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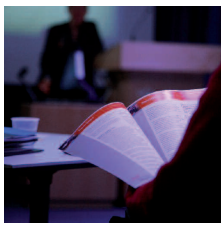

EVALUATION OF E-LEARNING COURSES

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SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

For an evaluation to be effective it needs to be planned before the course starts, it needs to be part of the overall design of the course, and students need to be informed about the evaluation from the outset. The evaluation of a course should:

1. Collect feedback from all stakeholders: students, tutors, administrators, and technical support staff.

2. Collect feedback from staff by:
   Formally organising frequent staff meetings (online or face-to-face), and define an agenda for each meeting covering all key issues.
   Documenting (as briefly as possible) the issues covered and decisions taken.

3. Collect student feedback as an integral part of the activities of the course. This should include:

   Collection of student feedback during the run of the course
   Encourage students (online or face-to-face) to reflect at predefined moments about their own learning and how the course design, materials and activities supports their learning.

   Collection of student feedback at the end of the course
   In designing a survey consider: question design (closed /open questions, number of questions and topics, relevance, and language use), mode of application (online or a paper based questionnaire) and timing.
   Ensure that responsibility for collection and analysis of results is clearly assigned.

4. Consider the use of additional strategies to collect feedback taking advantage of the technology in use in the course (e.g. the statistics on course use that VLEs provide).

5. Consider all relevant aspects of the use of technology in teaching and learning in the course. This might include collecting feedback on:

   Quality, usefulness and frequency of use of the different course components (online activities, face-to-face events, readings, online discussions, tutor support, technical support, etc)
   How well the online activities run (timing, frequency, sequence, instructions, interactions, feedback, time on task, etc.)
   E-learning experience (workload, involvement, online participation facilitators and obstacles, etc.)
   Role of tutors (engagement, feedback, support, etc.)

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INTRODUCTION

During 2006 the IoE used the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund in order to fund four e-learning projects designed to support the development of the provision of flexible teaching in accordance with the Learning and Teaching Strategy. These four projects as a whole set out to generate a set of practical tools and resources to support a faster and more coherent integration of technology in teaching and learning activities.

This document is the outcome of one of these projects - 'Evaluation Resources' – and it provides a review of evaluation resources available for practitioners which are applicable to online and mixed-mode courses[1]. The main objective of this report is to provide an overview of practical evaluation resources for IoE academics who are currently using technology in their courses so as to facilitate the integration of evaluative practices into e-learning courses.

These resources do not cover the full range of evaluation possibilities, but do provide an overview of some of the distinctive ways in which it is possible to evaluate e-learning courses. The Summary of Recommendations sets out the main recommendations, the main body of the report provides an expanded account of those recommendations, and then the appendices provide a review of existing evaluation tools, resources and approaches together with a number of exemplars which can be used as a basis for developing specific approaches. The main emphasis of this report is on providing support for tutors looking to evaluate their own on-going courses. Some of the tools and approaches described in the appendices go a little wider than this and are intended to support evaluations of materials and approaches in a more general way, and these are provided as a source of ideas and inspiration rather than as models to emulate in course evaluation.

CURRENT PRACTICE

Currently courses at the IoE are generally evaluated by an end-of-course questionnaire. The forms used have been designed to cover all basic aspects of teaching and learning but were designed for face-to-face courses.

To apply this evaluation form to courses that include online components, some e-learning tutors have adapted these questionnaires to match the features of their courses (see Appendix Six). This adaptation has usually been restricted to making changes to how the course elements are named and including some additional items in order to collect information regarding the e-learning elements of the course. However, there are many important aspects of on-line delivery which are not typically examined by these questionnaires, in particular technical, library and administrative support. These are particularly important for e-learning courses where students are often at a distance as they impact directly on students' learning experiences.

This questionnaire-based approach to evaluation typically relies solely on student feedback and there are usually no formal strategies to collect feedback from tutors (particularly important when courses are run by a dispersed team).

Many course leaders carry out evaluations of this kind, but they commonly get very low return rates. The low return rate of student surveys is usually explained by the distant

[1]For the sake of simplicity the word 'course' will be used in this document both to refer to what is normally called a 'course' at the IoE and to individual 'modules'.

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location of students, which clearly has an impact. However other factors such as the way the questionnaire is administered to students (sent by email, sent by post, online survey) may also influence the willingness of the students to respond as they may not feel their responses are completely anonymous.

It has been found that staff often do not follow up the return of the surveys, and sometimes do not even analyse their results! A Staff E-learning Needs Analysis survey carried out by the LTU in January 2007 showed that more than 80% of respondents indicated a lack of confidence in evaluating e-learning courses.

There is therefore a need to rethink evaluation practices for on-line learning and teaching if they are to become more complete, valuable and effective. The following section describes practical strategies that tutors can incorporate into their e-learning courses in order to collect data to inform their practice and upon which they can develop strategies to improve the quality of their courses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This section has been written for course leaders who are running courses that include an e-learning component and who wish to improve their teaching and learning practice through an effective evaluation. The recommendations made are therefore intended to be achievable within the context of running a course. However, effective evaluation does require some additional time commitment as the data collection needs to be carefully designed and carried out, and the data effectively analysed. For an evaluation to be effective it needs to be planned before the course starts, as part of the overall design of the course, and students need to be informed about the evaluation from the outset.

REDESIGNING COURSE EVALUATION

Based on a review of the literature, an examination of the resources for evaluation that we have identified (see Appendix One) and an analysis of present IoE practices, it is possible to identify four main practical recommendations to enhance course evaluation:

1. **The evaluation of a course should consider the collection of feedback from all stakeholders involved in the design and running of the course. This should include, in addition to students, the collection of data from tutors, administrators, and technical support staff.**

In most face-to-face courses the collection of feedback from staff (tutors, administrators, and support staff) is commonly carried out within the context of team meetings during an overall evaluative discussion led by the course leader. Although this is certainly an appropriate setting for such an evaluation, it is not always possible to do this for e-learning courses. Many e-learning courses involve staff participating on a part time basis, and possibly participating at a distance, and this means that such face-to-face discussions may be difficult to organise, and so may not occur. So, and particularly where a course is taught and supported by a large team, it is important to provide mechanisms to capture everyone's view on the course and its various components.

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The approach developed by Swinglehurst (2006) for peer observation of teaching in online courses offers some useful guidelines for carrying out this task[2] (for more information see Appendix Two). In her research Swinglehurst developed a strategy in which tutors in an online course meet once a month to analyse specific teaching episodes described and presented by one of the tutors. The course team found these structured meetings valuable in allowing them to analyse their teaching practice, to learn from each other's experiences and practices as well as to agree on changes and improvements.

Taking the basic features of this approach, it is possible to identify some useful tips for e-learning course teams in their evaluation design:

* *Formally organise frequent staff meetings, where tutors, administrators and sup port staff meet to analyse the preparation and running of the course. These meetings could be face-to-face and/or online.*
* *Define an agenda for each meeting so as to cover key issues related to the dif ferent aspects of the course (e.g. student support, academic feedback, encouraging discussions), and rotate the member of staff responsible for this agenda, and for ensuring that the focus is maintained on the issue under discus sion.*
* *Limit the recording of the discussion at these meetings to a minimum, focusing on briefly documenting the topics covered and the decisions made that have implications for other members of staff and/or for future runs of the course.*

Additionally, course leaders may consider – depending on the number of team members – the application of a brief questionnaire to the staff involved in the preparation or running of the course to collect detailed information that would not be feasible by other means (e.g. workload, staff development needs, student support).

