Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning

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Acknowledgements

PREAMBLE

The Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning (herein referred to as the Rubric) has been developed by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) as part of its role to lead the quality assurance component of the Partnership for Enhanced Blended Learning (PEBL) project. This project is coordinated by the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and includes as technical partners the Staff and Educational Development Association, UK (SEDA), The University of Edinburgh, Kenya's Commission for University Education (CUE) and COL.

The purpose of the Rubric is to guide an institution, faculty or individual lecturer in developing quality blended learning courses to enhance the learning experience. As an open educational resource carrying a CC licence, the Rubric may be modified, redistributed and so on, as long as attribution is given to the original authors.

The PEBL project is centred on developing a network of institutions located in East Africa to move toward more fully utilising blended learning. The premise of the project is to address qualified staff shortages in various subject areas. Through the use of quality learning materials developed by experienced subject-matter experts, this shortcoming can be minimised. The courses can be used in credential-bearing programmes and shared across institutions. The development of a network dedicated to sharing courses also serves to foster a community of higher education institutions that will continue to develop and share courses over time, after the PEBL project concludes. The culmination of upskilling the East African institutions will be to develop, share and modify a suite of blended learning courses amongst the participating institutions.

The central components in the project are blended learning course development (under the direction of SEDA), online learning management (University of Edinburgh) and quality assurance (COL). The ACU is responsible for the budgeting and co-ordination of the project, and the Commission for University Education is the East Africa partner who provides guidance on accreditation and contextualisation.

COL's 30 years of experience collaborating with institutions across the Commonwealth, and its central mission to enhance access to formal and informal quality education opportunities, form the backdrop for the conceptualisation and development of this Rubric for blended learning. COL is also tasked with ascertaining institutional readiness to engage with blended learning, and to subsequently work with institutions to improve various areas of blended learning (e.g., integrate technological or innovative phrasing into an institutional mission, contextualise courses, etc.), leading to clear quality assurance guidelines that will enable sustainable practices in delivering quality blended learning.

In total, the network comprises 23 higher education institutions located in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

Over the life of the project, three successive batches of courses will be developed. The Rubric was piloted with the first batch, which totalled six courses. Two other rounds of proposals have been completed, for which all universities were invited to submit a proposal. The second batch of courses amounts to ten in total, and the third batch amounts to nine courses in total. The second-batch courses are nearing completion, and the third-batch courses are at an early stage of development.

Given that all blended learning courses designed as part of the PEBL project are shared and implemented across the four states of East Africa — Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda — it is paramount for these courses to meet institutional, national and regional quality standards. The developed Rubric will help with meeting these standards by facilitating the application of rigorous quality assurance processes to the designed courses and by ensuring course transferability. The Rubric is a product of the PEBL meeting that took place in Nairobi, Kenya in April 2018. Representatives from partner and participant universities each gave input from April to June to design the Rubric.

The full Rubric is located in the Annex.

1. INTRODUCTION

1A. Context

Blended learning has been mainstreamed in post-secondary education around the world. The increasing ubiquity of the Internet, along with greater affordability of data plans and personal devices (particularly cell phones), are enabling millions of individuals to participate in various forms of technology-enabled learning, or TEL. Blended learning relies on networked technologies for teaching and learning. It therefore must consider mechanisms of delivery (e.g., the use of a learning management system, or LMS), instructional

methods to best exploit such mechanisms (e.g., learner-centred pedagogies), and the proportion of engagement that occurs in person and by distance or online methods. In this instance, blended learning can be defined as the *purposeful* fusion of face-to-face and online environments to conduct teaching and learning (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). There is no specific blueprint for implementing blended learning; how it is done will be dictated by mechanisms, pedagogies, facilities, capacities, and so on. With respect to mechanisms or degree of blending, one may consider blended learning to be located on a continuum, as illustrated in Figure 1.

