

Blended and Digital Learning Policy 2025/2027

Introduction

Blended and digital learning plays a key role in enhancing the student learning experience by integrating face-to-face teaching with digital tools and resources. This policy outlines the Group's approach to blended and digital learning, ensuring accessibility, inclusivity, and high-quality teaching, learning, and assessment (TLA).

Principles

The Group is committed to:

- Providing a high-quality, accessible, and inclusive blended learning experience.
- Ensuring all learners have equitable access to technology, learning materials, and support.
- Embedding digital literacy into the curriculum to enhance employability skills.
- Complying with accessibility standards and ensuring compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Regularly reviewing accessibility features of digital platforms to ensure compatibility with assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers, voice-to-text software).
- Providing alternative learning formats (e.g., transcripts, captions, etc) to support diverse learning needs.
- Ensuring students and staff are aware of available accessibility features and training.

Access to Digital Learning

The Group will provide:

- Access to digital resources, including Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), e-books, and recorded lectures.
- Loan schemes for students who require digital devices or internet access.
- Technical support to address accessibility and digital competency gaps.
- Developing a process for students to confidentially disclose digital access needs to ensure appropriate support is provided.
- Providing flexible options for students with limited access to digital tools, such as on-site study spaces with dedicated IT access.
- Ensuring that assessment submission and participation requirements do not disadvantage students who have intermittent or no internet access at home.

Digital Pedagogy and Assessment

Teaching staff will use a range of digital tools to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. These include interactive learning platforms, recorded lectures, and formative assessments conducted through digital means, by:

- Ensuring that all digital learning content is designed with inclusive pedagogy, including consideration for neurodivergent learners and students with disabilities.
- Providing staff training on designing accessible digital assessments, including alternative assessment formats for students with reasonable adjustments.
- Encouraging the use of plain language and inclusive design principles in digital learning materials.

Staff Training and Development

The Group will provide ongoing training and professional development opportunities to support staff in delivering high-quality blended and digital learning. By:

- Embedding inclusive teaching and digital accessibility training as part of staff CPD.
- Providing guidance on recognising and mitigating unconscious bias in digital learning environments.
- Ensuring all staff are trained to use assistive technologies and accessibility features within digital platforms.

Student Support and Engagement

The College will provide structured support to help students engage effectively with blended learning. This includes digital skills training, well-being support, and clear communication channels. Including:

- Developing tailored support plans for students with additional learning needs, ensuring reasonable adjustments are made for digital learning environments.
- Offering alternative methods of communication (e.g., telephone, video, and face-to-face meetings) to accommodate students with disabilities or specific learning preferences.
- Ensuring mental health and well-being resources are accessible online and signposted within digital platforms.

Monitoring and Review

The policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective in supporting all students and staff. Feedback from students, staff, and external stakeholders will inform continuous improvement by:

- Introducing student and staff feedback mechanisms to assess the inclusivity of digital learning experiences.
- Conducting an annual audit of digital resources to ensure compliance with accessibility standards and best practices.

Conclusion

The College is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment through blended and digital learning. By embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion principles into our digital strategy, we aim to ensure all learners have the opportunity to succeed.

Blended and Online Learning Procedure

Procedure	Action Points
<p>1. Ensure the diversity of our students, their learning preferences, preparedness, and life circumstances inform the design and choice of blended learning and flexible delivery approaches.</p>	<p>College Vice Principals will support Heads of School, in collaboration with Curriculum Teams and teaching staff, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the barriers for students regarding access and engagement with learning, including age, disability, and socio-economic factors. This includes gathering feedback from diverse student groups to inform accessibility improvements. - Provide blended and flexible delivery options to support increased access to learning for diverse students, taking into account the resources available. Ensure alternative formats (e.g., captioned videos, screen reader-compatible materials) are provided where necessary.
<p>2. Ensure that students are provided with consistent and easy access to services, information, tools, and resources necessary to facilitate and enable student learning and engagement.</p>	<p>Director, Digital & IT (D&I) in collaboration with College Vice Principals, will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that learning management systems are sufficiently resourced to support blended learning and flexible delivery approaches in virtual environments. - Embed accessibility checks for digital content (e.g., Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.1 compliance) to support students with disabilities. <p>D&I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that video conferencing and audio-visual services for on-campus learning environments are maintained and functioning. - Ensure loan schemes are available for students facing digital poverty. <p>D&I will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure on-campus spaces are upgraded to support blended learning, including accessible workstations for students with specific needs.
<p>3. Utilise approaches that enable and encourage interaction, collaboration, and communication between students and staff and create a sense of belonging to the learning community.</p>	<p>Curriculum Managers, with the support of Heads of School, will support Subject Coordinators and Teaching Staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote the use of physical and virtual learning environments for collaboration. - Ensure students can update their digital profiles (e.g., names and pronouns) to respect gender identity and inclusion, as requested. <p>D&I, in collaboration with College Vice Principals, will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure collaboration platforms are inclusive and support diverse engagement needs.
<p>4. Include opportunities to develop the digital literacy of students through orientation to virtual environments used for learning and teaching and in discipline-specific contexts.</p>	<p>Quality, Development and Learning Standards (QDLS) and Curriculum Managers will support Subject Coordinators and teaching staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide mandatory digital skills readiness programs, including creating targeted activities for students during Induction. - Learning Support to ensure digital skills support includes assistive technology training for students who require screen readers, voice-to-text software, or other accessibility tools.

<p>5. Ensure blended learning course and subject design aligns with accessibility and inclusion principles.</p>	<p>QDLS will support Curriculum Teams, in collaboration with Subject Coordinators and Teaching Staff, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop blended learning approaches that account for diverse learning needs. - Ensure learning technologies and teaching methods do not create barriers for student groups. - Encourage the use of clear, simple language in digital materials to support students with English as a second language.
<p>6. Regularly review blended learning approaches for inclusivity and accessibility.</p>	<p>Curriculum Managers will support Subject Coordinators and Teaching Staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regularly evaluate blended learning approaches for student access and engagement across all protected characteristics. - Use student surveys and learning analytics to assess whether certain groups face barriers in online learning.
<p>7. Implement an inclusive approach to staff training and development for blended learning.</p>	<p>Vice Principal, QDLS, in collaboration with College Vice Principals, will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure ongoing professional development of staff regarding inclusive blended learning approaches. - Embed anti-discrimination training into staff development programs. - Ensure staff are trained to use assistive technologies effectively.
<p>8. Invest in, research, and support online infrastructure that enhances equity in digital learning.</p>	<p>Director, D&I, via the Digital Transformation Group (DTG), will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure student feedback systems, learning management systems, and wireless networks support equitable and inclusive blended learning. - Introduce data tracking to identify potential digital exclusion trends and address inequalities in engagement.