



Standards for blended learning

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1.0 Purpose

Blended learning is an innovative approach to GP training which blends on and offline learning on key curriculum topics. These blended learning topics are developed by experts from within the GP community and the GP Training central team. The overarching goal of the ICGP blended learning approach is to ensure the creation of accessible, engaging and supportive teaching, learning, and assessment activities which offer high quality learning experiences and flexibility to trainees. The approach designed around key ICGP curriculum topics which is case based and at a level appropriate for trainees. As this is a new initiative, standards are required to ensure that the planning, development, evaluation, and support of the blended learning activities are fit for purpose to scaffold and support the training and progression of ICGP trainees.

2.0 Scope

The standards apply to all blended learning resources developed for GP training schemes under the governance of the ICGP.

3.0 Standards statement

The standards follow this organizational framework:

| Level | Description |
|---|--|
| Theme | The main subject or area being discussed. |
| Standard | The outcome to be achieved. |
| Requirement | A measurable component of a standard. |
| Exemplary indicator / policy signposting | An example of how a requirement may be fulfilled. ICGP governance documents will usually provide more detailed guidance and are signposted here. |

The standards are informed by the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Quality Assurance (QA) guidelines as well as the most recent Standards and Criteria for quality assuring medical education and training in Ireland (Irish Medical Council, 2023).

The standards are subject to revision as the national training programme in general practice expands and develops.

Theme 1: Organisational Context

A strategic and organisation-wide approach to blended learning is supported by appropriate resources and staffing.

Standard 1.1: The ICGP Training Blended Learning strategy is aligned with the ICGP Strategic plan and is supported by organisation wide communication and collaboration.

| Requirement(s) | Exemplary indicators / policy signposting |
|---|--|
| <p>1.1.1: There is an effective mechanism to review and implement ICGP blended learning strategy to ensure support of the ICGP Strategic Plan .</p> | <p>1.1.1.1: The Academic Programme Manager oversees the review with key stakeholders annually to ensure the Blended Learning Strategy effectively supports the ICGP Strategic Plan. Detail in Blended Learning Strategy eBook.</p> |
| <p>1.1.2 Organisational collaboration and communication are key requirements for blended learning success.</p> | <p>1.1.2.1: A collaborative approach to blended learning development across the GP Training and Education departments is promoted to provide a seamless offering of digital and blended learning to all trainees and members.</p> <p>1.1.3.2: A robust communication strategy is employed encompassing trainees, members, and other stakeholders to promote engagement with blended learning resources.</p> <p>1.1.3.3: Communications will take the format of face-to-face visits/presentations, monthly newsletter, and/or virtual community of practice meetings.</p> |

Standard 1.2: The ICGP blended learning initiative is underpinned by appropriate technical supports, staffing, and resources

| Requirement(s) | Exemplary indicators / policy signposting |
|---|---|
| 1.2.1: An appropriate technical infrastructure underpins blended learning initiatives. | <p>1.2.1.1: An appropriate Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is available to host blended learning materials. This VLE is regularly upgraded to remain in the service plan for the technical provider.</p> <p>1.2.1.2: A licence is maintained, with an appropriate number of seats, for a development platform such as Rise 360.</p> <p>1.2.1.3: Additional licences are available to host live online webinars e.g. Zoom and to source copyrighted images e.g. Canva.</p> |
| 1.2.2: ICGP will ensure that instructional designers and GPs involved in the creation of blended learning have the appropriate expertise. | <p>1.2.2.1: Subject matter experts (SME) involved in the generation of content for blended learning will be subject to contract outlining their role and responsibilities</p> <p>1.2.2.2: SMEs are ICGP members in good standing, have completed all continuing education requirements, and have an acknowledged expertise in their subject.</p> <p>1.2.2.3: Qualified and experienced instructional designers who have been appropriately onboarded to the ICGP context will lead the development of blended learning resources.</p> |
| 1.2.3: All parties involved in blended learning development will be subject to regular review. | <p>1.2.3.1: SME performance is reviewed through an evaluation panel and post launch feedback respectively</p> <p>1.2.3.1: Instructional designer performance is regularly reviewed through bi-annual job chats and, at each resource launch through, an evaluation panel and post launch feedback respectively.</p> |
| 1.2.4: Collaboration with external partners is scheduled, as required. | 1.2.4.1: Videographers, video editing experts, and contract instructional designers will be engaged according to Irish procurement regulations. |

