

Unitec Institute of Technology Whare Wānanga o Wairaka

Online / Blended Learning Guidelines

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Purpose

The Framework for Developing Highly Blended/Fully Online Courses at Unitec establishes a shared set of design principles, process (standards) for the creation of courses/programmes that are online or highly blended and delivered by Unitec Institute of Technology. The framework is underpinned by the Learning and Teaching Strategy and Te Tīpare.

Audience

This document is intended to support the following people:

Heads of School – The detail required to ensure all courses within a program meet high quality and effective online/highly blended delivery approaches.

APMs – A framework to guide the design and quality review process of online/highly blended course delivery and approaches

Teachers/SMEs – A framework to guide the design process and quality review when working to develop more online/highly blended courses

TPA/Learning Designer – A framework to guide the collaborative learning design process with the Teacher/SME

Terms of Reference

Blended learning is the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences (Garrison and Kanuka, 2004).

At Unitec, we define a **Highly Blended Course** as one where most of the learning experience occurs in an online environment.

Example: Environmental and Animal Sciences

A **Fully Online Course** is one in which all synchronous and asynchronous activity occurs online.

Example: Community Studies: Police

Framework - research-informed models for course design

Learning Design Principles - guidelines for the ways in which people learn most effectively online

Standards – an agreed and documented process (standards) for the creation of courses/programmes

Links to Supporting documents

Teaching and learning strategy (2020 – 2022)

Te Noho Kotahitanga

Te Tipare framework

[Digital Learning tools interactive diagram](#)

Principles informing course design

The purpose of these principles is to articulate a preferred approach to learning design for highly blended/fully online courses, endorsed by Te Puna Ako. Not all the principles will be relevant in all cases, but this framework assumes most courses will emphasize the application of knowledge with an activity-bias.

Learning Design principles	
<i>The objective of these principles is to guide the design of Highly Blended/Fully Online course development</i>	
1.	Alignment with other Unitec learning and teaching frameworks Unitec's Teaching and Learning Strategy 2020-2022 and the Te Tipare framework underpin and inform all learning and teaching design, activity and evaluation.
2.	Learner engagement Consideration shown to one or more of the following: building whanaungatanga; acknowledging ako, a variety of activities that are authentic where possible; learners are active & engaged with peers and staff; learners are able to reflect on the learning experience.
3.	Constructive alignment All teaching/learning activities and assessment tasks are purposefully connected to intended learning outcomes and build towards graduate profile.
4.	Activity-based, collaborative and authentic assessment tasks Design enables learning to be constructed through activities and/or supported by interpersonal communication. Topics are not driven by information transfer. As often as possible, assessment tasks are framed around authentic real-world tasks and/or contexts.
5.	Constructivist approach as appropriate to the learning context Problems, issues and activities are situated for the learner using authentic examples that connect to the real world beyond the classroom. This includes acknowledging appropriate level and types of learning, including a variety of learning approaches, that enable diverse and responsive student-preferred pedagogies.
6.	Challenge learners and develop learner autonomy Consideration is given to how learners will be provided with opportunities to develop skills and knowledge through tasks that are problem based. Learners and teachers have opportunity to aro their own learning.
7.	Feedback & practice Consideration given to how learners articulate and demonstrate to themselves and others what they are learning, supported by regular constructive feedback and social dialogue (teacher and peers).
8.	Learner guidance Consideration shown as to how learners are supported and guided through their learning, demonstrating clear scaffolding to encourage greater learner responsibility. This includes guidance on how to use technology in learning, and where to seek academic and social support and advice. Peer support (tuakana-teina) is encouraged.

9.	Pedagogically appropriate technology use Where technology is used, it should extend the potential for learning. Learner capability and support requirements will form part of this decision.
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The above list is adapted from JISC (2009)

Standards guiding course design

The following standards are intended to help inform well-designed online courses and can be used to evaluate successful completion of course design.

Pedagogical Standards (PS) <i>The object of these standards is to identify how to incorporate accepted learning design principles</i>	
PS1: Course Introduction & Learning Path	<i>An orientation to the delivery, technologies and learning methods used in the course is provided. The learning path (schedule, timetable etc.) is available for learners to guide them through the course. It explains expectations, learning outcomes, activities, timetables and assessments.</i>
PS2: Clear Instructions	<i>Instructions for all activities, summative and formative assessments are clear and complete enough for learners to understand what is to be done, how it is to be completed, and how and when it is to be submitted.</i>
PS3: Mātauranga Māori	<i>Mātauranga Māori is appropriately embedded integrated in course content and assessments. Kaihautū have been consulted at all stages of development.</i>
PS4: Cultural Inclusivity	<i>Language/activities used manaaki all learners as part of the Unitec/course whānau. The course supports our priority learners towards parity goals 2022.</i>
PS5: Activity-Centric Design	<i>Course activities are mostly interactive and facilitate a deeper understanding of the content and enable learners to complete assessments. A wide range of Moodle functions and appropriate learning technologies contribute to active learning.</i>
PS6: Varied learning experiences	<i>Opportunities for varied learning experiences are provided. This may include a range of teaching strategies/online activities/virtual classrooms/pre-recorded material. Student-preferred ways of learning/responding are considered in design and review of courses.</i>
PS7: Marking Criteria	<i>Learners are provided with clear details of the marking criteria that will be used for all summative activities.</i>
PS8: Assessment & Feedback	<i>The course is designed to ensure a range of formative and summative assessment and feedback opportunities.</i> <i>Feedback is prompt, timely, frequent, on-going and has value to the learners and is mana-enhancing and uses culturally responsive methods.</i>