In order to define the agenda for these meetings and to inform the content of questionnaires it is worthwhile looking at the quality framework developed by UCL (see Appendix Seven) - which lists those aspects of an online course to be monitored, and the evidence to be used to monitor those aspects.

2. The evaluation should be designed as an integral part of the activities of the course, and should include collection of feedback during the run of the course as well as at the end of it.

Collection of student feedback during the run of the course

The approach developed by Daly et al. (2006) offers a simple and effective mechanism for the collection of student feedback during the run of a course (for more information see Appendix Two). Their approach consists of embedding evaluation activities as part of the running of the course, encouraging students at pre-determined moments to think about their own learning and how the course design/materials/activities have supported them (or not) in this process.

[2]It may also be useful in this context to look at the research carried out by Sue Askew (Askew, 2004) on face-to-face peer observation at the Institute of Education

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The strategy is implemented by posing a question to students in order to prompt their reflection, asking them to answer it online (e.g. in a discussion board) or in face-to face focus groups where the delivery mode allows this. This question needs to be carefully designed to be sufficiently open to allow students to bring forward their particular concerns and issues. Examples of questions developed for this purpose by a number of different online courses are presented in Appendix Four.

The main benefits of applying this strategy are the possibility of identifying the issues students are having difficulties with while they are actually experiencing the problems, and the opportunity to explore students' experiences of the course.

A variation to this strategy is the organisation of online learning diaries that run throughout the course, in which students are encouraged through brief questions to post their thoughts regarding the learning process and how the course has supported them.

Collection of student feedback at the end of the course

Many courses adopt the simple and useful strategy of an end of course questionnaire to get student feedback on a wide range of aspects of the course. Such questionnaires constitute part of the internal quality assurance mechanisms of most higher education institutions and as a consequence, it is possible to find a wide range of options regarding questionnaires, questions, modes of application, etc. Research evidence indicates that the effectiveness of these student questionnaires is highly affected by the online features of courses (Jara, 2007).

Aspects that should be carefully considered in order to overcome potential difficulties when building an end-of-course questionnaire are:

a) Questionnaire/question features: closed/open ended questions, number of questions, relevance, topics covered and language used. Although it is not possible to suggest one best way to do proceed, it as it will depend on what you are aiming to evaluate and the characteristics of your student body. Here are some suggestions to bear in mind:

* *The language used in the questionnaire should match the course. Whether you use terms such as units, sections or chapters, discussion boards or forums, online activities or sessions, it is important that students should clearly understand what you are asking about.*

* *The questions should be phrased in a direct and simple way. It is usually better to ask a direct and specific question than a general one that may not prompt any useful answer from your students (e.g. it is more useful to ask 'did the online activities help you understanding the topics covered in the course?' rather than 'were the online activities useful?')*

* *The use of open and/or closed questions should depend on the type of informa tion you are expecting to collect from the students. Closed questions allow stu dents' opinions to be easily categorised and collated, which would be useful when needing to evaluate the usefulness/appropriateness of a resource, activi*

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ty or material. Open questions by contrast will demand more time for analysis but may make it possible to collect richer information about students' experences and views.

b) Mode of application: depending on the course modality (fully online, blended) you should consider what would be the most efficient way to collect feedback from students: an online or a paper based questionnaire. Each mode has particular benefits and limitations:

* *Online questionnaires (using an online survey tool): this type of application is very convenient when dealing with a large group of students as the results can be easily compiled and analysed. It also allows students to respond anony mously and at a convenient moment. The main issue is that tutors are unable to ensure that students will answer it, and so the return rates depend on factors such as ease of completion, and timing.*

  A variation sometimes used in e-learning courses is the collection of feedback through e-mail, i.e. the questionnaire is sent to students as an attachment or embedded in an e-mail, for them to return in the same way. This mode has the limitation that the answers are not anonymous and so students may not feel comfortable responding.

* *Paper-based questionnaires: in blended courses, it may be possible to collect end-of-course feedback from students when attending a face-to-face session. This way of applying a questionnaire is usually perceived by tutors as the most efficient way to get high return rates as students can be encouraged to com plete the questionnaire in the room before leaving. Such an approach however runs the risk of poor quality responses.*

c) Timing: the time at which feedback is collected may also have an impact on return rates. Evaluations through questionnaires often take place after the course has finished and students are on vacation or concentrating on preparing for their assessment, and this might affect the willingness of students to complete a questionnaire. One successful strategy developed on one postgraduate course was to send out a short questionnaire with coursework feedback as this was an established milestone within the course.

d) Responsibility for collection and analysis: research suggests that evaluations sometimes fail to deliver useful and relevant results simply because no-one is sure whose responsibility it is to do this (Jara, 2007). It is very important then for course teams not only to decide how feedback will be collected but also who will be in charge of collecting the feedback, analysing it and sharing the results with the team.

Although questionnaires are perhaps the most common strategy for the collection of student feedback at the end of a course, other strategies such as focus groups are also very effective and easy to implement. Particularly in the context of blended courses, where face-to-face sessions are planned, the implementation of a brief group evaluation has been found to provide useful information regarding the course design and student experience. In Appendix Five, an example of the questions designed for the evaluation of a blended course is presented. In this example, the focus group lasted 30 minutes, led by someone external to the course and the information gathered provided

valuable information about how the online activities were experienced by the students, their timing within the course, and the role of the tutors in them.

3. The evaluation should consider the asdditional strategies available to collect feedback according to the delivery mode, taking advantage of the technology in use in the course.

As was described above, there are a number of ways in which feedback can be collected from students and tutors, both face-to-face and online, such as focus groups, questionnaires, team meetings, and online discussion spaces. In addition to these, there is usually the possibility on e-learning courses of collecting data from the computer logs that the particular system in use provides (e.g. Course Statistics in the Blackboard VLE).

Basic statistics such as last login date, number of messages sent by users, areas of content and discussion boards/forums visited by users are examples of the ongoing monitoring that tutors could easily carry out within a VLE.

These statistics do not provide indications of the quality of the student/tutor participation or of a satisfactory online experience. They are however a very useful tool for monitoring online presence, to obtain an overall picture of the ongoing activity, as well as to detect problems that users may be experiencing in accessing/participating in the online environment.

4. The evaluation should include all aspects relevant to the use of technology in the teaching and learning of the course.

Evaluating e-learning requires a review of all aspects of the course and its components with the aim of identifying strengths and weaknesses, and methods of improvement. It is not appropriate to over concentrate on specific aspects of the course, however, and the literature suggests approaching evaluation holistically including the learning and teaching processes and the specific e-learning aspects, such as the technology and its support (CAP, 2006).

There is a very wide range of aspects that could be included in an evaluation of e-learning, and this list would vary depending on context and on the objectives and audience for the evaluation (CAP, 2006).

The guidelines developed by Warwick University and Bristol University provide a number of basic questions which practitioners could consider when designing their evaluations (CAP, 2006). Two other resources that could be of help in identifying the aspects to be covered in the evaluation of an e-learning course are the IHEP's Quality on the Line report (Phipps and Merisotis, 2000), which lists the benchmarks that should be considered for the successful design and running of e-learning courses; and UCL's Quality Framework (Greenhalgh, 2001) that lists the factors to be considered and monitored during the design and running of a fully online Masters degree (see Appendix Seven).

Looking through the questionnaires developed by e-learning practitioners (see Appendix Six) suggests a range of other issues. Among the most relevant are:

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- *quality, usefulness and frequency of use of course components (online activities, resources, face-to-face events, readings, online discussions/seminars, tutor support, technical support, etc.)*
- *how well online activities run (timing, frequency, sequence, instructions, interactions, feedback, time on task, etc.)*
- *e-learning experience (workload, involvement, online participation facilitators and restrictions, etc.)*
- *role of tutors (engagement, feedback, support, etc.).*

These questions are directed at students, but many of them could also be directed at tutors.

