

Capacity Needs Assessment Toolkit for Online Learning



Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning



Purpose

The Capacity Needs Assessment Toolkit was commissioned by the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation as part of the Foundation's strategic efforts to promote open learning and expand access to quality higher education in the Arab region and beyond. The first phase of the project was in support of the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA) at the American University of Beirut (AUB). At different higher education institutions, the beginning of this journey includes a thorough assessment of institutional capacity and roadmap for the way forward.

The purpose of this document is to serve as a toolkit for universities to determine their level of readiness to introduce quality e-learning at their institutions.¹ It outlines the process required to complete a capacity needs assessment (CNA), the stakeholders that need to be engaged, and the deliverables from each phase; and provides the guidelines and tools to do so.

¹ Throughout this document, "e-learning" broadly refers to both intentional online and blended learning courses and programs. Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) and pandemic responses are not done with intentional design and should be reviewed for and used as needed for intentional e-learning.

Table of Contents

Capacity Needs Assessment

CNA Implementation and Timeline

Approach

- Phase 1**
- Project Initiation and Mobilization Components
 - Key Activities
 - Deliverables of Phase 1

- Phase 2**
- Conducting the CNA
 - Key Activities
 - Deliverables of Phase 2

- Phase 3**
- Final Analysis and Report
 - Key Activities
 - Deliverables of Phase 3

Authors

About Us

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Stakeholder Influence Grid

Appendix 2 - CNA Rubric

Appendix 3 - CNA of Online Learning Readiness

Appendix 4 - Stakeholder Interview and Focus Group Questions

Appendix 5 - Stakeholder Survey Questions



Capacity Needs Assessment

A capacity needs assessment (CNA) is a process that helps identify challenges and opportunities for enhancing key skills, thereby enhancing a project's ability to achieve its objectives.

The overall goal of this CNA is to determine the gap between required and existing capacities to introduce e-learning at a higher education institution. It covers 9 areas that are considered critical to the effective introduction and offering of e-learning within an institution. These 9 areas are discussed in more detail in the rubric in Appendix 2. These areas are considered from two perspectives: inward looking and/or outward looking. Universities can focus either on one or both of these perspectives, depending on their strategy and priorities for e-learning and where they are at in the process of implementing e-learning. The two perspectives are described further below.

Inward looking: transforming courses/degrees to blended/online courses with the aim of improving the teaching and learning experience and outcomes within the institution.

Outward looking: launching a pipeline of online and blended programs (including, but not limited to, for-credit degrees, micro-credentials, non-credit diplomas, and professional development certifications) with the aim of increasing access to education and skills development for students outside the institution.

At the end of the CNA, the institution will be scored on a scale of 1-4 in terms of its level of readiness across all 9 areas and the two perspectives (as relevant). This is illustrated in a table in Appendix 2: CNA Rubric.



CNA Implementation and Timeline

It is recommended that the assessment is led by an individual or an entity external to the university. This would ensure an objective assessment of the institution's level of readiness to introduce e-learning, including its strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement across all the relevant areas. The external consultant(s) should have a key point person and/or team, also known as the "project team", who will lead the CNA internally.

The inclusion of external and internal persons will help to create balance between institutional knowledge and perspective and to reduce bias and ensure objectivity. These individuals should include university faculty, staff and leadership who have experience in:

- Relevant subject areas (if specified in the project)
- Education technology
- Strategy development and implementation
- Student recruitment and support



The time required to complete the CNA varies by the size of the institution, the scope of the assessment, and the extent of the data collection process (number of interviews with relevant stakeholders and supporting documents to be collected). Below is a general timeline that can be adapted as necessary.

Quantitative phase will generally take 1 month, but the timeline is subject to the collection of stakeholder contact information.

Qualitative phase will generally take 1 month but is heavily dependent on the number of interviews/ focus groups to be conducted, as well as the response time of the university contacts. (Each focus group will be, on average, an hour; and each interview should be, on average, 30 minutes. These timeframes are based on best practice and the potential for interview fatigue.)

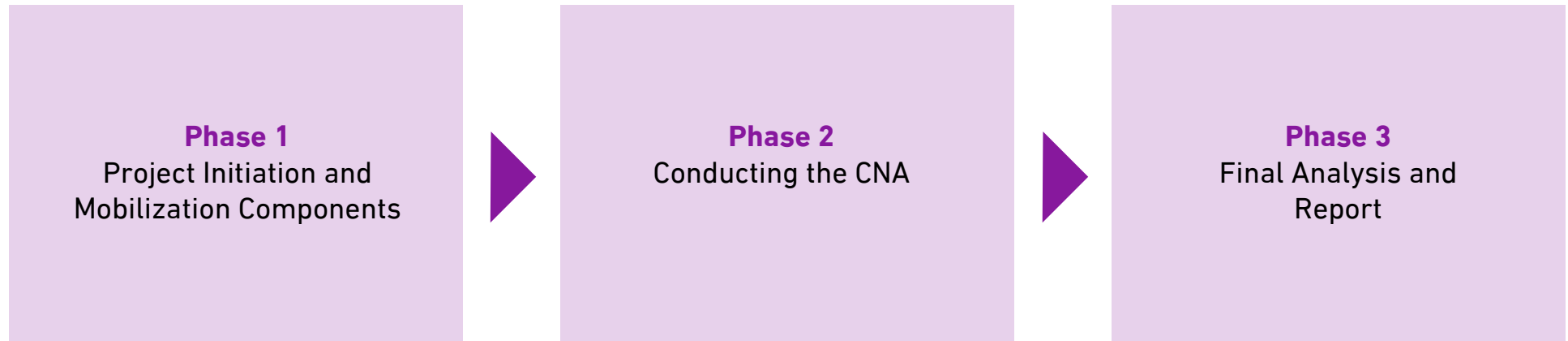
Analysis and reporting phase will generally take 1.5 months but is heavily dependent on the number of universities participating.

