P6 Programme and Service Development Policy and Procedure

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P6 Programme and Service Development Policy and Procedure

1. PURPOSE AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of the Forus Training Programme and Service Development Policy is to ensure the appropriate preparation, coordination and management of the development of programme and services at Forus Training, in compliance with QQI quality assurance guidelines.

Programme development is overseen by the P1 S4 **AD HOC Programme Development Sub Committee**, reporting to the **Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council (QAAGC).**

It is important to note that Forus Training maintains a Master File of Validated Programmes. This controls the delivery of programmes and limits them to validated programmes.

Status of Module
In Development
Validation Application Submitted
Awaiting PAEC Decision
Validated
Withdrawn
Withdrawn by Provider

Table 1: Status of Components in Master File

2. DEFINITIONS

Programme development is the process of designing and developing a programme to be approved and validated via QQI's Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training.

3. SCOPE

General Programme Validation Manual.

Forus Training identifies potential new programmemes in a number of informal and formal ways.

The QQI quality assurance guidelines underpins the validation of Forus Training programmes. It is our agreed quality system that gives us access to awards.
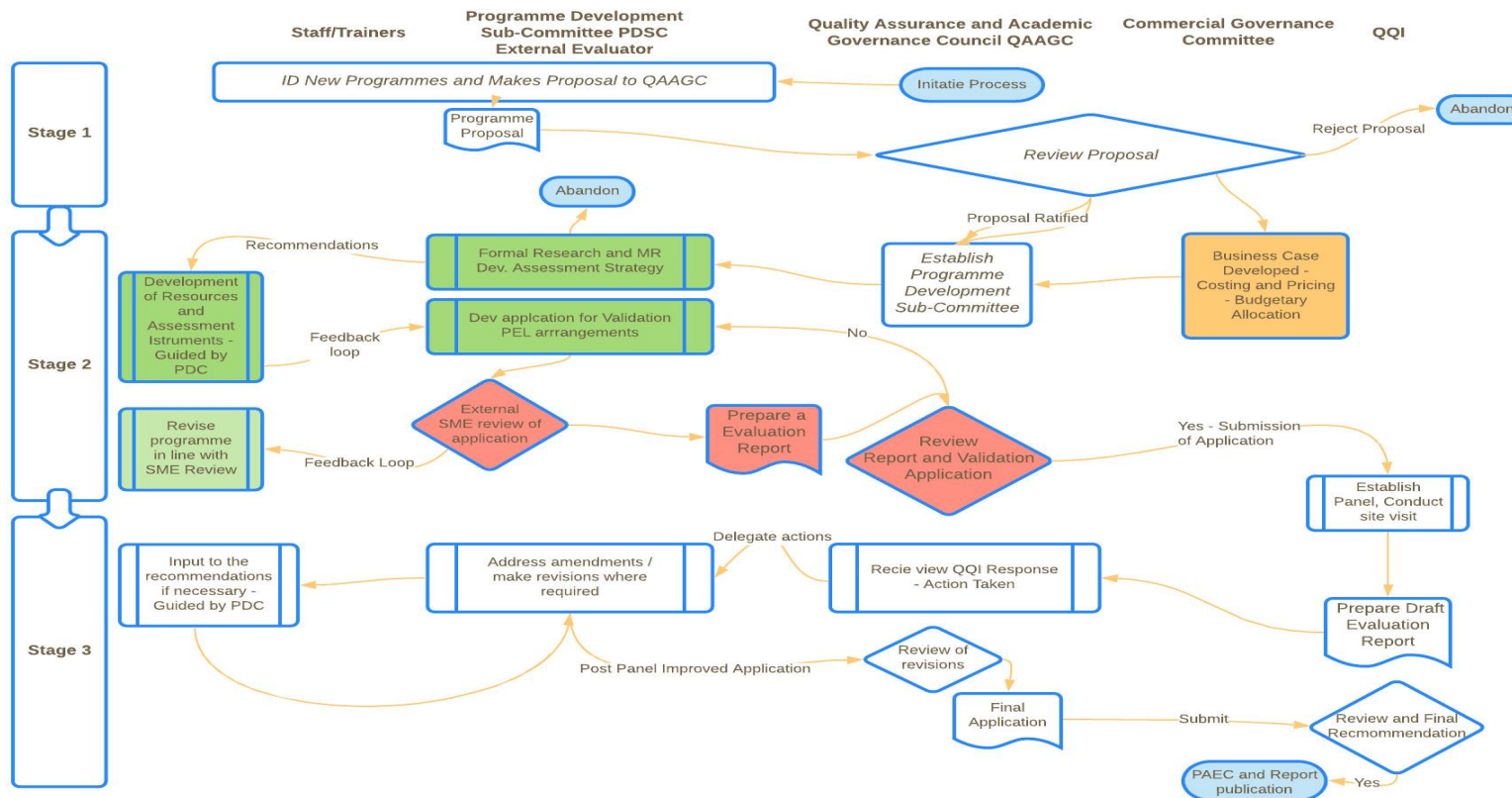
It is our duty at Forus Training to ensure the continuous development of our programmes and services so that our learners continue to receive high quality further education and training experiences.

4. PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

P6 Programme and Service Development Policy and Procedure

The flowchart is organised by the following columns: Staff/Trainers; Programme Development Sub-Committee PDSC External Evaluator; Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council QAAGC; Commercial Governance Committee; QQI.

Stage 1
- Initatie Process
- ID New Programmes and Makes Proposal to QAAGC
- Programme Proposal
- Review Proposal → Reject Proposal → Abandon

Stage 2
- Proposal Ratified → Establish Programme Development Sub-Committee
- Business Case Developed - Costing and Pricing - Budgetary Allocation
- Formal Research and MR Dev. Assessment Strategy → Abandon
- Recommendations
- Development of Resources and Assessment Istruments - Guided by PDC
- Feedback loop
- Dev applcation for Validation PEL arrrangements
- External SME review of application
- Prepare a Evaluation Report
- Review Report and Validation Application (No / Yes - Submission of Application)
- Revise programme in line with SME Review
- Feedback Loop
- Establish Panel, Conduct site visit

Stage 3
- Input to the recommendations if necessary - Guided by PDC
- Address amendments / make revisions where required
- Delegate actions
- Recie view QQI Response - Action Taken
- Prepare Draft Evaluation Report
- Post Panel Improved Application
- Review of revisions
- Final Application → Submit → Review and Final Recommendation → Yes
- PAEC and Report publication

Criteria for the selection of programmes to be developed.

The following criteria should be considered when selecting programme developers:

- Qualifications and/or experience relevant to further education and/or training,
- Experience in the design and development of programmes,
- Qualifications and/or experience in a specific field, domain (subject expertise) or level,
- Experience in the assessment of learning.

Stage 1 - Exploratory Stage

Step 1 - Identification of potential new programme(s)

Proposals to explore the viability of a new programme can come from any member of staff or trainer. The suggested programme may be sought after by a customer or potential customer or may be required as government directives change. The Quality Assurance & Academic Governance Council avails of the following opportunities to identify potential new programmes;

- Forus Training works in association with local communities and learners.
- As part of the model of delivery, trainers have regular contact with stakeholders.
- Forus Training also undertakes advisory work for the organisations with which it works.
- Such work usually relates to service development initiatives and brings Forus Training into direct contact with learners, supervisors, and committees.
- Forus Training has direct links to employers in the sectors with which it works.
- Most learners of Forus Training are currently working in relevant sectors. Therefore, learners are connected directly into the current thinking, practice and issues in their own agencies. This wealth of information is available to Forus Training through workshops, tutorials and informal discussion.
- The trainers employed by Forus Training to train on our programmes are all working as practitioners in their field and many are registered practitioners and members of the associated professional bodies. As such, they are well informed about current trends and issues in the areas of disability and non-profit service provision.

