

What's driving the need for flexible curricula?



# Learner expectations

How are our learners changing and what are their needs/expectations for flexible curricula?

QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc002>



# Learner expectations

## Considerations

- Financial issues.
- Changing learner demographics and the diverse needs of specific learner groups.
- Increasing demand for employability, digital literacy, careers and lifelong learning skills.
- Need for greater flexibility in time, pace, content and place of study.
- Need to belong to an academic, learning and social community.
- Flexibility in entry/exit into higher education.
- Need to recognise prior learning (formal and experiential) and simpler articulation between colleges and HE.
- Demand for flexible and sustainable support for induction, personal, professional and academic development.
- Opportunities to learn using a range of technologies.
- Need for personalised learner course content, and course information, guidance and support, starting at enrolment.
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What's driving the need for flexible curricula?



# Key Government and sector drivers

What are the key Government drivers having an impact on the institution that may influence the need for and design of flexible curricula?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc003>



# Key Government and sector drivers

## Considerations

- Expectation to respond to shifting Government policies, priorities and plans eg
  - widening participation
  - business-university collaboration
  - learner employability and entrepreneurialism
  - digital Scotland
  - curriculum for excellence
  - articulation
  - skills strategy
  - student engagement
  - lifelong learning
- Scottish higher education in a regional and international context.
- The Bologna Process.
- The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.
- The Scottish higher education Quality Enhancement Framework.
- UK visa and immigration changing rules and practices.

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# Institutional drivers, goals and priorities

What are the key institutional drivers, goals and priorities that will influence the need for and design of flexible curricula?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc004>

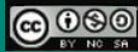


# Institutional drivers, goals and priorities

## Considerations

- Outcome agreements.
- Expectation to respond to institutional and local strategies and planning processes, eg
  - teaching, learning and assessment
  - technology-enhanced/blended learning
  - management Information Services
  - library
  - estates
  - internationalisation and globalisation
  - employability/graduate attributes/digital literacies
  - learner engagement
  - work-based learning/employer engagement
  - widening participation including articulation and recognition of prior learning
  - business plans (institutional, local and programme)
  - quality assurance and enhancement
  - recruitment/retention targets and approaches
  - sustainable development
  - learner extra-curricular activities and accreditation
- Curriculum for excellence.
- Responding to league tables and public data eg NSS, KIS, student employability, external examiner reports, QAA audits.
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# Globalisation and internationalisation

What is the impact on the need for and design of flexible curricula of globalisation and internationalisation, including international competition?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc005>



# Globalisation and internationalisation

## Considerations

- Global university rankings (eg quality of education, quality of faculty, performance).
- Internationalisation of curriculum content, delivery and student experience.
- Recruiting and preparing international students for local or remote study.
- Students wanting to study abroad.
- Transnational arrangements eg overseas campuses, collaborative agreements for teaching by local staff.
- Sustainability and its links to global citizenship.
- International collaboration in curriculum design and delivery.
- Cross-border quality assessment practices.
- Institutional internationalisation, collaboration (eg in quality enhancement and educational innovation) and benchmarking.
- Mass higher education eg in developing countries.
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# Employer and employer body needs and expectations

What are the key needs of employers and employer bodies in respect of flexible curricula?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc006>



# Employer and employer body needs and expectations

## Considerations

- Programmes align with employer strategic objectives and goals.
- Partnership working is developed and sustained with employers.
- Programmes align with standards eg national occupational and professional body standards.
- Programmes and associated qualifications offer cross-border mobility.
- Partnerships and joined-up approaches are developed and sustained with educational providers.
- Employees are supported by employers and institution, using eg mentoring.
- Programmes develop employability-related skills.
- Work-related learning opportunities are developed that are cost-effective and efficient.
- Work-based learning offers flexible delivery.
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What's driving the need for flexible curricula?



# Changes in how we teach

What factors are influencing how we teach and how do these act as drivers for flexible curricula approaches?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc040>



# Changes in how we teach

## Considerations

- Increasing need for continuity of support for academic, personal and professional development throughout a modular programme (starting at induction).
- Need to demonstrate and evidence knowledge, capabilities and attributes through use of e-portfolios, reflection etc.
- Need to develop autonomous, self-directed learners, capable of self-review through eg assessment.
- Working, learning and communicating are affected by the use of technologies/ new media.
- Learners have access to low-cost consumer devices and Cloud-based services that can be exploited for learning.
- Learners are involved with curriculum design, delivery and evaluation.
- Increasing focus on research-informed teaching and learning in some institutions.
- .....

What's driving the need for flexible curricula?



# Changes in what we teach

What factors are influencing what we teach and how do these act as drivers for flexible curricula approaches?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc007>



# Changes in what we teach

## Considerations

- Knowledge, ideas, information, data, people are increasingly available via the internet.
- Broadening of some discipline areas and development of interdisciplinarity.
- Some discipline areas need to be updated more frequently than others.
- Increase in demand to address graduate attributes and employability skills.
- Expectation that programmes should develop learner skills such as critical thinking, problem identification and solving, enquiry, knowledge building, creativity, initiative, digital literacy and entrepreneurialism.
- Access is increasing to a wide range of free open educational resources, open source tools, open data and free/near-free Cloud-based and mobile apps.
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# Retention

What factors are influencing retention (noting that between 33% and 42% of students think about withdrawing from HE) and how will these influence the design and delivery of flexible curricula?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc008>



