

PCC Online Course Delivery Protocols Guidance Document

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PCC Online Course Delivery Protocols

1. Policies

A review of all PCC Adult and Family Learning Policies will be reviewed to ensure that they take into account online course delivery. All PCC A&FL policies will be made available to learners via their online courses.

- **Acceptable Use Policy**

The Acceptable Use Policy will be shown to learners on the occasion of their first log-in which they should agree to before going any further. It should also be made available on the LearnPortsmouth Moodle home page.

- **IT Policy - Security and Data Protection**

When selecting an external host for the LearnPortsmouth Moodle the following questions will be asked to ensure all data is secure and backed up.

- How often are backups undertaken and where will backups be stored?
- Are courses backed up individually or is it a backup of the whole installation?
- How easy is it for a tutor to roll back their own course if needed - do tutors need to backup their own course areas?
- Disaster recovery policy - what happens if the whole system fails?
- Moodle updates - security patches to be implemented in what time span and by whom?
- Data protection - how is the personal user and course data protected?

- **Pricing and Refunds Policy**

If in the future if PCC moves towards an offer of full cost recovery online courses, we will produce a Pricing and Refunds Policy document.

- **Course Transfer Policy**

Online course facilitators and learners will be made aware of PCC's Course Transfer Policy as part of their induction. Any learner wishing to transfer will need follow the following process:

- Complete the PCC Course Transfer request form and email to PCC Admin
- The Senior management at PCC reviews the request, discusses with the course facilitator.
- The Administration team at PCC contacts the learner within 5 working days of receiving the request with a decision/recommendations.

- **Quality Policy**

The quality of online course delivery, support and materials will be reviewed as part of PCC's existing Observation of Teaching and Learning processes. Each course will have an in-built standard course evaluation which will be reviewed by lead tutors and the Adult Learning Manager

In order to monitor the quality of online courses, one of the PCC trained observers will log into a support session and witness the interactions between tutor and learner. There will be a conversation with a learner, by phone, email or face to face about their progress and evaluation

of the course and the completed course materials and evidence will be subject to the usual checks by the Observer.

- **Complaints policy**

Online course facilitators and learners will be made aware of PCC's Complaints Policy as part of their induction. Any learner wishing to complain will need follow the following process:

Complete the PCC Complaints Form and email to PCC Admin

Senior Management at PCC reviews the request, discusses with the course facilitator.

Senior Management at PCC contacts the learner within 5 working days of receiving the request with a decision/recommendations.

- **Equality and Diversity Policy**

Our online course offer will follow our Equality and Diversity Policy. In addition we will ensure that:

All tutors developing online courses make them as accessible as is possible, for example providing transcripts to any audio or videos developed specifically for the course or the adding of alternative text to images.

Learners are made aware of the PCC specification, software and hardware requirements needed to access the course prior to enrolment.

Online courses will provide an open access taster, to enable a learner to test out their system prior to enrolment.

- **Learner Support Policy**

Our online course offer will follow our Learner Support Policy.

Recommendations regarding policies

Access to policies should be available to online learners as they are for all face to face courses.

Consideration should be given to where these are held - top level or within individual courses. It may be that some need to be in both places e.g. complaints policy. To ensure it appears in every course consideration should be given as to whether links to policies should be given in a sticky block.

2. Course management

Full Cost Recovery Courses

A Business Case will be written for any full cost recovery course suggested by a member of PCC staff to ascertain whether or not the course would be financially viable in the long term.

Online Courses – Funded

- Curriculum online course leaders to be assigned to manage the online courses within their areas.
- Curriculum Online Course Leaders will have administration rights for their areas so that they can set up courses for their staff, thus maintaining a structure that they have control over.
- The teacher who develops the online course will need full teacher rights.
- Teachers who facilitate the course could be given non-editing teacher rights.