There are different evaluation questions which arise at different points in the life cycle of a course, and Appendix Three sets out some proposals for Course Reviews and Annual Reviews as well as end of year and mid-course evaluations, and was the basis of earlier discussions about quality assurance for e-learning at the IoE in 2003.

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APPENDIX ONE
REVIEW OF LITERATURE
EVALUATION OF E-LEARNING TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICE

Evaluation is essential to teaching and learning practice and its improvement. Practitioners are expected to carry out evaluation of their teaching practice as part of the quality assurance and enhancement activities.

The IoE Learning and Teaching Strategy clearly states all teaching staff should commit to continuous improvement, and several institution-wide strategies are in place for this purpose, such as peer review exercises, end of course reviews, staff development activities. However, these sorts of strategies often seem to have limited impact in practice (Harvey, Oliver and Smith, 2002).

The increasing use of learning technologies in teaching and learning has further highlighted the relevance of evaluation. As courses using technology are being perceived as 'innovations' within higher education institutions, practitioners are expected to justify the value of online delivery (Harvey, Oliver and Smith, 2002; Oliver et al., 2007).

The abundant literature on evaluation reveals the concern and need for more practitioner evaluation. Numerous resources and tools have been developed to support practitioner evaluation, these are directed at academic staff who need to evaluate their initiatives, projects and activities, and they assume that staff have the time and funding to carry out such evaluations.

This report aims to provide resources to academic staff who need to carry out their evaluation activities within their current time and resource allocations. Harvey, Oliver and Smith (2002) and Oliver (2000) list some of the problems and challenges that this activity entails for staff:

Lack of skills and confidence – academic staff are increasingly being requested to evaluate their practice, however practitioners engagement with evaluation is highly influenced by their lack of skills and/or confidence in how to carry out evaluation. To support this need, several evaluation toolkits, cookbooks and guidelines have been developed offering support on the design, process and/or methods for evaluating e-learning. Research has shown however that learning the skills and gaining confidence are sometimes not enough for practitioners to carry out evaluation.

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Lack of motivation – academic staff will only consider evaluation and dedicate time to it, when it is directly relevant to problems they consider important, as a way to understand or solve problems. As Harvey et al. (2002) states:

> *If academic staff did not perceive evaluation as a method to improve practice or they were finding that their limited experience in the evaluation process raised more issues than solutions, then it is not surprising that they did not write up their work. (p.7)*

Unclear purposes – a further difficulty in carrying out effective evaluations is the lack of clarity and precision of purpose. It is argued that staff tend to use off-the-shelf methods rather than creating/adapting specific ones for the activities they want to evaluate, resulting in the collection of irrelevant data. The method most commonly used is the end of term questionnaire, which is easy and convenient to apply but it is often inadequate (Harvey, Higginson and Gunn, 2000). Evaluations are needed to collect data for quality assurance purposes, with which action plans can be created to improve the quality of the course – i.e. quality enhancement; to make visible the value and effectiveness of e-learning (Harvey et al., 2002); and to improve practice.

E-learning elements – for this report e-learning is understood as any course that uses technology to support teaching and learning; evaluations should not only cover the 'normal' aspects of any teaching and learning activity, but also the particular features brought in by the use of technology (e.g. whether technology actually supported student learning). Oliver (2007) indicates there are three further issues that should be considered when planning to evaluate e-learning: the amount of data available, which is wider than in other contexts, but not all of it is useful; the distance between the evaluator and participants (in the case of distance education courses); and the tendency for evaluations to compare results with those from face-to-face environments, which is often not appropriate considering the different nature of the courses.

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APPENDIX TWO
RESOURCES FOR EVALUATION
PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR EVALUATION

Oliver et al. (2000; 2007) provide a comprehensive account of the development of the field of evaluation of e-learning during the last decade, describing checklists, guidelines and toolkits designed to facilitate academic staff evaluative work. The collection of resources presented in this report is drawn from what is available online as well as resources available in other colleges of the University of London, and their selection is based on their potential usefulness for higher education e-learning practitioners.

It is important to note here that these resources do not include those focused on approaches and strategies aimed at institutional level evaluation, such as benchmarking approaches, but rather the resources that offer a practical strategy for the evaluation of courses by tutors.

The resources selected and briefly described in this section are organised into three categories: **Approaches for reflective evaluation**, **Toolkits** and **Guidelines**. They can also be divided into resources intended for the evaluation of courses by tutors (1a, 1b), and those resources intended for a more external 'evaluation' of materials and approaches which may nevertheless provide pointers to ways of evaluating courses.

1. ***Approaches for reflective evaluation*** - recent research in the area of e-learning has proposed strategies that incorporate a reflective evaluation process, carried out from the start of the course (as opposed to a single end-of-course event) involving the review of multiple issues by students, academic and support staff. This offers an approach to the evaluation of courses where the focus is on strategies to collect meaningful data during the process of the course that can inform tutors and students about the challenges being faced during the course in relation to learning and teaching.

a) Embedding evaluation in mixed-mode courses – Caroline Daly, IoE.
http://www.cde.london.ac.uk/support/awards/file3272.pdf.
This approach was developed within a research project studying e-learners' experiences in a mixed-mode course (Daly et al., 2006) that collected learner narratives throughout the course requiring a continuous process of meta-level engagement by participants
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b) Peer–to–peer Reflection on Pedagogical Practice, PROPP – Deborah

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Swinglehurst, UCL
http://www.cde.london.ac.uk/support/awards/file3281.pdf
This approach emerged from a research project on peer observation of teaching on an online course (Swinglehurst, 2006). It focuses on the evaluation of teaching practice, through a process of reflection on specific teaching episodes by tutors.

2. Toolkits

Effective Practice Evaluator – JISC e-learning programme.
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearningpedagogy/evaluator.doc
This template is presented within the guide **Effective Practice with E-learning** (*http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning_pedagogy/elp_practice.aspx*). It offers a detailed framework for recording and analysing an example of e-learning practice. It can be used in a variety of contexts wherever practitioners need to reflect critically on their practice.

3. Guidelines

Evaluating e-learning developments – University of Warwick
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/ldc/resource/eguides/elearning/
This guide provides an overview of the principles and methods for effective evaluation of e-learning. It does not provide any readily applicable methods to evaluate courses; however it does provide a review of issues that should be considered and the approaches that may be taken.

These guidelines are intended to be used for planning and designing the evaluation of an online or mixed-mode course. Their value resides in the details they provide for understanding how an evaluation can be conceptualised, planned and carried out. Although they are not 'ready to use' resources, in that they do not give templates for evaluating courses, they do offer practitioners a wider understanding of the key role of evaluation for improving practice.

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APPENDIX THREE
EVALUATION OF ONLINE COURSES

(The following document was the result of a review of evaluation procedures for online courses carried out by Harvey Mellar at the IoE in 2003)

The quality of on-line courses is an area of increasingly intense scrutiny by outside (including funding) bodies and by potential applicants. The evaluation of on-line courses presents some additional issues for evaluation that do not apply to face-to-face courses operating according to well understood and widely agreed procedures. This paper makes some recommendations for the evaluation of on-line courses at the IoE. The paper first outlines the areas that need to be examined over and above those examined for face-to-face courses at the annual and major reviews and proposes an initial mid-course review. The paper then details specific criteria to be used during these reviews, and the additional questions that need to be incorporated into the evaluative questionnaires sent to students and tutors.