# Retention

## Considerations

- Concerns about the demands of academic study, confidence and the achievement of future aspirations.
- Funding and cost of living problems.
- Learners face conflicting demands for their time.
- Change of circumstances eg health, employment.
- Lack of inclusion in the learning, academic and social community (starting pre-entry).
- Lack of access to personalised information, guidance, performance data and support.
- Learner special needs insufficiently addressed.
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Good practice in  
external engagement and partnerships  
should:



# Engage employers with design and delivery

- To what degree do programme teams engage with employers to shape design and delivery that will allow customisation to individual employer/learner contexts and needs?
- To what degree do employers help to define and develop flexible graduate employability skills?
- Can employers act as a catalyst to help develop innovative flexible curricula?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc009>



# Engage employers with design and delivery

- Employers and/or learners/past learners are members of the design team.
- An employer-provider advisory group is set up and meets regularly.
- Employers act as learner mentors and assessors (and contribute to the design of assessments).
- Training and quality assurance is in place for employers as mentors, assessors and supervisors.
- Employers provide learner support.
- Employers contribute towards specifying employability skills and learning outcomes.
- Academic staff have appropriate time and resources to engage with employers in forming partnerships and in developing and delivering curricula.
- Staff make use of systems and technologies to support employer engagement in design and delivery of curricula.
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Good practice in  
external engagement and partnerships  
should:



# Align curricula with employer and learner needs

- To what degree are programmes personalised by aligning curricula with employer and learner needs?
- Do employers influence curriculum flexibility in terms of maintaining currency and relevancy?
- Do employers offer flexible and authentic work-related learning experiences that meet both employer and individual learner needs?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc010>



# Align curricula with employer and learner needs

- Curricula are aligned with employer strategic goals such as workforce skills development, skills utilisation, acquiring and retaining key staff and promoting entrepreneurship.
- Curricula align with learner personal needs and facilitate career progression and life-long learning.
- Employer and learner needs are identified in relation to learning outcomes, pathways, assessment and support, using diagnostic tools.
- Learners have access to flexible opportunities to work/learn via authentic work-related experiences eg through WBL (work-based learning), placements, year in industry and sandwich and industrial training opportunities.
- Programmes offer bite-size, small awards.
- Programmes and their associated qualifications offer cross-border mobility with consistency/ portability of outputs, standards and learning outcomes.
- Programmes offer flexible delivery (in time and place) and with consideration for those with special needs.
- Delivery is cost-effective and efficient, minimising loss of time and earnings for companies and learners.
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Good practice in  
**external engagement and partnerships**  
should:



## Align curricula with sector/employer body needs and initiatives

- To what extent do programme teams meet the needs of a broader range of employers cost-effectively by working with sector/employer bodies that have defined (or plan to define) key skills/capabilities/learning outcomes?
- To what extent do learners have flexibility to work for a range of different employers - through aligning programmes with key sector skills and capabilities?
- To what extent can programmes engage with SMEs (small and medium sized enterprises) flexibly, by working at a sector level?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc011>



# Align curricula with sector/employer body needs and initiatives

- Staff engage with relevant sector-employer-professional bodies with a focus on developing win-win opportunities.
- Sector Advisory groups are set-up to drive forward sector-based initiatives and include stakeholders from all bodies, groups, employers and providers.
- Curricula are aligned with sector, professional and/or employer body/consortia needs eg defined key skills, capabilities, awards and learning outcomes.
- Programme teams research and identify sector initiatives with which to align with.
- Staff have appropriate time and resources available to allow for engagement with sector/ employer bodies.
- Funding for sector initiatives (for both programme development and delivery) is sought from a range of bodies.
- Programme teams work with key large employers to engage SMEs (eg as part of supply networks).
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Good practice in  
**external engagement and partnerships**  
should:



## Align curricula with professional, regional, national, sector, international standards and changing contexts

- To what extent can curricula maintain currency and relevancy through aligning with standards?
- To what extent can programmes meet the flexible needs of a wide range of stakeholders, represented through professional, regional, national, and international bodies - through aligning curricula with standards?
- To what degree do curricula respond to changing sector contexts?

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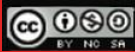


# Align curricula with professional, regional, national, sector, international standards and changing contexts

- Qualifications and learning outcomes are aligned with standards eg National Occupational Standards, sector standards, professional standards.
- Staff undertake regular research to identify accreditation/standards frameworks and how these map to institutional provision.
- Qualifications and standards align with SCQF.
- Qualifications and standards are integrated with professional awards.
- Staff engage with regular mapping of learning outcomes to relevant standards and update curricular accordingly.
- Systems allow students to collect evidence towards professional awards and accreditation and enable transfer of such evidence to other systems eg using e-portfolios.
- Professional bodies provide accreditation.
- Industry 'brands' provide certification.
- Sector skills councils provide certification.
- HEAR (Higher Education Achievement Report) records are aligned with relevant standards.
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Good practice in  
external engagement and partnerships  
should:



## Engage other educational providers and stakeholders with curriculum design and delivery

- Can programmes provide greater flexibility and inclusion through working with other providers (eg FE)?
- To what extent are other providers (eg FE) better-placed to provide certain types of learning eg vocational?
- To what extent do programmes collaborate closely with other providers to facilitate articulation?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc013>



# Engage other educational providers and stakeholders with curricula design and delivery

- Programme teams allocate time and resource to partnership formation and co-design of curricula with other educational providers.
- Training and quality assurance are in place for other educational providers, as appropriate (eg for work-based mentors).
- Agreed processes/roles/responsibilities are in place to support programme delivery, including learner support.
- There are cross institutional, cross-provider and co-ordinated approaches to development, marketing and promotion of programmes, pathways and progression.
- All providers have agreed systems and technologies in place to support co-design and delivery of curricula, ensuring they present a unified interface for users.
- Staff engage with other stakeholders in curricula design and delivery eg local community groups.
- Effective leadership and business-like ways of working are in place where there are mechanisms/structures in place to effect regular dialogue between co-providers.
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Good practice in  
anytime, anywhere learning  
should:



## Ensure minimum equitable off-campus access to technologies for all learners

- Do all your learners have access to appropriate technologies and technical knowledge to fully engage with flexible learning (including using mobile devices)?
- Do quality assurance processes seek to ensure minimum equitable access?
- Will work-based learners be able to gain flexible access to institutional systems in the work-place?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc014>



# Ensure minimum equitable off-campus access to technologies for all learners

- Programme specification incorporates minimal requirements/expectations for end-user devices, networks, security and applications/programmes to access the University's systems, though allowing some learner choice in which technologies to use.
- Programmes provide loan devices and connectivity for those learners unable to meet the minimum requirements specification where student ownership of a device is not stipulated.
- Programmes provide detailed and usable guidelines for setting up end-user devices, networks, applications/programmes and security.
- Access to institutional systems from mobile devices is provided such as the VLE, student records systems, e-portfolios, allowing eg access to learning materials, student performance data, information resources, uploading of e-portfolio evidence, conferencing.
- Programme teams engage with employers to ensure learners have flexible access to institutional systems and to overcome issues of access that arise due to security/ protection system, firewall policies.
- Processes are in place to quality-assure provision.
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Good practice in  
anytime, anywhere learning  
should:



## Provide access to a broad range of on-campus technology enhanced learning tools for learners and staff

- To what extent do learners and staff have access to a range of on-campus technologies to support blended and flexible learning opportunities and new pedagogies?
- Are learners able to fully and flexibly access institutional systems using their own devices in a wide range of formal and informal spaces across the campus?
- To what extent do the available campus-based learning technologies underpin the infrastructure needed to support active and flexible student engagement in learning?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc015>



# Provide access to a broad range of on-campus technology enhanced learning tools for learners and staff

- Access to devices (eg PCs, Tablets, e-book readers) is provided on-campus where appropriate/necessary.
- Ready access to reliable on-campus wireless networking is available to learners in both formal and informal spaces.
- Learners are supported in using their own devices to access the University's systems and the internet.
- Learners have access to accessories that support the use of their own devices eg access to power supplies, appropriate spaces in teaching, learning and social rooms.
- Learners have easy access to printing services, including from using their own devices.
- Tools are provided to allow sufficient interaction in learning spaces eg EVS (Electronic Voting Systems) and projection systems to allow learners to display content from their own devices.
- Lectures are recorded and made available to learners.
- Tools are provided to allow learners to store, edit, manage and access multimedia data eg audio, video, screencasts.
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Good practice in  
anytime, anywhere learning  
should:



## Design curricula with a significant focus on technology-enhanced learning (TEL)

- To what extent do curricula support flexible and blended learning on-campus, at home and in the work-place using desktop/laptop computers allied to a range of learning technologies?
- Do staff have appropriate skills, knowledge and support to design flexible curricula using TEL approaches?
- To what extent do programme teams evaluate potential use of a broad range of technologies to support flexible learning?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc016>



# Design curricula with a significant focus on technology-enhanced learning (TEL)

- Social media such as wikis, blogs, forums, messaging are used to support highly engaging forms of formal and informal learning, communication, knowledge-building and collaborative content creation.
- Real-time web-conferencing systems are used to support cost-effective ways of learning, collaboration, communication and engagement through eg virtual classrooms.
- A virtual learning environment (VLE) provides the infrastructure to underpin a wide range of integrated and managed technology-enhanced learning applications.
- Technologies such as computer-based testing, online assignment submission and marking and e-portfolios support efficient assessment and implementation of pedagogic principles of effective assessment & feedback practice.
- Multimedia technologies are used by staff and students in a range of learning scenarios eg collecting evidence towards assessment, creating learning content.
- Technologies such as podcasting, screen-casting, wikis, blogs, e-portfolios support feedback in efficient and enhancing ways.
- E-portfolios are used to efficiently support and enhance reflective practice and collection of evidence towards accreditation.
- Cloud-based services are utilised to provide resilience and enhance reliability and system support.
- Programme design teams have access to usable guidance, training resources and support in relation to innovation in TEL.
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Good practice in  
anytime, anywhere learning  
should:



## Design curricula specifically to exploit mobile technologies such as Tablets, SmartPhones, e-book readers, and multimedia devices

- To what extent does curriculum design take advantage of the affordances of mobile devices in delivering flexible anytime/anywhere learning?
- To what extent can existing e-learning materials and learning activities be reconfigured for mobile devices?
- Do staff have appropriate skills, knowledge and support to design flexible curricula using mobile devices?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc017>



# Design curricula specifically to exploit mobile technologies such as Tablets, SmartPhones, e-book readers, and multimedia devices

- Learning, teaching and assessment apps are developed to exploit the affordances of mobile devices (eg 'instant' social networking, location-awareness, usability, portability, mobile gaming, multimedia data, use in practice settings/for situated learning).
- Learning activities make use of mobile/Cloud-based tools eg online surveys, social networking, office/management tools.
- Learning activities include use of mobile devices to create multimedia and interactive multimedia learning content by both students and tutors.
- Mobile devices are used for assessments eg formative assessments that exploit SMS messaging and voice-based CellCasting; podcasting-based feedback, up/down-loading of evidence on e-portfolios.
- Existing e-learning materials are re-configured for mobile platforms.
- Guidelines are provided to both learners and staff on using mobile learning approaches.
- Programme design teams have access to guidance, training resources and support in relation to using mobile technologies in TEL (technology enhanced learning).
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Good practice in  
anytime, anywhere learning  
should:



## Ensure a high degree of digital literacy (DL) among learners

- Do curricula define requirements for learner digital literacies and incorporate them into academic, personal and development planning and reflective practice?
- Do learners have access to appropriate tools and resources to analyse and develop their digital literacies?
- To what extent do curricula provide opportunities for learners to apply digital literacies in different contexts?

QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc018>



# Ensure a high degree of digital literacy (DL) among learners

- Development of learner digital literacies is incorporated into academic, personal and professional development planning and reflective practice.
- Digital literacies are defined as part of requirements for programme participation eg in terms of skills, practices (ways of thinking and acting) and attributes.
- Digital literacies incorporate a range of literacies eg information and communications literacy, academic and learning practices, social/ collaborative practices, media literacy and techno-literacy.
- Learners have access to a range of learning resources to enhance their digital literacies and appropriate time is allocated for this activity.
- Learners have access to online self-review diagnostics tools which provide personalised suggestions for areas to improve digital literacy.
- E-portfolios are used by students to plan, record and monitor/reflect on progress with development of their digital literacies.
- Curricula provide opportunities for learners to put into practice and apply their digital skills and capabilities in different contexts such as scholarship, learning and employer contexts, which are assessed formatively and potentially summatively.
- Curricula incorporate the development of student attributes and employability skills linked to digital technologies.

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Good practice in  
anytime, anywhere learning  
should:



## Provide 24-hour access to information, learning resources and support

- If your learners wish to access institutional systems at any time/any place to support their flexible learning, will institutional systems allow this?
- Do quality assurance processes aim to ensure 24-hr access to all learning, working and information resources and tools.
- To what extent do learners have access to 24-hr one-stop-shop technical support and problem-solving?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc019>



# Provide 24-hour access to information, learning resources and support

- 24x7 access to online libraries, databases, catalogues, periodicals, journals, collections (including e-book publications) is provided.
- 24x7 access to programme/module administration and management information is provided.
- 24x7 access to learner management data (eg from student records systems) and tools to support learners in analysing their progress is provided.
- 24x7 access to learning systems and applications eg the VLE is provided.
- 24x7 access to a one-stop-shop for all technical and problem-solving queries is provided.
- Access to a range of online resources for supporting and guiding learners in the use of all institutional ICT systems (including learning, information and management systems) is provided.
- Community-based forums are provided and facilitated to co-opt learner peer support and to capture and address common problems and issues.
- Students are encouraged to use social media platforms to self-form groups and support each other.
- Processes are in place to quality-assure support services.

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Good practice in  
anytime, anywhere learning  
should:



Provide flexible access to tutors, peers, mentors, experts, assessors and other relevant stakeholders involved with curricula delivery

- To what extent is there flexibility in how and when learners can gain support from tutors, peers, mentors, experts, assessors and other stakeholders and are expectations clearly defined?
- Are there protocols of engagement and processes in place to quality-assure such flexible support?
- To what extent is training, guidance and support provided for the different stakeholders?

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<http://tiny.cc/qaafc020>



# Provide flexible access to tutors, peers, mentors, experts, assessors and other relevant stakeholders involved with curricula delivery

- Learners have virtual access to tutors at specified times and within specified response times using both asynchronous and synchronous technologies.
- Mentors and coaches engage with learners using eg social media, web-conferencing and learning journals/e-portfolios at specified times and within specified response times.
- Curricula are designed to incorporate peer-to-peer learning support through eg peer feedback on assignments, using technologies such as e-portfolios, social media and web-conferencing.
- Learners have virtual access to external experts at specified times and within agreed response times.
- Induction and guidance materials are provided to tutors, mentors, assessors and experts in effective practice and use of digital systems to support learners.
- Mentors, coaches, tutors, assessors and experts are encouraged to collaborate in sharing good practice in providing learner support including via a facilitated online community of practice.
- Processes are in place to quality-assure support services.
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Good practice in  
anytime, anywhere learning  
should:



## Provide specific learner guidance and support for flexible learning

- To what extent do learners understand the importance of being an effective and efficient flexible learner?
- To what extent are flexible learning capabilities incorporated into academic, personal and professional development planning and reflective practice?
- Do learners have access to tools and resources to diagnose and develop their flexible learning capabilities?

QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc021>



# Provide specific learner guidance and support for flexible learning

- Development of learner flexible learning capabilities/professional development/academic and reflective practice.
- Guidance on effective practice in using digital media for collaborative, constructivist, peer and informal learning eg social media, mobile devices is provided.
- Guidance on effective practice in flexible learning, including academic/personal/professional development planning, reflective practice and evidence capturing using technologies such as e-portfolios, blogs and learning journals is provided.
- Guidance on effective practice in use of synchronous communications such as web-conferencing is provided.

Guidance on effective practice in research-led learning is provided.

Guidance on studying/learning in different locations such as the work-place, at home and on the move is provided.

- Guidance on how best to manage study time, be an efficient learner and using ICT for efficiency in learning is provided.
- Tools to help learners diagnose/self-review their flexible learning capabilities are provided.
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Good practice in  
entry, transition, progression and exit  
should:



## Provide flexible learning pathways including options for negotiated curricula

- To what extent do curricula offer learners flexibility in learning pathways, learning approaches and choice in topics of study and assessment approaches?
- To what extent do curricula offer greater customisation to learner needs through more flexible pedagogic and assessment approaches eg curricula based around specific values and processes?
- To what extent do curricula incorporate the academic, personal and professional development of learners throughout a programme?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc022>



# Provide flexible learning pathways including options for negotiated curricula

- Curricula are based around specific values and processes rather than specific content and activities, allowing learning to be customised to suit learner and learner cohort needs.
- Programmes provide choice about topics of study, orientation (eg theoretical, practical, vocational) and learning pathways to defined learning outcomes.
- Approaches such as inquiry-based learning, coaching and reflective practice form core elements of negotiated curricula design.
- Cross-institutional frameworks are adopted (eg repurposing modules from other faculties, departments, courses) to maximise use of modules of learning.
- Highly modular curricula are designed which can be flexibly recombined to suit the personal needs and interests of learners ('pick and mix' approach).
- PDP (Personalised Development Planning) is a key element of programmes for each learner.
- E-Portfolios are used by learners, tutors and mentors to support academic, professional and personal development.
- Assessment criteria and methods are negotiable with flexibility in completion routes.
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Good practice in  
entry, transition, progression and exit  
should:



## Provide flexible learning pathways including options for negotiated curricula - additional considerations relating to work-based learning contexts

- To what extent do curricula offer flexibility and choice for both learners and employers in terms of customising curricula for work-based learning?
- To what degree can WBL (work-based learning) programmes be efficiently and cost-effectively customised to suit different employer/needs?
- To what extent do curricula align with employer/learner contexts and needs?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc023>



# Provide flexible learning pathways including options for negotiated curricula - additional considerations relating to work-based learning contexts

- There is a flexible accreditation framework for design of WBL courses which allows rapid and flexible curriculum design and customisation of existing work-based learning modules.
- Generic frameworks are adopted which can include eg (a) pre-validated core modules to develop work-related generic skills (b) pre-validated template or 'shell' modules emphasising experiential learning and (c) modules for developing job-related skills.
- Learning contracts are developed, agreed and signed between learner(s), institution, employer and other educational providers - which set out needs, objectives, learning outcomes, modes of assessment, obligations, responsibilities for all parties.
- Assessment of learning outcomes is negotiated in terms of type, format, timing and deadlines and involves employers in both design and delivery of assessments.
- Contingencies are in place to account for interruptions to learner progress eg for learners who cease employment or the employer becomes bankrupt.
- Curricula are designed to be relevant to employer contexts and aligned with learner's work and project-related activities.
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Good practice in  
entry, transition, progression and exit  
should:



## Provide flexibility in programme timing and progression

- To what extent do curricula offer learners flexibility in start/end dates, sequence and pace of learning?
- To what extent do curricula offer greater choice in locations for face-to-face teaching and/or virtual options?
- To what extent do curricula offer learners onward progression opportunities?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc024>



# Provide flexibility in programme timing and progression

- Programmes allow for flexible start dates, though the degree of flexibility is optimised to balance with the pedagogical approach, delivery model and institutional processes and systems.
- Programmes provide flexible options in terms of length of course, pace of learning (eg accelerated, decelerated, fast-track degrees) and roll-on/roll-off enrolment.
- Programmes allow for flexible exit points, to enable learners to leave before fully completing a programme (eg circumstances change) but with some credits.
- Programmes provide options such as day/block release, teaching at remote locations, residential study (that may include weekend delivery) as alternatives to campus-based face-to-face sessions.
- Programmes provide flexibility in timings of undertaking and submitting assessments.
- Programmes allow flexibility in the sequence of delivery eg sequence of modules.
- Programmes provide flexible onward progression opportunities.
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Good practice in  
entry, transition, progression and exit  
should:



## Provide flexible learning pathways through RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning), articulation and credit transfer

- To what extent do curricula offer learners the flexibility to accredit and/or previous formal/ informal/non-formal learning?
- To what extent do curricula offer flexibility for FE learners to articulate into HE study with advanced standing?
- To what extent do programme teams collaborate with FE providers and other stakeholders to facilitate easy and cost-effective entry and progression for HE study?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc025>



# Provide flexible learning pathways through RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning), articulation and credit transfer

- New frameworks include opportunities for RPL within an agreed proportion of the overall credits.
- Costing of RPL is set at an appropriate level to make it attractive to learners and there is a clear policy on how much of a programme (and part-modules) can be via RPL.
- There are articulation pathways for progression from pre-HE programmes into HE programmes (ie some units in colleges can be RPL'd to HE modules).
- Institutional RPL policies and processes enable credit transfer to be used to underpin progression and these link to assessment policy.
- HEIs and colleges have progression/entry criteria/RPL agreements and collaborate on curriculum design to support learner transition from vocationally oriented study to study for mixed vocational/academic work-based degrees.
- HEIs and colleges ensure common approaches to recruitment where progression routes and life-long learning potential are fully explained to candidates.
- There are tools (eg e-portfolios) for learners to collate and manage evidence for RPL.