Content Writing Standards (CWS) <i>The object of this standard is to ensure all content and media are accessible for learners.</i>
CWS1: Bias <i>The content is free of bias related to age, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, or disability.</i>
CWS2: Tone <i>The course uses a positive tone which models appropriate communication and helps to build a learning community, through course elements such as course instructions, learning activities and learning facilitator introduction.</i>
CWS3: Citations <i>All content in the course materials is appropriately cited and licensed</i>
CWS4: Clear Language <i>The language is clear and easy to understand, and the level of literacy required is appropriate to the course level. Any use of te reo Māori is supported by glossary or translation in Moodle.</i>
CWS5: Mechanics of Writing <i>The course uses correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling</i>

Design Standards (DS) <i>The object of this standard is to provide an intuitive, easy-to-use course that provides a variety of content in different formats to suit learners</i>
DS1: Course structure <i>The course elements use a logical and consistent structure and design format; the course layout is intuitive and simple to use</i>
DS2: Currency of Information Sources <i>Resources are from credible and authoritative sources, reflect current professional and/or industry practice, and are regularly reviewed and updated</i>
DS3: Varied Learning resources <i>Learners are provided with a variety of learning materials that enhance the learning experience, including primary sources where appropriate. Consider using examples and case studies from an Aotearoa context.</i>
DS4 Content Formats <i>File formats for all digital content enable maximum use of content across a wide range of devices/software</i>
DS5: Accessibility <i>Identifies accessibility requirements that must be met to ensure that web content provides people with a disability equal access to information</i>
DS6: Visual Design <i>Navigation should be consistent, with good formatting; contrast of colour; easily readable and appropriate hierarchy and balance of activity and of elements on the page.</i> <i>The course is consistent in navigability, and format</i>

Technology Standards (TS)
<i>The object of this standard is to ensure consistency and appropriate use of tools in course delivery</i>
TS1: Programme information <i>Learners entering a programme understand the expectations around software use and appropriate devices required.</i>
TS2: Technical functionality <i>The course complies with all relevant Unitec Information Technology and Records Management policies as found here.</i> <i>Learners' access to devices and wifi is assumed.</i>
TS3: Choice of tools <i>Choice of technology tools (at course and programme level) is based on their potential to enhance learning and informed by the Unitec Digital Learning tools interactive diagram .</i>
TS4: Tools used in industry <i>Inclusion of technologies that are regularly used in industry where appropriate to enhance the authenticity of the learning experience</i>
TS5: Learner support <i>Consider learners' proficiency in blended/online educational environments, and their familiarity with the Unitec Moodle interface. Manaaki is given as appropriate (f2f and online).</i>

References

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Glossary

ako – the reciprocal nature of learning and teaching

aro – to notice, pay attention to

constructive alignment - 'Constructive alignment' starts with the notion that the learner constructs his or her own learning through relevant learning activities. The teacher's job is to create a learning environment that supports the learning activities appropriate to achieving the desired learning outcomes. The key is that all components in the teaching system - the curriculum and its intended outcomes, the teaching methods used, the assessment tasks - are aligned to each other. All are tuned to learning activities addressed in the desired learning outcomes. The learner finds it difficult to escape without learning appropriately.' Biggs, J. (n.d.) [Aligning teaching for constructing learning](#)

constructivist approach – **Constructivism** is 'an **approach to learning** that holds that people actively construct or make their own knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner' Elliott, S.N., Kratochwill, T.R., Littlefield Cook, J. & Travers, J. (2000). *Educational psychology: Effective teaching, effective learning (3rd ed.)*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill College.

learning approach – different ways of learning (and teaching) [Examples](#)

manaaki - to support, take care of

Mātauranga Māori - knowledge of the Māori world

Te Tīpare framework – Unitec's framework for Māori learning

tuakana-teina - mentoring relationship

whānau - extended family, family group

whanaungatanga - developing relationship