FACE-TO-FACE Traditional Web-facilitated Hybrid Online **INTENSITY OF BLENDING** **ONLINE**

Figure 1. Continuum of networked and technology-enabled learning interventions. From Allen and Seaman (2014).

From the above continuum, it can be inferred that various proportions of face-to-face and online engagement can constitute a blended learning environment. Further, blended learning may be course specific, or it may be programme specific. Some courses, for example, may have students learn content independently online, and engage face-to-face to discuss or apply the newly learned content, an approach that is otherwise known as the flipped classroom (Herreid & Schiller, 2013). Some programmes may engage with blended learning to offer a proportion of courses as exclusively face-to-face, and a proportion of courses as exclusively online. Irrespective of the mode, intensity and so forth that are chosen to arrange a blended learning environment, there are far deeper considerations for institutions, faculties and individual instructors to consider when creating a viable and sustainable blended learning ecosystem.[1] In general, institutions will need to map out infrastructure, instructor and learner readiness, funding, learner support and other essential areas for a successful learning environment. The quality elements in the Rubric address these areas, taking into consideration the use of technology.

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1 See, for example:
- Classifying K-12 Blended Learning
- Getting Started with Blended Learning: How Do I Integrate Online and Face-to-Face Instruction?
- Design of a Blended Learning Environment: Considerations and Implementation Issues
- The Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives, Local Designs
- Guide to Blended Learning

1B. Quality Assurance in Blended Learning: The Higher Education Context

Higher education institutions are susceptible to external pressures and need to comply with a range of government requirements — including regulations, policies, accreditation stipulations and legislation — that directly impact an institution's functioning (Ramirez & Christensen, 2013; Shattock, 2010). While they may be burdensome, these requirements serve to maintain standards in quality assurance, which act as the means to achieve control, oversight and upholding of standards; quality assurance therefore "ensures not only accountability, but can be used to encourage a degree of compliance to policy requirements" (Harvey & Newton, 2007). How well requirements are implemented or adhered to is not necessarily consistent amongst institutions, and the need to experiment — such as in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, with institutions having to rapidly pivot online — may interfere with compliance. Naturally, with experimentation comes risk, and the Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning aims to support making reasoned decisions in the development and use of blended learning. It should also be recognised that rapidly pivoting to online learning is not ideal, and in some respects it has had a detrimental effect on what would otherwise be considered well-planned and well-executed online learning interventions (Hodges et al., 2020).

Increasingly, institutions are establishing dedicated quality assurance units in situ, and blended learning is gradually becoming central to quality assurance work. The need to quality assure courses is critical given the interconnectedness of institutions nationally, regionally and internationally. Outsourcing to quality assurance experts is costly, and the outcome may sometimes be decontextualised, given that outside consultants lack the institutional knowledge to fully grasp the nuances within a given institution. As such, developing supports for institutions to carry out quality assurance

internally can lead to more regular interventions and create a culture of quality that will lead to better outcomes relative to teaching, learning and research, as well as strengthened capacity for the advancement of knowledge, employment and the betterment of society.

As institutions shift online, they are sometimes challenged to fit a square peg into a round hole. This has been illuminated by the onset of COVID-19, as institutions around the world shut their physical campuses in the first half of 2020. Institutions have quickly realised that learning online is categorically different than face-to-face teaching. Technological aptitude notwithstanding, instructors and learners are encountering online learning environments characterised as lacking the regular visual cues, verbal utterances and engagement with material that are often taken for granted in normal contact-based settings. Not surprisingly, the sudden pivot online has given rise to the so-called shortcomings of online learning. If anything, these outcomes demonstrate the careful considerations needed to plan and engage in online learning, including finding what is right for a given institution.

Online course quality has traditionally been reviewed for relevance to the learner by assessing course design, learning resources and the course delivery process (Chua & Lam, 2007). Moreover, institutions have been exploring metrics to compare the integrity and academic rigour of online courses to their face-to-face counterparts (Moore, 2011).