- If a course is being co-delivered then teachers need to have decided on who is undertaking what role.
- Curriculum online course leaders need to be assign Teachers/facilitators to courses and nominates substitutes in case of illness etc.
- Support will be made available to teachers to ensure a home life/work life balance is maintained when running a course that is online and could easily impinge on non-working hours.
- Technical support need to be aware when new courses are starting and be ready to support.
- Administrators need to register new learners to the LearnPortsmouth Moodle and to enrol them onto the online course.
- Administrators will support online courses, send out marketing, handle enquires, enrol onto the courses, support initial log-ins.
- Administrators will monitor learner attendance on the course and chase anyone who has not logged in for more than 1 week

Course delivery planning

- A plan will be developed to roll out online courses.
- Marketing strategy for online course/s will be initiated.
- Communication process in place so that Curriculum Online Course Leader and teacher/s are kept informed of current sign up for the course. Key dates will be decided for decision making as to the viability of running the course.
- Booking system will be set up for the virtual classroom to hold online tutorials and/or induction.
- Consideration will be given as to whether an online course templates are required as a starting point for courses that will run more than once. They can ensure standardisation of content and save course administration time.
- Courses will need to be copied from templates in readiness for the new course.
- Before delivery facilitator will review course materials to ensure links still work, contents relevant, current and forums clear if using a previously run course area.
- Course evaluation will be included with each course; consideration will be given as to whether to use a generic or a course specific evaluation and how it would be electronically provided and analysed.

3. Course delivery

This section covers all areas relating to pre, during and post course delivery.

- **Pre-course delivery**

- Software and IT requirements for course will be collated and made available at course marketing time.
- Guidance for learners on ICT (and other - curriculum based) skills requirement to complete the course satisfactory. This could be a list or an audit process that the learner completes, depending on the course/content/level.
- Registration of learners to Moodle – at the assessment and guidance session, learners will be asked to register on the Moodle.

- Enrolment form: Existing enrolment forms to be reviewed. Communication details are important and additional data regarding email address/mobile phone number/Skype details could be included. Depending on whether the course is accredited additional details may be required by awarding bodies.
- Course payments: at the time of writing, the only pay methods that can be processed are card, cash or cheque.
- Administrators will send a follow-up email to learners to thank them for expression of interest in online courses.
- Administrators to Notify of learner's place on the course, starting date, named contact, and payment received send to learner. Date when further information will be sent out.
- Learners informed how to self register (if option selected for registration) access the course, induction information, teacher name and contact details. Other information that a learner will need could be provided by email or from the course area and is outlined below.
 - Learner sent contract: containing framework of the course requirements and what is expected by the learner in particular keeping to timescales. This would normally be digitally signed and returned.
 - Induction information will be provided to learners including:
 - How to access the virtual classroom online session;
 - Basic information about navigating the online environment;
- PCC will consider developing an online course handbook that could be accessed online or emailed to online learners containing:
 - Specific course information;
 - Equal opportunities and access to assessment;
 - Appeals procedures;
 - Copyright and plagiarism;
 - If accredited, the accreditation process and how the evidence will be assessed;
 - Deadlines and organisational policy on missing deadlines;
 - APL procedures/options and whether available for the current course.

- **Course delivery**

- **Course administration**

- Facilitator will be supplied with a list of learners, contact details. These details should be kept in accordance with data protection policy.
 - A communication and tracking method will be put in place so that as the learner progresses through the course, the facilitator can see exactly how the learner is progressing and identify any additional support that may be needed.
 - File management on the facilitators computer should be set up for individual courses so that emails and all documents sent to the facilitator are filed in one place and easily accessible.

- **Course Support**

- Technical support will be made available to students through a phone call to the office administration team who will source the support required. Should any issue be outside there are of expertise, technical support from PCC will be accessed.
 - Teacher/facilitator Support
 - The facilitator will have access to technical and admin support during course delivery;

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- **Learner Support**
 - Learners will be informed of when technical support will be available; a list of FAQs will be produced for out of hours help. Support will otherwise be available during PCC working hours.
 - Learners will be informed when their facilitator is available to support them and how they can be contacted.
 - Learners will be informed of how long they might have to wait for a response to a query;
 - Learners will be informed of how long they will need to wait for work to be marked and whether it can be resubmitted.
 - Learners will be informed about deadlines and if online assignments will be closed after that date. This information will be sent in pre-course learner materials;
 - Learners will be informed how they can complain or appeal;
 - Learners will be able to provide feedback about their course/support.