1. Major review

To be carried out at the end of the first run of the course, and every three to five years at periodic review. These criteria are additional to those used for face-to-face courses.

Expert review of:

1.1. Course design	Does the course take advantage of the unique possibilities of on-line delivery? (Suggested criteria provided in 4.1)
1.2. Materials	Examination of the quality of course web site, and teaching materials. (Suggested criteria provided in 4.2)
1.3. On-line interactions	Examination of activities used, student performance, participation and interactions and the role of the tutor(s). (Suggested guidelines provided in 2.3)
1.4. Management and support of on-line tutors	Are tutors new to on-line teaching given appropriate support? Procedures for the management of the course team. (Suggested guidelines provided in 2.4)
1.5. Technology	Is just-in-time technical assistance available to students and tutors? Are procedures in place to guarantee security of student work?
1.6. Access	Students are advised/surveyed about the programme to determine that they possess the self-motivation and commitment to learn on-line. (Possible provision of an on-line pre-course taster pack for prospective students.) Provision is made for students with disabilities and special needs. Integrated student support services are available on-line to learners. Equal access to necessary course materials is available to all learners.

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2. Annual review

2.1. Administrative data	Does the administrative and technical infrastructure provides access to all prospective and enrolled learners? Reliability of technical infrastructure – hardware, software, staffing and technical assistance. Accounts for using networks, web sites, and virtual classroom software are set up quickly. Timely web content updating. Delivery of learning materials within # days of registration. Reliable, timely information of any changes. Response to email messages within # hours. Feedback to drafts within # days. Grade reporting within # days. Final results available within # days. Comparisons with similar face-to-face courses on attainment, retention and completion rates, reasons for withdrawal and costs.
2.2. Evaluation Questionnaire data	Processing of data from evaluation questionnaires, delivered on-line and completed anonymously by students and tutors. (Sample questions provided in 5.1, 5.2)
2.3. On-line activities, environment and reference material	Course team review of design of on-line activities and of on-line environment, and of the relevance and appropriateness of reference and reading materials.

3. Mid-course review

A short on-line evaluation form should be created to allow students to feedback on their experience of the course to date, at a point about halfway through the course. This is an additional support to alert staff to potential problems before the course finishes.

4. Guidelines and Criteria

4.1. Course design	What is the justification for the course being delivered on-line? Is the design adapted to take account of the progressive nature of on-line course delivery (e.g. Salmon's 5-stage model of on-line courses)? How is the role of the tutor (as facilitator and subject expert) represented and realised through the design? How does the course design contribute to the effective management and flow of information – to achieve critical mass in both respects? Do the on-line activities make appropriate use of e-resources and e-facilities, and are opportunities provided for active, joint, problem-solving on-line? Are opportunities provided for joint, knowledge construction on-line, that goes beyond a summary of individual contributions? Are the on-line activities appropriate to the learning objectives at the different stages of the course? Is the structure of the course- in terms of temporal structure, pacing of input material, and range of activity types- appropriate to the needs of the participants and to the objectives of the course? Is the assessment mode appropriate to the course design and objectives? Does the course design allow for flexibility in the design of the on-line environment in response to the requirements of individual cohorts of students?
4.2. Course materials	Does the Web-site design promote ease of readability, accessibility, navigability with respect to the course materials and shared workspace areas? Is the user interface designed to allow ease of access even with the use of low bandwidth service providers? Good integration of multi-media and text? Do multi-media and graphic elements appropriately support and enhance the conveying of information? Is there effective use of outline frames, and embedded structuring of information through use of hyperlinks, to (a) provide a conceptual framework for the subject material and (b) avoid information density and overload? Is the provision of navigation markers, advance organisers, unit summaries and self-assessment tasks adequate to promote deep-level engagement with the subject content?

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	Is there provision of low-cost access to material banks, which are regularly updated, and from which journal articles etc can be downloaded? Are references to URL's regularly updated?
4.3. On-line interaction	An analysis of on-line interaction includes examination of the tutor's role, on-line activities, student performance, interaction and participation: **Tutor role** * Tutor models standards for accountability and appropriate on-line interaction. * Tutor addresses and supports individual student needs, skills, and knowledge. * Tutor provides timely, specific, and authentic feedback. * Tutor monitors student interaction on-line and makes appropriate interventions to promote participation, effective learning-group management, and conceptual understanding of the subject material. * Tutor ensures the pacing of student progression through the course. * Tutor provides criteria for grading and weighting for each assignment. * Tutor provides private communication to students when appropriate. **On-line activities** * Do the activities make full use of the interactive facilities and the information resources of the on-line environment? * Is the learning group provided with a suitably structured on-line environment, group management skills and procedures, and appropriate resources for each activity type undertaken? * Are the activities appropriate to the learning task and the educational philosophy of the course and the subject? **Student performance, interaction and participation** There are now a number of frameworks for content analysis of CMC transcripts available, although few have been developed on the basis of empirical research. These frameworks are designed to provide information on: * The rate, frequency and distribution of messaging across the group and across the time-frame of an activity. and/or * The direction and density of messaging-thus also identifying: topic threads, length, complexity and organisation of the threads, degree to which contributions of individual participants are taken up for discussion and further development. and/or * measures of critical thinking
4.4. Management and support of on-line tutors	Is there a pre-course training/induction programme for tutors who are new to on-line teaching? Are there procedures in place for the support of on-line tutors during the course? (For example: a mentor for each tutor, a buddy (teaching partner), a tutor's on-line discussion site, feedback from peer review of their on-line teaching.) What procedures are in place to promote a sense of inclusion and cohesion among the course team? (For example: regular, mandatory, face-to-face meetings for all members of the course team, team teaching, openness on the part of course leaders to take suggestions from the teaching team regarding the management and design of the course, a course newsletter, efficient and accurate communication of course information to all course team members.) Do the schedules for on-line tutors acknowledge the intensity of on-line teaching? (e.g. 4 weeks on-line tutoring followed by 4 weeks other duties) Is the distribution of course information the task of a centralised administrative system, in order to limit the workload of the tutor? What opportunities are available for on-line tutors, who are non-IOE staff, to contribute to material development and course design for the courses they are involved with? What opportunities for professional development are available to on-line tutors? What procedures are in place to monitor the quality of the tutoring during the course? For example: random sampling of the transcript, sampling of feedback, mid-course questionnaire (1.3.), virtual teaching visits. Statistics on staff retention.

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5. Feedback from Students and Tutors