Holidays and university breaks need to be factored into the entire timeline. The recommendation is to add on an additional month to accommodate for the variance in these factors at each institution.



Approach

The Capacity Needs Assessment is comprised of a 3-phased approach that includes key activities and deliverables.





Project Initiation and Mobilization Components

Key activities

1. Confirm and mobilize project resources.

The external consultant(s) lead in conducting the CNA, supported by the project team from the university (after securing university leadership support).

2. Align on the overall objective of the assessment.

This consists of first aligning within the university on why a capacity assessment is needed and its scope, followed by aligning with the consultant to clarify the expectations from the process.

3. Prepare introductory and stakeholder meetings.

The external consultants will prepare presentations to introduce and center the language and basic tenets of e-learning as well as establish times for meetings.

4. Develop and implement a preliminary survey.

The survey aims to establish a baseline understanding of the policies, procedures, and resources in place for online learning programs at each university. (It can be based on “Appendix 5: Stakeholder Survey Questions”).

5. Create a preliminary checklist based on the survey - to compile relevant documentation to share with consultant(s).

This activity is a joint effort between a project team person and the external consultant. The background information will inform the consultant(s) of what is already in place (programs, processes, technology, training, etc.) and how best to proceed with the CNA (who to interview, what questions to ask, etc.). The documents are linked to the survey and can include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- University or faculty strategy (depending on the scope of the project)
- E-learning strategy (if available)
- Documentation on any available online or blended courses programs – This can include: syllabi; learning objectives; technology and tools used; examples of assessments; student enrolment, outcomes and/or engagement data; course and faculty evaluations, etc.



- Faculty training materials on how to (re)design an online or blended course (if such a course exists)
- Course evaluation templates
- Documentation about marketing and outreach process and student support services
- Relevant documentation from student orientation
- Relevant university policies and/or guidelines
- Relevant university standard operating procedures

6. Prepare preliminary interview and focus group questions based on “Appendix 4: Stakeholder Interview Questions”.



Deliverables of Phase One



Project team selected



Goal and scope of the CNA approved by university



Preliminary introductory and stakeholder mapping meetings



Preliminary survey



Preliminary list of documentation



Preliminary interview schedule



Conducting the CNA

During this phase, the external consultant works with the project team to: administer the survey; gather and confirm the documentation provided; and conduct the interviews and focus groups with all relevant stakeholders to determine the strengths within the university, where the gaps are, and what areas need development to achieve their desired goals.

Key activities

1. Conduct Introductory and Stakeholder Meetings:

- An introductory meeting should include baseline definitions and discussions surrounding preliminary vision, preferred course structure, and preferred target market, which will allow a university to start initial conversations about where it is in the process of implementing e-learning.
- Identify project stakeholders: It is important to jointly identify the key stakeholders who will be involved in the CNA outside of the university leadership team that is established prior to the CNA. These stakeholders will be engaged at different stages of the process, and this activity helps determine which stakeholders to involve and at what levels. Ideally, a stakeholder mapping and analysis activity is done by the external consultant(s) with each university, where the team and the university determine which stakeholders to involve and what influence these stakeholders wield to help inform how best to engage them in the implementation of the online learning plan (refer to Appendix 1: Stakeholder Influence Grid²).
- At a minimum, the stakeholders involved should include the institution's leadership (can be represented by the Provost's office or others), deans, faculty, student support services, IT/LMS, Center for Teaching and Learning and/or the unit housing instructional designers and media specialists, and other administrative key personnel (registrar, admissions, finance, accreditation, etc.). Roles and responsibilities of identified stakeholders should be identified at this phase too.

2. Administer survey to identified stakeholders from a variety of areas within the university “Appendix 5: Stakeholder Survey Questions”.

² It is important to note that depending on where a university is at in the process of developing e-learning, it may be difficult to establish the exact influence of stakeholders at this phase.



- 3. Conduct walkthroughs to observe and build a thorough understanding of the processes in place under the relevant 9 areas in the CNA.³ When a walkthrough is not possible, it will be even more important for universities to provide relevant and extensive documentation in a follow-up to the quantitative part of the assessment.**
- 4. Prepare and conduct a mid-way presentation – the external consultant should aggregate the survey data and then prepare and conduct a mid-way presentation to share the preliminary data and allow university stakeholders to provide feedback.**
- 5. Collect university documentation and evidence to support claims in survey data.**
- 6. Based on the checklist provided in “Appendix 3: CNA of Online Learning Readiness”, and the information collected from the survey, use interview questions provided in “Appendix 4: Stakeholder Interview Questions” to conduct detailed interviews and focus groups with the identified stakeholders to understand their current capacities within the 9 areas (where relevant).**
- 7. Gather and document the data received under each studied area from the university to support the findings and the final assessment.**

³ This is dependent on access to universities and them functioning at full capacity, not as they do during a pandemic.



Deliverables of Phase Two



Observational research, videos, and transcript data from introductory and stakeholder meetings



Quantified survey data



A workshop session/presentation with the most relevant stakeholders to share the preliminary results at the mid-day point for buy-in.



Documentation supporting understanding of the 9 areas within the CNA checklist



Observational research from university walkthrough



Summary of all interviews held and stakeholders interviewed



Final Analysis and Report

Key activities

- 1. Aggregate data and apply appropriate data analyses to the following: introductory and stakeholder meetings; survey; mid-way presentation discussion; collection checklist; interviews and focus groups.**
- 2. Assess and rate the readiness level (Level 1, 2, 3 and 4) of each of the 9 areas under study.**
- 3. Identify and list strengths, gaps, areas for improvement, and needs.**
- 4. Prepare a final report presenting the findings of the CNA, which will include areas for improvement and areas of strength.**
- 5. Conduct a final presentation with key stakeholders from the university to disseminate findings from the CNA.**



Deliverables of Phase Three



A CNA report presenting the findings, including the institution's level of readiness for each of the 9 areas, along with recommendations on areas for improvement, based on the outlined goals and priorities.