Step 2 - New programme(s) proposal presented by Proposer

The following scoping tool **P6 S1 programme Development - Tool 1 - Scope** is used in this initial exploration so that informed decisions can be made at committee level. A report is prepared by the proposer based on this form. The resulting proposal is presented to the Quality Assurance & Academic Governance Council (QAAGC).

Step 3 - Proposal Ratified

The Quality Assurance & Academic Governance Council (QAAGC) makes the decision on whether the programme validation application will be developed and put forward to QQI. This decision will be communicated to the proposer within 5 days of the meeting. The QAAGC sends a report on the proposed programme to the Commercial Governance Committee which may need to have an extraordinary meeting in order to approve budgetary costs for programme development. The Accounts Manager prepares a detailed budget for review to include projected costs (including development costs) and income over the 5 years of the application for the meeting.

Stage 2 - Programme Development Stage

Step 1 - Establishment of New programmeme Development Sub-Committee (ad-hoc)

- Membership of the Committee will be determined by the nature and purpose of the new programme(s) proposed,

  Chairperson: Subject Matter Expert

  Membership: Industry (Employer Representative)

  Trainer Representative

  Learner Representative

  Programme Development and Design Lead

  Managing Director / Head of Centre: Observer of Process - in Attendance (no casting vote)

  Programme Leader

- This committee is a sub-committee of the Quality Assurance & Academic Governance Council (QAAGC) and as such the chair of the committee will report on the activities of the committee to the P1 S4 Quality Assurance & Academic Governance Council (QAAGC),

- The Chair of the Committee **-** Subject Matter Expert is responsible for ensuring that minutes of all meetings are maintained and available to internal staff of Forus Training and to the Quality Assurance & Academic Governance Council (QAAGC). The Terms of reference of this sub committee are available to view in the Quality Assurance Manual,

- The Chair of the programme development Sub-Committee ensures to communicate to the P1 S4 Quality Assurance & Academic Governance Council (QAAGC) QAAGC should there be any apparent reason why the process should not continue.

Step 2 - Formal research and market identification

New Programme Development Sub-Committee (ad-hoc):

- The main focus of the research is to ascertain the level of interest in the proposed programme; to determine whether grantors would purchase such an initiative and to what extent; to identify the training needs of the sector as identified by the research sample; and to attempt to predict the long term sustainability of the programme.

- Develop a full rationale for the development of the programme.

- Develop a detailed identification of the target market for the programme.

- Where relevant and appropriate this will include formal market research being undertaken by the committee.

- Such research is generally qualitative in nature and is conducted through focus groups, questionnaires and interviews.

- The research process concludes with the formulation of a research report and the recommendation to proceed or not.

- In addition, the research report will also make recommendations on content and other aspects of the programme.

- The completed research will be presented to the Programme Development and Review Committee.

- Following approval of this report by the Programme Development and Review Committee a complete development costing will be drawn up by Forus Training Director and resources secured.

Step 3 - Approach to Effective Teaching and Learning Policy

- In line with our academic strategy all programmes are developed in line with best practice.

- All programmes are created with Best Practice in Instructional Design in mind.

  - Forus Training uses the ADDIE model and the ABC Learning Designer Tool from UCL to guide our processes.

  - Each module is designed using UCL'S ABC (Academic Blended Curriculum) Learning Design method for curriculum design. The ABC Learning Design method makes it easy to plan learning experiences based on six learning types from the Conversational Framework model developed by Diana Laurillard. Laurillard's Framework is based on the idea that educators should "use what we know about what it takes to learn, and build this into a pedagogical framework with which to challenge digital technologies to deliver a genuinely

enhanced learning experience" (Laurillard, 2009).

- UCL's ABC Learning Design method incorporates Laurillard's Framework into a practical curriculum design process. The method supports the blend for programmes i.e. determines the balance between face to face, online (synchronous and asynchronous) learning. It allows Trainers to choose digital tools based on the learning types identified by Diana Laurillard, making it a method that is driven primarily by pedagogical theory. It is a method that helps Trainers understand and validate their Blended Learning practice and the pedagogical theory that underpins it. The concept of ABC Learning Design also promotes the sequencing of learning activities, resulting in a structured workflow. It is important to note that this model puts an emphasis on the fact that teaching itself is a form of "design science".

