DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Reviewed October 2021
by Tara Foster

Reviewed January 2025
By Laura Evans

This policy establishes the expectations for Distance Learning at Aptitude Training Academy. Distance Learning applies to courses and units where:

- Learners are not required to meet tutors or other students;
- Learners are engaged in academic study through structured activities
- Learners access to support (academic, administrative and technical) is ordinarily conducted without attending the classes in person

The purpose of this policy is:

- to ensure a high quality learning experience for Distance Learning; and
- to make clear the responsibilities of various parties in the design, development and delivery of Distance Learning courses.

Ensuring the Quality of Distance Learning

Aptitude Training Academy is committed to providing a high quality experience to our students in the online/distance learning environment. Aptitude Training Academy's approach is to design the Distance Learning provision that focuses on three key areas; structure and content; monitoring of progress; and assessment. It is not a requirement that all of these expectations will be met explicitly, however the course teams will ensure that relevant materials and procedures are emplaced that broadly map against these expectations.

Definition:

Distance learning applies to learners recruited and enrolled online and who study independently using virtual learning environments - for example via online courses, posted resources, and telephone support.

Relevant learning material is delivered in a structured and supported manner which facilitates self-managed and increasingly independent learning.

Definition of Distance Assessment

Distance Assessment is a method of assessment where the assessment is designed to be carried out remotely. Distance Assessment enables learners to be assessed even if they are in situations/settings where traditional methods of assessment may be difficult or impossible to operate. There are scenarios where distance assessment will not be possible and not appropriate where:

- Practical skills and/or interaction with individuals/equipment need to be demonstrated and assessed in person.
- There are group work situations/units where collaboration with others is required
- There is a requirement for learners to be overseen in person by centre staff at a specific physical location, under controlled conditions, including observations of performance in competency-based qualifications and externally set and marked examinations and controlled tasks.

Types of Blended Learning:

A. Face-to-Face Time with Learners

This is the most traditional form of teaching, learning and assessment. It is a 'tutor-centred' method of education and takes place in class, in person. Learners benefit from increased levels of interaction with their peers, as well as with their tutor, and are allowed the opportunity to bond with fellow learners. In face- to-face learning, learners are held accountable for their progress at the specific time the lesson is taking place, for example, through the use of assessment for learning techniques.

B. Flipped Learning

In the traditional approach to teaching, learning and assessment the tutor is the primary source of information. By contrast, the flipped learning model deliberately shifts instruction to a learner centred approach, where in class time is dedicated to exploring topics in greater depth; introducing complex concepts; answering questions; addressing misconceptions; setting clear expectations around work to be completed at home (online or paper based); and creating rich learning opportunities. As a result, learners are actively involved in knowledge construction as they participate in and evaluate their learning in a manner that is personally meaningful.

C. Online Learning

The E-Learning platform for sharing online resources and setting work is available for learners to submit completed tasks and assignments through this platform. It is recognised that a considerable amount of engaging and effective work has been set through other platforms such as YouTube or links to internet information sites.

Expectations:

1. Learning material is accessible, inclusive, relevant and current.

2. Learning materials relate to the intended learning outcomes of the course/unit and to the needs of distance learners and this is clearly signposted to students.

3. Learning materials are of a high standard, presented in a structured and easily navigable manner and encourage student engagement.

4. Learning materials adhere to copyright restrictions.

5. Complex ideas are presented in multiple supporting formats and a multi-media approach is adopted which engages students and supports different approaches to learning.

6. Activities promote enquiry, collaboration, enterprise and contextualisation.

7. Activities prompt critical reflection and review, consolidate learning and contribute to students' wider skills' development.

8.Activities create opportunities for students to link theory and practice

9.Further relevant reading and development opportunities are signposted.

10. Feedback on assessments should be in line with policy although the distance nature of the learners means that they can benefit from feedback by multiple means through detailed and direct feedback on work together with generic feedback to the cohort.

Online Safety

Ensuring live sessions are safe by following guidelines for Data Protection & Confidentiality Policies, E-Safety and Privacy Notice.