

Accreditation and modes of delivery

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18 February 2015

PURPOSE

- Answer questions and give feedback
- The purpose of this presentation is to provide guidelines and recommend practices to assist you in submitting programmes for accreditation.
- The presentation provides a structured engagement with actual examples derived from practice to increase your confidence when submitting such programmes in the future – focusing on distance mode of

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the presentation, you should be better able to:

- Identify **trends** in the range of **approaches** that constitute the notion of distance provision
- Demonstrate increased **confidence** in applying for accreditation for a distance programme
- Demonstrate **increased ability** to provide appropriate **feedback**

PRINCIPLES

- Framework
- Explicit set of criteria + minimum standards
- Peer evaluation process
- Rigorous
- Fairness & consistency
- Multiple checks and balances:
- Checklisting & screening
- Evaluation
- Recommendations
- Accreditation Committee scrutiny

• HEQC

PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION: A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

- CHE - QC of higher education
- Development and Accountability
- Relationship with professional bodies
- Strengths and Challenges
- Shifts
- Regulatory considerations
- Framework and Criteria

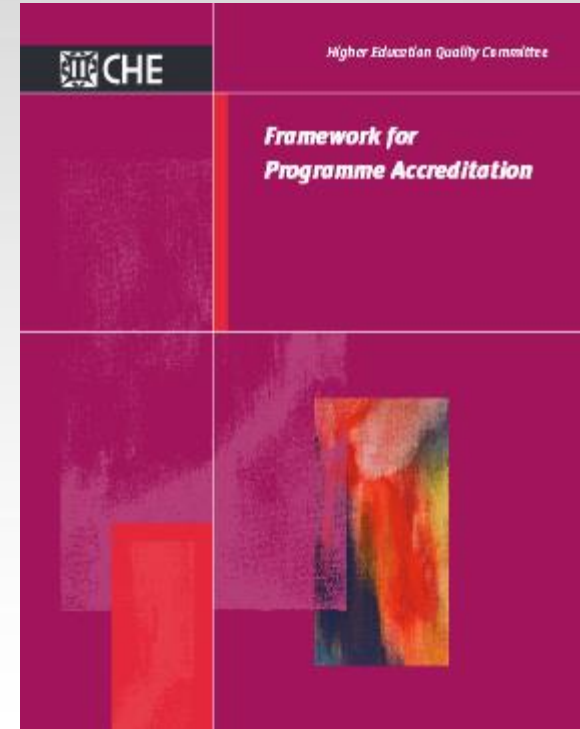
ACCREDITATION PROCESSES

- New programmes across HE sector, re
- accreditation of programmes in private
- sector.
- New sites of delivery, change of mode.
- Volume: depends; usually about 400
- processes per year.
- HEQC on-line system

- Evaluators: nominated by sector, database
- of 1500 subject specialists, training
- Accreditation Committee - 20 experts, 5 -
- 6X per year, 2 days at a time – can
- consider up to 100 programmes/processes
- in one meeting
- Recommends outcomes to next committee
- – HEQC
- Or defers, or requests site visit

Section 1: Introduction and Background

- Current policy distinguishes **2 modes of provision for accreditation and funding purposes: contact or distance**
- All programmes, regardless of mode of provision, should meet the same minimum criteria – but some of the criteria need to be interpreted differently / additionally for distance
- Companion Document: *Programme Accreditation Criteria*
- While most institutions offer a blend, the geographic location of students should **inform** the ways in which learning experiences are designed, mediated, assessed and reviewed



- Documents, criteria
- Applications are made on system, Upload all relevant documents e.g. modules, budgets, policies
- Form follows criteria used.
- 19 criteria: new programmes use 1-9.
- Each has minimum standards (about 10)