Theme 2: Blended Learning Curricula and Assessment

Blended learning offerings support ICGP curriculum learning outcomes to aid the progression of ICGP trainees.

Standard 2.1: The selection of blended learning topics for development is predicated on key stakeholder input and feedback.

| Requirement(s) | Exemplary indicators / policy signposting |
|--|--|
| 2.1.1: National Programme Director, Regional Programme Directors, Academic Programme Manager, and Scheme Directing Teams feed into the selection of blended learning topics for development. | <p>2.1.1.1: The National Director and Regional Programme Directors will liaise directly with the Academic Programme Manager to recommend key curriculum topics annually.</p> <p>2.1.1.2: Scheme Directing Teams (SDT's) are surveyed annually for suggestions on curriculum topics to be developed.</p> |
| 2.1.2: ICGP trainee input is welcomed into the choice of curriculum topics for blended learning development. | 2.1.2.1: Trainees are surveyed at the national Trainee Conference annually for input to curriculum topics for the next academic year. |
| 2.1.3: The Academic Programme Manager designs the calendar of blended learning offerings annually. | <p>2.1.3.1: The Academic Programme Manager, in conjunction with the National Director and Regional Programme Directors shortlists the key curriculum topics and engages the appropriate Subject Matter Experts (SME's) for blended learning development each academic year.</p> <p>2.1.3.2: The Academic Programme Manager produces and circulates the calendar of blended learning offerings by June for the next academic year to enable SDT's to plan their curriculum. A copy of this calendar is posted to the VLE for all.</p> |

Standard 2.2: ICGP trainee engagement with blended learning modules and successful completion associated assessment is central to the ICGP training programme.

Requirement(s)

Exemplary indicators / policy signposting

2.2.1: Blended learning resources are designed to be an integral part of GP training. Trainees should be directed to blended learning resources by their SDT's.

2.2.1.1: SDT's utilise blended learning resources as best suits to facilitate virtual day release, as an additional learning resource for curriculum topics done in day release, and access pre-prepared resources for small group learning. Detail in Integrating Blended Learning eBook.

2.2.2: ICGP trainees access blended learning offerings independently to support their own learning and/or exam preparation.

2.2.1.2: To support trainee autonomy, these resource are available 24/7 365 days via the VLE. All trainees have access to resource pages for the duration of training and into membership.

Standard 2.3: There is robust assessment and monitoring of trainee engagement with blended learning resources.

Requirement(s)

Exemplary indicators / policy signposting

2.3.1: Trainee progress and completion of blended learning materials is embedded in the VLE .

2.3.1.1: Formative and summative assessment is embedded in each blended learning resource. The pass mark for successful completion of blended learning resources is 80% and assessed in each resource via multiple choice questions, tracked in the VLE.

2.3.1.2: Trainees may generate a certificate of completion for their own records from the logged result in the VLE.

2.3.2: Trainee engagement and progress with blended learning resources is monitored.

2.3.2.1: Monthly reports on trainee engagement are generated on a national and basis by ICGP Training central and stored within the ICGP technical infrastructure. See 4.2.1

2.3.2.3: All data is held securely according to GDPR regulations.

Theme 3: Blended Learning Design and Development

ICGP Training design and develop high-quality, pedagogically appropriate blended learning content.

