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General Quality Process Charter

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English version

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References

D2.2 Conceptual model for ODL Quality process and evaluation grid, criteria and indicators
D4. Trainer's and Professional's Guide to Quality in Open and Distance Learnings

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Introduction	4
1.1. Rationale.....	4
1.2. Usage	5
2. Quality assessment tools	5
2.1. Checklist.....	6
2.2. Incident form	6
2.3. Questionnaire	7
2.4. VLE log files-based tools	9
3. Description of the roles	11
3.1. Roles related to the “student support” sub-process	11
3.2. Roles related to the “learning material design and production” sub-process.....	13
4. General Quality Process Charter	15
4.1. Process workflow diagram	15
4.2. Quality related to the Student Support sub-process	16
4.2.1. Quality processes related to the role of <i>Teacher</i>	17
4.2.2. Quality processes related to the role of <i>Tutor</i>	19
4.2.3. Quality processes related to the role of <i>Coordinator</i>	21
4.2.4. Quality processes related to the role of <i>Administrative support</i>	24
4.2.5. Quality processes related to the role of <i>Technical support</i>	30
4.3. Quality related to the Learning Material Design & Production sub-process	32
4.3.1. Quality processes related to the role of <i>Learning material designer</i>	32
4.3.2. Quality processes related to the role of <i>Learning material producer</i>	36
4.3.3. Quality processes related to the role of <i>Audiovisual planner</i>	39
4.3.4. Quality processes related to the role of <i>Usability planner</i>	40
5. References	42



1. Introduction

This General Quality Process Charter is intended for professionals in the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) field, providing them with a quick review of the essential processes involved in producing and implementing quality ODL courses. As its name indicates, this document contains general aspects of Quality implementation; these are grouped into table-charts in section 4. For the reader wishing to implement Quality on a more developed basis, we strongly recommend reading deliverable D4 of the e-Quality project: “Trainer’s and Professional’s Guide to Quality in Open and Distance Learnings”^[1].

1.1. Rationale

The structure of this document is made up of three parts:

1. a description of some tools that can be used to assess quality (section 2)
2. a description of the roles used in the document (section 3)
3. the Quality Process Charter itself (section 4)

The structure of this Quality Process Charter comprises two sets of tables, grouping roles associated with

- the student support sub-process (section 4.2)
- the learning material design sub-process (section 4.3)

The tables are structured around roles; these are detailed in section 3. This structure allows the user to jump quickly to the most important recommendations to be met for each actor: the tables provide some quality criteria for each role, each of these being associated with

- comments, to detail the criterion
- a commitment, defining the guideline related to the quality criterion
- an indicator, to assess the fulfillment of the criterion

These roles and activities are introduced in the previous e-Quality core documents, mainly the D2.2 deliverable^[2]. For more information and details on the specific activities for each role, please refer to the D4 deliverable^[1].



1.2. Usage

To use this GQPC, the first step is to decide which dimension(s) of quality need to be assessed. These quality issues may apply to student support, or to the tasks related to learning material design.

Once this first choice is made, the second step is to evaluate the list of roles provided at the beginning of the section. These roles are related to the tasks of each participant in the ODL process (except the learner, to whom this document is not addressed). The title of the functions of the people fulfilling these roles may differ from one institution to another; therefore, for each sub-process a table describes the role by enumerating its activities and duties.

The most important quality criteria (with comments and advice on how to assess / fulfill them) and their indicators, are detailed in the charts contained in sections 4.2 and 4.3 below. These may then be used at the outset, when planning the learning event, to ensure that the most important aspects have been taken into consideration, or when the learning event has been completed, to assess its quality and possibly figure out ways to improve it. For more details on this, you are strongly advised to read ^[1].

2. Quality assessment tools

In many cases, assessing the fulfillment of a Quality criterion is not that simple. This can be due to several reasons, but it is usually either because

- there is no means of measuring accurately and objectively (e.g. learner satisfaction, or the suitability of the teaching method)
- or the thing to be assessed is simply not measurable directly (e.g. all learners have 24/7 access to the VLE)

This section therefore aims at providing a set of tools to evaluate such factors. In the following, four generic tools are described that may be used to assess one or a number of aspects of the Quality of the e-learning process:

1. checklists
2. incident forms
3. questionnaires
4. VLE usage logs

The functioning of these tools is detailed below. For each measurement tool, the rules of usage are proposed, as well as guidelines to estimate the cost (for both implementation and long-term usage), and known limitations the user should be aware of before using these tools.

2.1. Checklist

This tool is a way of ensuring that every Quality aspect is going to be (or has been) taken into account when planning the process. But it can also be used at the end of the process to re-evaluate the same Quality aspects in terms of how the process took place. It is thus **both a preemptive and a subsequent measure** toward the achievement of a Quality e-learning process.

To put it in a nutshell, the checklist lists all the elements to be taken into account at the time of planning or development of one of the considered sub-processes (i.e. student support, or learning material design & production), enabling the actor responsible for that part of the process to qualitatively evaluate whether every listed aspect has been sufficiently taken into account.