5.1. Student feedback	Student feedback form needs to be on-line and to be anonymous. A number of additional questions are required over and above those required for face-to-face courses. The following suggests the areas that need to be considered and makes some suggestions about possible questions. **Strategic intent of e-learning programme:** *Identify whether the objectives you had in taking the course on-line are being met*, e.g. * I was able to schedule my learning around my professional and personal commitments. * Taking the course electronically saved me time * Taking the course on-line saved me money. * I would not have been able to take this course if I had had to come into college for 10 evening seminars. * I prefer the on-line mode of delivery of the course to a face-to-face mode. **Content:** *Incorporation of additional questions*, e.g. * The resources (on-line materials, printed materials, digitised readings) were easily accessible but also sufficiently challenging * The course pack (including readings, course information and contact details) were sent out in good time. * The participation expectations were made clear at the outset. * The timing of activities was clear. * The sequencing of activities was clear. * What needed to be done in each activity was made clear in the instructions. * I was encouraged to use several resources (e.g. Web links, textbooks, email) to construct knowledge. **Interface design:** *Were the learning activities facilitated by the technology used*, e.g. * I had all the necessary technical skills for taking part in this course * The cost of taking this on-line course (including internet connection time, printing, etc.) was no more than I had expected. * The technology encouraged meaningful interaction with other students * It was easy for me to navigate my way through the resources and activities. * The combination of text and interaction was appropriate and enhanced my learning. **Interactivity:** *Level of interaction with faculty and other students* e.g. * I was able to interact with my tutor effectively. * I was able to interact with other students effectively. * I was able to interact with the administrative staff effectively. **Student support:** *Adequacy of technological support and appropriateness of use of technologies for the course, and the role of the tutor*, e.g. * The tutor facilitated collaborative working * The tutor was accessible (by email, phone and in person) * The tutor used questions effectively to facilitate my learning * Technical support was readily accessible and timely * I was clear about the support available and where to access it * The tutor gave timely and informative feedback on the outcomes of the activities. * The library contributed positively to my learning.
5.2. Tutor feedback	Feedback from tutors (and other staff working on the course) about their experience of the course. This is particularly important where a range of tutors work on the course, not just full time IoE academic staff. Particular features that should be included: * Staff satisfaction with the course * Workload * Professional development activities carried out in the area of on-line learning * Staff satisfaction with the management of the course team * Recommendations for changes to the course or course team management procedures * Self–evaluation of tutoring on the course to be undertaken as part of the peer review process.

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APPENDIX FOUR
EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR EMBEDDED EVALUATIONS

MASTER OF TEACHING (Caroline Daly)

1. A sense of community?
Now that you have spent your first month as an online student on the MTeach – what has it been like so far? Some researchers say that it is very difficult to establish a 'sense of community' at a distance. Others say that it is certainly possible to form a learning community online, and there are several theories about what this might look like. What are your first thoughts?

2. Writing online/talking in a seminar
Only two of you had prior experience of learning online before joining the MTeach, so this has been a new way of communicating to learn for everybody else in the group. These discussions form a significant alternative to talking about issues at the face to face days or in traditional seminars. What has it been like to 'discuss' by using writing to communicate with each other like this?

RESEARCH SYNTHESIS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE (Karen Bird)

Conducting a systematic review is a collaborative process, involving both face-to-face meetings and online discussions/activities. The course has been designed to mimic this process- carrying out activities both in the workshops and online- how has it been to learn like this? Please offer your thoughts…

MULTIMEDIA DESIGN AND COMMUNICATION (John Potter)

1) Online communication in Blackboard and in the blogs
Some of you have had no experience of teaching and learning like this, others of learning in different VLEs (like First Class). What has it been like to 'discuss' by using writing to communicate with each other in this course (whether you have been using the blog alone or the discussion boards as well)? Have you been able to incorporate some multimedia elements or links to multimedia elements so that you are not wholly text-based?

2) Activities and readings online and in the residentials
Has the balance been OK so far in terms of theory and practice? Have you felt the pace of the activities has been OK? Have you been overwhelmed with new things to do and think about or has the pace been about right?
Have the residentials been useful? Is the timing right (they used to be at the end of the course)? And how about the content? Please discuss...

IOE 2006, 2007
Caroline Daly
Karen Bird
John Potter

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APPENDIX FIVE
QUESTION GUIDE FOR FOCUS GROUP EVALUATION

Foundations of Science Module: Student Focus Group Questions

Outcomes: Ability to engage in informed, critical discussions

One of the module objectives is to improve the ability to engage in critical, informed discussions on a range of issues in Science Education. A range of methods was used, e.g. face-to-face discussions, online discussions, individual reflective activities and review writing.
Overall, do you think the module helped you to improve your skills?

Blended Learning

General Experience

This is the first time the module used online methods.
How was your experience with the online activities? Was the timing appropriate?
How well fitted the module into your schedule?

Online Discussions

What is your level of prior experience with online discussions?
In what way were the online discussions different to face-to-face subject discussions?
What would you say were the main benefits or drawbacks of the online discussions?
How did the online discussions support you in achieving the module aims and objectives?
How important were peer contributions for your learning?

Activities/Reflective Tasks

One task had to be submitted online (via a blog), other tasks had to be sent in by email.
Please comment on the use of online technology for task submission – was it difficult? Could you easily access the feedback?
How did the reflective tasks help you in your learning?

Tutor Interaction

Please comment on the role of tutors.
At what level did they interact in the online discussions? Was that level appropriate? Should tutors have contributed less/more to the online discussions?
Did you receive feedback on the reflective tasks? How valuable did you find the feedback?

IOE, 2007
Ralph Levinson
Tim Neumann

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APPENDIX SIX
EXAMPLES OF STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Most existing course evaluation has been carried out solely based on end-of-course questionnaires. Although this approach to evaluation is, on its own, insufficient to provide data to support the improvement of teaching and learning, it is a mechanism that provides some benefits in terms of the number of topics it is possible to cover and because they are easy to administer and analyse (Crompton, 1996). The questionnaires included in this appendix show a variety of ways in which different courses have tackled the collection of feedback from students.

a) Module Evaluation Form – Online MA in TESOL, Institute of Education (Dr Amos Paran)

b) Module Evaluation Form – MA in Applied Educational Leadership and Management, Institute of Education (Dr Megan Crawford)

c) Module Evaluation Form – MSc in International Primary Health Care, University College London (Prof. Trish Greenhalgh)

(Note: Whilst what follows reproduces the questions on the forms accurately, the layout has been compressed in order to save space in this report).

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Institute of Education University of London
Module Evaluation – MA TESOL Distance Learning

Module evaluation are an important aspect of our teaching quality enhancement procedures. The institute is committed to continuous improvement of its modules and courses. We greatly value your feedback and thank you in advance for completing this form.

Module Title: _____ Term and Year: _____

1. Overall evaluation

(i) Overall, how would you rate the module? (Please tick one)

❑ Poor (1) ❑ Satisfactory (2) ❑ Good (3) ❑ Very good (4)

(ii) Did the module fulfil its stated aims, objectives and learning outcomes? (Please tick one)

❑ Yes ❑ No

Please comment if you wish:
……

(iii) Would you recommend the module to others? (Please tick one)

❑ Yes ❑ No

(iv) Which units did you find valuable? Why?
……

(v) What, if anything, did you not find valuable? Why?
……

(vi) How could we improve the teaching of this module in the future?
……

(vii) Is there anything else you would like to comment on to aid future planning of this module?
……

2. Tutor support and teaching

(i) Do you feel the tutor(s) were adequately prepared to teach the module? (Please tick one)

❑ Rarely (1) ❑ Occasionally (2) ❑ Frequently (3) ❑ Always (4)

Please comment if you wish:
……

(ii) Do you feel that the tutor(s) encouraged your involvement in the online sessions? (Please tick one)

❑ Rarely (1) ❑ Occasionally (2) ❑ Frequently (3) ❑ Always (4)

Please comment if you wish:
……

(iii) Did you find the module materials interesting? (Please tick one)

❑ Rarely (1) ❑ Occasionally (2) ❑ Frequently (3) ❑ Always (4)

Please comment if you wish:
……

(iv) Did you find the module reader and coursebooks interesting? (Please tick one)

❑ Rarely (1) ❑ Occasionally (2) ❑ Frequently (3) ❑ Always (4)

Please comment if you wish:
……

(v) Did you find the online teaching sessions interesting? (Please tick one)

❑ Rarely (1) ❑ Occasionally (2) ❑ Frequently (3) ❑ Always (4)

Please comment if you wish:
……

(vi) Was the balance between individual work and online work right? (Please tick one)

❑ Rarely (1) ❑ Occasionally (2) ❑ Frequently (3) ❑ Always (4)

Please comment if you wish:
……

(vii) Were the assessment procedures made clear? (Please tick one)

❑ Yes ❑ No

(viii) Are the assessment criteria clear? (Please tick one)

❑ Yes ❑ No

(ix) Has adequate support been offered to help you with your work this module? (Please tick one)

❑ Yes ❑ No

(x) Are there any equal opportunities issues arising from the module that you would like to raise?

