher education. This policy also informs LSCI of risks posed by challenges faced in online and blended learning programmes, and ensures academic standards are maintained across all courses offered by LSCI.

1.2 This policy covers all blended programmes and courses offered by LSCI. It covers teaching, learning and assessment of programmes with a blended or online delivery components and is designed to safeguard the academic standards associated with such courses, and for staff and students engaged in online and blended learning provisions.

This policy is focused on student centred learning, teaching and assessment and engagement.

1.3 LSCI's policy on online and blended learning provision is consistent with National Standards for Quality Online Learning (NSQOL) ([Home | National Standards for Quality Online Learning](#)), relevant OfS requirements and QAA guidance.

2. Purpose

The objectives of this policy are:

- 2.1 To provide a framework for staff to engage with blended and online Programme delivery;
- 2.2 To ensure compliance with LSCI's Learning and Teaching Policy;
- 2.3 To provide guidance on instructional design for blended and online delivery;

3. Benefits

This policy supports the ongoing development of technology-enhanced learning across both online and face-to-face teaching environments that will assist in:

- 3.1 Enhancing the student experience;
- 3.2 Supporting innovative teaching strategies;
- 3.3 Building the digital capacity and competency of LSCI.

4. Principles

- 4.1 This policy supports LSCI's Strategic Plan and Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy.
- 4.2 The following assumptions underpin the development and implementation of this policy:
- 4.2.1 LSCI will ensure that the strategies and processes for the appointment, induction, training, professional development, and appraisal arrangements for academic and support staff are appropriate and specific to blended and/or fully online learning contexts.
 - 4.2.2 LSCI recognises that teaching on a blended/online Programme requires pedagogical and technical expertise. LSCI will ensure that academic staff are supported to function effectively in their delivery of blended/online content;
 - 4.2.3 LSCI recognises that benchmarks and indicators (e.g. guided learning hours /contact hours) designed for face-to-face provision are not always fit for purpose in a blended/online learning environment and can be revised, given the flexibility afforded by digital technologies;
 - 4.2.4 LSCI will ensure that the appropriate technical infrastructure and technical support for programmes are in place, to support blended and online modes of delivery;
 - 4.2.5 LSCI will ensure its teaching, learning and assessment practices are accessible to students with disabilities;
 - 4.2.6 LSCI will ensure its teaching, learning and assessment practices are student-centred, with a focus on engaging students in the learning process through face-to-face learning or online delivery of courses;
 - 4.2.7 LSCI will ensure arrangements are in place for compliance with any legal, regulatory or statutory obligations required for a blended or online learning context.

5. Definitions

The use of two key terms in this policy are defined as follows, in relation to this policy:

5.1 Definition of Blended Learning

Blended Learning is a type of Programme where teaching, learning and assessment occur using a mix of on-site and online learning, with the online components taking place synchronously, asynchronously, or in combination.

5.2 Definition of Online Learning

Online learning as a type of programmes where ALL teaching occurs entirely online, either synchronously or asynchronously, or in combination. Importantly, learners can complete their Programme of study from a distance, with no in-person or on-site requirements.

6. Policy

6.1 Academic Standards

- 6.1.1 LSCI is responsible for the academic standards and quality assurance of programmes delivered through blended and online learning. For this, it has developed ‘Standards for Quality Online Programmes’ and ‘Standards for Quality Online Teaching’ which are placed at ‘**Annex-A**’ and ‘**Annex-B**’ respectively.
- 6.1.2 All programmes offered in blended and online mode will be subject to the core quality processes that underpin all of LSCI’s programmes, as noted in our Quality Handbook. It is the responsibility of LSCI to manage the delivery of programmes and provision of support and assessment of students while ensuring that the academic standards of all awards are in accordance with LSCI’s partner awarding organisations’ policies.
- 6.1.3 LSCI will ensure that procedures and regulations as specified in academic policies are fit for purpose in a blended and online learning environment. For example, LSCI will ensure that reliable and scalable systems and processes are in place to verify the identity of students and to manage remote assessments. LSCI will also ensure content is available in accessible formats for all.
- 6.1.4 LSCI will ensure that quality assurance systems to monitor and/or moderate standards are fit-for-purpose in a blended and online learning environment.
- 6.1.5 LSCI will ensure that processes and regulations in relation to Admission, Access and Transfer Policy are fit-for-purpose in a blended and online learning environment.
- 6.1.6 LSCI will ensure that the VLE system supports blended and online learning programmes and the quality assurance of a flexible learning experience.