A final presentation to university key stakeholders presenting a summary of the findings and recommendations from the report.

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A special thanks to our strategic partners who provided their expertise and input into this capacity needs assessment toolkit. These include Instructional Design for E-Learning (IDEL), Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, American University of Beirut, and Arizona State University.

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Please note: Given the time gap between the writing and publication of the Capacity Needs Assessment, the authors may no longer be directly affiliated with their respective organizations.

About Us

AGF

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation was established in 2015 with the aim of empowering Emirati and Arab youth by increasing access to high-quality higher education that leads to better livelihoods. The Foundation, one of the largest privately funded philanthropic initiatives in the Arab region, seeks to enhance the educational ecosystem in the region by scaling innovative learning solutions and promoting knowledge production and sharing. The Foundation is committed to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals 4, 8, and 17, leveraging strategic partnerships to promote inclusive and equitable access to education and lifelong learning for all in the Arab region.

UCQOL

The University Consortium for Quality Online Learning (UCQOL) was founded by the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation in collaboration with the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) and nine leading universities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It is expanding the network of higher educational institutions in the region to incorporate high-quality online learning as part of a norm. UCQOL aims to strengthen existing online programs, develop high-quality online courses, and make high-quality online programs more accessible to Emirati and Arab Youth. UCQOL, which is in line with the UAE National Innovation Strategy and the National Higher Education Strategy 2030, is the first regional project where a multi-sector consortium is spearheading online education to ensure that the online programs are market-driven, high-quality, and accredited.

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning

The Abdulla Al Ghurair Hub for Digital Teaching and Learning (“The Hub”) was established through partnership of the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation and Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture at AUB in a pioneering initiative to advance world-class online STEM education. The core mission of the Hub is to promote innovation in education and increase access to, and impact of, high-quality education for Arab youth. The Hub is thus committed to advocating for modern and effective online learning, inclusive knowledge dissemination, data-driven solutions to pedagogical challenges, and need-based capacity building within AUB and at regional education institutions.

Appendices

You can find all listed appendices below. For your convenience, you may download Appendices 2-5 in Word format by clicking the attachment icon on the left pane.



Appendix 1 Stakeholder Influence Grid

A best practice for a CNA will include a stakeholder influence grid. However, the relevance of the grid will depend on where a university is in its e-learning process. It is also important to note that there is an updated model, called the **saliency model**, that includes a third attribute: **urgency**.

If the external consultants find the updated model more relevant, they can access a quick overview of it and include it in their CNA.⁴

1 **Low power / Low interest**
this group are those that are not interested in the project and have no real power within the project

2 **Low power / High interest**
this group are those that are interested in the project but have no real power within the project

3 **High power / Low interest**
this group are those that are not interested in the project and have power within the project

4 **High power / High interest**
this group are those that are interested in the project and have power within the project



⁴ <https://pmstudycircle.com/2015/09/saliency-model-to-analyze-project-stakeholders/>



Appendix 2 CNA Rubric

The below checklist serves as a guide to score the readiness level for each of the 9 areas in relation to the institution's online learning plan and/or goals. The checklist should be used by the individual(s) or teams conducting the Needs Assessment and can also be used during the review process with the project team to clarify the selection made.

Area Covered	Key Questions	Level 1 Readiness	Level 2 Readiness	Level 3 Readiness	Level 4 Readiness
Vision and Strategy	To what extent is the institution's vision for 'Online Learning' well-articulated and reflected in a coherent strategy?	There is no explicit vision or strategy for the institution	There are some promising but fragmented initiatives that do not fall under an articulated vision or a coherent strategy	There is a loosely defined vision guiding various fragmented initiatives but no clearly articulated strategy, goals and KPIs	There is a clearly articulated vision, strategy and set of goals and KPIs that guide an integrated set of initiatives
Organizational Structure and Business Model	To what extent does the institution's organizational structure and business model support the growth of 'Online Learning'?	The institution's organizational structure and business model jeopardize the growth of 'Online Learning'	While the institution's overall organizational structure and business model are clear, they have not taken into account 'Online Learning'	Some specific organizational structures and business models have been developed to support the growth of 'Online Learning'	The overall institution's organizational structure and business model enables the growth of 'Online Learning'



Appendix 2 CNA Rubric

Area Covered	Key Questions	Level 1 Readiness	Level 2 Readiness	Level 3 Readiness	Level 4 Readiness
Faculty	To what extent are faculty open, trained and incentivized to support the growth of the institution’s Online Learning vision?	Few faculty members are open, incentivized or trained	Some faculty are resistant or uninformed while others are self-motivated and seek the required support	A critical mass of faculty members are open and self-motivated and find ways to receive most of the support they require in their efforts	There is a widespread digital education culture amongst faculty and an institutionalized process for engaging, incentivizing and building the capacity of faculty for digital education
Instructional Design and Media	To what extent are the instructional design and media production resources and processes effective and scalable enough to support the design and development of high-quality courses?	There are no processes and resources in place	There are some resources in place, but no defined processes or way of work	There are good resources and processes in place but are not yet sufficient for scale	There are sufficient resources and fully-fledged and scalable processes in place
Technology and Infrastructure – Institution Systems	To what extent are the institution technology systems effective and scalable enough to support a large online community of learners?	There are no institution technology systems and infrastructure	The institution has some of the required infrastructure and systems in place but they are not working effectively nor ready for scale	The institution has most needed systems and infrastructure, and most of them are developed and integrated effectively	The technology systems and infrastructure are working effectively and scalable to meet the requirements