Course delivery - Induction

- Facilitator will send a welcome email or message.
- Facilitators will be aware of and follow online course induction processes providing evidence that they have done so with all students. ;
- Facilitators will provide contact details and preferred communication method and times they are available to the learners;
- For courses where a learner self studies but provides assignments, target dates and estimated date of completion will be discussed;
- Induction into Moodle course area and e-portfolio will be given;
- Learner agreement outlining expectations of learner and facilitator;
- Policies will be highlighted
- If the induction is not held in a virtual classroom, facilitators will produce a short introductory video so that the learners see their tutor;
- Learners will be encouraged to upload a photo and profile information to help the facilitator and other peers to build a online relationship;
- Profile information will be covered, including how to change your email notifications and password;
- Learners will be introduced to the structure and navigation of the course; and
- If groups are being used in the course then learners will be informed of what group they will be in for certain activities and what this means in practice.

Course delivery - Teacher/facilitator delivery

- Facilitators will initiate and moderate forums (including ice-breakers), wikis.
- Staff training in the moderation of forums may be required
- Facilitators will timetable tutorials;
- Facilitators will provide weekly course news;
- Depending on the style of the course the facilitator may send a weekly email to outline what is being covered that week, when they are available for contact, reminder on tutorials, assignment deadlines, outside speakers or other course events;
- Facilitators may keep a course calendar and keep course events up-to-date if being used;

- Administrators will track learner log-in and chase learners who are not accessing the course in accordance with organisation policy and learner agreement;
- Facilitators will track learners progress through the course materials;
- If a learner fails to access the course for 'x' number of days/weeks the tutor should follow the organisations withdrawal policy;
- Facilitators will mark work within set period of time;
- Facilitators will respond to queries in set period of time;
- Facilitators will be encouraged to use online in-course methods of help support e.g. a 'Help me' forum.
- Facilitators will be encouraged to create a FAQ wiki/web page etc;
- Facilitators will be made aware of organisation's plagiarism policy;
- Facilitators will follow organisation's quality processes;
- Facilitators will follow organisational policy for learners who wish to transfer to future courses.

- **Post course delivery**

- Facilitators will ensure course is closed and archived if appropriate. Evidence captured for accredited courses should be securely archived in accordance with awarding body requirements;
- Internal and external verifiers will be given course access where appropriate;
- Learners will be informed of future training possibilities;
- Facilitator need to move files/records associated to the course from individual PCs to organisation server; and
- Facilitator will remove/destroy learner data of own PCs/records in compliance with data protection.
- Facilitators will notify Administrators of learners who have successfully completed and achieved. Certificates sent to learners if appropriate.
- Analysis of course data undertaken - achievement, retention, learner evaluation and facilitator evaluation. Recommendations made for future delivery of that course whether - amendments to the course content, course support, staff training or course entry requirements.

4. Development of materials

- **Style** – all courses will follow PPC Style Guides
 - course layout;
 - the blocks that should be used;
 - fonts, font sizes;
 - style of writing;
 - use of abbreviations;
 - type of language;
 - colour guidelines;
 - readability (NIACE online SMOG calculator);
 - proof reading;

- images should have alternative text;
- videos and audio files should have transcripts;
- page organisation with headings and lists being consistent; and
- organisation logo.
- All video files will be stored on the PCC Youtube site;
- Design of our online courses will follow a standard format.

Quality

- Teachers will be made aware of copyright rules on text, images, audio and video used within their resources or online courses;
 - Materials and courses will follow accessibility good practice;
 - Quality and processes for acceptance;
 - All online courses will undertake a quality review process.
 - **Training**
 - Teachers will be given training in order to develop online learning materials and courses;
 - Teachers will be given on-going support whilst creating materials and courses - technical and software how to's.
 - Teachers will be encouraged to collaborate in the creation of courses and to peer review courses.
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