Rules of usage / Cost evaluation / Known limitations

The D4 deliverable of the e-Quality project ^[1], which is based on this document, will provide the reader wishing to implement this measurement tool with more details on using the checklists to assess Quality.

2.2. Incident form

This practical, easy to use tool can help the quality manager and the institution **follow up the quality of the training process in real-time during the learning process**. It consists of a form to be filled in by any of the actors involved in a process, when a problem (or “incident”) occurs. This form may be made available through the VLE used by the training process, but it would be more reliable to include it on the web site of the institution, and – in case of a major server failure – to have it distributed in paper form to all the actors involved, at the beginning of the learning event.

Rules of usage

1. All actors in the learning process have to be made aware of the existence of the incident form.
2. An actor in the student support sub-process (ideally the coordinator – see section 3.1) has to be in charge:
 - to make sure the incident form is available to all other actors at any time;
 - to take the relevant measures as quickly as possible after receiving an incident form.



3. The form has to be easy and quick to fill in, so that it takes little time; therefore, it should only contain the following fields:
 - actor(s) involved
 - time of the incident
 - description of the incident and of the background conditions
 - negative impact on the process flow

It should moreover contain a fax number (or possibly even a postal address) where it is to be sent, in case of a major IT system failure.

4. All incident reports have to be stored and analyzed. They must be sent to and provoke a reaction from any actor(s) who may be involved in the incident. This reaction may be specific for a one-off incident, but the main aim is to determine the origin of the incident and evaluate the risk of such incidents recurring. That means understanding the true origin of the incident, not only the superficial cause.
5. The incident forms received, and the way they were taken into account must be made publicly available and presented as part of the continuous improvement of the process. The evolution of the number of incidents is a rough indicator, whereas the satisfaction rate after resolution is a quality indicator.

Cost evaluation

The cost of implementing and sustaining this tool has been evaluated as minimal. It does not require any special training from the coordinator, and requires little implementation time to

- make other actors aware of the form and how it works
- make the form available on a web server for remote access, and distribute one paper copy to each actor in the learning process

The cost at runtime for the coordinator is very low, because the coordinator's job as regards the incident form is simply to forward it to the various actors in the student support, depending on the type of incident.

Known limitations

By its very nature, this kind of tool is limited to assessing the Quality dimension related to the non-occurrence of such incidents during the learning/teaching process.

2.3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire tool is a way **to assess the Quality of the learning process during or at the end of the process**. By providing the learner with a set of pre-established questions, it is often possible to obtain a statistical evaluation (thus, more objective than an individual appreciation) of the Quality of the process.



A general quality assessment questionnaire should be provided to the learners at (or before) the end of the learning process, to provide a means of improvement for the teams providing student support, and learning material design & production. However, the learners should be able to ask for a course evaluation questionnaire if they feel the need for it. One should note here that there are two generic types of questionnaires assessing the Quality of the learning event from the learners' point of view:

1. opinion questionnaires, which provide questions allowing the learner to express his/her satisfaction with the learning event regarding his/her expectations;
2. knowledge questionnaires, which provide a means to assess the learner's knowledge of the taught matter, which is also related to the Quality of the learning/teaching process.

Moreover, these two types of questionnaires can be used during – or at the end of – the learning event, or after some time (e.g. 6 to 12 months) to assess how the perceived Quality (opinion questionnaires) or the learner's knowledge (knowledge questionnaires) evolves with time after the end of the learning event.

The questionnaires do not however concern only learners. Other actors in the institution (such as tutors, administrative staff, etc.), as well as people possibly hiring learners after the learning event, may give some input to improve the Quality of the learning event. One must keep these aspects in mind when using questionnaires, as a survey aimed at such people can also enhance the Quality of the learning process.



Rules of usage

1. The number of questionnaires to be distributed has to be kept at a strict minimum. The more questionnaires are handed out, the less correctly filled in they are likely to be.
2. The number of questions in a questionnaire has to be kept to a minimum, as questionnaires with too many questions tend to be filled in incompletely,
3. The nature of what is to be assessed by the questionnaire has to be very clear when compiling it, in order to ask the relevant questions (as far as possible).
4. Most questions have to be “closed questions” (i.e. only accept a limited number of answers – such as “yes/no” or “bad/sufficient/fair/good”, etc.), as answers to open questions are usually more difficult and time-consuming to analyze.

Cost evaluation

The costs (both in money and time consumption) of implementing a questionnaire-based survey mainly depends on the following factors (in order of decreasing importance):

- number of open questions
- number of completed questionnaires received
- number of closed questions

Therefore, the cost can vary from very low to very high, and one has to be very careful in designing the questionnaire, to maximize its potential outcomes while minimizing the costs.

2.4. VLE log files-based tools

The virtual learning environment (VLE) log files are not a Quality assessment tool as such, but they can act as a basis for analyzing how the actors involved in the learning process interact with each other.

It is however impossible for human actors to parse these log files in order to check whether the process is running according to plan, so tools to measure Quality have to be developed to automate log analysis.

