3.2 Infrastructure and resources

The infrastructure and resources required to support good quality blended learning are understood, planned, and routinely monitored and evaluated. These arrangements should take into account that while online, learners are likely to be remote from the provider and from teachers and/or assessors. There is an institutional approach to these matters.

Procedures in this context include:

3.2.1 A planned approach to the procurement of services (e.g. cloud services), hardware and software to support online learning and a clear policy on a common platform for approval of exceptions.

3.2.2 Contingency arrangements in the event of platform, hardware or software failures.

3.2.3 Robust and consistent systems and processes across the organisation to manage the submission, receipt, marking and return of assessments. There are robust arrangements in place across the organisation to confirm the identity of remote learners and mitigate against fraudulent practices, attempts to gain unfair advantage, or academic malpractice. For example:

- all systems and processes used are capable of:

  - verifying the identity of learners;

  - guarding against cheating, plagiarism or other kinds of unfair advantage;

  - being reliable and scalable in the context of the provider and the strategic plan;

  - timing and synchronizing assessment to take into account factors such as cultural or religious calendars and provision that is offered across different time zones.

3.2.4 A student record system designed or adapted to support blended learning programmes and learners and their quality assurance.

3.2.5 Effective institutional arrangements to provide assurance that:

- Any blended learning elements of provision have had the reliability of their delivery systems tested and signed off in advance, with confirmation that appropriate technical support and contingency plans are in place.

- Intellectual property rights and software licensing issues are addressed in the development and delivery of online learning.

- The delivery system for each online section/unit of study is fit-for-purpose, for example, with a clear statement of:

  - resources needed to complement any online technology

  - how the technology is to be used by teaching and other personnel involved both individually and collectively

  - how it is to be used to confirm that the teaching and learning has occurred, including assessment and feedback for each individual programme

- The availability and life expectancy of the technology is appropriate to the nature of the blended learning provision, numbers of learners and duration of programmes.

- Institutionally approved transitional arrangements are in place to support any migration to new or different technology (hardware or software), taking account of the need to maintain compatibility with the technology that learners are using.

- A common policy and process is in place for ensuring that learners' work is properly attributed to them, particularly in cases where the assessment is conducted through remote methods that might be vulnerable to interception or other interference.

- Those with responsibility for assessment have the means and authority to confirm that a learner's assessed work is the original work of that learner only, particularly in cases where the assessment is conducted through remote methods.

- Mechanisms such as web-based methods or correspondence for the transfer of learners' work directly to assessors have been approved and tested by the institution to ensure they are secure and reliable; and there is an institutionally approved and consistent means of proving or confirming the safe receipt of student work.