In this particular project, 23 universities with different mandates, regulatory frameworks and recognition of degrees participated. Given the aforementioned realities in which a given institution operates, it became imperative to have a quality assurance tool that could cater to a range of external requirements.

Furthermore, as guidelines on quality assurance in blended learning were largely non-existent at the institutional level, this tool was used to support first-time development and deployment of blending learning courses.

APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE RUBRIC FOR BLENDED LEARNING

Generally speaking, the design of a rubric for blended learning is not an innovation. There are several such rubrics available online that have been developed by public and private entities. Some, including the one contained in this document, are primarily focused on course design, with considerations for face-to-face contexts, planning and delivery, assessment, and technology (Education Elements, 2020; Quality Matters, 2018; University of Ottawa, n.d.). Some other rubrics assume that any blended learning intervention is an exercise in change management, with the recognition that it is an irreversible shift to create an online learning culture within an institution. These rubrics encompass metrics of accountability at the institutional level, including leadership, vision and mission, infrastructure, etc. (District Reform Support Network, 2015).

The general approach to the Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning is to fully examine an institution's course design processes, taking into consideration orientation, content, instructional design, use of technology, the student experience, and other areas relevant to designing and delivering a blended learning course. It is assumed that the fundamental elements of blended learning do not differ significantly between institutions, so the development of this tool will enable universities to ensure that the quality of the courses they design or use will be assessed in a consistent and comprehensive manner. Assessing quality according to a specification of standards provides a baseline that can be used as a referenced set of criteria during the evaluation of performance. The Sloan Consortium and Quality Matters are two organisations providing specifications of standards that are

often referenced as the primary guides for evaluating quality assurance in online education. In the context of the PEBL project, the approach used was intentionally designed to be normative to ensure continuous improvement in online education and student learning that allows programmes to review the course design process.

There are five notable differences to COL's Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning when compared with other rubrics with a similar focus on developing blended learning initiatives.

First, the Rubric incorporates inputs from 33 senior administrators, academics and consultants from 25 institutions directly (e.g., quality assurance directors) or indirectly (e.g., vice chancellors, consultants) involved with their own institution's quality assurance processes, or who were contracted to support capacity building in the project. This collection of institutional representatives deliberated over a period of two months. Their inputs reflect a comprehensive undertaking generated from primary sources, in contrast to most other rubrics, which have been designed based on inputs from a narrower group of individuals or informed by secondary sources.

Second, the Rubric is largely based on conditions in the four targeted countries of Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The majority of contributors emanated from these countries and are privy to issues of technological infrastructure, unmet demand for higher learning, and so on. In this sense, the Rubric, informed by inputs from the 30 contributors from East Africa, reflects the institutional needs in their respective country contexts.

Third, the Rubric has been vetted by individuals from four national and international bodies, including the Commission for University Education, Kenya, the Staff and Educational Development Association, UK, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and the Commonwealth of Learning. The Rubric has also been reviewed by two international experts

in quality assurance. These inputs reinforce the international relevance of the Rubric, compounded by the widespread adoption of blended learning globally.

Fourth, the Rubric contains items on open educational resources (OER), including the requirement to source existing OER in the development of a blended learning course, and to release the course as an OER.

Fifth, and finally, the Rubric has been assigned a Creative Commons CC BY-SA licence. It can be used in myriad ways, including the repurposing of its content to suit the needs of any individual or institution, on condition that the new rubric or material assigns attribution to the original authors, and that it carries the same licence as the original (Creative Commons, n.d.).

1C. Uses of the Rubric

As noted earlier in this document, the Rubric for blended learning is focused on ascertaining varying quality measures at the course level. Institutional readiness for blended learning has been developed in the Institutional Quality Assurance Review Tool, which is being published separately by COL.

The intended use of the Rubric is to facilitate formative as well as summative assessment in a given blended learning course. The tool should therefore be utilised during all stages of course conceptualisation, design, implementation, monitoring, revision, etc.