- https://abc-ld.org/

Step 4 - Assessment Strategy Development of Assessment Instruments

In line with the **P1 S4 Academic Strategy Policy** the programme is developed along with delivery methodologies, a defined structure and the clear and effective assessment methods and instruments.

P6 S5 Development of Assessment Instruments Procedure

The following tools are used at this stage:

P6 S1 Programme Development - Tool 2 - Programme Framer This tool sets out and details the programme title, programme profile, learner profile, programme objectives, entry criteria, assessment schedule and programme review schedule.

P6 S1 Programme Development - Tool 3 - Delivery Framer This tool assists in determining and detailing whether the programmeme is Full-time or Part-time, the duration of the programme in total hours, the total award credit value, the modes of delivery and the delivery methodologies.

P6 S1 Programme Development - Tool 4 - programme Structure Deviser This tool is used to meet the needs of a range of different groups and to figure out the different pathways for each group.

P6 S2 programmeme Development - Tool 5 - Assessment Scheduler At this point the assessment briefs are developed in full. This is usually carried out by the Subject Matter Expert in conjunction with a member of the Programme Development Committee. They adhere to the P9 S9 C1 Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners Policy. They follow the guidance outlined in the document P6 S5 Development of Assessment Briefs Procedure.

All assessment is undertaken consistently with Assessment Guidelines, Conventions and Protocols for programmes Leading to QQI Awards.

The programme's assessment procedures must interface effectively with the Forus Training's QQI approved quality assurance procedures. The assessment of enrolled learners is planned to ensure the minimum intended programme module learning outcomes are acquired by all who successfully complete the programme.

The programme includes formative assessment to support learning and summative assessment. There is a satisfactory written programme assessment strategy for the programme as a whole and there are satisfactory module assessment strategies for any of its constituent modules. Sample assessment instruments, tasks, marking schemes and related evidence have been provided for each award-stage assessment and indicate that the assessment is likely to be valid and reliable. There are sound procedures for the moderation of summative assessment results.

Step 5 - Development of application for validation - objectives and purposes & structure

Forus Training ensures that our programmes are suitably structured and coherently oriented towards learners. That trainers and learners find the material fits with the intended programme learning outcomes. This ensures that it contributes to their knowledge and skill and that it facilitates their achievement of awards. It's important that programmes are integrated and that there isn't overlap between modules. The objectives and purposes of the programmes elements should be very clear to those delivering training. Programmes are also structured and scheduled realistically so as to facilitate the learner fully engaging with the material.

Step 6- Development of Application for Validation - Detail

Validation is a quality assurance process intended to ensure that a proposed programme can enable a learner to acquire and demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skill or competence to justify the award that is being offered in respect of that programme.

The following tools are used to do this:

P6 S2 Programme Development - Tool 6 - Learner Support Identifier

P6 S2 Programme Development - Tool 7 - Programme Module Objective Developer

P6 S2 Programme Development - Tool 8 - Programme Module Content Developer

P6 S2 Programme Development - Tool 9 - Learning Strand and Delivery Strategy Mapper

P6 S2 Programme Development - Tool 10 - Outcome and Content Mapper

P6 S2 Programme Development - Tool 11 - Assessment and Outcomes Mapper

Step 7 - Evaluation of The Programme

Conduct, and prepare a report on, an evaluation of the relevant programme against the applicable validation policies and criteria. This process is conducted in accordance with the Forus Trianing's QQI approved quality assurance procedures.