Standard 3.1: Blended learning materials are underpinned by key learning design frameworks

| Requirement(s) | Exemplary indicators / policy signposting |
|---|---|
| 3.1.1: High-quality, pedagogically appropriate blended learning resources are predicated on key learning design frameworks. | <p>3.1.1.1: Per Blended Learning Strategy ebook, all resources follow the ABC Learning Design and Community of Inquiry models and the Universal Design for Learning principles to ensure an inclusive experience for all learners.</p> <p>3.2.3.4: Video vignettes are a key design element supporting the Community of Inquiry design. approach to personalise the learning experience. The pieces to camera support the learning , enhance the practical application of learning content and enhance instructor presence.</p> |
| 3.1.2: SME's involved in blended learning development are supported in utilising key learning design frameworks. | 3.1.2.1: SME's are provided with a Learning Design guidance document and are supported by the instructional designer. |

Standard 3.2: Blended learning materials are of consistent high quality meeting curriculum learning outcomes

3.2.1: Blended learning resources developed for GP Training will be consistent in structure, interface and navigation, and will be representative of all learners.

3.2.1.1: Recommended guidelines for online resource design are available to instructional designers and SME's to ensure consistency and quality in production and style. Depictions of trainees and GPs in digital learning objects will be representative of the multicultural nature of the ICGP population. Detail in Learning Design guidance document.

3.2.1.2: Blended learning resources may contain asynchronous learning activities including digital learning objects, discussion forums, and resource packs as well as synchronous live learning via webinar all hosted on Moodle.

3.2.1.3: Blended learning resources are designed to be accessible to all learners. See 3.1.1.1

3.2.1.3: Digital learning objects will be designed to me one hour of learning content and include appropriate SME titles and the ICGP logo.

3.2.1.4: Webinars, if run, will be of one hour duration and will be repeated live across each day of day release (Tu/Wed/Th) at 3pm. Links for the webinars will be hosted on Moodle. A standard webinar template and Microsoft Form to capture trainee attendance will be used.

3.2.2: Blended learning resources will be designed to meet clear learning outcomes that map to the ICGP Curriculum.

3.2.2.1: SME's will indicate the most relevant ICGP curriculum learning outcomes for the resource and these will be mapped within the blended learning resource.

3.2.3: Blended learning resources will be designed to be challenge appropriate, interactive, case based, and evidence based.

3.2.3.1: Resources will be designed with year 3rd/4th trainees in mind, although will be applicable to all trainees and an optional resource for ICGP members.

3.2.3.2: Resources will be designed in Articulate Rise 360 combining interactive elements and case-based scenarios

3.2.3.3: Resources will link to appropriately referenced external guidelines, articles, and websites

Standard 3.3: There is a robust evaluation process supporting the development of blended learning materials

Requirement(s)

Exemplary indicators / policy signposting

3.3.1: A robust evaluation process supports the development of blended learning resources.

3.3.1.1: Prior to launch, blended learning resources are formally reviewed by members of the evaluation panel. The evaluation panel is made up of trainees and Scheme Directing Team members.

3.3.1.2: Reviews are managed by the instructional designer and the LORI evaluation template is used for the review process. Edits and feedback are validated by the SME and actioned by the instructional designer.

3.3.1.3: Prior to launch, the final digital learning object is shared with the National Director of GP Training and the Executive Director of Training & Assessment for review. Any further feedback is actioned prior to launch.

Standard 3.4: Blended learning materials and costs are managed appropriately during development