6.2 Programme Delivery

- 6.2.1 LSCI will ensure that the teaching, learning and assessment strategies and delivery mechanisms adopted in blended and online learning delivery, should be specifically designed for this study mode, the subject discipline and the intended programme learning outcomes.
- 6.2.2 LSCI will ensure that blended and online learning developments are learner centred and subject-led rather than technology led. The organisational structure and processes will ensure that technology is the servant of pedagogy, and that the programmes of study delivered in a blended and online format will support study readiness, equality of opportunity and positive outcomes for its learners.
- 6.2.3 LSCI will ensure its teaching, learning, and assessment practices are accessible to all students.

- 6.2.4 LSCI will take all practicable steps to ensure security and reliability of its online learning and support systems.
- 6.2.5 LSCI will control access to its online learning and support systems.
- 6.2.6 LSCI will take all practicable steps to ensure continuity of service delivery of its online learning and support systems. It will ensure that a contingency plan is available in the event of failure of the designated modes of delivery.

6.3 Student Information/Support

- 6.3.1 Prior to enrolment on a blended and/or online learning programme, students are provided with an induction to the programme.
- 6.3.2 The student induction will also specify requirements for access to the online learning environment – detailing the required broadband specification and any specific hardware or software requirements, for example.
- 6.3.3 The student induction will provide information on the level and nature of support available, including but not limited to academic, technical and pastoral support.
- 6.3.4 LSCI also provides support to students on all aspects of face-to-face and online delivery through its dedicated admin team and IT staff on Digital Literacy and through face-to-face support sessions held throughout the academic year.

6.4 Assessment of Students and Requirements

- 6.4.1 Assessments for blended and online learning programmes will be similar to those used for on-campus delivery with parity of standards. LSCI will ensure that the outcomes of assessment for a blended and/or online learning programme meet the specified academic level of the award as defined by the partner awarding Organisation.
- 6.4.2 Information on methods and criteria of assessment will be provided in the programme handbooks. In programmes featuring online assessment, the students will receive orientation sessions in advance to ensure that students feel supported in engaging in this type of programme delivery and assessment.
- 6.4.3 Students will be made aware of LSCI's Procedure for Preventing and Responding to Cases of Suspected Plagiarism mentioned in the programme handbooks.

6.5 Staff Professional Development in Online Teaching and Learning

- 6.5.1 Educators need a set of digital competences specific to their profession in order to be able to seize the potential of digital technologies for enhancing and innovating education.
- 6.5.2 LSCI will ensure that staff involved in teaching on a blended and/or online learning programme are appropriately qualified and supported.
- 6.5.3 LSCI will ensure staff are provided with opportunities to develop their academic and technology-enhanced learning skills and digital competences.

7. Responsibility

Dean of LSCI with the Programme Leader, and support from Data Manager, is responsible for the implementation of this Blended and Online Learning and Quality Assurance policy.

LSCI Standards for Quality Online Programmes

STANDARD A: MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement of a quality program clearly conveys its purpose and goals. It serves as the basis for the program's day-to-day operations, as well as a guide for its strategic plans for the future. Communication between and buy-in from stakeholders is a critical component of a mission statement.

- A1 The mission statement gives the purpose of the program or Organisation, is clear and concise in articulating who the program or Organisation is, what it does, and whom it serves.
- A2 The mission statement indicates that learning is the focus of the program or organisation.
- A3 The mission statement demonstrates a commitment to measurable quality and accountability to stakeholders.
- A4 The mission statement is made available to the public.
- A5 The mission statement is reviewed periodically by program leadership.

STANDARD B: GOVERNANCE

A quality program will have a clear governance structure with transparent roles and responsibilities designed to ensure long-term success and sustainability.