……

3. Administrative Support

Have the administrative arrangements relating to this module been satisfactory? **(Please tick one)**

❑ Yes ❑ No

Please comment if you wish:
……

4. Please add any other comments you would like to make

……

University of London External Programme
Institute of Education, University of London
MA Applied Educational Leadership and Management
MODULE EVALUATION FORM

1. From your experience:

	YES	NO
The module fulfilled its stated aims, objectives and learning outcomes		
The module met your expectations		
The module met your needs		
You would recommend others to take this module		

Please comment if you wish:

---

2. Overall, how would you rate the module?

Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor

3. How would you RATE EACH COMPONENT of the module?

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Online activities				
Printed sessions				
Online resources				
Handbook				
Tutor				
Online Library				
Summaries on the VLE				
Administrative support				
Technical Support				

Please comment if you wish

---

4. In relation to your WORK ON THE ONLINE ACTIVITIES please indicate how you rate:

	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Timing of activities				
Sequence of activities				
Clarity of instructions				
Interaction with fellow students				
Interaction with tutors				

Which activities did you find most useful? Why?

---

5. Please indicate the FREQUENCY OF USE you made of each of the components of the module:

	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
Online activities				
Printed sessions				
Online resources				
Handbook				
Tutor(s) support				
Online Library				
Summaries				
Administrative support				
Technical Support				

Please comment if you wish

---

6. For each statement, indicate your own experience in the module:

	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
My access to the Internet to work on the module was sufficient and unproblematic.				
The information received before and during enrolling on the course was accurate, clear and in time.				
I received a high level of service during the registration process				
I always knew how to contact my tutor				
The feedback received from the tutor(s) was good and sufficient.				
The tutor(s) encouraged my involvement in the module activities and discussions				
The tutor(s) managed the group skillfully				
The organisation and sequence of the contents of the printed sessions facilitated my study				
The online discussions were interesting and contributed to my learning.				
The workload was about right				
The work I was asked to do was stimulating				
The activities of the module were appropriate to the topics and learning goals.				
All students had an equal opportunity to Participate				
The written sessions were easy to read and comprehensive.				
The summaries were a very useful resource for my study.				

Please comment if you wish.

---

7. Were the assessment procedures made clear?	Yes	No

8. Are the assessment criteria clear?	Yes	No

Please comment if you wish

---

9. Are there any equal opportunities issues arising from the module that you would like to raise?	Yes	No

10. Please add any other comment you would like to make:

---

11. How do you rate the new look of the VLE?

much better	better	equally good	equally bad	poorer

12. How easy is the VLE to navigate now?

easier	the same	more difficult

13. If there was one thing you could change about the VLE look, what would it be?

---

14. Please add any other comment you would like to make regarding the VLE

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
MSc INTERNATIONAL PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Student feedback questions (end of module)

The Module content

- Overall, do you feel you got from the module what you were hoping to?
- Which aspect(s) of the module did you find the most useful? Why do you think this was?
- Which aspect(s) of the module did you find least useful? Why do you think this was?
- Can you suggest how we could improve it next year?
- Do you have any specific suggestions on how we could improve the assignment and/or the marking schedule?
- Do you have any specific suggestions on the range and focus of the reading materials?
- What did you feel about the overall workload?
- Any other comments or suggestions?

The tutoring

- Which aspect(s) of the tutoring did you find the most helpful or useful? Why do you think this was?
- Which aspect(s) of the tutoring did you find least helpful or useful? Why do you think this was?
- Can you suggest how we could improve it next year?
- Any other comments or suggestions?

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APPENDIX SEVEN
UCL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

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Web based MSc Programme in International Primary Health Care

QUALITY FRAMEWORK

This paper should be read in conjunction with our teaching and learning strategy, which is available separately.

Our aims

1. To develop students' abilities to achieve high quality research, teaching and service development in primary health care.
2. To provide a programme of postgraduate study characterised by rigorous academic standards, learner-oriented objectives, flexibility and relevance to real life practice.
3. To use educational methods that encourage self-directed learning, reflection on personal experience, critical thinking, and constructive comparison of different professional perspectives and health care systems.
4. To provide a structured and dynamic on-line learning environment based on state-of-the-art web technology that stimulates and supports learners; promotes interactive multidisciplinary working; and provides the opportunity for mutual support and collaboration.

Our values

1. We seek to achieve the highest academic standards in the courses we offer.
2. Our work is grounded in the principles of effective adult learning and in the ethical imperatives of effectiveness, efficiency and equity of service provision in primary health care.
3. We acknowledge and value diversity in our team members; in the students we serve; and in the range of accepted theoretical approaches to our subject.
4. As a learning organisation, we are committed to the continuing professional development of individual staff and to continuous quality improvement in our work.

Our perspective on quality

1. Quality has a number of dimensions as laid out in the standards in this document.
2. Quality is both a characteristic of the system as a whole and the responsibility of individual team members.
3. Quality is an ongoing goal.

Our methods

1. We will work to explicit and measurable standards of performance.
2. We will expect, promote and reward the achievement of these standards in all our staff and students.
3. We will seek, and incorporate, the views of the users of our service.
4. We will identify and address the training and support needs of staff through a dedicated budget.
5. We will review our performance systematically at least once a year and make our results publicly available.

1. COURSE MATERIALS (learning materials integral to the course *and* recommended external sources)				
CRITERION	**STANDARDS**	**HOW WILL STANDARDS BE MET?**	**EVIDENCE**	**QUALITY FAILURES**
Course materials will support the overall programme aims, provide clear learning objectives and promote active learning.	1.1 **Course structure.** All study modules will contain the following, presented in consistent house style: • A clear statement of aims; • Explicit and measurable learning objectives; • Supporting materials for self study (such as reflection exercises and practical activities); • Exercises for group interaction; • An estimation of learner workload, expressed in terms of expected study hours per week. 1.2 **Reading materials.** These will be • Intellectually rigorous (i.e. methodologically robust, logically consistent, and can be placed in a coherent theoretical framework); • Up to date (i.e. not superseded by more recent work), accurate and relevant; • Clearly written, professionally presented and accessible; • Transferable to an international context; • Classified by level of difficulty (e.g. introductory, standard and supplementary); • Copyright cleared. 1.3 **Multimedia materials.** These will be • Appropriate to the goals and the learning outcomes of the course; • Technically reliable; • Compatible with minimum user specifications; • Flexible – i.e. can be used in different ways by students with different learning styles; • As far as possible, upgradable at marginal cost. 1.4 **Accessibility.** At least 95 percent of required course materials will be available either on line via the programme website or as a paper or CD included within the MSc fee.	Course materials will be written according to standard templates. The tutors' manual will contain guidelines for writing open learning resources and agreed rules for house style. All course content will be peer reviewed against the standards listed left, and modified accordingly, at four separate stages: scoping (draft content for module); writing (detailed content of each study unit); interim review (annual updating of content before each new intake); and major review (5-yearly overview of scope and content). A full draft of each module will be sent to the External Assessor for approval before being made available to students. Student generated material from one year (exemplary essays, collaborative projects) will be peer reviewed by the standard mechanisms before being added to content for future years. Peer review meetings will be attended by a multidisciplinary team including one author, a senior academic with an overview of the programme, an educationalist, and a technical adviser. The tutor responsible for writing/updating the module will liaise with administrative and technical staff to ensure materials are available on-line in agreed house style or have been sent to students before the module begins. Suggestions for updating and revising of material by both students and staff will be systematically collected in a revision file, reviewed and fed into the peer review process.	Examples of study resources, examined for evidence of • Aims and objectives; • Exercises and activities; • Consistency of style and presentation; Examples of reading lists, checked against on-line reading materials and study packs. Minutes and reports from the internal peer review process: • Peer review meetings; • Tutors' annual reports on module; • Quality Monitoring Group; • Departmental Teaching Committee; • Faculty Graduate Teaching Committee; • College Academic Committee. Minutes and reports from the external peer review process: • External Assessors; • Visiting Examiners. Student feedback • Summary of evaluation questionnaires; • Transcript of Feedback Forum postings; • Correspondence and complaints.	Quality failure should be detected via • Internal peer review meetings; • Tutors' annual reports; • External Assessors' reports; • Visiting Examiners' reports; • Student evaluations; • Critical incidents.