| Requirement(s) | Exemplary indicators / policy signposting |
|---|--|
| 3.3.1: Blended learning resources developed for GP Training adhere to IP and copyright legislation. | <p>3.3.1.1: ICGP will retain all intellectual property and copyright for blended learning resources.</p> <p>3.3.1.2: Blended learning resources solely use copyright free images and diagrams/elements.</p> |
| 3.3.2: On completion, blended learning resources will be searchable and available in Moodle and ICGP library content. | <p>3.3.2.1: All blended learning resources are stored within the ICGP technical infrastructure on Onedrive</p> <p>3.3.2.2: The instructional designer will catalogue the blended learning resource for the ICGP library in the library log.</p> <p>3.3.2.3: The instructional designer will create a Moodle page for the resource and upload all blended learning materials, ensuring appropriate enrolment and visibility to learners on or before the scheduled launch date. If webinars run for a topic subsequently, a recording will be uploaded here post event.</p> |
| 3.3.3: Accurate costings accrued in the development of blended learning materials are logged and processed. | <p>3.3.2.1: The Academic Programme Manager will document invoices sent by the videography; the fee for the SME; and any additional costs in the blended learning costs spreadsheet.</p> <p>3.3.2.2: The instructional designer will review, approve, and send to ICGP accounts department any expenses/payments that accrue in the development of blended learning resources.</p> |

Standard 3.5: ICGP blended learning resources may be shared across other medical training contexts

| Requirement(s) | Exemplary indicators / policy signposting |
|---|--|
| <p>3.3.1: Selected blended learning resources may be contextualised for Malaysia/Malaysian ICGP trainees.</p> | <p>3.3.1.1: The Academic Programme Manager will engage with the National Director in Malaysia to identify required digital learning objects and topics for the MINTFM programme.</p> <p>3.3.1.2: The instructional designer will share the original learning object and a contextualisation worksheet with the assigned SME in Malaysia.</p> <p>3.3.1.3: The redevelopment of the resource for Malaysia will be in accordance with the documented change requirements in the worksheet and will take approximately four weeks. On completion, the contextualised digital learning resource is packaged and produced for the Malaysian VLE.</p> |
| <p>3.3.2: Selected blended learning resources may be shared with other postgraduate medical bodies where appropriate.</p> | <p>3.3.2.1: The Academic Programme Manager will engage with the National Director for Training, the Executive Director for Training and Assessment, and the Forum of Postgraduate Medical Training bodies to promote a culture of collaboration across the sector through the sharing of relevant resources.</p> |

Theme 4: Review and Resourcing of Blended Learning Resources

Blended learning resources and approaches are regularly reviewed and duly reported

Standard 4.1: Trainee feedback on ICGP blended learning resources is captured, reviewed and meaningfully actioned.

Requirement(s)

Exemplary indicators / policy signposting

4.1.1: Post launch trainee feedback on blended learning resources is routinely captured.

4.1.1.1: A feedback form is generated for each blended learning resource and hosted on the VLE. Trainees are directed to complete the feedback form post module completion. The VLE is regularly monitored for feedback via forms and discussion forums.

4.1.1.2: A formal review of blended learning initiatives is undertaken annually using MS Forms to survey trainees and Scheme Directing Teams.

4.1.1.3: Ad hoc feedback is collected from trainees and scheme directing teams at face-to-face meetings

4.1.1.4: Collected feedback is reviewed by the blended learning team and actioned where appropriate.

Standard 4.2: Blended Learning Resources are regularly reviewed to ensure current evidence base

Requirement(s)

Exemplary indicators / policy signposting

4.1.2: Blended learning resources are reviewed to ensure they are medically up to date.

4.1.2.1: Each digital blended learning resource is reviewed by an appropriate SME every three years to ensure an up-to-date evidence base and new guidelines/reports/practices are added to the resource as necessary. This process is managed by the Academic Programme Manager.

Standard 4.3: Trainee engagement with blended learning resources is recorded and reported to Scheme Directing teams and ICGP to support learning and progression.

Requirement(s)

Exemplary indicators / policy signposting

4.2.1: ICGP staff are notified of trainee engagement with blended learning resources.

4.2.1.1: Trainee engagement with digital learning activities and live webinars is logged and stored, in accordance with GDPR regulations, within the ICGP technical infrastructure.

4.2.1.2: Monthly reports are collated by the blended learning team and circulated to each scheme showing a breakdown of their trainees engagement with blended learning resources and activities.

4.2.1.3: Collated reports are developed for ICGP central management to provide a picture of national engagement of all trainees.