- B1 Governance members are knowledgeable about K-12 online learning.
- B2 Governance members ensure the program or Organisation is adequately resourced through securing and/or approving resource allocations in a manner that aligns with the mission, vision, and strategic goals of the program or organisation.
- B3 Programmatic or organisational bylaws clearly define the unique roles of the governance and leadership teams. Each of these groups works within the established guidelines.
- B4 Governance members collaborate with the leadership team who implements the policies and procedures that are in compliance with state educational statutes and/or regional accrediting agencies.
- B5 The program bylaws articulate the Organisation to which it belongs, the roles and responsibilities of its board and leadership, and comply with all state and federal regulations.

STANDARD C: LEADERSHIP

The leadership of a quality online program is accountable to the program's governance body and is responsible for setting and meeting the operational and strategic goals in support of the program's mission and vision statements.

- C1 The leadership team establishes annual program or Organisational goals, implements action plans designed to meet or exceed goals, and monitors and communicates progress on goals to stakeholders.
- C2 The leadership team maintains a disciplined knowledge of trends in its educational and business environment in order to inform budget projections.
- C3 The leadership team provides a productive collaborative environment for learning and work.

C4 The leadership team verifies that measures are in place to ensure the quality, integrity, and validity of information.

C5 The leadership team develops and implements program or Organisational policies and procedures that are reviewed and updated regularly.

STANDARD D: PLANNING

A quality program engages in regular strategic planning in order to reflect upon and improve Organisational effectiveness.

D1 A strategic plan is developed and updated regularly to address long-term actions.

D2 The strategic plan addresses the requirements for resources that effectively and efficiently serve their learners and faculty, including curriculum, technology, academic support, professional development, and fiscal viability.

D3 Organisational goals are aligned to the approved strategic plan and updated annually.

D4 Organisational goals are shared and supported throughout the Organisation.

STANDARD E: ORGANISATIONAL STAFF

A quality online program has appropriate levels of qualified, well-trained, and supported staff who have the resources needed to achieve personal and organisational goals.

E1 Sufficient qualified professional, administrative, and support staff are provided to achieve the organisation's mission and annual goals.

E2 Sufficient organisational staff are provided to oversee the instructional learning environment.

E3 Ongoing training and support are provided to the staff to carry out the mission, vision, and goals of the program.

E4 Clearly defined individual and team roles and responsibilities are evident to help create a collegial team that provides effective delivery of quality education.

E5 Evaluations of staff and faculty occur on a regularly scheduled basis.

STANDARD F: FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL RESOURCES

A quality online program plans for and expends financial and material resources using sound business practices to accomplish the Organisation's mission and vision.

F1 Resources are managed in a responsible manner according to local, state, and/or federal budget regulations and accounting principles.

F2 Resources are adequate and allocated to help ensure sustainability over time, according to the organisation's strategic plan, mission, and vision.

STANDARD G: EQUITY AND ACCESS

A quality online program's policies and practices support students' ability to access the program. Accommodations are available to meet a variety of student needs.

G1 Policies clearly state learner eligibility requirements for the program and are communicated to stakeholders.

G2 Program faculty and staff work with students and families to personalise programs and adhere to accommodations as dictated by local policies and laws.

G3 All learners are ensured equitable access to the program.

STANDARD H: INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In a quality online program, leadership is transparent in its management of the program, providing regular and timely information on progress towards attainment of goals, alignment with policies and standards, and achievement of student learning outcomes to all stakeholders.

H1 Accurate information is disclosed to prospective and current stakeholders.

H2 The program meets or exceeds industry standards related to course rigor and diploma-completion requirements.

STANDARD I: CURRICULUM AND COURSE DESIGN

A quality online program will adopt and implement instructional design methods that enable effective online instruction for both institutionally developed courses as well as licensed content from other sources.

I1 The program has clearly stated educational goals.

I2 The program clearly organises course offerings in a way that stakeholders can easily navigate.

I3 Courses included in the program integrate quality instructional materials to enable and enrich student learning.

I4 Courses offered through the program utilize regularly evaluated technology that supports the learning goals and enhances the learning experience.

I5 Courses included in the program contain content that aligns with appropriate learning standards and includes provisions for both intervention and accelerated learning opportunities.

