

4. Course Design

The course curriculum is well-researched, with aims and learning outcomes appropriate to the level of study; content, teaching and learning and assessment methods facilitate the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes; there is an identified process of development and evaluation of courses.

Elements of the Criterion

Course planning

- 4.1 The course is designed with national needs as well as the needs of prospective learners and employers in mind.
- 4.2 The elements of the course (see 4.3 and 4.4 below) and the relationships between them are consciously planned.
- 4.3 For each course, there is a publicly accessible and learner-friendly description of the aims and learning outcomes; entry-level skills, knowledge and experience; credit rating and/or notional hours of learning; target learners; teaching and learning strategies; content outline; items in the learning package (including elements such as study guides, textbooks, tutorial letters, audiotapes and videotapes); assessment strategy; and a year plan containing key dates for learners.
- 4.4 Choice of media and technology is justified in the light of the aims of the course, required learning outcomes, learner needs, capacity to access and use the technologies, the physical features of the teaching sites and available facilities and services.
- 4.5 There is a stated language policy for the course which is based on the national language policy, language profiles of learners, career context and curriculum. The policy is implemented in course materials, assessment and learner support.
- 4.6 The list of courses offered by an educational provider is limited to a number that allows for quality investment in course design and development in the context of budgetary limitations. (Quality is defined by the criteria in this document).

Course curriculum

- 4.7 The amount and complexity of work required to complete the course merits the credits which it has been allocated. This also applies to the assessment for recognition of prior learning and experience.
- 4.8 Where a course is imported or exported, account is taken of the needs of local contexts, and, where necessary, the course is adapted accordingly (for example, by the inclusion of local case studies or a glossary of terms).
- 4.9 Content, teaching and learning strategies and assessment are carefully structured to facilitate the achievement of the learning outcomes.

- 4.10 Various forms of learner support are built into the design of the course.
- 4.11 Teaching, learning and assessment activities encourage critical thinking and independent learning.
- 4.12 The teaching and learning strategies of the course acknowledge learners' existing knowledge and experience, and provide opportunities for guided integration of new knowledge.
- 4.13 Where appropriate, experiential learning opportunities are designed into the course. There are suitable methods of recording and assessing this (such as portfolios, logbooks, project reports, learner interviews, or reports from the mentor).

Quality assurance

- 4.14 The educational provider requires relevant competence of authors, consultants, and others that are brought into the course design and development process.
- 4.15 The educational provider gives authors, consultants, and others involved in the course design and development process necessary guidance and training regarding aspects of distance education in order to assure quality in their work.
- 4.16 An appropriate infrastructure exists within the educational provider to administer the range of elements of the course efficiently.
- 4.17 There is a timetable for the regular revision and updating of courses.