Theme 5: Learner Support for Blended Learning

Trainee engagement with blended learning resources is scaffolded by learner supports

Standard 5.1: Blended learning resources are designed for all learners

Requirement(s)

Exemplary indicators / policy signposting

5.1.1: All resources that are produced will ensure that learning is responsive and meets accessibility guidelines supporting learning for all.

5.1.1.1: Blended learning will be designed according to Universal Design for Learning principles and will include alt-text for images, transcripts for media, content is screen readable. Care will be taken to ensure fonts, images, tables and more are consistent and accessible to all.

Standard 5.2: Learner support for blended learning resources is provided and clearly signposted for trainees and scheme directing teams

Requirement(s)

Exemplary indicators / policy signposting

5.1.1: Appropriate learning supports are clearly communicated to all stakeholders in blended learning

5.1.1.1: A contact email address is provided on each blended learning page for the appropriate SME and the blended learning team mailbox (supporthub@icgp.ie).

5.1.1.2: The blended learning team mailbox is regularly monitored for correspondence. Emails are dealt with promptly and courteously.

5.1.1.3: Instructions for trainees and members on the use of blended learning resources are detailed on each blended learning resource page.

5.1.2: Technical support pages are available for all stakeholders

5.1.2.1: A purpose built support page is available for both trainees, Scheme Directing Teams, and trainers respectively.



5.1.2.2: Contact details for the blended learning team and welcome videos are posted on the support pages.

5.1.2.3: Additional resources including timetables, video explainers for blended learning initiatives and technologies are posted on each support page

5.1.3: The Near Peer mentoring scheme may provide trainee supports on blended learning and online platforms

5.1.3.1: Volunteer mentors will be trained in mentoring trainees in the appropriate use of the virtual learning environment and blended learning digital objects.

Standard 5.2: Blended learning activities are conducted in a safe and supportive online environment.

| Requirement(s) | Exemplary indicators / policy signposting |
|---|--|
| 5.2.1: Trainees and scheme directing staff can expect a safe and supportive online learning experience. | 5.2.1.1: Courtesy and respect will be expected at all live events. 5.2.1.2: Closed captions or any additional supports may be requested by attendees present at live events 5.2.1.3: The Chat function in the live online platforms and Discussion fora will be monitored by a member of the blended learning team |

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

- Academic Programme Manager: overall responsibility for the development, implementation, and evaluation of blended learning at ICGP.
- Instructional Designer: responsible for the design, development and evaluation of blended learning resources.
- Regional Programme Directors: support the selection of curriculum topics for blended learning development.
- National Programme Director: informs all stages of the blended learning initiative.
- Executive Director of Training and Assessment: overall responsibility for the GP Training function and informs all stages of the blended learning initiative.

5.0 Definitions

ABC

ABC Learning Design is a collaborative curriculum design model where Subject Matter Experts work with instructional designers to create a visual 'storyboard' showing the type and sequence of learning activities required to meet the module's learning outcomes.

Blended learning

Blended learning is an approach to which blends online and face-to-face learning on curriculum topics.

Digital resource

A one hour interactive online learning module.

Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

Moodle is an online, open-source learning platform that provides custom learning environments for students. This is where digital resources are hosted.

Near Peer mentoring scheme

ICGP trainees can benefit from a national peer mentorship programme to support their training. Near peer mentoring is where Registrars volunteer to act as mentors to first year trainees, a developmental process which benefits both mentor and mentee.

Subject Matter Expert (SME)

A subject matter expert (SME) is as GP with specialized knowledge in a specific area



Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL is a framework which aims to improve the educational experience of all students by introducing more flexible methods of teaching, assessment and service provision to cater for the diversity of learners in our classrooms

6.0 Related and supporting documentation

- Blended Learning Strategy eBook
- Integrating Blended Learning eBook.
- Learning Design guidance document
- LORI evaluation template
- Library Log

7.0 Contact

GP Training Unit, ICGP

gptraining@icgp.ie