I6 Courses included in the program provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.

I7 Courses included in the program provide a variety of activities that include options for in-depth learning through authentic problem-solving and experience.

I8 Courses offered through the program meet content copyright law and fair use guidelines.

I9 Courses offered through the program are designed using research-based design principles, such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL), that improve access to learning for all participants.

I10 Courses offered through the program include opportunities for both asynchronous and synchronous learning.

STANDARD J: INSTRUCTION

A quality online program takes a comprehensive and integrated approach to ensuring excellent teaching for its students.

J1 The program adopts clear expectations for curriculum design and teaching practices that align with its stated vision, mission, principles, or values.

J2 Instruction is guided by evidence-based practices.

- J3 Teachers incorporate a process of continual self-assessment, using learning analytics to inform changes in pedagogy and instructional practices.
- J4 Instruction is inherently inclusive for all learners.
- J5 The program implements strategies to ensure the academic integrity of course assignments and assessments in order to increase student accountability.

STANDARD K: ASSESSMENT AND LEARNER PERFORMANCE

A quality online learning program values positive learner outcomes and takes a comprehensive, integrated approach to measuring and monitoring progress toward defined learning objectives.

- K1 The program uses multiple methods to assess the degree to which stated learning goals are met.
- K2 Formative assessments are included that provide data for targeted remediation or intervention when needed.
- K3 Assessments are aligned to learning objectives.
- K4 The program provides standards for timely, effective feedback as an integral role of assessment.

STANDARD L: FACULTY AND STAFF SUPPORT

A quality online program supports faculty and staff by providing mentoring, technical assistance, and timely professional development.

- L1 The program provides and encourages participation in induction and mentoring programs.
- L2 Teachers are provided regular feedback regarding their performance and student achievement/progress.
- L3 The program provides a wide variety of professional development opportunities to faculty and staff, which are aligned to the National Standards for Quality Online Teaching.
- L4 The program provides professional development opportunities to guidance staff focused on student needs unique to online learning and the network of services available to support online learning.
- L5 The program provides teachers and staff with timely and effective technical support.

STANDARD M: LEARNER AND PARENT/GUARDIAN SUPPORT

A quality online program provides learner and parent/guardian support services to address the various needs of learners at different levels within the Organisation. The levels of support are appropriate and adequate for learner success.

- M1 Learners are provided with an orientation to online learning technologies and successful online learning practices.
- M2 The program provides academic services and academic advising to address learners' academic and developmental needs.

- M3 The program provides accessibility support services that comply with special education policies and procedures.
- M4 The program provides access to the learning management system(s), as well as all appropriate learning and assessment content.
- M5 The program establishes standards for teacher communications with learners and parents/guardians.
- M6 The program establishes standards for timely, effective technical support for learners.
- M7 The program has guidance services and academic advising to support learners and parents/guardians to ensure the success of the online program from the decision-making process through the renewal process or graduation for all educational goals to be met.

STANDARD N: PROGRAM EVALUATION

A quality online program recognizes the value of program evaluation. Program evaluation is both internal and external and informs all processes that affect teaching and learning. Internal evaluations often are more informal in nature and may provide immediate feedback on a targeted area of inquiry. External program evaluations typically look at the entire program from an objective perspective that will bring additional credibility to the results.

- N1 Ongoing internal evaluations are conducted to regularly collect and analyse data based on national, state, and/or program metrics.
- N2 Ongoing internal evaluations are conducted using valid and reliable measures to evaluate learner success and to drive instructional and management decision-making.
- N3 Ongoing internal evaluations are conducted to determine program success and plan for continuous improvement by measuring learner achievement and satisfaction based on valid and reliable assessment techniques.
- N4 Regular internal evaluation of state or national standardized test results designed to measure achievement of all learners are conducted to inform the program's impact on student outcomes.
- N5 Faculty are evaluated on an ongoing basis to assure instructional quality, using clear, consistent policies, measures, and procedures.
- N6 A process for reviewing and evaluating courses is implemented to ensure quality, consistency with the curriculum, currency, and advancement of student learning outcomes.
- N7 Periodic external evaluations are conducted by highly qualified parties with a demonstrated ability to deliver an objective and comprehensive evaluation of internal evaluation processes and results.
- N8 Periodic external evaluations are conducted by highly qualified parties with a demonstrated ability to deliver an objective and comprehensive evaluation of progress towards the program's goals, mission, and strategic plan.
- N9 Findings from external evaluations conducted by highly qualified parties with a demonstrated ability to deliver objective and comprehensive evaluations supported by current research are used to develop and implement an improvement plan.
- N10 Evaluation results are communicated to program stakeholders.