Details on formative and summative applications of the Rubric are located in Section 3c.

1D. Objectives

The Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning is intended primarily to provide a comprehensive approach to designing and quality assuring blended learning courses, with the following as its specific objectives:

1. To prioritise quality in the development of blended learning courses; and

2. To evaluate blended learning courses and identify their strengths and weaknesses for improvement.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE RUBRIC FOR BLENDED LEARNING

During the April 2018 workshop in Nairobi, a draft rubric document was prepared. Participants were divided into groups to populate one of seven original categories with sub-items. The most relevant and pertinent sub-items were deliberated upon and chosen in plenary. Each group accepted the responsibility to finalise their given category in the rubric document. Discussions followed on whether there was a need to include technology support and scoring criteria.

Finally, the rubric document was further developed and refined over two months to June 2018, based on online exchanges within each group.

In July 2018, the first iteration of the Rubric was finalised and sent to the ACU for review. It was developed with seven areas and 47 sub-items, referred to as quality elements. The seven areas were:

Content	(12 quality elements)
Instructional Design	(7 quality elements)
Course Structure	(5 quality elements)
Student Support	(6 quality elements)
Technology/Media	(8 quality elements)
Assessment	(6 quality elements)
Quality Assurance & Evaluation	(3 quality elements)
7 categories	*47 quality elements*

Each quality element was scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 being the highest score (quality element fully completed) and 1 being the lowest score (no quality element met). There were two other columns: *Not applicable* and *Improvement needed*. The total score that could be reached for a given course was 235.

The Rubric was piloted with six courses as part of the Batch 1 modules[2] in the PEBL project. They are listed as follows:

Introduction to Entrepreneurship	(Kenyatta University)
Research Methodology and Design for Business	(Makerere University)
Numerical Analysis	(Open University of Tanzania)
Introduction to Critical Thinking	(Strathmore University)
IT Teaching Methods	(State University of Zanzibar)
Biochemistry	(University of Rwanda)

The application of the Rubric to the Introduction to Entrepreneurship module is selected as a case study to illuminate how the Rubric was used and how the corresponding feedback was sent from COL to Kenyatta University. It should be noted that the feedback offered was distinct to the PEBL project and part of COL's role as the quality assurance lead. The Rubric is otherwise to be used as a standalone document for internal assessment processes only.

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2   Note that the terms *modules* and *courses* are used interchangeably in the PEBL project. The terms are used to refer to a collection of materials that would be delivered for a full semester in a conventional university setting, for example, and include a syllabus, learning objectives and outcomes, course content, assessment, resources, etc. The term module is only used in Section 2 and Sub-Section 2a to maintain consistency with the Batch 1 module processes.

2A. Application – Case Study from Kenyatta University

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

Kenyatta University (KU) is a comprehensive public research university located in a suburb of Nairobi, Kenya. It enrols over 70,000 students. The University's Digital School of Virtual and Open Learning (DSVOL) has spearheaded its blended learning initiative under the PEBL project. The DSVOL Team engaged with its university to solicit proposals for the first round (or batch) of modules to be considered for development.

KU developed a module entitled "Introduction to Entrepreneurship" (OER Africa, 2018). It is a 12-week course aimed at providing learners with a grounded understanding of entrepreneurship relevant to starting, running and growing a business. Some details include safeguarding intellectual property (i.e., intellectual property rights) and understanding legal aspects of business. The module was written by faculty in the Department of Business Administration at KU. Four members of the DSVOL Team reviewed the module, and each member independently applied the Rubric to the module.

The image in Figure 2 is a screenshot received from one DSVOL Team member at KU. One can observe from the category, *Content*, a view of several quality elements, and the corresponding scores and qualitative inputs under *Improvement needed*.

Figure 2. Introduction to Entrepreneurship rubric scoring.

The total average score from the four team members was 198 out of 235, or 84%.

