



Institiúid na gComhairleoirí Treorach
INSTITUTE OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

Submission on “White Paper Topic Specific Assurance (QA) Guidelines”

The Institute of Guidance Counsellors would like to thank QQI for this opportunity to comment on this white paper. Guidance counsellors working with the potential labour market across the life span recognise the value of blended learning programmes and the practicality of this approach for many of our clients, especially those in the adult community who cannot always afford to attend full time courses, those of any age struggling with disabilities, those in prison attempting to rehabilitate themselves and those living in remote areas where poor infrastructure undermine their educational opportunities.

A significant advantage of blended learning is an opening up of possibilities that transcend geographical boundaries and transcend national barriers. The advantages of this are limitless as through blended learning methods students can now access best practice and cutting edge research throughout the world.

Another advantage of this type of learning is how it offers different styles of learner a way of learning that is a perfect fit with their learning style, intrapersonal learners will thrive in an on-line learning environment, interpersonal learners will be happiest in the social context of face to face provision. VLE are invaluable in instilling confidence and allowing learners to make mistakes and fail in a low stakes environment, this could have inexhaustible applications for practical courses like Medicine, Pilot training and reduce the possibility of personal injury amongst students.

The need for high quality IT equipment and effective internet will be a prerequisite if this is to function successfully. This may be a challenge in some second level educational institutions currently and may require a significant investment. 3.1, 3.2.4, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3 and most of section 5 are very important considerations for our students when they progress to further/higher education and it would be essential that the necessary resources, staffing and supports are in place for this portion of their learning (as distinct from the provision of such online modules in an effort to cost save or reduce face-to-face time with students).

The majority of our members work in second level education, as such we may not have sufficient experience or knowledge of the implications of such guidelines (as worthwhile as they are) on the delivery of blended learning courses in institutions where they are used. We can, however, as advocates for our students, support the need for standards of delivery in such courses and are fully cognisant of their actual and potential value.

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