

**University guidelines for blended and distance-learning**

**programme approval and validation panels**

For the most part, validation activity for blended and distance-learning programmes will follow the same procedures as standard programmes. However, attention will be focused on how the programme team intend to address the differences between on-campus and off-campus design and facilitation, in particular the high levels of student support, both academic and administrative, which are required prior to and during enrolment, and throughout the programme.

On blended and distance programmes, the learning materials and activities replace face-to-face contact and form the basis of communication and collaboration with students. These resources and activities will need to provide motivation and stimulus to ensure students remain actively engaged throughout the programme. Therefore, panels will **expect the full contents of at least one module** from the programme to be made available for review at validation, and the programme team to either demonstrate this **using the VLE (or other platform)** or provide the means for the panel to access this for inspection. Detailed descriptions of the remaining modules and a timetable for their production will also be presented.

Panel members will seek to reassure themselves that high quality content and delivery styles will be offered throughout the entire programme. If such reassurance proves difficult, the panel may wish to delay validation until this reassurance is received.

Programme teams should provide evidence of consultation with appropriate members of the Teaching Excellence Academy (or those with similar role and/or experience) for advice on the development of teaching and learning for blended and distance programmes.

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| **AREA** | **QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS**  | **Yes/No/Partially** **(please add supporting explanation if required)**  |
| **Generic**  | Can the programme team describe the differences and challenges of blended and distance learning?  |  |
|  | What previous experience do the programme team have of developing and facilitating blended and distance learning, for example, have any members of the team been an online student or tried a MOOC\*? \*MOOC are free Massive Online Open courses, useful for observing a range of resources and pedagogic designs. MOOC can be found at [Coursera](https://www.coursera.org/), [Udacity](http://www.udacity.com/), [Kahn Academy](https://www.khanacademy.org/) and [FutureLearn.](https://www.futurelearn.com)  |  |
|  | Initial student enthusiasm for online courses can be a challenge to maintain. Are the programme team aware of the poor retention rates associated with blended and distance courses and what measures are they taking to counter lack of participation?  |  |
|  | How would the programme team describe their own digital skills and confidence, for example do they have experience using webinars or Skype for teaching and learning?Are there plans to ensure students have or acquire the necessary digital literacies to successfully learn online?  |  |
|  | Has the programme team considered the implications of GDPR on any third party software they might be using such as Google Drive, Google Docs, Facebook Groups, Twitter etc?  |  |
|  | Are any specific software/hardware required to participate in the programme, for example, do students using their own technology have a PDF Reader, plugins to run webinar software, webcam, microphone, speakers etc? How will the minimum technology requirements be communicated to students?  |  |
|  | Some countries/institutions have firewalls preventing VLE or social media access (the NHS and China are good examples of this). Have the programme team considered this and how will it be dealt with?  |  |
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| **For internal programmes**  | Are the programme team aware of the Expected Use of Canvas Document?<https://universityofhull.box.com/s/9ag7t97iu2m027lbi3scmgkud8lia8ia>What steps have the programme team taken to follow this guidance, in particular the following requirement.‘Staff should ensure that all digital content supporting learning and teaching e.g. text, images and multimedia, follows inclusive practice guidelines.’ |  |
|  | Are the programme team aware of the Academic Professional Development Framework (APDF) programme which includes Canvas and learning design workshops? *This is through the Teaching Excellence Academy.* |  |
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| **Transition and Induction**  | At the start of the teaching period, it helps if all students are enrolled on the VLE, and had opportunities to log on, and find their programme/module site. All this can be problematic at a distance. Have the programme team allowed for a transition period or included time for troubleshooting during induction?Are activities in place to ensure online students have introduced themselves to each other and to staff before the teaching period begins?  |  |
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| **Learning Design** | What pedagogic models are the programme team using to create content and activities for blended and distance learning?  |  |
|  | Are the programme team demonstrating, or making available to panels, at least one module with a detailed timetable for the completion of the remaining modules and does the timetable seem realistic?  |  |
|  | Is all assessment appropriate to the online nature of the course? What steps will be taken to ensure students do not employ academic misconduct? |  |
| **Student support**  | What measures are in place to provide student support in the following areas:* Will blended and distance students have access to the University of Hull/Partner College ICT Helpdesk via email and telephone for issues with VLE access, forgotten passwords etc?
* Have all software licencing issues been resolved? Are there any assumptions regarding University software that have been overlooked?
* How will students be supported with remote access to Library resources, e.g. bibliographic software, electronic journal databases, and e-books?
* In what ways will students get access to study skills support and learning development resources?
* Is it clear how students will access to other aspects of the student experience such as administrative support (e.g. enrolment, fees, assessment etc.) and pastoral care? (Personal Supervisors etc.)
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