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UNIVERSITY OF KIGALI (UoK)

E-LEARNING GUIDELINES

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JUSTIFICATION FOR ADOPTING E-LEARNING AT UoK

To contain the outbreak of COVID-19, Government extended the existing measures of lockdown for additional weeks. Higher Education institutions remain closed and are encouraged to use appropriate technology to continue instruction. Due to uncertainty surrounding the end of this pandemic and to avoid further loss of time, UoK is using appropriate technology to continue instruction to avoid serious disruption of the academic calendar so that students graduate on time. Specifically, the university is adopting Electronic or online Learning to enable studies occur.

Electronic Learning or ‘e-learning’ or online learning means the application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance distance education by making learning activities more flexible to students who are geographically dispersed. The Information Technology (IT) Team has integrated the e-shule platform and customized it with our existing Management Information System (MIS) to enable a fully featured e-learning platform. The e-shule platform is known for being user friendly and the training materials with user manuals are available for lecturers and students. The current reading materials have been uploaded by lecturers and can be easily accessed by all students online from anywhere. The system is being tested before its launched for online classes.

In light of the above, these guidelines have been developed to provide an indication by which to determine the course of action. These guidelines are simply recommendations or instructions to users that provide a framework for achieving compliance with standards. They have been purposely developed to stream line the tasks and processes of e-learning at UoK and are based on the best practices as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Open and Distance Learning of Higher Education (HEC). The guidelines will help UoK employees to know how to act in situations where they are not sure of how the standard or policy applies. A separate university policy on e-learning for UoK is being developed to provide a pathway for decision making, lay out ways to measure success and show consequences for violation (non-compliance) if not followed. It should also be noted that these guidelines are open to interpretation and do not have to be followed necessarily to the letter. Nevertheless this document is an important part of the entire process of e-learning since quality is always improved more with the application of a set of guidelines.

1. Collaborative Arrangement

UoK has a collaborative arrangement with LOXOTEC LTD to support the delivery of e-learning and the following are included:

- (a) A written agreement specifying respective rights and responsibilities between the two parties
- (b) Academic resources available to support the collaboration

2. Mode of Delivery

The following media below is available for delivery which is combined for multi-media approach to meet the diverse nature of learners.

- (a) Print-based media;
- (b) Audio-visual media;
- (c) Audio-conferencing;
- (d) Audio-video conferencing
- (e) Online
- (f) CD ROM
- (g) Internet and e-mail based.

The chosen media mix is based on the following criteria.

- (a) **Accessibility** of the media to the learners
- (b) Speed within which it can be set up.
- (c) **Cost** of using it, both by the institution at the installation and maintenance as well as learner cost
- (d) Its capacity in creating **Inter-activity**.
- (e) **Organizational** requirements for development.
- (f) **Uniqueness**

3. DEVELOPING STUDY MATERIALS FOR E-LEARNING

In developing instructional study materials for academic programmes delivered through e-learning, the following criteria is used for making the study materials self-instructional and interactive.

I. At the module level, the layout/format should include the following:

- (a) Title of the module and module number.
- (b) Table of contents which is a clear reflection of the lecture titles in the book/module.
- (c) Introduction which gives:
 - (i) Overview of the module;
 - (ii) Rationale for offering the module;
 - (iii) Advice on how the learners should approach and interact with the module;
 - (iv) Give any prerequisite if applicable;
- (v) Linkage of the specific module and the others in the programme;
- (vi) Specific essential reading/reference materials; and
- (vii) Assessment mechanisms of the module.

- (d) Objectives of the module which guides or informs the learners what is expected of him/her after completing the module in other words the expected outcome.

- (e) Well balanced lectures that reflect the weighting of each lecture and sub-divided into small chunks.

- (f) Reference given at the end of specific lectures.

- (g) A summary of the whole module and possibly feedback or solution to some of the activities/practice exercises to enable the learners check their work and performance.

- (h) End of module practice exercise that summarizes the entire module.

II. At lecture level the layout/format should include the following for each lecture:

- (i) Lecture title which agrees with module content/outline.
- (ii) Lecture outline showing the content sub-topics for each lecture

(iii) Individual lecture objectives that indicate what is expected as outcome for the learners after completing each lecture.

(iv) Unit introduction which includes the following:

link between the previous lecture and the specific lecture;

overview of what the lecture is going to deal with; and

(iii) Any specific prerequisite if applicable.

(e) Each lecture treated/broken in sub-topics.

