



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Memo

From: Gary Walsh, Director of Quality

To: Consultation unit, QQI

Date: November 6, 2017

Subject: Feedback from the University of Limerick with regard to QQI white paper entitled '*Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended Learning*'

The University of Limerick welcomes publication of the QQI white paper entitled '*Topic Specific Quality Assurance Guidelines for Blended Learning*'. We also acknowledge and welcome this consultation opportunity provided by QQI.

The draft guideline document was circulated internally to a wide range of relevant academics and academic managers. Several responded with detailed feedback. All respondents welcomed the development of guidelines relating to this topic and acknowledged that there was much sound guidance included in the white paper.

The primary concern, articulated by the majority of respondents, was that the guidelines as an aggregate whole are excessively prescriptive, suggesting an overall level of oversight potentially unrealistic in terms of the underpinning resources required. It was also suggested that comprehensive implementation of the guidelines could result in a level of oversight higher than that applied to traditional programme/module delivery.

Another concern expressed was that the document doesn't clearly define what is meant by programmes which have a 'blended learning component'. This could render it challenging to identify which programmes the guidelines should be applied to, as there exists many



understandings of what blended learning means, and indeed that many if not all programmes today have a blended learning component.

Another feedback theme suggested that some guideline elements may be difficult if not impossible to achieve in practice. One example provided related to 'equivalent service' for online students. The contributor relayed an example relating to the availability of core textbooks as reading material, many of which are simply not available as e-books. Another example related to teacher support in terms of e.g. online chat rooms, which typically occur during the working day, which in turn may not suit most online learners.

We hope that these comments will prove useful to you as you develop finalized guidelines.

With best regards,



Prof. Gary Walsh,

Director of Quality.