Appendix 2 CNA Rubric

Area covered	Key Questions	Level 1 readiness	Level 2 readiness	Level 3 readiness	Level 4 readiness
Technology and Infrastructure – LMS & Learning Management Tools	To what extent are the LMS and learning technology tools effective and scalable enough to support the delivery and management of online content for residential and online community of learners?	There is no LMS learning technology tools being used	There is a basic LMS in place but has not been utilized	The LMS and some basic learning tools are partially utilized	The LMS and suite of learning technology are effective and scalable enough
Marketing, Student Outreach and Recruitment	To what extent are the marketing, student outreach & recruitment resources and processes effective and scalable enough to attract and manage a large pipeline of online learners?	There is no existing capabilities and tools in place	Some capabilities and tools are available, but they are sporadically used and not yet customized/fully transferable to online programs	All the required student services are available with many already adapted to meet the needs of online learners but require a coherent strategy missing	The capabilities and tools are fully developed to meet the needs of 'Online Learning'



Appendix 2 CNA Rubric

Area covered	Key Questions	Level 1 readiness	Level 2 readiness	Level 3 readiness	Level 4 readiness
Student Support and Community	To what extent are the student support resources and processes effective and scalable enough to enable the success of a community of online learners to succeed?	There are very few existing resources and tools, but they are not yet transferable to online learners	Most resources and tools are available, but they are not yet customized or fully transferable to online learners	All student services are available with many of them already adapted to meet the needs of online learners	There is a suite of resources and processes to support online students and a seamless integration in serving residential and online learners
Information and Data	To what extent are information and data gathering tools and processes effective and scalable enough to ensure the quality of outcomes for the different stakeholders?	There are no resources and processes in place	There are some sporadic efforts to gather data and information but with no methodological process or tools in place	There are some tools and processes in place to gather information and tools but are not properly utilized	There is an effective and scalable system in place that is properly utilized



Appendix 3 Online Learning Readiness Scoring

The below table should be completed by the consultant based on all the data and information collected and interviews and focus groups conducted with the relevant stakeholders. Depending on the online learning goals, the interviews should address both inward looking and outward looking readiness, and the table should rate those, where relevant, accordingly. The tentative results should preferably be shared with the project team to receive input and jointly agree on the final scores. The rubric should also be complemented by a short narrative report describing the identified strengths and areas for improvement in relation to their outlined online learning goals, based on evidence and insights from the needs assessment process.

Area to be Studied	Inward Looking Readiness Level (1-4)	Outward Looking Readiness Level (1-4)
1. Vision and Strategy		
2. Organizational Structure and Business Model		
3. Faculty		
4. Instructional Design and Media		
5. Technology and Infrastructure – Institution Systems		
6. Technology and Infrastructure – LMS & Learning Management Tools		
7. Marketing, Student Outreach and Recruitment		
8. Student Support and Community		
9. Information and Data		



Appendix 4 Stakeholder Interview and Focus Group Questions

The below interview questions include the overarching questions that will inform the readiness assessment for each of the 9 areas. They are meant to serve as a guide for the consultant and project team, who will be expected to develop them further based on the specific context and needs of the institution. In particular, in the current context, the consultant will be expected to inquire about how the Covid-19 crisis had an impact on each of the 9 areas.

Prior to conducting the interviews, the project team will be expected to confirm that the suggested stakeholders are best suited to respond to the proposed questions prior to scheduling interviews. Interviews should be conducted with individuals or teams from each department or unit separately and should cover questions from all the relevant areas for those individuals/teams. After completing all the interviews, the responses and any documents received can be triangulated and analyzed to develop the readiness scores.

Note: Depending on the area of focus (inward looking vs. outward looking, or both), the below questions will need to be adjusted to address the relevant components within each of the 9 areas:

1. Vision and Strategy.
2. Organizational Structure and Business Model.
3. Faculty.
4. Instructional Design and Media.
5. Technology and Infrastructure (Institution Systems).
6. Technology and Infrastructure (LMS & Learning Management Tools).
7. Marketing, Student Outreach, and Recruitment.
8. Student Support and Community.
9. Information and Data.



Vision and Strategy

To what extent is the institution's vision for 'Online Learning' well-articulated and reflected in a coherent strategy?

- **Relevant stakeholders:** University leadership; Deans; Center for Teaching and Learning and/or Unit leading Instructional Design and Media

- **Interview questions:**
 - a. What is the university's overall vision? Strategy?
 - b. Does the university have an explicit vision or strategy related to online learning?
 - How did it come into place?
 - Who developed it and who leads it?
 - What is the structure of that team?
 - What is the value proposition? What are its goals and objectives? What is the timeline?
 - Have KPIs been developed? What are they?
 - How well is it communicated internally and externally?
 - To what extent is it integrated with the overall university vision and/or strategy?
 - Is there a budget for it? What does it cover?
 - What have been the biggest achievements to date?
 - What have been the biggest challenges to date?
 - c. If no vision or strategy for online learning exists, where would online learning fit within the university vision/strategy?
 - What would be its value proposition and key goals? How would they connect with the broader university strategy?
 - Who would lead it (individuals and/or teams)?
 - How much buy-in would there be to drive such an initiative? From whom?
 - What would be its budget? What would it cover?
 - What would be the biggest challenges to introducing and implementing it?
 - What, if any, online learning initiatives exist to date (courses, programs, task forces, etc.)?



Organizational Structure and Business Model

To what extent does the institution's organizational structure and business model support the growth of 'Online Learning'?