Resources for programmes leading to CAS awards (from September 2018)
Programme leading to one or more CAS Components

- Programme Descriptor Template

- Guidelines for Completing the Descriptor

- Template for Self- Evaluation against QQI Validation Criteria

Programme leading to a CAS Major, Special Purpose or Supplemental Award

- Programme Descriptor Template

- Guidelines for Completing the Descriptor

- Template for Self- Evaluation against QQI Validation Criteria

https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/Application-for-Validation-(Levels-1-6).aspx

Step 8 - PEL Arrangements

Following approval by the Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council (QAAGC) and, if

Checklist for Self- Evaluation against QQI Validation Criteria

Programme leading to one or more CAS Components

Tool to support the evaluation by Forus Training of a new CAS compound programme against the QQI validation criteria (Version 1, 2019):

The applicable fee (the application is incomplete if the fee has not been received by QQI).

The fee is in accordance with the fee schedule on the QQI website.

Following approval by the QAAGC, the submission document(s) are forwarded to QQI and proceed through the external evaluation for validation process.

After QQI has received the independent evaluation report, it will make this available to the provider.

Forus Training will be invited to:

− Comment on the factual accuracy of the independent evaluation report,

− Respond briefly to the overall findings (e.g. whether they are accepted by the provider),

− Submit any modified documentation and plans addressing any pre-validation conditions proposed in the IER.

Stage 3 - External Evaluation

Step 1 - Acknowledgement and desk review

Following receipt of an application QQI acknowledges the application in writing.

QQI then conducts a desk review to determine whether or not the application addresses the validation criteria and the programme description accords with the guidelines in QQI General programmeme Validation Manual.

Step 2 - Expert panel selection

Following acceptance of an application an Expert Panel is established to make an assessment of the application.

Expert panels are formed by QQI under the direction of the Programme Validation Manager.

The expert panel is constituted on a case-by-case basis in accordance with QQI's Core Validation Policy and Criteria and Participating in an Evaluation Panel as an Expert Assessor Guidelines.

QQI will provide secretarial support and induction/information briefing to the panel.

Step 3 - External assessment (Site Visit)

The expert panel evaluates the proposed programme against the validation criteria.

Forus Training's self-assessment is a key part of the evidence considered by the expert panel.

The expert panel will normally undertake a site visit as part of the assessment to establish if the programme meets the criteria and should be validated. The Managing Director will meet with a QQI panel supported by representatives from the Programme Development Committee.

Step 4 - Expert panel report

Shortly after the site visit the expert panel agrees a report of its findings, conclusions, prerequisites for validation, conditions and recommendations. Recommendations may be optional.

This report is known as the Draft Expert Panel Report.

Step 5 - Forus Training's Response

The expert panel report is sent to Forus Training. Forus Training is invited to respond in writing (within a specified time) on the expert panel report's findings, conclusions, prerequisites for validation, conditions and recommendations.

Step 6 - Final expert panel assessment

Following consideration of Forus Training's response, the expert panel agrees with a brief statement setting out its reaction and its final recommendations to QQI regarding validation.

This statement will be included as an addendum to the report and included in the submission to QQI/programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC).

Step 7 - QQI Decision

QQI has delegated the formal validation decision to the QQI programmes and Awards Executive Committee (PAEC). This decision is based on QQI's validation policy and criteria and informed by the following evidence:

- The expert panel report,
- Forus Training's response,
- The expert panel's reaction to Forus Training's response if any,
- A memorandum from the QQI executive on the context for and conduct of the process noting any concerns or complaints expressed by the provider.

Following a formal validation decision QQI will issue an Order of Council, Approved Programme Schedule and Certificate of programme Validation. All validated programmes will appear in QBS under validated Further Education programmes.

Stage 4 - Report Publication

Step 1 - Report Publication

P6 S8 10 Programme Evaluation, Monitoring and Review Procedure

Following the validation decision, the expert panel report is published on the QQI website.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

A. RELATED POLICIES PROCEDURES AND FORMS

Links to relevant documents

1. QQI Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training, Revised 2013

[Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training](#)

2. QQI (2013) Revised General programme Validation Manual

Z:\P1 Governance\QQI Re-engagement\Re-engagement Meeting October 2019

3. QQI (2013) Quality Assurance Guidelines and criteria for provider access to initial validation of programmes leading to a QQI Awards Higher Education and Training