Process



OUTCOME

DEFERRAL

ACCREDIT

**ACCREDIT
WITH
CONDITIONS**

**NOT
ACCREDIT**

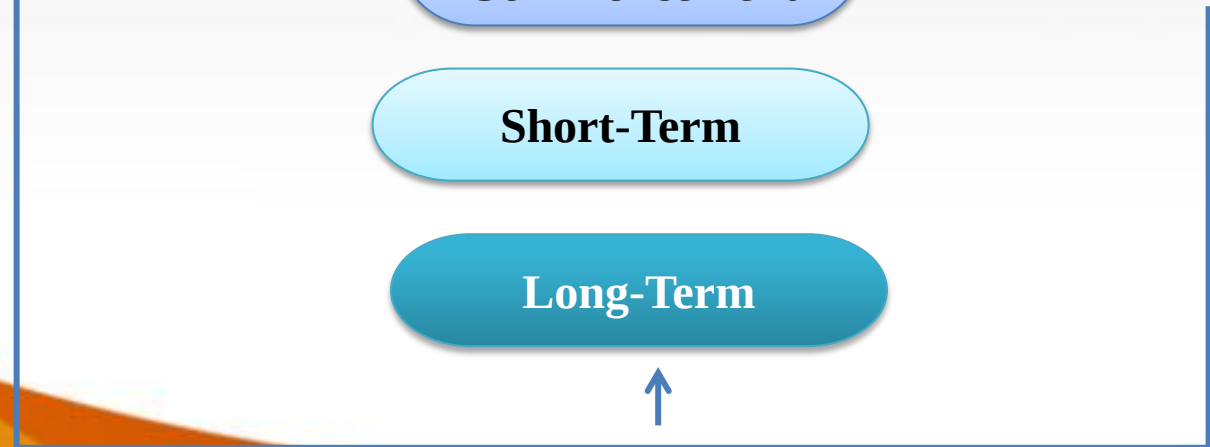
**Prior to
Commencement**

Representation

Short-Term

**SITE
VISITS**

Long-Term



Information

- Programme design – list modules and
- credits, progression rules, supply module
- outlines, with outcomes and how
- assessed, reading lists, equipment
- available etc.
- Staffing - lists, CVs, workload model,
- implicit rules
- Streamlining SAQA information

What is DE

- It is true that in many cases distance education is not properly planned, does not deliver what it promises, and is not cost effective
- distance education has an added layer of complexity in terms of **planning and management**, and because mistakes are less easy to overcome with a large, geographically dispersed student body.



**"When I was a student, wireless data transmission
meant passing notes in class"**

- DE not necessarily requiring teachers and students to be in the same place at the same time.
- distance education is concerned with the **design of programmes** that presuppose the **spatial and/or temporal separation** of teachers and students for the majority, and possibly the whole, of the learning experience.
- Distance education focuses on **learning design for, and implementation of, teaching, learning, support and assessment** – with or without supporting technology – that aim to provide educational opportunities to students who are not physically ‘on site’.

"Yes Sir, you're absolutely right,
you can never stop learning
- in fact I'm on a course
right now."



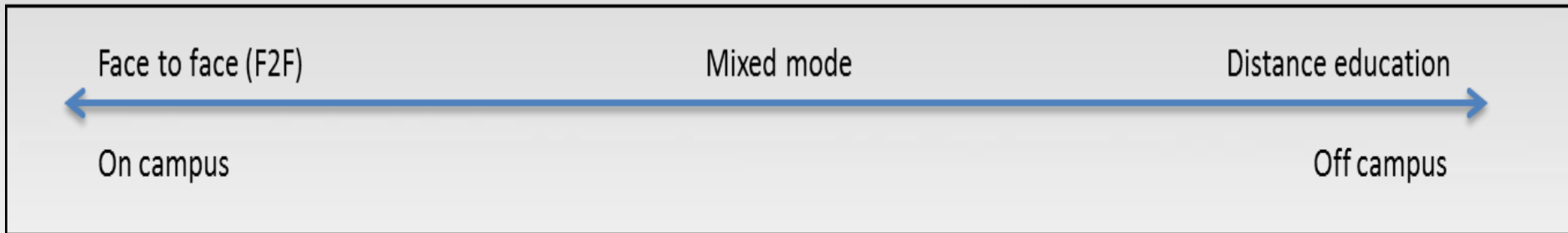
- Even if registration requirements stipulate that students must have specific ICT devices and skills and specific levels of connectivity, it is necessary **to think about how distributed students can gain access to technical support** (e.g. online support or call centres)
- important **design questions about what examples to use, what resources to refer to, the type of language that might be appropriate**, how a large and distributed student population might be divided into smaller groups for collaborative assignments (perhaps deliberately pairing students from different environments), and what learning styles and strategies might be appropriate (perhaps a greater range of options for a more diverse range of participants).

- Distance provision aims to create a *quality learning environment* using an appropriate **combination of different learning resources, tutorial support, peer group discussion, and practical sessions** (real or virtual or a combination of both)

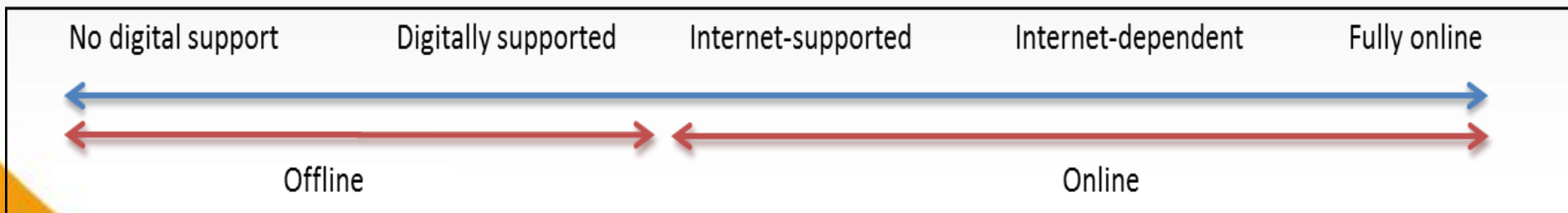
- Key challenges of distance learners to be addressed by a provider include overcoming the difficulty of students **sharing their experiences with other students**; providing **opportunities to interact with teachers outside of normal hours**; providing timely and appropriate interactive learning materials and feedback on assessment; and making available expert guidance and support in order to derive maximum benefit from the **learning materials**. Many of these traditional challenges can be addressed through appropriate use of suitable supporting digital technologies but only if the integration of technology is designed for purpose, and the impact on students, staff and systems is taken into account and provided for.