LSCI Standards for Quality Online Teaching

STANDARD A: PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The online teacher demonstrates professional competence by adhering to professional responsibilities.

- A1 The online teacher meets or is working towards local and/or state/national requirements for eligibility to teach.
- A2 The online teacher demonstrates technological proficiency.
- A3 The online teacher adheres to local or national laws or mandates related to the safety and success of all students.
- A4 The online teacher is a reflective practitioner.
- A5 The online teacher regularly participates in professional learning related to online learning and pedagogy.
- A6 The online teacher effectively manages their roles and responsibilities.
- A7 The online teacher models digital citizenship including the responsible use of emerging technologies.
- A8 The online teacher advocates for quality online learning with stakeholders.

STANDARD B: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

The online teacher facilitates learning experiences that model and promote digital citizenship while ensuring fair access and participation for all learners.

- B1 The online teacher facilitates learning experiences that promote responsible digital citizenship for all learners.
- B2 The online teacher establishes expectations for learner behaviour that encourage academic integrity and appropriate use of digital tools in adherence to local policies.
- B3 The online teacher models compliance with intellectual property policies and fair-use standards while fostering learner understanding and responsible application of these concepts.
- B4 The online teacher implements national and local policies designed to safeguard all learners in digital learning environments.

STANDARD C: ENGAGEMENT AND BELONGING

The online course incorporates instructional materials, activities, resources, and assessments that align with standards, engage all learners, and support the achievement of academic goals.

- C1 The online teacher provides and/or directs learners to technical support in a prompt manner.
- C2 The online teacher identifies patterns in learner engagement.
- C3 The online teacher nurtures individual learner agency.
- C4 The online teacher communicates in a timely and supportive manner.
- C5 The online teacher provides actionable, specific, and timely feedback.
- C6 The online teacher provides and/or facilitates the development of community engagement expectations.
- C7 The online teacher facilitates collaboration among learners.
- C8 The online teacher responds quickly to violations of the community engagement expectations.
- C9 The online teacher leverages partnerships with stakeholders within the student's local learning community.

STANDARD D: LEARNER-CENTERED INSTRUCTION

The online teacher personalizes instruction based on the learner's academic, social, and emotional needs.

- D1 The online teacher collaborates with stakeholders.
- D2 The online teacher builds an understanding of the learner's needs and preferences.
- D3 The online teacher supports the learner's use of assistive technologies.
- D4 The online teacher continuously monitors learner progress.
- D5 The online teacher analyses a variety of data sources.
- D6 The online teacher creates or adapts curricular materials in response to the learner's needs.
- D7 The online teacher modifies instructional strategies in response to the learner's needs.

STANDARD E: INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

The online teacher curates and creates instructional materials, tools, strategies, and resources to engage all learners and ensure the achievement of academic goals.

This standard and indicators are considered optional, as instructional design does not always fall under online teaching responsibilities. For full online course design standards, see the National Standards for Quality Online Courses. The following section outlines standards for instructional design skills for the online teacher of record, where applicable.

- E1 The online teacher aligns course content with associated learning goals.

- E2 The online teacher incorporates subject-specific resources.
- E3 The online teacher incorporates developmentally appropriate resources.
- E4 The online teacher incorporates resources that are representative of the learners.
- E5 The online teacher designs courses with continuous assessment opportunities.
- E6 The online teacher designs curricular materials that incorporate constructive feedback.
- E7 The online teacher develops a range of assessments.
- E8 The online teacher designs learning experiences that efficiently use technology.
- E9 The online teacher continuously reviews and updates course content.

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