- **Relevant stakeholders:** University leadership; Deans; Finance; Advancement
- **Interview questions:**
 - a. What does the institution's organizational structure look like?
 - Who are faculties accountable to? For what?
 - How much independence do Deans and Faculties have, including on Finance? Do the same policies apply across all faculties?
 - What is the governance structure and process for developing, approving and managing new programs?
 - What is the journey from admission, course assignment, registration, processing requests/petitions, coordinating with other departments/faculties, to monitoring and assessing program outcomes?
 - b. If online learning strategy or vision exists, what is the governance structure driving this effort?
 - To what extent is it centralized?
 - c. Who would be responsible and accountable for an online learning initiative, including strategic priorities, program selection, quality assurance, etc. if introduced?
 - d. If any online courses or programs exist, do the same structures and processes apply to them? Provide examples and describe. If not, what is different?
 - What teams are involved? How?
 - e. What is the process of accrediting programs like? Who leads it?
 - If any online programs or courses exist, how has accreditation been addressed?
 - What are the Ministry policies around that?
 - To what extent would the government policies influence the introduction of new online programs/courses?
 - Does the institution have other accrediting bodies that it must accredit its programs through?
 - Would this accreditation be impacted by online programs/courses? If so, how?



Faculty

To what extent are faculty open, trained and incentivized to support the growth of the institution's Online Learning vision?

- **Relevant stakeholders:** University leadership; Deans; Faculty
- **Interview questions:**
 - a. How open are faculty to online learning?
 - How many are teaching online courses?
 - How many are teaching technology-enabled courses? What is the governance structure and process for developing, approving and managing new programs?
 - What tools and technologies are they using?
 - How much power/clout do those who are most open have?
 - What are the key concerns of those who are most resistant?
 - What, if anything, has the institution done to change the perspective of faculty around online learning?
 - b. How much and what training do faculty receive?
 - Have they received any training in online learning? What?
 - c. How are faculty incentivized to develop and/or teach new courses (grants, course release, other), if at all?
 - d. What support do faculty receive, if any?



Instructional Design and Media

To what extent are the instructional design and media production resources and processes effective and scalable enough to support the design and development of high-quality courses?

- **Relevant stakeholders:** Center for Teaching and Learning or Unit leading instructional design and media; Deans; Faculty.
- **Interview questions:**
 - a. How many instructional designers does the institution have? What is their background/experience level?
 - b. Is there a plan to recruit new instructional designers? If so, how many? What is their background?
 - c. What resources are typically used by designers to design an online or blended courses (technology tools, media production, or other)?
 - d. If available, what does the faculty training on teaching online look like?
 - How many faculty members have done it?
 - How long is it? What does it look like?
 - How was it developed?
 - Could this model be scaled? How?
 - e. Is there a clear and structured process of putting a course online (or blending it)? What is it?
 - f. What other services do instructional designers and/or media specialists offer?
 - g. What resources does the media team have or not have compared to other institutions?
 - h. How many media specialists are there, if any? What is their background?



Appendix 4 Stakeholder Interview and Focus Group Questions

Technology and Infrastructure (Institution Systems)

To what extent are the institution technology systems effective and scalable enough to support a large online community of learners?

- **Relevant stakeholders:** Center for Teaching and Learning or Unit leading instructional design and media; IT.
- **Interview questions:**
 - a. What technology systems and infrastructure does the institution currently use? Please describe what they are for each step of the student lifecycle.
 - Are they working effectively?
 - Are they well integrated with other tools/software, ex. Registrar, M&E/Assessment, etc.
 - If not, what are the issues?
 - b. What is the level of readiness of students to use online technologies in the classroom (digital literacy)?
 - c. To what extent does the university have the technology systems and infrastructure to support online learning?
 - What, if anything, else would be needed to support scaling online learning?



Appendix 4 Stakeholder Interview and Focus Group Questions

Technology and Infrastructure (LMS & Learning Management Tools)

To what extent are the LMS and learning technology tools effective and scalable enough to support the delivery and management of online content for residential and online community of learners?

- **Relevant stakeholders:** Center for Teaching and Learning or Unit leading instructional design and media; IT.
- **Interview questions:**
 - a. What, if any, LMS system and tools are being used?
 - a. To what extent is it being used by faculty?
 - b. Do they fulfill all the institution's requirements? Why or why not?
 - c. To what extent is it integrated with other university tools?
 - b. What is the quality assurance process for selecting new technologies?
 - c. Is tech support provided to students? How often?



Marketing, Student Outreach, and Recruitment

To what extent are the marketing, student outreach & recruitment resources and processes effective and scalable enough to attract and manage a large pipeline of online learners?

- **Relevant stakeholders:** Deans; Outreach and/or Recruitment; Marketing; Admissions; Students.
- **Interview questions:**
 - a. What, if any, market research studies have been conducted by the university to inform the development and introduction of new programs, and/or to understand the student population?
 - b. Who are your institution's biggest competitors? How do you differentiate yourselves?
 - c. Who leads marketing and outreach at the university?
 - To what extent is it a centralized function?
 - Is there a coherent brand and strategy when communicating about the institution externally? If so, what is it?
 - d. What is the process for student outreach and recruitment for the residential programs?
 - How successful is it? What is your most successful outreach strategy?
 - To what extent could the same process be applied for online students?
 - How does it differ for different education degree types (Bachelor's, master's, etc.)?
 - Are any specific tools used for outreach/marketing?
 - To what extent could they be used for online students?
 - How do most students hear about the institution? What is their average profile?
 - e. What are the main modes of communication with prospective students?



Student Support and Community

To what extent are the student support resources and processes effective and scalable enough to enable the success of a community of online learners to succeed?