This kind of tool could for instance be used to ensure that questions asked through the VLE are answered in time – a time, which has to be laid down beforehand. The server can keep track of all the messages received by a tutor, as well as the answers sent by him – including dates and times. The storage of these values can then be automated, as well as the signaling of an alert if time periods are not respected.

Rules of usage

The functionalities of the VLE used for the process have to be checked beforehand, to ensure that parallel tools actually need to be developed. Commercial-grade VLEs often provide tools to measure or analyze usage (e.g. number of logins, time since last login, etc.), as well as tools to automate tasks (e.g. provide reminders before deadlines, etc.).



Before starting the teaching/learning event, all actors (staff as well as learners) using the VLE have to be officially notified about the kind of data stored by the VLE, and for what purpose(s) it is being recorded (see e.g. tables in sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.5). For instance, if questions to the tutor are visible to third-parties (e.g. teacher, or manager), this should be officially announced in the documentation provided before the start of the learning event.

Cost evaluation

As in the case of the questionnaire tool (section 2.3), the implementation costs must be assessed, with a comparison of the potential benefits, before embarking on the development of such a tool. Guidelines on cost evaluation will not be provided here, as these costs depend very much on

- the nature of the Quality dimension to be measured
- the existing capabilities and level of detail of the VLE log files
- the possibility of implementing home-made tools in the VLE (usually more feasible if this is open source)

3. Description of the roles

3.1. Roles related to the “student support” sub-process

Role	Main duties
Teacher	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. pedagogical planning2. familiarization3. guidance in subject matters4. leading the learning process5. feedback and evaluation of the learning process
Tutor	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. motivation of the learners2. guidance of the learners3. encouragement of the learners to interact and work together
Coordinator	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. advice2. coordination3. connections between the actors involved in the process



Administrative support	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. registration2. records3. other administrative tasks
Technical support	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. design of the technical infrastructure2. personal technical support3. solving of technical problems4. access control

3.2. Roles related to the “learning material design and production” sub-process

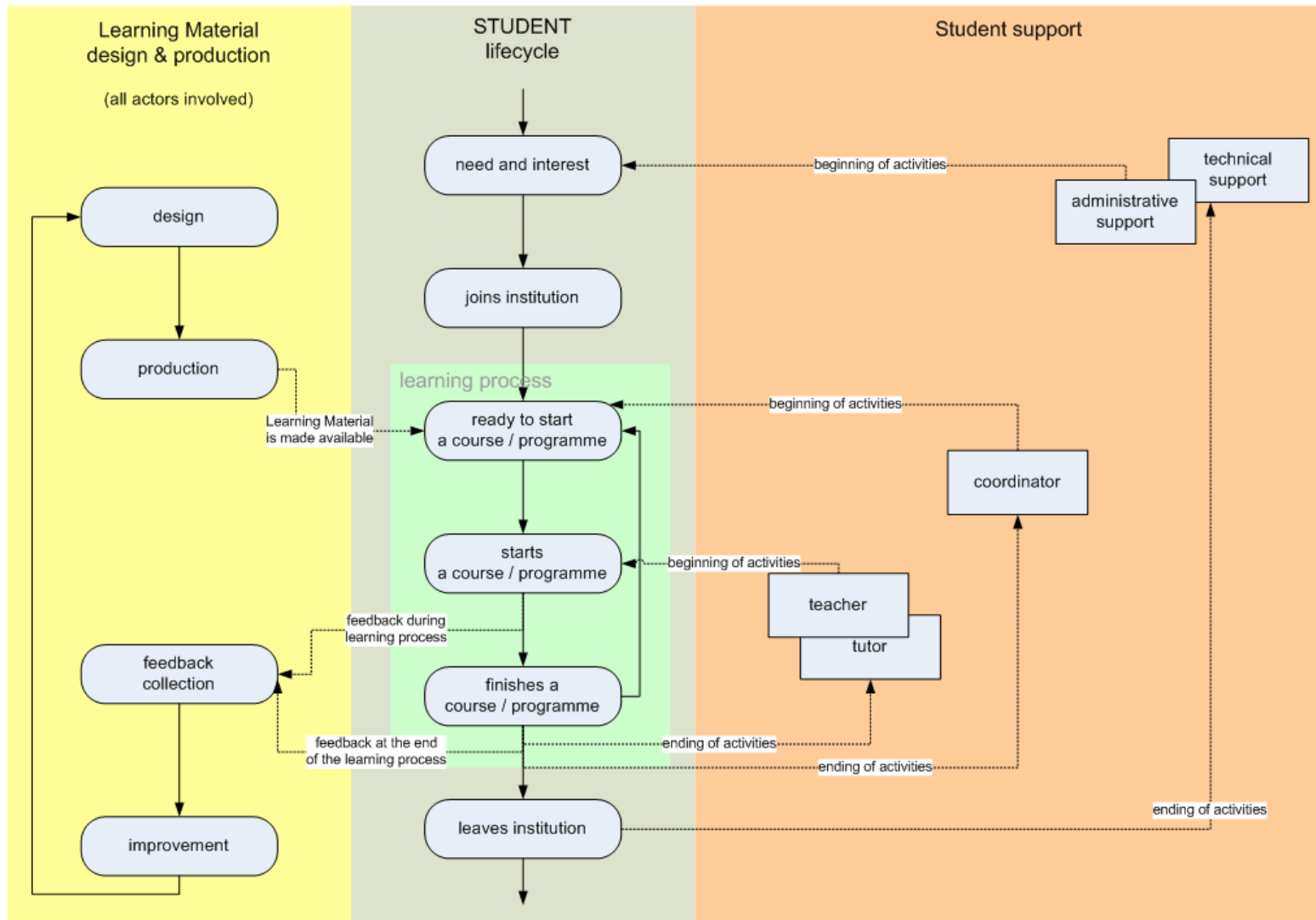
Role	Main duties
Learning material designer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. search for information 2. planning of learning material resources 3. planning of learning material structure 4. planning of pedagogical approach 5. planning of tools 6. responsibility for copyright matters
Learning material producer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. definition of expenses for production and users 2. setting of learning goals 3. creation of contents according to the goals 4. modification and reuse of existing materials 5. determination of additional materials 6. taking into account the existing design charter and checking its respect in the course material produced 7. monitoring technical development and assuring the usability of the course material produced 8. checking the compliance of course material produced with standards and the use of open formats 9. checking that all course material produced is available through the VLE interface 10. informing all content producers about copyright



	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11. preparing contracts for authors and designers, presenting and taking into account their rights12. preparing contracts for all member of the production team
Audio-visual planner	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. planning and production of the audiovisual layout2. inclusion of the various media elements3. planning and production of navigation, using media elements
Usability planner	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. mapping the user's needs to the development of the user interface2. planning of navigation3. planning of learning material delivery4. usability testing5. providing external expertise to course developers if needed

4. General Quality Process Charter

4.1. Process workflow diagram



The process workflow diagram above is intended to give the reader an overview of the whole process involved – that is, a higher education ODL event. At the centre of the diagram there is the student lifecycle, which specifies the general steps of the path of a learner through an ODL institution; the green rectangle outlines the learning process itself, for better readability. For more details on the student lifecycle, see ^[2]. On either side one can see the involvement of the actors related to the Learning Material Design & Production sub-process (left side, yellow background) and that of the actors related to the Student Support sub-process (right side, orange background). The dotted arrows represent the relations between the two mentioned sub-processes and the student lifecycle.

The rest of this document (sections 4.2 and 4.3) is devoted to setting out the most important points to consider during the planning/evaluation/improvement of a Higher Education ODL event.

The remainder of this section presents the various processes and indicators related to building a quality ODL. These are grouped by roles (to which they are linked), and these roles are grouped into three main categories: administrative, support, and material design roles.

4.2. Quality related to the Student Support sub-process

Note: In the “Indicator(s)” column, the terms “before/during/after” refer to indicators that may be used before/during/after the learning event.

4.2.1. Quality processes related to the role of *Teacher*

Quality criterion	Activities	Comments	Commitment	Indicator(s)
A precise schedule of the work including rules has been established	Pedagogical planning - To create a schedule - To define the rules of the work	The schedule of the work has to be planned in advance, and the rules have to be made clear to the learners	Documents provided at the beginning of the course specify the work schedule, as well as each actor's commitments	Before: documents distributed at the beginning of the learning event During: continuous assessment of each learner's working progress After: learners' post-learning event satisfaction questionnaire
The learning methodology is explained to the learners	Familiarization - To explain learning methodology and methods	The learners have to be made aware of the learning methodology, in order to avoid false impressions or expectations	Provide adequate information to the learners, about the methodology used in the learning event	Before: documents distributed at the beginning of the learning event During: continuous assessment of each learner's working progress After: learners' post-learning event satisfaction questionnaire

Guidance in subject matter is provided	Guidance in subject matters	The teacher is responsible for support related to the taught subject	The students are provided with enough topic-related resources, and support is provided to work with these	Before: the duties of the teacher and of the tutor are made explicit
Learners' progress is being continually assessed	Feedback and evaluation - To use instruments for continuous assessment	The teacher has to be aware of most problems that could occur during the learners' progress	Periodically provide exercises and/or assessments to evaluate the learners' progress	During: provide means of assessment at regular intervals

4.2.2. Quality processes related to the role of *Tutor*

Quality criterion	Activities	Comments	Commitment	Indicator(s)
<p>The students' motivation is stimulated, adequate guidance is provided when needed and actors' collaboration is encouraged</p>	<p>Motivation - To motivate the students in learning - To promote an atmosphere that supports learning and participation - To make the students feel part of the educational community</p> <p>Guidance - To offer guidance if needed</p> <p>Encouragement to interact and work together - To promote interaction and cooperative work among the learners - To promote functional interaction between the students and the staff</p>	<p>The learners' motivation and interest has to be kept at the highest possible level, in order to maximize the efficiency of the learning process</p>	<p>The tutor is aware of the importance of continuously maintaining, even enhancing, student motivation, providing adequate guidance and promoting collaboration, and is ready and well prepared to this task</p> <p>If necessary, additional training or support is provided to the tutor</p>	<p>Before: The coordinator checks tutor's skills and experience</p> <p>During: self-assessment tools (exercises, etc.) have to be provided to the learners periodically</p> <p>After: Students questionnaires</p>

<p>Learners' questions have to be answered in a pre-defined amount of time</p>	<p>Guidance</p> <p>- To answer questions about the course or to transfer the addressed questions to the right person (i.e. questions about administrative issues)</p>	<p>To avoid learner dropout or loss of motivation, answers to asked questions must be provided quickly and reliably.</p>	<p>There is a pre-defined maximum amount of time in which to answer a learner's question, and the tutors commit to not exceeding that time before replying to questions.</p>	<p>Before: Time to answer has been defined beforehand</p> <p>During: Automatic reminders in case of delays</p>
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4.2.3. Quality processes related to the role of *Coordinator*

Quality criterion	Activities	Comments	Commitment	Indicator(s)
The learners are well aware of their goal and of how to behave and work in the institution	<p>Advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To give general advice on the methodology for following ODL - To give general information on the institution 	They can explain what their training need is, why they have chosen this institution, and how they will work within this institution	The coordinator verifies that the learners have signed one or several documents including the training needs, that they have been provided with documents and/or welcome sessions where they become aware of all they need to know in order to learn successfully and efficiently in the chosen institution.	Before: Signed contract or application sheet; signed "welcome document" and/or welcome session attendance certificate
No failure in coordinator or tutors' interventions nor in resources and other services delivery	<p>Coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To coordinate the different aspects of the course - To integrate pedagogical issues with technical aspects - To control training material delivery - To supervise the work of the staff 		The services have established a clear plan of the many events and actors roles. They continuously check the advancement of activities according to the planned schedule and immediately take appropriate corrective measures if needed.	<p>Before & during: Check that all scheduled activities are on time.</p> <p>After: Actors (mainly tutors and students) questionnaires</p>

<p>Each actor gets the right information at the right time.</p>	<p>Advice - To offer guidance and support to other actors in the course</p>	<p>This role is often included in one or several of the previous roles. When it is included, the associated commitment should be transferred to the other role.</p>	<p>A detailed list of the information to be provided, including who is responsible for providing it and when, which technical constraints are associated, to what actors it should be transmitted, is established at the design stage. The coordinator then has to keep a check on transmissions occurring smoothly.</p>	<p>Before & during: Check that all information is provided as foreseen. After: Actors (mainly tutors and students) questionnaires</p>
<p>The students receive support for the course in general.</p>	<p>Connections - To manage connections with actors inside the institution</p>	<p>The learners have to know which person to address when support (not related to subject matter) is needed</p>	<p>The coordinator checks that information about the roles and duties of the various actors is provided to students in relation to the course.</p>	<p>Before: Detailed document including each party's role and precise scheduling is provided to all partners</p>
<p>Guidance and support is offered to all actors in the course. Supervision of the student support staff</p>	<p>Advice - To offer guidance and support to other actors in the course Coordination - To supervise the work of the staff</p>	<p>Each actor in the process has to be made aware of his/her own duties and responsibilities.</p>	<p>The coordinator checks that each actor in student support knows his/her duties, as well as who to contact for matters that aren't under their responsibility</p>	<p>Before: meeting with all the staff, or information documents establishing the duties of each person</p>

<p>Pedagogical issues are integrated with technical aspects</p>	<p>Coordination - To integrate pedagogical issues with technical aspects</p>	<p>The coordinator has to ensure that the pedagogical methods are compatible with the chosen technological solutions</p>	<p>The coordinator checks that all pedagogical methods to be used can be implemented within the teaching environment</p>	<p>Before: ensure the compatibility of the pedagogical method with the learning environment</p>
<p>The impact of training on the learner's professional skills is being assessed</p>	<p>Connections - To assess the impact of training</p>	<p>The coordinator has to assess the transfer of knowledge and competence gained from the learning event to their professional skills after a period of practice, long enough to be appreciated (at least 6 months).</p>	<p>The coordinator keeps in touch with alumni to be able to send them questionnaires and to get them filled in, as well as by their employers. The information obtained is analyzed and used by the pedagogical team to improve training if needed, especially to make it more profitable in terms of professional skills.</p>	<p>Questionnaires sent to the learners 6 or 12 months after the end of the training. Questionnaires sent to employers 6 or 12 months after the end of the training</p>

4.2.4. Quality processes related to the role of *Administrative support*

Quality criterion	Activities	Comments	Commitment	Indicator(s)
<p>The students receive adequate information (e.g. booklet) about the registration process. They can easily register (on line service, adequate opening hours, staff support)</p> <p>The students receive resources and other access rights according to the chosen training program.</p> <p>The successful students receive their diploma in due time.</p>	<p>Registration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide relevant information on ODL specificities to potential students before registration for a course <p>Records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To update the academic file of each student - To manage the students' records and grades - To file the students' records appropriately <p>Administrative tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practical arrangements 		<p>The administrative staff provides the students with all information about the registration process and support for effective registration. Then it provides all needed facilities such as resources and access rights. Finally, it issues successful students with their diplomas.</p>	<p>Before & during: Paper or online registration guide booklet; checklist of resources and other rights for each course</p> <p>After: Student satisfaction questionnaire</p>

<p>Contents of a course are consistent with the objectives of the formation</p>	<p>Administrative tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To connect the specific course with the institution's strategy 		<p>Having several content experts separately checking the course content against the objectives</p>	<p>Before: Checking procedure completed</p> <p>After: Question included in global satisfaction questionnaire</p>
<p>Target public, as well as its suitability for ODL, is identified</p>	<p>Administrative tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To connect the specific course with the institution's systems 	<p>This is important in order to develop suitable material and teaching pedagogy</p>	<p>Always link a course to target publics</p>	<p>Before: Check for target public listed in the related documents (description forms, application forms)</p> <p>After: Question included in global satisfaction questionnaire</p>

<p>Objectives of the study programs are clearly defined and communicated</p>	<p>Registration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide relevant information on ODL specificities to potential students before registration for a course 		<p>Always list objectives in the program-related documents</p>	<p>Before: Check for objectives listed in the related documents (description forms, application forms)</p> <p>After: Question included in global satisfaction questionnaire</p>
<p>Study programs are coordinated between the different faculties and institutions; cooperation exists and is encouraged</p>	<p>Administrative tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To connect the specific course with the institution's strategy - To connect the specific course with the institution's systems - Practical arrangements 	<p>This very much depends on the internal organization of the institution, but may be crucial. It avoids task duplication.</p>	<p>The group of persons responsible for the different study programs involved in this issue (e.g. working in the same content area or professional area or part of a common diploma) has a regular meeting every year and each member commits himself/herself to informing the group as soon as a change is foreseen in the study program he/she is in charge of.</p>	<p>Before: Check for approval (document signed by all actors) of a complete program</p> <p>After: Question included in global satisfaction questionnaire</p>

<p>New students are adequately welcomed and integrated</p>	<p>Registration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide relevant information on ODL specificities to potential students before registration for a course - To manage registration 	<p>New students have to be seamlessly integrated, so that their lifecycle through the institution is not hindered by administrative problems</p>	<p>Each new student receives welcome and how-to / FAQ documents, enumerating and explaining all the facilities provided by the institution</p>	<p>Before: Analysis of questions asked to the institution's help desk</p> <p>After: Question included in global satisfaction questionnaire</p>
<p>The financial context of the students is taken into account</p>	<p>Registration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide relevant information on ODL specificities to potential students before registration for a course - To manage registration 	<p>Students possibly needing financial support have to be identified before definitive enrolment</p>	<p>Ensure that financial issues are solved before any enrolment. If necessary, help student in finding financial support. Be prepared to examine unexpected situations during training.</p>	<p>Financial document signed by interested parties (institution and student or company representative)</p> <p>Existing procedure for unexpected financial situations</p>

<p>Official documents clarify the roles and responsibilities of the trainers</p>	<p>Administrative tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To connect the specific course with the institution's systems - Practical arrangements 		<p>Check that roles and responsibilities of the trainers are clarified in the available documents</p>	<p>Document including those responsibilities signed by both parties.</p>
<p>Official documents clarify the rights and duties of the students</p>	<p>Registration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To provide relevant information on ODL specificities to potential students before registration for a course 		<p>Check that roles and responsibilities of the students are clarified in the available documents</p>	<p>Document including those responsibilities signed by both parties.</p>

<p>Methods of evaluation are clear and transparent</p>	<p>Administrative tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To connect the specific course with the institution's strategy - To connect the specific course with the institution's systems - Practical arrangements 	<p>The learners need to know how they are being evaluated at the end of the course</p>	<p>Check that clear methods of evaluation have been set up and explained to all partners before the start of the course</p>	<p>Document including evaluation processes signed by both parties.</p>
<p>The students' records and grades are being managed efficiently</p>	<p>Records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To update the academic file of each student - To manage the students' records and grades - To file the students' records appropriately 		<p>Every year the students' records and grades are kept in paper format as well as on a digital support (i.e. CD or DVD) and stored in a safe place accessible by the staff in charge of answering requests from alumni.</p>	<p>Incident forms from alumni unable to obtain their personal information within a given time limit.</p>

4.2.5. Quality processes related to the role of *Technical support*

Quality criterion	Activities	Comments	Commitment	Indicator(s)
Availability for any technical problem occurring during the training session.	The solving of technical problems	It provides answers to technical and connection problems that may occur during the course which are not listed with an associated solution in the FAQ usually as a first level of help.	Hot-line providers are informed of the kinds of problems that may arise and trained to answer them (if needed, additional training is to be provided before they act as hot-liners)	Before: List of hot-liners' needed competencies, check whether the competencies are available During: Hot-line available After: Students questionnaires
The VLE is up and running at all times, software and hardware problems are being solved rapidly	The solving of technical problems - To deal with technical problems within the VLE	At least running hours are defined (e.g. excluding Sundays)	The VLE running hours are defined in agreement with the coordinator, and back-up solutions are available in case of a major failure	Before: back-up solution is ready During: incident form, stability of the VLE system to be assessed periodically
Questions & technicalities about the VLE are being answered	Personal technical support - To answer questions about the VLE	The technical support has to provide a hot-line to manage enquiries regarding the VLE system	A well-trained hot-line is available to all actors of the learning event	During: Hot-line available
The protection of privacy is ensured	Access control - To guarantee the protection of privacy and intellectual property	The privacy of each end-user of the VLE has to be respected	Confidential and private data from the VLE users is kept in a safe, inaccessible place	Before: personal data privacy has to be checked

<p>Access rights are managed</p>	<p>Access control - To give access keys to the VLE - To give access keys to the library and other additional materials - To manage access</p>	<p>The technical support is responsible for managing access rights to the VLE</p>	<p>Each actor has access rights linked to their duties</p>	<p>Before: Each user's access rights are defined according to the user's role in the learning event</p>
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4.3. Quality related to the Learning Material Design & Production sub-process

Note: In the “Indicator(s)” column, the terms “before/during/after” refer to indicators that may be used before/during/after the learning event.

4.3.1. Quality processes related to the role of *Learning material designer*

Quality criterion	Activities	Comments	Commitment	Indicator(s)
pedagogical choices are made according to the learners’ needs, content is developed in a manner that facilitates knowledge building and assimilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning of resources for learning - Planning of learning material structure - Planning of pedagogical approach used in material 	the course script must facilitate the learning process	target public is pedagogically known, and course content and structure are developed accordingly	<p>Before: enquiries are made about the target public , needs and expectations are known</p> <p>After: Questionnaire</p>
a concrete teaching / learning model is established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning of learning material structure - Planning of pedagogical approach used in material 	this model is to be assessed and enhanced in collaboration with the learners	establish teaching model prior to learning material design	

proposed activities are adapted to various learning styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning of pedagogical approach used in material - Planning of tools, saving methods and delivery of the material 	to motivate learners having different learning styles	various kinds of activities are proposed to the learners (e.g. problem-based, collaborative, etc.)	During: VLE statistics
complementary activities are proposed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning of tools, saving methods and delivery of the material 	to motivate learners with subsidiary (optional) activities	propose optional activities	During: VLE statistics
activities designed to assess the learner's progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning of pedagogical approach used in material - Planning of tools, saving methods and delivery of the material 	the learner has to feel confident with his/her progress, and quickly realize if he/she is experiencing problems	activities give the learners feedback on their progress	During: check assessment activities results After: questionnaire
the teaching method is adapted to the learners' level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning of pedagogical approach used in material 	the target public level has to be taken into account when developing the teaching method	not to use unusual teaching methods, unless well explained and discussed with the students	After: questionnaire
the teaching method is adapted to the course subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning of pedagogical approach used in material 	confirmed teaching methods have to be used	not to try brand new teaching methods without adequate student support	After: questionnaire

learning guidelines are provided	- Planning of resources for learning	the teaching / learning process must not be hindered by the absence of guidelines	clear guidelines on how to study the subject are given, in order for the student to be able to work on his/her own	guiding documents provided within the VLE
the teaching / learning plan is developed in collaboration with the teacher(s) and tutor(s)	- Planning of resources for learning - Planning of learning material structure	author(s) and tutor(s) have to be aware of the concepts underlying the teaching plan	during the design of the plan, discussions have to take place between these actors to ensure collaboration	Meetings minutes and list of decisions taken after discussion
a storyboard for the course is developed	- Planning of learning material structure	the learners have to know exactly how the activity workflow is organized	activities are interconnected from the beginning to the end of the course	post-course questionnaire
the navigation system has to be developed to match to the storyboard	- Planning of learning material structure - Planning of tools, saving methods and delivery of the material	the VLE has to reflect the course storyboard	use of the VLE by the learners has to make the course storyboard very clear	post-course questionnaire
educational activities have to be developed, and to reflect the pedagogical choices made by the pedagogical coordinator	- Planning of pedagogical approach used in material	instructions have to be developed in harmony with the chosen pedagogical model	during the design of the activities, discussions have to take place between the instructional designer and the pedagogical coordinator	Meetings minutes and list of decisions taken after discussion

information from various sources is provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information retrieval - Planning of resources for learning 		alternate information sources (external references) are provided	external references (e.g. at the end of each chapter) are visible
course content is copyrighted / licensed adequately	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taking care of copyright issues 	see also Quality processes related to the role <i>Learning material producer</i> in section 4.3.2, regarding third-party content	adequate licensing is added to the course content	copyright information is clearly visible for each resource

4.3.2. Quality processes related to the role of *Learning material producer*

Quality criterion	- Activities	Comments	Commitment	Indicator(s)
a design charter exists and is used for the design process	- Taking into account the existing design charter and checking its respect in the course material produced	there should be clear rules on how the content is to be presented, to avoid big discrepancies in the course material, and so that the learners recognize the course contents as an entity	adopt and use a design charter	the number of occurrences of non-respect of the charter
technological development is being monitored	- Monitoring technical development and assuring the usability of the course material produced	there should be awareness of technological developments, to avoid the obsolescence of produced material	Main software and hardware developments have to be monitored, and customer support availability for the used soft- and hardware has to be checked	Incident forms on difficulties encountered by students or teachers that may be due to obsolescent course material
standards and open formats are used	- Checking the compliance of course material produced with standards and the use of open formats	this is to avoid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compatibility problems when changing VLE • material loss due to formats becoming obsolete 	make course material compliant with standards – at least, use open specifications or common file formats	List of course material that is not yet compliant with standards, including planned agenda for improvement

all course elements have to be integrated within the VLE	- Checking that all course material produced is available through the VLE interface	each and every resource used for the course has to be readily accessible through the VLE interface	Access to every needed document has to be verified	The site map has to be available and clearly readable
content from third parties is used as permitted by the law	- Modifying and reusing existing materials - Determining additional materials	if third-party content is being reused	in the case of content reuse, rights are adequately negotiated with copyright owners	every reused piece of content is being reused with the agreement of its copyright owner
content producers are aware of copyright restrictions	- Informing all content producers about copyright	they have to be aware of what is allowed and what is not	copyright issues are explained to the producing team	every project team member is informed of copyright issues
authors' and designers' rights are clearly defined	- Preparing contracts for authors and designers, presenting and taking into account their rights	to know who is the owner of the copy rights	contracts are drawn up taking this dimension into account	every project member's contract specifies their rights in reference to the developed contents

contracts are drawn up for the whole production team	- Preparing contracts for all members of the production team	to define the duties and activities of each person	each contract is to be drawn up by a lawyer	Number of people beginning to work before the signature of an official contract Statistics on delay to prepare contracts between the decision to hire someone and the signature of the official contract
expenses are defined	- Defining of expenses for production and users	This must be planned beforehand, to avoid financial complications during the production phase	A budget of the expenses for each step of the production process has to be produced, taking into account the opinion of each involved actor	Statistics on the gap between the forecast budget and the final real cost Evolution of this gap
the production deadlines are respected	- Monitoring technical development	Time is needed to thoroughly test the produced material.	A rigorous development plan has to be established and adhered to.	Milestones evaluation

4.3.3. Quality processes related to the role of *Audiovisual planner*

Quality criterion	Activities	Comments	Commitment	Indicator(s)
<p>animation, video and sounds must be received in good conditions by the learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning and producing the audiovisual layout of the material 	<p>poor image quality could demotivate learners</p>	<p>Check that the multimedia components of the course material are compatible with the technical specifications of the learner's equipment, as indicated on the official documentation of the course</p> <p>Other possibility: to provide 2 versions of the resources depending on connection speed, possibly with automatic checking by the server.</p>	<p>Incident forms related to access to multimedia resources.</p>

the various media elements are included within the learning material	- Inclusion of different media elements, e.g. picture, icons, graphics, voice, video, animation		Check the list of media expected to be available and the evolution of the technical constraints to be used by students	Incident forms related to unavailable multimedia resources
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4.3.4. Quality processes related to the role of *Usability planner*

Quality criterion	Activities	Comments	Commitment	Indicator(s)
the VLE is chosen according to the needs	- Mapping of skills and need for the learners to develop user interface		various VLE's are evaluated and their functionalities compared to the actual needs	all needed tools are available within the used VLE
the ODL course exploits facilities provided by the VLE	- Planning of navigation and acting in the learning material		To provide course designers with all information and advice about the possibility offered by the VLE before the course is designed To provide end users (students, teachers, staff) with all the information and advice about the possibility offered by the VLE	the VLE is used as a learning platform and not as a CMS (Content Management System) Check-list to compare the facilities and functionalities between the possibilities offered by the VLE and what has been planned by the course designer

the VLE acts as expected	- Usability testing of the learning material	each functionality of the VLE has to be tested	A periodic check is carried out with the help of the technical staff and a list of recommendations (including budget) is sent to the management for decision	After: no complaints are made about VLE behavior
course additions reflect learners' needs	- Mapping of skills and learners' need for the development of user interface	elements such as exercises, problems, quizzes, etc. are in line with the course content	to try out and assess every course element	Statistics about the effective use by students of each element of course material: number of students using it, time spent...
assess the quality of the animations and sounds	- Usability testing of the learning material	animations have to be readily recognizable, as well as sounds	to try out and assess every animation and sound, in coordination with the sound expert and the animation expert	post-course questionnaire
outside expertise is offered to the course developers	- Providing outside expertise to course developers if needed		To keep track of demands from course developers and the way these demands have been satisfied	Complaints from course developers who could not receive outside expertise within a given time limit



5. References

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- [4] ENQA, *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Helsinki (2005).