2. THE INTERACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

CRITERION	STANDARDS	HOW WILL STANDARDS BE MET?	EVIDENCE	QUALITY FAILURES
Formal on-line discussions on key topics (virtual seminars) will support the overall programme goals through high quality, focussed academic discourse, collaboration and lateral support.	2.1 **Framework.** Virtual seminars will be: • Regular: one per study unit; • Time limited: held between specified dates; • Asynchronous: not held in real time 'chat'; • Compulsory: participation will be a course requirement; • Small: 15 students or fewer per seminar group; • Archived: stored in an accessible, indexed and searchable on-line repository. 2.2 **Format.** The format of the virtual seminar will be • Structured: will follow an explicit and standard format based around specific group tasks; • Focussed: will address a topic identified in advance and based on the unit learning objectives; • Threaded: comments on particular themes will be linked via declarative subject titles. 2.3 **Process.** The process of the virtual seminar will be • Moderated: introduced, co-ordinated and summarised by a named student; • Facilitated: overseen and supported by the module tutor, who will monitor content and depth of discussion; • Contained: follow explicit and agreed ground rules for on-line behaviour in groups. 2.4 **Content.** The discourse of the virtual seminar will be: • Inclusive: will seek and address a range of different inputs and diversity of perspectives; • Challenging: will promote and support critical reflection on course materials and on-line contributions; • Constructive: will promote and support the creation and sharing of new knowledge; • Collaborative: will promote and support the sharing of materials and production of joint outputs by students; • Grounded: will draw on students' own experiences and backgrounds as well as course materials.	The module tutor will • Create a discussion forum for each virtual seminar by the specified date; • Ensure all students have access to the appropriate fora; • Close the forum on the specified date and archive the contents. Course materials will list the following details for the virtual seminar: • Start and end date; • Aims; • Preparatory work; • Outline structure (e.g. whether students should work in pairs or as a whole group); • A link to the overall learning objectives of the study unit and assignment. The induction module for students will include training in 'threading' messages, ground rules for on line group work, and e-moderating skills. Module tutors will reinforce and continue this training in subsequent modules. Academic staff will review the process of virtual seminars at regular Quality Monitoring Group meetings to identify and share learning points. See also Section 3: Tutor Performance and Development.	Transcripts of virtual seminars, examined for evidence of • Timing, group size, and input from all students; • Consistent and logical structure (e.g. threading); • Focussed discussion related to unit objectives; • Moderation by student; • Facilitation by tutor; • Adherence to ground rules and prompt and appropriate management of individuals who deviate (e.g. on-line 'bullying'); • Interdisciplinary and interprofessional sharing of knowledge and experience; • Interactive discourse leading to knowledge construction and higher order learning (such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation); • Exploration beyond the course; • Archived transcript plus student-generated summary. Student feedback • Summary of evaluation questionnaires; • Transcript of Feedback Forum postings; • Correspondence and complaints.	Quality failure should be detected via • Internal peer review meetings; • Tutors' annual reports; • External Assessors' reports; • Visiting Examiners' reports; • Student evaluations; • Critical incidents.

3. TUTOR PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

CRITERION	STANDARDS	HOW WILL STANDARDS BE MET?	EVIDENCE	QUALITY FAILURES
Module tutors will be appropriately qualified, trained and supported to deliver high quality learner support in the on-line environment.	3.1 **Tutor competence.** All tutors must be judged suitably qualified and experienced in all relevant content (subject) areas through formal approval by the Programme Director, Department Teaching Committee, and Faculty Tutor 3.2 **Tutor induction.** All tutors must demonstrate satisfactory performance in the Induction Course for Tutors, including: • Navigation of course software; • Use of email and bulletin board; • Use of html editor to prepare web pages; • Liaison with administrative and technical staff. 3.3 **Tutor performance.** All tutors must demonstrate the following in the on-line environment, to the satisfaction of the Programme Director, Faculty Tutor, and Visiting Examiners: • Technical competence (ease of navigation, use of full functionality of interactive software); • Content expertise (accuracy and relevance of information and support provided); • Effective communication (e.g. questioning, challenging, seeking clarification); • Group facilitation (e.g. establishing and implementing ground rules, maintaining a focus on the group task, promoting collaborative working, managing dysfunctional behaviour). 3.4 **Tutor behaviour on line.** All tutors must behave professionally in the on-line environment, and be receptive to feedback from students and staff. 3.5 **Tutor development.** All tutors must actively embrace the principle of continuing professional development. They will be required to participate in an annual appraisal of performance and review of training needs.	Job descriptions for tutors will contain explicit standards for experience and qualifications in both subject content and technical skills. A full curriculum vitae and/or personal learning log will be reviewed by the Programme Director before a tutor is appointed to a new subject area. The Induction Course for Tutors will define and address explicit performance standards in technical competence. Tutors will receive training and support to develop their online tutoring skills. Novice tutors will be supported by experienced tutors through a lead and support tutor system during a probationary period. Achieving and maintaining competence in on-line tutoring is a prerequisite for a definitive contract. Codes for behaviour in on-line groups will be available in the student manual and the tutors' manual. The Programme Director will undertake and document an annual appraisal of all academic staff. They will be encouraged to work towards specific goals such as: • Short courses to meet identified needs; • Membership of ILT or other professional bodies; • Higher degrees; • Presentations at conferences; • Publications in peer reviewed academic journals.	Human resource file, with Job descriptions for tutor roles; • Curricula vitae of tutors; • Certificates of satisfactory completion of Induction Course for Tutors. Transcripts of virtual seminars, examined for evidence of • Technical competence; • Content expertise; • Effective communication; • Group facilitation. Student feedback, especially via explicit question about tutor input in on-line evaluation questionnaire for each module. Academic staff personal learning log or equivalent.	Quality failure of tutors should be detected via • Failure to pass Induction Course; • Internal peer review of virtual seminar; • Visiting Examiners' reports; • Student feedback, especially via on-line evaluation questionnaires; • Critical incidents. NB Student performance is not a very sensitive indicator of overall tutor competence. As a general rule, poor performance by a majority of students on a course should raise questions about course design or tutor competence, whereas poor performance by a minority of students is usually attributable to other factors.