- **Relevant stakeholders:** Deans; Faculty; Students; Student Support Unit(s); Financial Aid.
- **Interview questions:**
 - a. What are the units providing support to residential students (student onboarding and orientation, digital literacy, academic advising, career services, counseling, tech support, financial aid, etc.)?
 - To what extent is this support centralized (across faculties and departments) and coordinated?
 - What do they offer?
 - What percentage of the services are available or could be made available online?
 - What percentage of the resources provided in person are available online?
 - b. How would this support be similar/different for students studying online?
 - c. What, if any, software or tools are used to communicate with students online, or to foster a sense of community among students?
 - d. Does the university offer any of the following student support services: English language support, student success coaching, and free tutoring support?



Appendix 4 Stakeholder Interview and Focus Group Questions

Information and Data

To what extent are information and data gathering tools and processes effective and scalable enough to ensure the quality of outcomes for the different stakeholders?

- **Relevant stakeholders:** Assessment and/or Evaluation Unit; Quality Assurance Unit; Registrar; Deans; Student Support Unit(s).
- **Interview questions:**
 - a. What tools and/or processes are available and used to gather data and information to inform activities (ex. Student and course data, marketing and recruitment, student support, etc.)?
 - Are they automated?
 - Who manages the tools and data analysis? Is it centralized and shared across different departments/units and faculties?
 - To what extent is the data (or some types of data) used to monitor and evaluate outcomes in different areas, and/or to inform decisions?
 - b. To what extent is there a culture and practice of using data within the institution to inform decisions and/or policies?



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Appendix 5 – Stakeholder Survey Questions contains the following:

Q1- University Online Learning Inventory

Q2- Respondent Information

Q3- University Information

Q4- Department and Program Information

Q5- Technology and Infrastructure Information

Q6- and Q7- Learning Management System Information



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q1 - University Online Learning Inventory

Welcome to the first phase of the Needs Assessment for this institution. In this first phase, you will complete an inventory of the online learning resources, policies, documents, processes, and infrastructure that currently exist at your university.

In this inventory, universities are asked to complete questions covering four main areas about online learning:

1. University Information
2. Department Information
3. Technology and Infrastructure Information
4. Learning Management System (LMS) Information

All questions within this inventory should be answered. However, one person will not be able to answer all the questions for their university. Therefore, you are encouraged to collaborate with your fellow university experts by convening a meeting to complete the inventory, communicating one-on-one with experts who are able to answer specific questions, or even sharing the inventory link with your fellow university experts and specifying which sections they should complete.

A few additional notes:

1. If you are an expert that has been asked to complete only a specific section of the inventory, you should feel free to skip ahead to your section, leaving sections blank for which you are not knowledgeable.
2. For some questions that a university answers in the affirmative (Yes), it is highly recommended to include data and evidence, including pictures, to log the information.



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q2 - Respondent Information

As a respondent for your university, provide your information for the following areas.

- Your University: _____
- Your Name: _____
- Your Title: _____
- Your Department: _____
- Your Program: _____
- Your Responsibilities (briefly): _____



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q3 - University Information

Q3.1 Does your university have a mission statement?

Yes

Not sure

No

Display This Question: If Does your university have a mission statement? = Yes

Q3.2 Please insert your university's mission statement here.

Q3.3 Does your university have an organizational chart showing the university hierarchy?

Yes

Not sure

No

Q3.4 Student Information

- Total Number of Students _____
- Number of Students On-Campus _____
- Number of Students Online _____
- Number of Hybrid Students _____
- Demographics of All Students _____



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q3.5 Briefly describe the financial situation for the university. In your response, describe if there is annual funding in place, and if a financial breakdown showing how funding is disbursed exists.

Q3.6 Does your university have an Organizational Structure and Business Model which includes the role of online learning?

Yes

Not sure

No

Q3.7 Does your university have an online learning strategy?

Yes

Not sure

No

Display This Question: If Does your university have a mission statement? = Yes

Q3.8 Briefly describe your university's online learning strategy and how it ties into the university's mission statement.

Q3.9 Does your university currently offer any online or blended courses/programs?

Yes

Not sure

No

Q3.10 Briefly describe the online and/or blended courses/programs that your university currently offers.



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q3.11 University Policy for Online Courses

Yes

Not sure

No

Does your university have policies and/or guidelines for online courses?

Does your university have standard operating procedures for online courses?

Q3.12 Faculty Training for Online Courses

Yes

Not sure

No

Does your university provide training to faculty on online-learning and design pedagogy?

Does your university have faculty training materials on how to design and develop an online or blended course?

Does your university provide training to faculty on using a Learning Management System (LMS) or similar instructional technology?

Does your university employ intelligent/smart technologies to support faculty training?



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q3.13 University Support for Online Learners

Yes

Not sure

No

Does your university have documentation for orientation for students enrolled in online courses?

Does your university have registration and graduation support for online learners?

Does your university provide academic outreach to online learners? For example, are online learners' log-ins and activity tracked and followed up on?

Does your university provide outreach for online learners' mental and physical health?

Does your university have online course evaluation templates?

Q3.14 Briefly describe the university's expectation for online courses and programs. Does the university prefer that they are all online, hybrid, asynchronous, synchronous, have standardized course frameworks?

Q3.15 In terms of online learning, who is the university trying to reach?



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q4 - Department and Program Information

Q4.1 Provide the name of the department or program for which this section is being completed.

Q4.2 Briefly describe how the department/program's mission and vision align or do not align with the university's mission and vision.

Q4.3 Please provide the following details for your department/program.