[Higher Education and Training Quality Assurance Guidelines and Criteria for Provider Access to Initial Validation of programme](#)

4. QQI (2014) Policy on Monitoring

[Click to Open QQI Policy on Monitoring 2014](#)

5. QQI (2016) Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training

[Policies and criteria for the validation of programmes of education and training](#)

6. QQI (2016) Quality Assurance Guidelines

[Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines](#)

[P6 S5 Development of Assessment Instruments Procedure](#)

B. LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

1. Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012
2. Further Education & Training Act 2013
3. QQI Insights: Quality in Irish Further Education & Training – September 2019

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Academic Manager

Ensure that the courses that are run at Forus Training are always kept up to date and are delivered to a high standard, written using learning outcomes, developed based on evidenced need align with the relevant award standards be subject to internal evaluation and approval prior to submission for validation comply with requirements of Access, Transfer & Progression be subject to ongoing monitoring and periodic review.

Programme Developers:

The role of programme developers is to design and develop a learning package that will describe how a specific award standard will be reached. In developing the programme, the developers should concentrate on the relationship between the typical learner group and the award and consider the journey the programme will take the learners on so that they can reach their destination which is certification in a QQI award.

7. COMMUNICATION PLAN

Forus Training communicates with all members of staff and the trainers about the development of programmes and services.

programmedev@forustraining.ie

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

Lisa O Connell

Managing Director

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Appendix 1- Programme Leader/Trainer Questionnaire.

- It will be important to have course aims and learning objectives set before considering blended learning opportunities for your course. o It is important to ask yourself "What do I want my students to learn by undertaking this course?" Begin by asking the following:
    - "At the end of my course what should a Learner demonstrate? – that is, what are the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should achieve?"
    - What learning and teaching activities would best support the students' learning?
    - How might the students demonstrate their learning and achievements.
- The aims and objectives are in the validated programme descriptor.

Once you have a set of course aims and objectives you can then start to consider ways in which you might integrate blended learning in the design of the course.

- Why do you want to use the online learning environment?
- How do you want to use the online learning environment?

If you are taking on someone else's course or redesigning your own course, you need to think carefully about the current course practices. Take time to review the course.

- Go back over the programme aims and learning objectives, teaching and learning activities, and assessment tasks.
    - Are all these elements aligned and do they make sense in combination?
    - For example, do the assessment tasks actually allow students to clearly demonstrate the learning objectives and do the learning and teaching activities specifically support the students' development of the learning objectives?
- Undertake a content inventory -
    - What resources are you using?
    - And in what format do they exist (print, online, audio, video, etc)?
    - Have students had any issues accessing a resource?
    - Could this access be improved?
- What are the current teaching strategies? Identify what is valuable and that which you do not want to lose in moving online.
    - How are you currently using the forustraining.ie?
    - Have you used the knowledge base?
    - How have the previous students used the site?

- ○ Did experiences meet expectations for both you and Learners?
- ○ What have your experiences been in managing the course?
- ○ Are there any aspects that you would like to improve either from your own or your Learner's perspective? (e.g., assignment submission and handling, course communication, assessment guidelines, certain activities or content).
- ○ What was the Learner feedback from the previous iteration of the course?
- ○ What worked well, what could be improved, what do you want to do differently and why? It might be adapting some aspect of the course to blended learning mode may help address some issues or problems that you and the students experienced.
- ○ For example, increasing student numbers may mean that a particular learning activity is no longer feasible in its current form. This may be a good opportunity to adopt a blended learning approach.

What is your course context?

- Course-level considerations;
  - ○ What are your current teaching environments?
  - ○ Across multiple campuses?
  - ○ Lecture theatres, tutorial rooms, laboratories, industry/community locations?
- Teaching team;
  - ○ Who will be contributing to the development of this course and its resources?
  - ○ Who will be teaching it?
  - ○ What are the respective roles of the contributors to each of these tasks?
  - ○ What time commitments are involved in development and/or teaching?
  - ○ How long will these staff remain with the course?
  - ○ What teaching experience and level of technical knowledge/ skill do they have?
- Will a blended learning approach improve Learner learning outcomes?
  - ○ Are you using technology for a clear purpose or just for the sake of it?
  - ○ Will the blended learning elements I design be scalable (i.e., is it still viable if student numbers increase or decrease)?
- Will the blended learning technologies be sustainable? In the short-term, medium-term and long term future?