From the use of the Rubric, COL provided feedback to the DSVOL Team, with commentary under three broad headings: Strengths, Areas for Improvement, and Recommendations. An example is provided in Figure 3, which is a screenshot from the report.

Strengths	Areas for Improvement	Recommendations
1. The module is generally well written. 2. The activities given in the e-tivity table are comprehensive and well thought out. 3. There is good interactivity in the module, which is key to student learning.	1. Provide a powerful introduction that welcomes the students to the module. 2. Diversify interactive activities so that you are not only using YouTube videos. 3. Indicate how assessment will be done and how students will get feedback.	The module is well written and there is good logical flow. However, this can be made better by aligning all the sections and diversifying activities in the e-tivity table.

Figure 3. Rubric report: summary of Introduction to Entrepreneurship course.

As can be gleaned from Figure 3, the quality assurance team from Kenyatta was given general feedback to improve the quality of the course. In particular, there are suggestions to diversify activities and to add details and complexity to assessments. Other recommendations were centred on adding details to learning objectives and learning outcomes, and checking references.

The course was subsequently uploaded to OER Africa. Visitors will find the full course as a downloadable Word document and a downloadable Moodle back-up on this site (https://www.oerafrica.org/). The course is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 licence:

2B. Validation

Upon receipt of the results from the six institutions that developed the courses, COL reviewed the scores and comments and correspondingly developed a report for the ACU. Overall, it was felt that the Rubric had not been used to its fullest intent. Respondents had not depicted accurately the extent to which the blended learning courses had been developed, and they were rather generous in the scores allotted to a given quality element. Further, the utilisation of the Rubric as a formative tool for scrutinising the course from conception to finalisation had not been followed, and subsequent instructions clarified that the tool was to be used iteratively.

The Commonwealth of Learning returned to the technical partners of the PEBL project to invite their input on a revised Rubric. COL, in turn, reflected on these inputs and drafted a revised Rubric. Changes included refinement to the quality elements, and the addition of one category, entitled Navigation. The revised Rubric now includes eight categories and 50 quality elements. Further, the scoring matrix was replaced with checkmarks located on a "met" or "not met" continuum.

Navigation	(6 quality elements)
Content	(11 quality elements)
Instructional Design	(8 quality elements)
Course Structure	(6 quality elements)
Student Support	(4 quality elements)
Technology/Media	(6 quality elements)
Assessment	(6 quality elements)
Quality Assurance & Evaluation	(3 quality elements)
8 categories	*50 quality elements*

The changes were fully endorsed by the technical partners. The revised Rubric was presented and subsequently shared with the PEBL network at its annual meeting, held in May 2019 in Kigali, Rwanda.

3. METHOD OF USE

3A. Orientation

The Rubric should be used iteratively or as a formative and summative assessment tool. From the outset, the course development team — assuming it is a team, rather than an individual developing a blended learning course — should review the Rubric to identify areas that should be considered for the course. The eight categories and 50 quality elements should be studied and considered as relevant, and the team should ascertain what quality elements are "fully met" (see next section).

To verify the extent of quality, it is necessary to solicit input from those most familiar with the quality element. Once all of the information is compiled, it is recommended that the institution develop a report that includes narrative and evidence regarding the status of each quality element. While this may sound intensive, it should also be expected that as blended learning initiatives mature, an increasing number of quality elements will be "fully met," and therefore fewer quality elements will be in need of extra scrutiny, triangulation, etc. Institutions, course development teams and so forth should also reflect on what lessons were learnt, and consider how blended learning practices can be improved. Such reflection might also include how to improve the Rubric itself. Given that quality assurance is a cyclical process, it would be expected that categories or quality elements would need to be refined, removed, added, etc. The benefit of the Rubric is that it is being released as an open educational resource and under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 licence. In this sense, any changes made to the Rubric are expected to be released under a comparable licence for consumption or further adaptation by other entities.