- Name of Department/Program _____
- Year founded _____
- Current number of faculty _____
- Current number of students _____

Q4.4 Department/Program Student Information

- Total Number of Students _____
- Number of Students On-Campus _____
- Number of Students Online _____
- Number of Hybrid Students _____
- Demographics of All Students _____

Q4.5 Does the department or program have additional LMS training, Production (Media; Graphics; Video), or online course design and build processes, in addition to what the university provides?

Yes

Not sure

No



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q4.6 Does the department or program have additional technological support in addition to what the university provides?

Yes

Not sure

No

Q4.7 Briefly describe the department/program's connection to external employers. In your response, describe if these connections offer students and graduates employment or internship opportunities.

Q4.8 Briefly describe how the department/program is funded. In your response, describe if there is a trust in place for a specific number of years, if funding has to be procured for each year, etc.



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q5 - Technology and Infrastructure Information

Q5.1 Indicate if technological support exists for students in the following areas.

Yes

Not sure

No

Email

.....

Chat

.....

Phone

.....

Video-conferencing

.....

Remote installation

.....

Messaging and project management tools (such as Slack, Trello,
Google Hangout, etc.)

.....

Other (please specify)



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q5.2 Indicate if technological support exists for faculty in the following areas.

Yes

Not sure

No

Email

Chat

Phone

Video-conferencing

Remote installation

Messaging and project management tools (such as Slack, Trello,
Google Hangout, etc.)

Other (please specify)



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q5.3 Indicate if technological support exists for staff in the following areas.

Yes

Not sure

No

Email

Chat

Phone

Video-conferencing

Remote installation

Messaging and project management tools (such as Slack, Trello,
Google Hangout, etc.)

Other (please specify)



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q5.4 Are there formal processes in place for managing online learning technology and infrastructure?

Yes

Not sure

No

Q5.5 Are there formal processes in place for scaling online learning technology and infrastructure?

Yes

Not sure

No

Display This Question: If Does your university have a mission statement? = Yes

Q5.6 Briefly describe the formal process for scaling online learning technology and infrastructure.

Q5.7 Technology and Infrastructure - Production Personnel

Indicate if your university has the following personnel in place for the production of online learning content.

Yes

Not sure

No

Videographer

Media Designer

Graphic Designer

Instructional Designer



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q5.8 Technology and Infrastructure - Production Equipment

Indicate if your university has the following equipment in place for the production of online learning content.

Yes

Not sure

No

Designated media studio space

Media room for recording videos

Set equipment (green screen, backdrops, etc.)

Camera for photography

Camera for video

Set/Production Lighting

Microphone

Soundproof audio recording space

Licenses for production software



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q5.9 Briefly describe what recording options are available. These may include video, audio, remote video recording, remote audio recording, faculty self-recording, etc.

Q5.10 Is there an online course production process in place?

(Here is an example of a [New Course Design/Development Process](#). To open the file, click on it and it will open in a new tab. This will allow you to review it and then return to the survey tab to complete the survey.

Also, please note that your university's process might not be as extensive as what is presented in the file.)

Yes

Not sure

No

Display This Question: If Does your university have a mission statement? = Yes

Q5.11 Briefly describe the Production Process Workflow for your university.

Q5.12 Is there a formal process in place for faculty or staff to reserve time to record course videos and to complete other media production?

Yes

Not sure

No

Display This Question: If Does your university have a mission statement? = Yes

Q5.13 Briefly describe the reservation process.



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q5.14 Briefly describe your university's financial situation for buying, maintaining, and acquiring production equipment and technology. In your response, describe if there is annual funding in place, as well as if there is a financial breakdown which shows how the production technology and equipment is funded.

Q5.15 Does remote access to your university's library exist?

Yes

Not sure

No

Display This Question: If Does your university have a mission statement? = No

Q5.16 Is there a plan in place to create remote access to your university's library?

Yes

Not sure

No

Q5.17 Does remote access to your university's bookstore exist?

Yes

Not sure

No

Display This Question: If Does your university have a mission statement? = No

Q5.18 Is there a plan in place to create remote access to your university's bookstore?

Yes

Not sure

No



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q6 - Learning Management System Information

Does your university currently have a Learning Management System?

Important! If you select 'Yes', you will be asked a series of questions about your university's LMS. If you select 'No', you will be taken to the survey completion page.

Yes

Not sure

No



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7 - Learning Management System Information

Q7.1 What Learning Management System(s) does your university currently have?

Q7.2 LMS - Course Management

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to send grades from LMS to Registrar System (Example:
PeopleSoft)

Ability to integrate the LMS portal solution with Registrar or Other
System (Example: PeopleSoft)



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.3 LMS - Faculty-Student Communication - Announcements

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability for students to receive announcements outside the LMS for emergency notifications

Ability for students to view announcements within the LMS

Ability to copy announcements to new courses

Ability for system administrators to edit active (system) announcements

Ability for system administrators to edit/delete any role's institution announcements

Ability for instructors to edit active announcements



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.4 LMS - Faculty-Student Communication - Discussion Forums

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability for instructors to create and for instructors and students to post and respond to discussion boards

Threaded discussions are allowed

Ability to grade discussion postings

Ability for students to attach documents in discussion forums

Ability for students to embed links in discussion forums

Ability to allow group creation in discussion forums

Ability to have anonymous postings

Ability to set release conditions (i.e., hide/show dates) for multiple discussions at the same time

Ability to search discussions



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.4 LMS - Faculty-Student Communication - Discussion Forums

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to moderate discussion forums

Ability for students to have private discussions that cannot be viewed by the teacher

Ability to use rubrics to grade discussion forums

Ability to use the WYSIWIG or HTML editor in the discussion forums



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.5 LMS - Faculty-Student Communication - Internal E-mail

Exists

Does Not Exist

E-mail tool provides 'spell-checking' ability for narrative fields

Ability to set up rules within the e-mail tool

Ability to administratively set students' LMS email address to a campus standard system for all students in all courses

Ability to forward internal e-mail to an external account

Ability to use the WYSIWIG or HTML editor in the internal e-mail tool

Ability to archive incoming and outgoing e-mails communications throughout the course

Ability to use search capabilities in the internal e-mail

Ability to create folders for filing/sorting e-mails within the e-mail tool



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.6 LMS - Student Academic Support

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to track attendance in the gradebook (example: last login date)

Ability to notify/alert at-risk students

Detailed student system tracking is available (log in, log out, last accessed, IP)

Detailed student tracking is available for each course tool (How many discussion posts were read, how long did they spend on each quiz question, etc.)