4. ASSESSMENT

CRITERION	STANDARDS	HOW WILL STANDARDS BE MET?	EVIDENCE	QUALITY FAILURES
Assessment will be **Valid:** will give an accurate and complete reflection of the student's ability and performance; **Reliable:** will give consistent and coherent results between markers; **Fair:** will guard against cheating and take a broad and sensitive view of what is 'correct' or 'incorrect'; **Appropriate** to the educational objectives of the overall programme and to the particular objective being assessed; **Efficient:** will use tutor time appropriately and avoid double handling; **Timely:** will provide students with feedback at an appropriate stage in their learning; **Formative** as well as summative.	4.1 **Setting assignments.** All course assignments will be reviewed as part of the peer review process to ensure that • The form and content is appropriate to the workload and matches the unit objectives; • A structured schedule stating how marks will be allocated is included; • An agreed indicative answer is placed on file for markers, giving examples of the standard required for pass and distinction. 4.2 **Submission of assignments.** The facility for electronic submission of assignments will be • Simple, clear, and user friendly; • Technically secure and reliable; • Anonymised. 4.3 **Marking and feedback.** • 90 percent of assignments will be returned to students within 21 days; All students will receive written formative feedback that is clear, constructive, relevant, thorough, and inoffensive. 4.4 **Examination procedure.** • Examination papers will follow the general standards for assignments given in 4.1; • The External Programme will notify students of examination dates. • A mock examination with an indicative marking schedule will be posted at least one month before the date of the examination.	Assignments and examination questions will be peer reviewed internally and externally as part of the course content (see Section 1). Papers will be marked on the basis of agreed marking schedules and indicative answers. The MSc administrator will maintain the electronic assignment submission procedure and provide prompt help to students who have difficulty using it. Assignments will be double marked and a formal arbitration procedure used if there is a discrepancy of more than 10% between markers (see full regulations for details). Tutors will use an agreed template for providing feedback to students. Novice markers will shadow a senior until they demonstrate the ability to mark consistently and provide appropriate feedback. The module tutor will ensure that a mock examination is developed, peer reviewed, and posted in good time.	Assignments as supplied in course materials, and examination papers, including marking schedules, indicative answers and feedback templates. Visiting Examiner reports, with particular reference to scrutiny of assignments and examination papers against unit objectives. TMA returns spreadsheet, with particular reference to timing of submissions and consistency between markers. Examples of tutor feedback forms to individual students. Copies of administrative notices about examinations. Student feedback • Summary of evaluation questionnaires; • Transcript of Feedback Forum postings; • Correspondence and complaints.	Quality failure should be detected via • Internal peer review meetings; • Tutors' annual reports; • TMA returns statistics; • Co-marker evaluation of feedback sheet to students; • External Assessors' reports; • Visiting Examiners' reports; • Student feedback and evaluations; • Critical incidents.

5. STUDENT COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

CRITERION	STANDARDS	HOW WILL STANDARDS BE MET?	EVIDENCE	QUALITY FAILURES
Our programme will be supported by accessible, accurate, and up to date documentation. Support and advice will be tailored to the needs of individual students. There will be an effective system of student representation.	5.1 **Documentation.** Students and prospective students will have timely access to details of the programme, which will indicate clearly what is expected of learners in each module and give the expected time commitment and credit value. This documentation will support students in making informed choices to meet their personal learning needs. 5.2 **Attention to individual support needs** • Before starting the programme, all students will be required to assess and declare their motivation and commitment to it; • All students will have access to a personal progress log giving a summary of modules taken, marks awarded and credits gained; • All students will be allocated a named member of academic staff whom they may approach for advice on module choices and in times of crisis; • Academic staff will regularly review the needs of students identified by the module tutor as academically weaker or otherwise having particular needs. 5.3 **Library support.** Adequate journals and other resources will be available on-line for students to explore beyond the course materials. Students will be able to obtain assistance to help them seek and use electronically stored information successfully. 5.4 **Social support.** Students will have access to an on-line social forum for informal discussion and support. 5.5 **Student views** will be actively sought via a range of approaches including on-line feedback questionnaires for each module, an anonymous feedback forum, and an independent, structured complaints procedure. We will respond promptly and sensitively to their expressed concerns.	A named member of academic staff will check and update the on-line student manual and publicly available programme details against the standards listed left at least annually. A named librarian or informaticist will check and update library resources at least annually. The Programme Director will ensure that all students are allocated a named adviser from the academic staff, who will respond promptly to enquiries about study options and overall progress. In the event of a serious student crisis, their personal adviser will submit a confidential report to the Programme Director. A member of the course team will ensure that all students have access to the on-line student manual, to an accurate personal progress log, to the online library, and to the relevant social forum. All students will be asked to complete an on-line feedback questionnaire for every study module. The MSc Administrator will collate responses for the module tutor, who will review them against the standards listed left before preparing an annual report on the module. All students will be informed of the independent complaints procedure. The Quality Monitoring Group of academic staff will meet once per term and include a regular review of student feedback and of named students with particular needs.	Student manual, website and marketing materials, examined for evidence of clarity, accuracy and completeness of information on programme content and format. On-line summary of progress on an individual student basis, generally accessed via the on-line 'Check your progress' tool. Administrative data, such as: List of all students and personal advisers; Membership lists of modules and social for a. Student feedback • Summary of evaluation questionnaires; • Transcript of Feedback Forum postings; • Correspondence and complaints. Anonymised confidential reports on student crises. Minutes of Quality Monitoring Group meetings.	Quality failure should be detected via Tutors' annual reports • External Assessors' reports; • Visiting Examiners' reports; • Student feedback and evaluations; • Feedback on publicly available information from prospective students; • Critical incidents, especially confidential reports on student crises.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

CRITERION	STANDARDS	HOW WILL STANDARDS BE MET?	EVIDENCE	QUALITY FAILURES
Administrative and technical systems will support the programme goals through high quality service delivery, multidisciplinary teamwork, effective communication, and robust technological infrastructure. Administrative and technical staff will have clear roles and responsibilities and be adequately supported in their work.	6.1 **Customer care.** Students and prospective students will receive prompt, courteous and accurate responses from the UCL course team to enquiries and correspondence. 6.2 **Multidisciplinarity.** Administrative and technical input will be an integral aspect of the presentation and marketing of the programme and of the development and delivery of course materials. Staff offering this support will work as part of the multidisciplinary course team. 6.3 **Development of support staff.** All administrative and technical staff will be suitably qualified for the work required of them and have • An accurate and up to date job description • A structured Induction Course for Support Staff on appointment • A confidential annual appraisal • Training and support appropriate to their role 6.4 **Technology strategy.** A documented strategy will be in place to define and monitor technical standards. This will be based on established industry quality standards and include issues of system design, hardware and software specification, technical support for staff and students, and confidentiality and data protection.	The Programme Director will oversee the appointment, induction, supervision and appraisal of administrative and technical staff against the standards listed left. The Technical Director will prepare and maintain a comprehensive technology strategy against the standards listed left. The Technical Director will will deliver full support for staff involved in on-line course development. Academic staff will acknowledge and incorporate the input of administrative and technical staff when developing course materials and systems. The Programme Director will identify a dedicated training budget and allocate funds judiciously for both in-house training and external courses for all staff. All staff will be required to keep a personal training log documenting professional goals, courses attended, and new training needs identified.	Human resource file, with • Job descriptions for administrative and technical roles; • Curricula vitae of these staff; • Certificates of satisfactory completion of Induction Course for Support Staff. Student feedback, especially via explicit questions about administrative and technical support in on-line evaluation questionnaires. Copies of particular items of correspondence or communication. Staff personal learning log or equivalent.	Quality failure should be detected via • Annual appraisal returns; • External Assessors' reports; • Visiting Examiners' reports; • Student feedback and evaluations; • Critical incidents.

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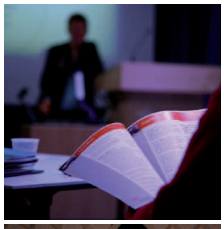

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