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Good practice in  
entry, transition, progression and exit  
should:



## Provide pre-entry information and guidance

- To what extent does pre-entry information and guidance help potential learners gain an accurate understanding about flexible curricula and the requirements for HE study - and thus make informed choices?
- To what extent does pre-entry information and guidance help learners to experience/visualise what flexible HE study could like for them and its realities?
- To what degree does technology support flexible learner access to pre-entry information, guidance and enrolment?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc026>



# Provide pre-entry information and guidance

- Programme information is comprehensive and maintains its currency and relevancy to target markets (including nationally and internationally) and takes account of and provides for students studying part time, at a distance or on split sites.
- Promotional literature and materials set out the programme content, structure, flexible start dates, flexible programme delivery methods, learning and teaching approaches, expectations and anticipated study commitments from applicants.
- Details of subject knowledge and competencies that are necessary for success at degree level are provided, including explaining what studying a particular subject at university entails and how the approach to learning differs from school, colleges and different international contexts.
- Progression routes from relevant lower level qualifications (or equivalents) are clearly expressed, together with advice on any potential bridging courses that may be necessary and potential for life-long learning.
- Advice is provided in relation to opportunities to engage with employers eg through placements, consultancy, year in industry, internships.
- Totally online programme registration ensuring fast access to institutional VLE and e-documentation is provided, allowing learners to make online payments, including on a per-module basis.
- Learners have access to online systems, guidance, tools & resources to inform decision-making eg VLE, study skills, learning contracts, RPL (recognising prior learning) documents and PDPs (personal development plans).
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Good practice in  
entry, transition, progression and exit  
should:



## Provide pre-entry support

- To what extent are potential learners supported in making choices about addressing their needs and identifying flexible study options, through access to a range of stakeholders including tutors, administrators and past learners.
- To what degree have potential learners access to tools and resources to help them assess their academic, personal and professional skills and address any skills deficits?
- How can pre-entry support help programme teams to drive high retention rates?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc027>



# Provide pre-entry support

- Learners have access to the institutional VLE prior to arrival and tools are available to enable applicants to assess their academic, personal and professional skills, address skills deficits and prepare for embarking on study at degree level.
- Support, liaison and advice are provided to schools, colleges and area learning networks.
- Support and advice to potential learners is provided through social media and student sites eg The Student Room, UCAS forums, LinkedIn, Twitter, including the potential to set-up institutional social media sites.
- Applicants have opportunities to discuss and agree development needs and additional learning support needs.
- Applicants have access to past learners to determine if a programme is relevant to their development needs.
- Applicants have opportunities to engage with programme teams prior to application to start negotiations on individualised development plans that recognise and accredit prior learning and qualifications and offer exemptions and accelerated routes through course structures.
- Mechanisms for gaining feedback on the usefulness of pre-entry information, resources and support are provided.
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Good practice in  
entry, transition, progression and exit  
should:



## Provide integrated flexible induction

- To what extent is programme induction personalised in terms of timing, access and alignment with personalised curricula?
- To what extent does programme induction focus on preparing learners for the demands, learning models and assessment practices of flexible HE study?
- To what extent is technology used to help learners prepare for HE study?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc028>



# Provide integrated flexible induction

- Tailored programme induction that can be delivered and accessed flexibly throughout the year in accordance with individual start dates is provided and, where relevant, is based on learner agreements and personal development plans.
- The process of personal tutoring starts at induction as well as potential learner mentoring to provide peer support.
- Learners are helped to develop accurate expectations and understanding about the demands of higher education, as well as the importance of peer collaboration, employability skills, digital literacies and how to benefit from personal, academic and professional tutoring.
- Access to online services (eg VLE, e-tools, learning resources, e-portfolios) is provided to learners before they arrive.
- Learners have access to skills audit/self-review diagnostics tools to support the process of reflecting on their academic, professional and personal skills, strengths and weaknesses.
- Induction is not a one-off event but starts pre-arrival and continues through the first year and aims to integrate academic, social, technology and employer-related aspects.
- Opportunities for students to do group activities and use these same groups for projects throughout the semester are provided.
- Full use of digital media (eg social networking) is made to support induction activities, particularly for distance learners.
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Good practice in  
entry, transition, progression and exit  
should:



## Provide effective support for learner progression and retention

- To what extent do learners have access to flexible support mechanisms in order to maximise the benefits of their study, address any learner problems and facilitate their progression?
- To what extent do learners and staff have access to data and reports on learner engagement and progress with flexible curricula (at module and programme levels)?
- To what extent do learners have access to flexible support mechanisms to help them progress into employment?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc029>



# Provide effective support for learner progression and retention

- Personal tutoring is provided to all learners focusing on their academic, personal and professional development throughout the programme.
- Peer collaboration mechanisms are built into learning activities such as peer support, peer mentoring and peer assessment, feedback and marking.
- Student engagement with learning/study activities and online resources is monitored in order to provide data and warning alerts on potential problems.
- Learners have access to timely reports about their engagement and performance for individual modules and throughout the programme, around which they can self-regulate and engage with their personal tutors to plan actions and support activities.
- Mechanisms for support from alumni and access to previous cohort's work are integrated into programme learning activities and support.
- There is effective signposting and mechanisms in place to enable learners to enter into dialogue with tutors, career departments and employers about progression and career choices.
- Awards and support for extra-curricular activities that require learners to use their academic, personal and professional skills are in place, including potential accreditation for such work.
- Digital media (eg social media) are used to support learner progression and retention.
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Good practice in  
**entry, transition, progression and exit**  
should:



## Develop graduate attributes and employability skills to prepare learners for working and learning in employment

- To what extent are graduate attributes and employability skills embedded into programmes?
- To what extent do learners have opportunities to put into practice their graduate attributes and employability skills in authentic contexts relevant to their learning needs?
- To what extent do programme teams engage with employers to identify graduate attributes and employability skills?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc030>