The tracking schedule can be changed by system administrators

Tracking jobs can be monitored from a GUI interface



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.7 LMS - File Sharing

Exists

Does Not Exist

Learner can submit and faculty can access PDF assignment submissions

Learner can submit and faculty can access video assignment submissions

Learner can submit and faculty can access web page assignment submissions

Learner can submit and faculty can access Word document assignment submissions

Learner can submit and faculty can access Zip file assignment submissions



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.8 LMS - Assessments, Assignments, and Gradebook

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability of LMS to allow browser lockdown techniques to ensure assessment security

Ability of LMS to allow proctor passwords to ensure assessment security

Ability of LMS to allow IP restrictions to ensure assessment can only be taken in certain locations (campus lab)

Ability of testing tool to randomize quiz questions

Ability of testing tool to randomize quiz question answers

Ability to embed videos into assessments

Ability to accept student web pages and collaborative projects with multimedia

Ability to integrate course content with rubrics



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.8 LMS - Assessments, Assignments, and Grade Book

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to set conditions (i.e., hide/show, dates) for multiple assessments at the same time

Ability to use rubrics to grade essay questions within an online assessment

Ability to copy rubrics from semester to semester

Ability to use one rubric in multiple courses sections

Peer review tools are available

Quiz Question Type: Fill in the Blank/Short Answer

Quiz Question Type: Long Answer/Paragraph

Quiz Question Type: Matching

Quiz Question Type: Multiple Choice



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.8 LMS - Assessments, Assignments, and Grade Book

Exists

Does Not Exist

Quiz Question Type: True or False

Quiz Question Type: Word Scramble

Ability to create graded pre- and post-test surveys

Group management features are available for creating group assignments

Ability to create a group discussion topic or assignment and then assign it to all groups at once

Ability to provide detailed tracking of when students select an answer (i.e. time stamp of answer choice) within the Assessment tool

Ability to re-grade assessments



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.8 LMS - Assessments, Assignments, and Grade Book

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to grade objective quizzes automatically and reveal results to students

Ability to selectively release assessments based on date

Ability to selectively release assessments based on time

Ability to selectively release assessments based on student ID

Ability to selectively release assessments based on gradebook criteria

Ability to selectively release assessments based on multiple criteria

Ability for students to submit papers online and allow instructors to grade and give feedback without downloading the assignment



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.8 LMS - Assessments, Assignments, and Grade Book

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to see student submission dates for an assignment in the gradebook

Ability for students to see their grades (MyGrades Area)

Ability to export and import from Excel into the gradebook

Ability to include or support the use of portfolios to document student learning

Ability of system to support statistical analysis of assessment results

Self-assessments are available

Ability to change the file size limit on files that can be submitted to the Assignment Tool

Ability of testing tool to allow the use of math symbols



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.8 LMS - Assessments, Assignments, and Grade Book

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability of testing tool to allow the use of images

Ability of assessments be exported to another course

Ability to map learning outcomes to assessments in a way that achievement of specific outcomes can be evaluated



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.9 LMS - Course Templates and Content Copying

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to create course templates

Ability to assign ownership of course templates to a selected group of users

Ability to assign course templates via the Student Information System (SIS) integration

Ability for instructors to easily copy (clone) from an existing section to a blank section

Ability for instructors to select specific items they would like to copy into a new course

Ability to share content between courses

Ability to package a course to import into other LMS platforms or repositories



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.10 LMS - Mobile Compatibility

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to use mobile devices to access course content

Course tools are available in the mobile client

Access to the LMS's mobile client is standard

There is a pricing plan for mobile client access to the LMS

Available tools in the mobile client have the same functionality
as the web version

The LMS is mobile-ready when using the web version through
smart phones

The LMS is mobile-ready when using the web version through
tablets



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.11 LMS - Security

Exists

Does Not Exist

LMS ensures student privacy, if necessary

LMS protects confidential data and session activity both within the application and in transit

Data and session activity are encrypted

LMS supports mass notifications for users during emergencies, including any third-party product integrations

LMS enforces strong passwords and password changes



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.12 LMS - Accessibility

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to comply with legal requirements for accessibility

Ability to support the use of screen readers (example: JAWS)

Ability to set different assessment timeframes for individual students who need more time due to a disability

Ability to provide a variety of feedback types (text, audio, video) for assignments, discussions, and other student activities

Ability to add audio/video components to quizzes or exams

Ability to add captions to assessments



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.13 LMS - Interoperability

Exists

Does Not Exist

Ability to incorporate other technologies

Ability to integrate with other tools, such as Yellowdig, Slack,
Google Drive, and Zoom



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q7.14 LMS - Scaling

Indicate if the LMS can be scaled up for the following here.

Yes

Not sure

No

On-campus

Rural

Urban



Appendix 5 Stakeholder Survey Questions

Q8 - Additional Information

Q8.1 If there are any final notes or thoughts that you want to direct to the research team, please share them here:

Q8.2 Completion Confirmation

This is the end of the survey. Please confirm that you have completed all sections and questions to the best of your knowledge and ability.

Confirm

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