(f) The hierarchy of information distinguished by either heading scheme or numbering or both.

(g) Activities or practice exercises distributed in the lecture possibly under each topic or several topics and at the end of the lecture.

(h) Summary/conclusion at the end of each lecture.

(i) Specific reference clearly identified by pages.

III. Language of presentation should be at the level of the learners but not compromising the technical terminology of the subject.

IV. Simple language should be used to bring the learner closer to the text and the writer

4. Preparation of Module Materials for presentation

To ensure quality materials ‘fit for purpose’, for each media in use, the module materials preparation involves:

(a) Identification of the module team to include:

i. Module writer

ii. Media producers

iii. Editors/Instructional Designer

iv. Reviewers

(b) Training of module team by experts.

(c) Writing and illustrating the module materials.

- (d) Reviewing the module materials by the peer and other experts.
- (e) Editing the module materials.
- (f) Pre-testing of the materials on a trial basis
- (g) Production of the module materials ready for use.

5. Review of Curriculum and Learning Materials

Mechanism for regular review of both the curriculum and instructional materials by peers and experts.

The review focuses on relevance and appropriateness of content in relation to the syllabuses and their objectives, discipline conformity and learner expectations.

6. STAFF SUPPORT

6.1 Orientation and Training on Development of Learning Materials

Mechanisms to ensure appropriate orientation and training on requirements, skills and strategies of developing materials for e-learning by use of facilitators and training manuals.

The training manuals cover the following:

- (a) Overview of e-learning
- (b) Learner characteristics and their implications to the content development
- (c) Unpacking the syllabus to develop module outlines

- (d) Writing objectives and learning outcomes and their role in open and e-learning instructional materials
- (e) Presentation of materials for better understanding by the learners
- (f) Creating interactivity in open and distance learning materials; and
- (g) Use of visualization in open and distance learning materials.

6.2 Orientation to Lecturers or Module Tutors

The orientation of Lecturers or Module Tutors focuses on understanding their roles and strategies of operation for greater effective or maximum benefits to the learners. The orientation training includes:

- (a) Overview of e-learning
- (b) Understanding the learner
- (c) Understanding the teaching/learning process-mode of delivery

- (d) Strategies of operation of the provider
- (e) Understanding the role of the tutor; and
- (f) The tutoring processes both face to face and by correspondence through comments on assignments and tutorial letters.

6.3 Orientation to Non-academic Staff

The orientation focuses on their role and to the contribution of the programme/module. The areas to be covered should include:

- (a) Vision, mission of the provider;
- (b) Strategies of operation of the provider;
- (c) The role of non-academic staff in the teaching and learning environment and success to the programme; and
- (d) The customers who are learners or target groups and their concerns.

7. STUDENT SUPPORT

7.1 Student Services

The orientation focuses on skills for e-learning and academic socialization. The areas include:

- (a) Basic skills on e-learning:
 - (i) Reading skills;
 - (ii) Study skills;
 - (iii) Notes taking skills;
 - (iv) Writing skills; and
 - (v) Computer skills.
- (b) Academic orientation and socialization:
 - (i) Provide pre-entry guidance and counseling on:
 - (I) Types of programmes and modules available;
 - (II) Selection of modules in relation to learners needs;
 - (III) Instructional system and its requirements; and
 - (IV) Distance learner's challenges and how to cope with them.
 - (ii) Module support after admission including:
 - (I) Induction into instructional system

- (II) Timely distribution of study materials;
- (III) Introduction of learners to reading skills;
- (IV) Electronic academic support at the campus
- (V) Tutorial and counseling services to the learners
- (VI) Organization of practical
- (VII) Time management focusing on hours required to cover any specific module; and how to create the required time
- (VIII) Assignment and feed back to marked assignments; and
- (IX) Introducing learner to examination techniques.

(iii) Post-module support service including:

- (I) Immediate communication of results;
- (II) Advise on career prospects;
- (III) Lasting contact with their provider as alumni; and
- (IV) Information on new prospects by the provider.

7.2 Face to Face Sessions

These sessions may be conducted at the campuses (once the university re-opens), to serve the following purposes:

- (a) To provide special session for difficult aspects of the module at the middle of the programme/module
- (b) To provide some revision work to students before examination.
- (c) To provide general orientation and introduction to the module materials at the commencement of the module (i.e., once e-learning programmes are fully accredited)

7.3. Examination Regulations

The current university regulations apply. Only class assignments will be administered online for now. CATs and Final exams will be administered when the university re-opens.