Towards a Model

Spatial or geographic distribution of teachers and learners



Extent of ICT support



target

- the **physical location of students** and their **access to appropriate resources** and technology remain important considerations in the design of programmes.
- the **size of the cohort enrolled** for a course or programme would appear to be a major determinant of the nature and extent of the interaction

Size of cohort

- the need for the deployment of tutors, the level of mediation employed by the lecturer and tutors, the level of support for the learners, the nature of the assessment, and could in fact be the determinant for the pedagogical approach.
- the learning purpose should drive the use of ICTs and not the other way round.

Curriculum design and development

- We need a clear idea of the **profile of our entry-level students** in terms of their subject or disciplinary competences, their fundamental learning competences and capability for independent learning, their practical and ICT skills, and their existing life and work commitments
- Deciding on the **assessment strategy** is an **essential part of the curriculum planning process**.

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- Decisions about assessment will have to be made concurrently with materials design and development.
- a detailed preparation of the curriculum and strategy for the programme, which involves a good deal of consultation, between the academic unit and the service departments such as media, printing and/or ICT, and learner support, to explore the technical possibilities and the implications of the curriculum intentions.

Programme Design and systems

- Stronger emphasis on curriculum issues that underpin programme design and implementation



Criterion 1: Programme Design

Intended Student Profile



- Appropriately designed learning resources
- Decentralised support & assessment
- Distributed communication & interaction systems

Assessment Strategy



- Appropriate for intended learning outcomes
- Split between formative and summative
- Regular opportunity for formative assessment improvement)
- Management of Work Integrated Learning

(for pacing and feedback for

Credit Analysis



- Credit ratings are appropriate
- Programme is coherent
- Fundamental, core & elective components
- Pre- and co-requisites
- Clear articulation

Supporting Documents



- Policy and Budget for Materials Development
- Outline of courses and modules in programme
- SAQA Submission
- List of Readings (appropriate and up to date)
- Student placement – agreement with workplaces

Criterion 5: Teaching & Learning Strategy

Related Criteria

- 1: Programme Design
- 2: Student Recruitment, Selection & Admission
- 12: Teaching & Learning Interactions
- 6,13,14: Assessment



Notional Learning Hours

- Full time: 30 hours x 40 weeks = 1200 hours/year
- Part-time: 12-15 hours x 40 weeks = 600 hours/year
- Most distance students take 1.5 -3 times minimum duration



Progress and Assessment

- Systems to monitor student progress
- Timeframes for student assignment feedback
- Student support for those who fail a semester
- Staff development for assessment



Curriculum Review

- Time scheduled for updating
- Up-to-date references and weblinks
- Learning and assessment demands match level of qualification
- Benchmarking process



Staffing Complement

- Numbers of assignments to mark and materials to distribute
- Translation of materials into other languages
- Support for students in other countries
- Provision of work integrated learning placements
- Availability over evenings or weekends for support



Learning Materials & Support

- Learners only start when RECEIVE materials
- Either dispatched materials or required connectivity
- Required levels of interaction e.g. email, discussions
- ICT facilities can cope with increased enrolments



Criterion 6,13,14: Assessment



Formative Assessment to Avoid

- Assignments that do not count or are optional
- Assignments self-assessed against generic sheets
- Only examinations count
- Feedback received only after examination



Appropriate Assessment

- Fit for target audience
- Link to Programme Design
- Staff capacity
- Systems to mitigate against cheating
- Guidance on plagiarism



Student Assessment

- Align to Teaching and Learning Strategy
- Policies to ensure assessment valid & reliable
- Role of formative assessment
- Requirements and evidence needed for RPL



External Bodies

- External moderators for exit-level modules
- Role of professional bodies





Criterion 7: Library & 8: Administrative Services

Library Services

- Access to electronic/physical resources
- Support for using information and resources
- Each student able to access resources successfully
- Sufficient library budget



Increased enrolments

- Need for more tutors, tutor training & supervision
- Institutional systems and infrastructure capacity
- Size of student groups
- Quality of large scale programmes



Administrative Support

- Decentralised registration & contact sessions
- Assignment management
- Materials production & dispatch
- Systems maintenance



Tutor/Staff Management

- Delegation of marking and learner support
- Moderation of assessment e.g. marking sessions
- Controlling of standards
- Appointment & pay of part-time staff



Academic Coordinators

- Appropriate qualification in field/discipline
- Management of workload e.g. number of courses
- Supervise materials production, assessment design, tutor training & support, quality management, query handling



Learner Support

- Integrated into curriculum and course design
- Availability of contact sessions and tutorials
- Administrative and technological support
- Communication methods and staff to manage