3B. Qualifiers

The Rubric Document (see the Annex for the full Rubric)

Description of qualifiers to inform each quality element, and supporting feedback when applying the Rubric:

Qualifiers

- **Fully Met**: The quality element has been fully met. No more testing, refinement, updating, etc. is required. Fill in "Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met" in the corresponding row.
- **Partially Met**: The quality element is in progress. Testing is under way, some updating has been carried out.
- **Not Met**: No implementation has been carried out.
- **Not Applicable**: A given quality element is not applicable (or relevant).

Feedback

- **Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met**: If the "Fully Met" box is checked, provide an example, details, or link to demonstrate the quality element has been fully met.
- **Improvement Needed**: If you do not check "Fully Met," please offer input on where improvement is needed to move the quality element to "Fully Met."

3C. Applications – Formative and Summative

As noted earlier in the document, the Rubric is to be used iteratively, or as a formative assessment, and at the conclusion of the exercise, or as a summative assessment.

The purpose of the formative approach is to ensure that the various quality elements are being carefully considered, embedded and refined in a given course. This should also minimise the need for substantive changes to a blended learning course once it is nearer to being completed. For example, tracking and verifying references at the conclusion of a draft course may require an inordinate amount of time, particularly if there are multiple individuals involved in the design and development of the course. Similarly critical is that learning outcomes be aligned to a particular learning framework, such as Bloom's Taxonomy, so that the course is adequately developing learners' higher-order thinking skills, carries a high level of rigour, and meets the expectations and level of a course in a larger programme of study.

In this regard, it is strongly recommended that the tool be used throughout the design and development stages of a blended learning course.

4: SUMMARY

4A. Importance

As noted in the introduction, the Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning is a timely tool for decision makers and practitioners to review, utilise and adapt as they mature blended learning courses for their institution, and for wider sharing with and consumption by other learners. Globally, higher education enrolment is growing rapidly, in concert with an increasing ubiquity of affordable and accessible networked technologies and devices that blur the lines between contact and distance or online learning. Amidst a convergence of approaches to learning that are increasingly online and learner centred, there is a need for greater expertise in how to approach online learning. Nothing has illuminated this reality more than the 2020 global pandemic of COVID-19. Upon its onset, innumerable sites, webinars, websites, courses, guidelines, edicts, etc. flooded inboxes as institutions scrambled to shift courses online, decisively putting the cart ahead of the horse. While the outcomes of these interventions are not fully known, it has become clear that the implementation of good online learning cannot be misunderstood as an overnight solution. It takes vision, planning, leadership, expertise, funding, support, trial and error, refinement, sustainability, patience and courage, amidst a plethora of other factors.

The Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning has been well received by partners in the PEBL project, and within a wider catchment in the East Africa region. This publication will serve as a means to offer guidance and enhance support for institutions keen on using blended learning, whether as a small offering or for widescale adoption. The decision to publish the Rubric under a CC BY-SA licence should widen its appeal and enable refinements that will interest many institutions.

4B. Concluding Note: Blended Learning as the New Reality

Blended learning is the new reality in teaching and learning in higher education, and perhaps in other formal or non-formal educational contexts. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this shift. For institutions that have newly embraced online learning in 2020, it will be to their own undoing if they return to business as *was* usual, meaning retreating to a singular focus on physical classroom-based teaching. The threat of a resurgence of COVID-19 is one concern, but other unforeseen disruptions may also occur. Moving forward, an institution's risk management strategy will need to address how it will maintain a cohesive and quality learning environment if and when the next pandemic, recession, or natural disaster occurs.

The impact of COVID-19 has caused disruptions to higher education of a magnitude unseen in the post-war era. It has prompted a fundamental shift in how online learning is viewed as a viable complement if not alternative to classroom-based learning. Of the nearly 20,000 post-secondary institutions around the world, how many will now shy away from online learning? Which

governments will invest more earnestly in online learning, especially for their publicly funded institutions?