# Develop graduate attributes and employability skills to prepare learners for working and learning in employment

- Employability and graduate attributes are made defined and made explicit through validation processes and module/programme learning outcomes.
- Curricula provide opportunities for learners to put into practice and apply graduate attributes and employability skills in different contexts such as scholarship, learning and employer contexts, which are assessed formatively and potentially summatively.
- Competences from employers and professional bodies are mapped to modules and learning outcomes (at module and programme levels).
- Curricula include work experience for learners that is pedagogically supported eg through reflection.
- Employability is fostered through experiential learning which emphasises exploration, learning by doing and reflection in authentic learning contexts.
- Employability skills and graduate attributes are developed and supported on an on-going basis and are a key feature of learner personal and professional development planning activities.
- Learners have opportunities to develop their graduate attributes and employability skills through acting as partners, co-creators, co-researchers and change agents in educational innovation.
- Digital media are used to underpin authentic and professional work-based learning activities.
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Good practice in  
learning model, personalisation and student engagement  
should:



## Provide flexibility in campus-based teaching via technology-enhanced learning (TEL) techniques

- To what extent do curricula employ technology-enhanced learning (TEL) techniques to support different pedagogic and assessment approaches?
- To what extent do curricula employ TEL approaches to provide flexibility in learning styles and modes of study?
- To what extent do TEL approaches increase learner engagement with tutors, peers and external stakeholders?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc031>



# Provide flexibility in campus-based teaching via technology-enhanced learning (TEL) techniques

- Lectures are designed for greater learner engagement (and peer collaboration) through 'flipped classroom' approaches which combine face-to-face teaching with TEL approaches.
- Classroom sessions, including lectures, are customised to meet the needs of learners and encourage greater learner engagement (through the use of in-class polling/voting systems).
- Lectures are recorded and the recordings are made available to learners (online and for download) to allow learners to learn at their own pace and at times/locations to suit them.
- Learners can choose from a range of e-learning multimedia materials which feature attributes such as interactivity, usability and accessibility.
- Learners submit assignments and receive fast feedback and marks in electronic form.
- Learning activities within workshops, tutorials, labs and flexible learning spaces encourage greater learner engagement and collaboration using classroom technologies such as screen projection and interactive whiteboards and with mobile multimedia devices and online applications.
- Learning activities make use of web-conferencing, video/audio-conferencing systems to engage learners and tutors with external stakeholders such as subject experts.
- All blended learning activities follow proven evidence-based design principles and should be quality-assured.
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Good practice in  
learning model, personalisation and student engagement  
should:



Personalise learning activities with an aim to  
create autonomous self-directed learners

- To what extent do curricula aim to develop autonomous self-directed and flexible learners?
- Do learners have access to personal tutoring focused on their academic, personal and professional development?
- Do curricula aim to develop flexible learners, capable of sustaining their learning in different contexts, cultures and working environments?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc032>



# Personalise learning activities with an aim to create autonomous self-directed learners

- Learners plan, record, review and reflect on their learning and personal, academic and professional development (both within and outside the curriculum) using tools such as personal learning journals, e-portfolios.
- Learners have access to personal tutoring which focuses on their personal, academic and professional development and which engages students in a clear feed-forward approach.
- Learner coaching is a key learning activity.
- Learners are encouraged to make their work more visible and with professional quality outcomes, eg making work publicly available online and with opportunities for feedback.
- Curricula are internationalised to ensure students develop global perspectives and cross-cultural capability in order to prepare them for working and learning in a multicultural global environment.
- There are a variety of assessment methods that are culturally inclusive.
- Technology-based assessments are used which allow flexibility in when and where assessments are undertaken.
- Learners have access to and are encouraged to use mobile devices to capture learning experiences for review and reflection (eg video, audio and photography).

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## Design social and informal learning activities which exploit online media and support a range of pedagogies

- To what extent do online media support a range of pedagogic and assessment approaches that exploit social and informal learning and allow learner choice in how they engage?
- To what extent do curricula incorporate social and informal learning to exploit learning that occurs outside of traditional teaching approaches and prepares learners for working in collaborative and employer contexts?
- To what extent are learning and assessment activities designed specifically for work/practice/field-related settings and contexts and personalised to learner needs?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc033>



# Design social and informal learning activities which exploit online media and support a range of pedagogies

- Learning models are based on active learner participation, inquiry, problem-solving, collaboration, creative dialogue and critical thinking.
- Learning activities are designed to require learners to use a broad range of information and knowledge resources eg internet, online libraries, databases, journals, e-books.
- Learning activities are designed to allow alternative modes of learning and collaboration: distance, blended, work-based, field-based, partially or wholly campus-based.
- Social and informal learning activities follow proven and evidence-based design principles.
- Learning activities include collaborative research, synthesis and construction of content/knowledge bases using eg wikis including multimedia content (eg from mobile devices).
- Learning and assessment activities are designed specifically for practice/work/field-related settings and contexts and can be personalised to learner needs.
- Learners provide peer feedback on assignments which helps them to reflect on their assessments and marking criteria.
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Good practice in  
learning model, personalisation and student engagement  
should:



## Adopt open approaches to exploit the knowledge and experience of others and facilitate learner choice

- To what extent do curricula employ open approaches, resources and data that can support a range of pedagogic approaches and learner choice?
- To what extent do curricula require learners to find and use open resources to meet their own learning needs and contexts?
- To what extent do learning apps/software make use of open data streams?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc034>



# Adopt open approaches to exploit the knowledge and experience of others and facilitate learner choice

- Open educational resources (OERs) feature as an element of programme design and delivery, including using/repurposing existing OERs, creating new OERs and allowing learner choice in such materials.
- Programme teams keep abreast of open models, particularly OER availability through OER-specific search engines and repositories.
- Learners are encouraged to find and use OERs which meet their own specific learning needs and contexts.
- Tutors and learners are encouraged to use open software/apps and where feasible, to adopt an open standards approach.
- Programme teams make use of guidance on IPR and copyright in relation to OERs including guidance on stewarding mechanisms eg Creative Commons.
- Tutors and learners are encouraged to make use of Open Data within their learning activities.
- Programme teams make their learning materials available as OERs through eg publishing on OER repositories and search engines.
- Learning applications are designed to make use of open data streams that allow any apps that are developed to easily 'hook into' information available to the institution eg RSS feeds.
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## Design curricula to emphasise assessment for learning to develop learners capable of self-review

