Quality assurance of online learning in private higher education providers

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Plan for the session

- Key disrupters and drivers of change
- Trends toward uptake of blended and online learning
- Background to the survey and method
- Key themes from the survey:
  - growth of online and blended learning, in small organisations;
  - confidence in quality but not always using frameworks or holistic PD to build in consistency or scalability
- Good practice examples in strategies, minimum standards for online environments, design thinking projects to focus improvement efforts and sustainable professional development models.
Technology trends, implications and impact timeframes

24x7 access to experts, so we should deliver on experiences, frameworks and outcomes rather than content

Employment is changing with robotics, so graduates need problem solving and continuous, portfolio learning

Learning boundaries are blurring eg Singularity U, so we should bolster WIL and the integration of employment and education (83% of EY respondents agreed)

Nano degrees eg Udacity, so we should focus on modular, flexible components for re-skilling and up-skilling

Increasing preference for online learning: 1.1b borderless learners, so we should expand our horizons (EY – 22% of current v 42% future learners pro online)
Table 1: All higher education students by mode of attendance, full year 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2016

Source: DET higher education student statistics Table 2.7, 2012 and 2016

% increase 2011-2016

Internal = 8%
External (online) = 45%
Multi-modal (blended) = 93%
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Source: DET higher education student statistics Table 2.7, 2012 and 2016
Transformation Model (TEQSA 2017)

Curriculum context
- Organisational structure
- Reward & recognition
- Student experience & outcomes
- Program & unit design
- Performance management
- Technology
- Learning design
- Classroom management strategies

Teachers & teaching
- Discipline context
- Pedagogies
- Assessment
- Incentives
- Leadership
- Culture
- Induction
- Roles & expectations
- Technology
- On-campus hardware
- Classroom technologies
- Record keeping & reporting

Organisation & strategy
- Alignment of approaches
- Content
- Capability development
- Policies
- Support
- Governance
- L&T innovation
- Technology support for students and teachers
- Roles & expectations
- Project management and change management

Roles & expectations
- Recruitment
The sector has sustained growth in blended and online modes yet little information is available on the confidence of private providers in assuring quality.

Drawing on a range of resources (ACODE, ICDE, eMM, APEC Toolkit) a survey was developed to gather data on the uptake of blended and online learning amongst private providers and gauge confidence.

In September 2018, the anonymous survey was distributed through networks:

- ACPET
- CAUTHE
- COPHE
- HEPP-QN
- TAFE Directors’ Network
32 respondents from PHEP
(plus 1 TAFE which was removed)

Institution size. Considering Equivalent Full-Time Student Load (EFTSL), which category best describes the size of your institution

Current course delivery, on a continuum, from fully campus-based learning at one end, with a blend of on campus and online in the middle, to fully online
Subject delivery

Current subject delivery. On the continuum of on campus to online delivery, which of these statements best describes the majority of subjects (units that make up courses) at your institution:

- 23%: Classes on campus supplemented with learning resources online - students are required to engage with both
- 7%: Classes on campus with learning resources online - students are required to attend on campus classes but online resources are optional
- 2%: Classes online, resources and activities online with no student requirement to attend campus
- X%: Classes on campus and no online component

Responses
Does your institution have an effective strategy to guide blended and online delivery? (N=17)

- 10 = A or SA
- 1 = Nil
- 3 = not sure
- 3 = D or SD

Highlights the need for guidance, templates and samples
Quality assurance at course level

10 – A or SA
1 – nil
2 – not sure
4 – D or SD

Quality assurance at subject level

12 – A or SA
0 – nil
2 – not sure
3 – D or SD
Of the 17 respondents:

- Micro credentialling - 9 didn’t have QA for micro credentialing, 4 did & 4 weren’t sure;

- External benchmarks - 11 used external benchmarks to guide QA, 5 didn’t & 1 wasn’t sure;

- Quality assurance cycles - 13 had QA review cycles in place, 2 didn’t & 2 weren’t sure
Availability of professional development

Some PD offered in most institutions, yet less likely to be in **supporting students**
Is your institution broadly satisfied with student outcomes?

Broadly positive but room for improvement
Key challenges and barriers

• 16 of the 17 respondents listed barriers, including:
  • Resources and time;
  • Consistent application;
  • Communication
  • Engaging staff;
  • PD, especially for sessional staff

• … these point to the need for a **strategy** to underpin planning, resourcing and communication.
Examples of good practice: Strategy

- Navitas’ Transformation Framework (TEQSA 2017);
- ICMS’ Evaluation Framework, with Campus Equity Strategy

**Level 1 - Department-level reviews:** subject, course, student surveys and feedback forum, partner forum (ongoing)

**Level 2 - External checks** against reference points, eg QILT, external advisory committees, benchmarking (as required periodically)

**Level 3 - External peer review** with networks, external peer review of assessment and disciplinary standards, disciplinary, national and international networks (annual)

**Level 4 - External strategic review** national/international comparison of data and themes aligned to strategic priorities, industry partners & alumni (once per 7 years)
Examples of good practice: Course level

Navitas ACAP, Design Thinking project led by Catherine Tracey
Examples of QA: Subject level

- Storyline Articulate 360 (Cairmillar Institute) for consistent design, Echo 360 for access to lectures, Turnitin for all students
- Navitas’ guidelines for blended and flipped delivery
- Teacher mentors (Montessori Institute)
- ICMS:
  - guidelines for technology in L&T
  - Moodle minimum standards
Examples of QA: Professional development

- The Australian Council for Education Research: All staff associated with HE are funded by HR to complete the Online Facilitation Course. [https://www.acer.org/professional-learning/events/online-facilitation-acer-accredited-course](https://www.acer.org/professional-learning/events/online-facilitation-acer-accredited-course).
- Navitas global PD [https://learningandteaching-navitas.com/](https://learningandteaching-navitas.com/)

Learning and Teaching at Navitas

From the L&T Community

- Academic Integrity Awareness Week: Be aware, keep it real, reference right
- The stress bucket: Managing your mental health at university
- Linguistically responsive teaching: Strategies to support international students and language learners
- Excel gradebook spreadsheet: Making it easy to record student grades
Some key lessons learned

- **Accuracy and currency** online is critical – 70% (23) of respondents require students to engage with both online & on campus.

- **Guidance, templates and samples** will help lean teams. The largest group represented have fewer than 500 students, yet:
  - 1/3 didn’t use external benchmarks (35%) and
  - almost ¼ didn’t have QA processes (23.5%).

- **Whole-of course focus** is one priority, to expand QA from *subject* to *course*, eg transition requirements.

+ The sector’s generosity in sharing practice and issues through networks and forums.