  Program, School, Group influences

- What is the current 'culture' regarding teaching and learning in my School/Faculty?

- Will blended learning 'fit' within this culture?

- Is there the infrastructure or resources to support the technologies?

- Identify whether there are any program, school, faculty or Group-based requirements that may influence your design work such as a Minimum Requirements directive. Your Blended Learning Advisor and/or Program Convenor will be able to tell you if there are any requirements that need to be considered by you.

- Are there industry or professional standards which impact on what you include in the course, and how you include it?

- Identify where your course fits within the broader program of study and check other courses to achieve balance and cohesion with such things as assessment due dates and use of technologies.

Who are your students?

It is always crucial to ask whether the particular 'blend' is appropriate for your audience, as there is a range of characteristics that raise different issues which can impact on the success of your blended learning design.

- Year of study – 1st year students or later year students

  - Have your students already experienced blended learning in their program of study? What level of skill or familiarity do they have with technology in learning?

  - For example, if students were introduced to Discussion Forums in their first year, you could consider designing a more advanced use of this tool as they already will have developed some basic skills in using the technology.

  - However, if it is likely that your students will have little experience using technology in learning then you need to consider working at a basic level when designing blended learning elements for your course.

- Class numbers – is it a large class or a small class?

  - The number of Learners you have in a class can both constrain and provide opportunities for the use of technology.

  - For example, with the use of instant chat 10 students might be ok as conversation can be open and easily moderated, but with 50 students moderation and management becomes very important and can take away from your capacity to engage in a meaningful way with the students. Having a tutor or assistant to support the moderation process may be helpful, or you may want to break the larger group into smaller discussion groups.

Alternatively you could use a discussion forum, which allows you to structure and moderate the student interaction more easily with such numbers.

- There is a range of ways that you can use technology to make learning and teaching with a large class more efficient and effective.

Student type – do you have international students, students from a low socio-economic background, students with additional needs, mature age students, or students with work/family commitments?

- Language
    - To support ESL (English as a second language) students consider recording your lectures (they often find it useful listening at their own pace and/or several times for clearer understanding).
    - On one hand ESL students' written English is often better than their spoken English so group work online can provide a better means for communication, however you lose the nonverbal and face-to-face communication cues and interpersonal exchanges that can help to make it a positive experience.
    - Be aware of the support services available at Forus Training for students.

- Accessibility
    - It is important not to assume that all students will have access to a range of technology, for example, a broadband internet connection, the latest mobile devices, or a high-end computer. Whilst access is often high it is not often 100% and more over students' skill level varies considerably.
    - Consider how easily aspects of your course can be adapted to suit students with additional needs (e.g., hearing-, vision-, or physically-impaired).

- Experience and Motivation
    - Will students be familiar with certain technologies already? If not, how might this impact on their motivation and ability to engage with those elements of the course?
    - It is important not to jump to the conclusion that all young people are familiar with and enjoy using technology, just as it is important not to assume that mature age students will have little or no experience with technology.
    - If you have time, consider finding out in advance your students' experience with technology (e.g., survey students in one semester before designing new blended learning elements for the next iteration).
    - Remember to provide time and resources for students to gain familiarity and the required

skills to use the particular technology before they have to formally engage with it.

Amendment History			
Amendment summary sheet			
Revision	**Date**	**Amendment summary**	**Training Requirements**
	18/02/2020	Initial release	Read and Review
001	12/08/2021	Component validation - inclusion of reference to Master File - a record of Validated Programmes.	Read
002	23 Jan 23	Reviewed and and simplified the documentation pertaining to programme development and approval. Clarified the steps for academic and commercial approval and visually represented them.	Read