- To what extent do curricula place emphasis on formative assessment, feedback and dialogue/ action on feedback to enable teaching to be focused on the needs, performance and development of individual learners?
- Do curricula employ 'assessment for learning' approaches to develop learners capable of self-review?
- To what extent is feedback quality-assured?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc035>



# Design curricula to emphasise assessment for learning to develop learners capable of self-review

- Academic and programme team objectives and workloads are set to emphasise assessment for learning which aims to develop autonomous learners capable of self-review and self-marking.
- Curricula place greater emphasis on staged formative feedback (eg frequent low-stakes assessment to inform feedback) and less on summative assessment (the mark).
- Feedback profiling tools and templates are used to help tutors categorise and improve feedback.
- Programme teams quality assure feedback through eg learner/tutor feedback (on feedback) and analysis of feedback.
- Assessment and feedback (A&F) design is based on principles of good assessment and feedback.
- A&F is longitudinally as well as modular-based and aligns with programme as well as module learning outcomes.
- ICT systems support longitudinal A&F in relation to facilitating storage and management of all aspects of A&F.
- Feedback and marking is derived from multiple sources eg peer feedback, peer marking, employer feedback.
- Mechanisms are in place to avoid 'bunching' of A&F both from perspectives of students and staff.
- Feedback stimulates dialogue and action (feed-forward) and timetables need to reflect this (ie avoiding feedback delivery as an end-of-module action).

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Good practice in  
learning model, personalisation and student engagement  
should:



Continually engage in educational innovation,  
change and research in flexible curricula as part of  
quality enhancement and assurance

- To what extent do programme teams engage in educational innovation, change and research in relation to designing and delivering flexible curricula to meet changing drivers and needs of learners?
- To what extent are learners engaged with educational innovation and change to not only enhance curricula but also to promote self-directed learning and better understanding of the affordances of different pedagogies?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc036>



# Continually engage in educational innovation, change and research in flexible curricula as part of quality enhancement and assurance

- Engagement in educational innovation, change and research is embedded in programme design and review and includes regular evaluation and measurement of impact, based on evidence and pedagogic research.
- Programme teams continually horizon-scan sector educational innovation and change initiatives, research and reports in order to evaluate relevancy and appropriateness to programme quality enhancement.
- Students engage collaboratively with staff in institutional decision-making in order to influence enhancements and change eg on advisory boards and councils and in developing/ implementing student partnership agreements.
- Programme teams participate in external communities of practice/special interest groups relating to educational innovation.
- Students engage as partners in curriculum design.
- Students engage as partners in staff professional development eg student academic mentors.
- Students are engaged as evaluators in order to provide evidence for enhancement and change.
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Good practice in  
learning model, personalisation and student engagement  
should:



## Adopt flexible, transparent and business-like approaches to programme design, development, review and validation

- To what extent do programme teams appreciate that business-like approaches to curriculum design and delivery can provide greater flexibility in how they allocate their time and support learners?
- To what extent do programme teams calculate the cost implications for designing and delivering different flexible learning models?
- To what extent do programme teams fully research the needs and demands of learners for flexible curricula?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc037>



# Adopt flexible, transparent and business-like approaches to programme design, development, review and validation

- Cost models are used to explore the costs of different programme design and delivery approaches in order to evaluate the most cost-effective designs and delivery models.
- Professional market research is undertaken to ensure that curriculum design and delivery meets demands from learners and employers -  
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- Programme teams adopt curriculum design tools and practices that allow for rapid, efficient and agile development from ideas to approved programmes.
- Programme teams emphasise the need for being responsive to learners' emerging needs in the approvals and review process.
- Business plans are developed for programmes based on eg the market research and cost models.
- ----- particularly in relation to flexibility.
- -----

Good practice in  
learning model, personalisation and student engagement  
should:



## Implement protocols of engagement for learners and tutors to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, codes and policies

- Are learners and tutors provided with accurate, current and usable guidance in relation to protocols of engagement to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, codes and policies?
- Does the guidance fully embrace learning activities via online media and technologies?
- To what extent are learners made aware of their importance of their digital identity and how to build, sustain and protect it?

**QAA Enhancement Theme: Flexible Curricula**

<http://tiny.cc/qaafc038>



# Implement protocols of engagement for learners and tutors to ensure compliance with all relevant laws, codes and policies

- Programmes conform to the requirements of the Data Protection Act eg in relation to collection and handling of data on learners.
- Learners are provided with guidance on maintaining the security and protection of their own and the institution's ICT systems.
- Programmes respect the privacy of individuals and all e-activities and follow institutional privacy, equality, ethical and diversity guidelines.
- Programme teams make learners and other stakeholders aware of the need to follow institutional protocols on slander and libel.
- Learners are made aware of the need to protect and build their digital identify.
- Learners and tutors are required to follow institutional protocols of engagement in the digital world.
- Learners are provided with health and safety guidance in respect of using ICT systems.
- Clear guidance and protocols are provided in respect of IPR (intellectual property rights), copyright and technology licensing in different contexts eg employer contexts, scholarship and learning contexts.
- Learners and tutors are given guidance on the Freedom of Information Act and its impact in learning contexts.
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