The new narrative in higher education will be duly centred on current interventions and future mitigations. If we distil this down to online or blended learning, carefully considering the essential elements of how an online intervention should unfold requires referencing tools, best practices, etc. In this instance, the Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning is a viable tool that can enable and ready an institution, faculty or individual lecturer to engage in blended learning with purpose and a vision to enhance the learning experience.

Note that the Rubric is located in the Annex.

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ANNEX: THE QUALITY ASSURANCE RUBRIC FOR BLENDED LEARNING

The Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning

The Quality Assurance Rubric for Blended Learning is for institutions, their faculty or individuals who are interested in designing and developing blended learning courses of good quality. The intent is for the Rubric to be used iteratively, that is, as a formative and summative quality assurance tool.

Instructions

The Rubric can be utilised from planning to implementation for a given blended learning course. The qualifiers serve as checks to verify whether a certain quality element has been met, and the feedback enables resources to be shared to validate the qualifier more fully.

A description of qualifiers (to inform each quality element) and supporting feedback are offered below:

Qualifiers

- **Fully Met**: The quality element has been fully met. No more testing, refinement, updating, etc. is required. Fill in "Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met" in the corresponding row.
- **Partially Met**: The quality element is in progress. Testing is under way, and some updating has been carried out.
- **Not Met**: No implementation has been carried out.
- **Not Applicable**: The quality element is not applicable (or relevant).

Feedback

- **Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met**: If the "Fully Met" box is checked, provide an example, details or link(s) to demonstrate the quality element has been fully met.
- **Improvement Needed**: If you do not check "Fully Met," please offer input on where improvement is needed to move the quality element to "Fully Met."

Please check "√" the appropriate box under "Qualifiers" and include input under each relevant box under "Feedback."

Category	Quality Element	Qualifiers				Feedback	
		Fully Met	Part. Met	Not Met	N/A	Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met	Improvement Needed
1. Navigation / Orientation (e.g., the course site is well organised, and it is easy to navigate from the course home page to the course units, links, forums, etc.)	a) There are instructions on how to navigate the course site.						
	b) There are instructions on how learners should engage with a blended learning course and what proportions of the course are online and face-to-face.						
	c) Where feasible, materials open in the course site rather than as pop-up windows, etc. (i.e., separate Word docs).						
	d) There is a breadcrumb trail at the top of a given page for easy navigation through the course site.						
	e) There is sufficient indication of where materials are to be used online and in face-to-face settings.						
	f) There is a help option to support learners with FAQs, etc.						

Category	Quality Element	Qualifiers				Feedback	
		Fully Met	Part. Met	Not Met	N/A	Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met	Improvement Needed
2. **Content** (e.g., learners can engage with content and peers; expectations are clear)	a) Learning outcomes are clearly defined against academic / workplace standards.						
	b) Level of learning outcomes is aligned to relevant learning framework (e.g., Bloom's taxonomy).						
	c) The descriptive text and media promote a good understanding of the subject matter.						
	d) The content promotes interaction amongst students (e.g., peer coaching) and with the instructor.						
	e) The requirements for the number of study hours, as per the regulatory authority, are met.						
	f) The course level is identified (i.e., introductory or upper level, prerequisites required).						
	g) The course content is accurate, up-to-date and relevant to the labour / market needs.						
	h) The content meets the institutional and transfer credit requirements.						
	i) The references are reliable (i.e., proper information, active links), relevant and up-to-date.						
	j) The materials are properly cited and referenced and free of plagiarism.						
	k) The materials have been copy edited for accuracy, typographic errors, format, style, content and workable links.						

Category	Quality Element	Qualifiers				Feedback	
		Fully Met	Part. Met	Not Met	N/A	Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met	Improvement Needed
3. Instructional Design (e.g., the content is pedagogically sound)	a) Learners are exposed to a variety of learning activities.						
	b) Learning activities / instructional materials are linked to learning outcomes.						
	c) Instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated learning outcomes.						
	d) Active learning strategies are used that engage the student and promote the achievement of the stated learning outcomes.						
	e) Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction (student–student, student–instructor, and with materials / technology) that support active learning.						
	f) Access to external programs / software is available (e.g., SPSS).						
	g) Media is thoughtfully integrated in the course (i.e., short videos, variety of interactive features).						
	h) The LMS is learner friendly (e.g., minimal clicks, minimal external links or documents to access, as is feasible).						
	i) There are learning activities designed to engage students in critical thinking.						

Category	Quality Element	Qualifiers				Feedback	
		Fully Met	Part. Met	Not Met	N/A	Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met	Improvement Needed
4. Course Structure (e.g., the course has been properly conceptualised to reflect good practices in organisation, presentation and aesthetics)	a) The presentation is logical (e.g., sequential, well paced).						
	b) The course structure is flexible, allowing for easy updating of content in units, activities, assignments and learning materials.						
	c) The course structure includes links to library research databases, and accessible links to LMS and related websites.						
	d) The course is properly licensed as OER, where feasible.						
	e) The course meets institutional guidelines or is consistent relative to formatting / templates, etc.						
	f) The course structure enables a good mix of learning resources and faculty support.						

Category	Quality Element	Qualifiers				Feedback	
		Fully Met	Part. Met	Not Met	N/A	Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met	Improvement Needed
5. Student Support (e.g., students have timely and sufficient access to support in face-to-face and online modes)	a) The course has clearly defined instructions for learners to satisfy the course requirements (e.g., tasks, assignments) as well as the learning outcomes of the course.						
	b) Tutors are adequately trained and qualified to facilitate the blended course.						
	c) Students are provided with orientation to the online components of the course and registration facilities.						
	d) There are clear instructions on how and when students should expect feedback (e.g., within three days).						

Category	Quality Element	Qualifiers				Feedback	
6. Technology / Media (e.g., appropriate technology has been selected, references are available for students to retrieve resources)	a) The selection of technological tools (e.g., LMS, email, mobile applications) has been carefully considered in terms of infrastructure and learner access.						
	b) The selected technologies support completion of activities that enhance the learning outcomes.						
	c) The LMS provides an option to download resources for offline consumption (e.g., as pdf files).						
	d) The technology enables learners to communicate and collaborate.						
	e) The course site is device / browser agnostic (i.e., operational on mobile devices, multiple browsers).						

Category	Quality Element	Qualifiers				Feedback	
		Fully Met	**Part. Met**	**Not Met**	**N/A**	**Evidence of Quality Element Fully Met**	**Improvement Needed**
7. Assessment (e.g., assessment procedures are clear and accessible, regularly conducted, and in various formats)	a) Learners are provided with information on how they will be assessed in the course.						
	b) Marking guides for papers and examinations are provided.						
	c) Assessment measures include formative and summative assessments.						
	d) Assessment tools can facilitate self-evaluation or feedback (e.g., answers are provided for quizzes).						
	e) Assessment tools measure mastery of learning outcomes.						
8. Quality Assurance and Evaluation (e.g., quality assurance has been implemented thoroughly in design, and plans are in place for continuous quality assurance)	a) The course has been / is being subjected to quality assurance processes and with the same rigour as a face-to-face course.						
	b) Plans / schedules are in place for online courses to be reviewed to ensure that the provider keeps pace with changes in technology and content.						
	c) Course evaluation is enabled for learners to provide feedback on the blended learning experience, including the course content.						

Name of Course / Programme: _____ **Date:** _____

Name of Institution: _____

Reviewer's Name: _____

Summary of Strengths and Areas for Improvement (please add page(s) as necessary)
Strengths identified:
Areas for improvement identified:

Recommendations:

Using the Rubric (please add page(s) as necessary)

Comments / Feedback: