

# E-learning Quality

## Criteria:

## Workbook



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E-learning Quality Criteria:  
Workbook



- This workbook gives practical examples of using the E-learning Quality Criteria.
- Part 1 of the workbook focuses on informal and non-formal content. The content may include podcasts, videos or micro courses.
- Part 2 discusses formal content.
- The idea is to show through practical examples how the E-learning Quality Criteria can be used when planning content.
- Higher education institutions can apply the examples given in the workbook to their own needs.
- The workbook can be used in team-based and communal work of different actors in higher education institutions.
- The educational offering does not have to meet all the quality criteria exhaustively; they may be applied to various types of content in different ways.
- Terms used in the workbook:
  - **Informal** = everyday learning
  - **Non-formal** = unofficial, unstructured learning.



PART 1:

# Informal & non-formal content

# Ideas and examples for producing high-quality informal and non-formal education content

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E-learning Quality Criteria:  
Workbook



Part 1

Research-based  
education

Modularity

Diversity

Accessibility

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# Research-based education

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The contents of the educational offering are based on research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Include clear references to sources.</li> <li>➤ Include a link to the references on each page.</li> <li>➤ In a podcast, read out the sources at the end.</li> </ul>	
<p>Education is based on research while taking into account the special features of each education and scientific disciplines.</p> <p>Some good principles include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The starting point for content production is labour market needs and workplace relevance.</li> <li>➤ In pedagogy, for instance, the research-based approach relies on existing research evidence.</li> </ul>	<p>Multidisciplinarity is considered in research-based education.</p> <p>A useful tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Could the contents be produced by a multidisciplinary group with experts from different fields?</li> </ul>

Part 1

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# Modularity



REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Parts of the educational offering that the higher education institutes bring to Op.in.fi are offered to be completed as micro-credentials<sup>1</sup> or micro-learning<sup>2</sup>.</p>	
<p>The contents are designed stackable. There are tangible vertical and horizontal<sup>3</sup> transitions between content units, and preliminary information requirements and further possibilities are taken into account.</p> <p>For example, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Break larger units down into smaller parts, designed to be selected based on the learner's needs.</li> <li>➤ Divide the content into smaller parts, e.g. 15-minute inspiration sections, which raise the learner's interest in the following parts.</li> </ul> <p>When the contents are designed to be stackable, the learner can choose more content with the same or a different theme, or pursue formal education relating to the same topic.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> Micro-credential is a small amount of learning (1–59 credits) with described learning outcomes and pre-determined scope which has been reliably assessed and for which a certificate is awarded that is available for electronic use and owned by the learner.

<sup>2</sup> Micro-learning refers to an amount of learning worth less than one credit.

<sup>3</sup> Vertical stacking of studies refers to progress within a specific theme. Horizontal stacking of studies means learning on different themes at the same difficulty level.

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The educational offering comprises independent modules that the learner can compile into studies suitable for them.</p> <p>A useful tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The content may include units implemented in connection with joint projects between higher education institutions.</li> <li>➤ The learner may be awarded a digital badge once they have selected and completed enough parts on a specific theme.</li> </ul>	<p>The learner can compile studies suitable for them across higher education institutions.</p> <p>A useful tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Learners can select parts with the same theme offered by several different higher education institutions.</li> </ul>
<p>The contents of the educational offering are presented intelligibly, both as individual content and study units and as parts of larger modules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Write a concise and easy-to-understand introduction to the content. Explain why the learner should choose the content in question.</li> <li>➤ Provide the learner with information about how they can continue their learning and proceed with the next content units.</li> </ul>	

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# Diversity

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Learning is flexible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Make learning independent of time and place: for example, you can divide the content into smaller parts that the learner can take easily as permitted by their personal schedule.</li> </ul>	<p>Alternative ways to complete studies are offered.</p> <p>For example, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Turn written content into a podcast or video or, conversely, a video into written material.</li> </ul>
<p>Learners with diverse backgrounds have been taken into account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ You can offer the content in simple Finnish or in different languages; as spoken language or with subtitles.</li> <li>➤ Think of a learner who has not previously studied at a higher education institution: explain terms or instruct the learner to use different tools to support their learning.</li> </ul>	
<p>The learner's activity in the learning process is planned in advance.</p> <p>A useful tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To activate the learner, use the survey function, reactions and/or chat function in webinars.</li> <li>➤ Consider when the learner should have an active role in producing text and assessing their personal competence.</li> <li>➤ Use reflection questions in videos, podcasts or written material. Questions can be added to the beginning of the content or between different parts.</li> </ul>	<p>Diverse working methods, including learner-centred active learning methods and collaborative learning, are preferred.</p>

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The learner receives feedback on their learning during the learning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use interactive features in videos. When planning interactive features, ensure that the learner receives immediate feedback on their answers.</li> <li>➤ Plan questions that reflect on content.</li> <li>➤ Use automated quizzes, including those embedded in text.</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to teachers, the learner also receives feedback from peers.</p> <p>A useful tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use the video commenting option as a form of peer feedback.</li> </ul>
<p>The learner receives guidance during the learning process.</p> <p>Guidance is not always personal. For example, you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Add guidance elements to videos.</li> <li>➤ Verbalise transitions from one topic or perspective to another in a podcast.</li> <li>➤ Use reflection questions to guide the learning process.</li> <li>➤ Build guidance into the content by means of regular guidance messages.</li> <li>➤ Support self-study by dividing a module into themes and providing the learner with the necessary instructions/tools.</li> <li>➤ Offer learners an opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic.</li> <li>➤ Include a link to an expert forum or similar in the content.</li> <li>➤ Guide the learner in combining materials.</li> </ul>	
<p>Assessment is competence-based.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use assignments that are corrected automatically and give the learner feedback.</li> </ul>	<p>The chosen assessment methods also support the development of the learner's self-assessment skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use reflection questions, including self-reflection related to the learner's work.</li> </ul>

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Diverse assessment methods are used.</p> <p>A useful tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use learners' self-assessment.</li> </ul>	
<p>The assessment criteria are explicitly described.</p>	
<p>The assessment criteria are openly available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Describe the competence assessment criteria to facilitate self-assessment by learners.</li> <li>➤ Describe the level of competence that can be acquired through the content, enabling the learner to assess their knowledge and competence.</li> </ul>	
<p>Progress and performance monitoring or other learning analytics tools are used.</p>	<p>Learning analytics are used to support the learner's ownership of their own learning process and to support participation and responsibility in building their own study path.</p>
<p>A feedback channel has been implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Add a link to a feedback survey to the end of a video or to a podcast description. You can also use reactions, such as smileys or stars.</li> </ul>	
<p>Learning analytics results and learner feedback are taken into consideration in the implementation development work.</p>	<p>Learning analytics are used by the higher education institution in their continuous implementation development work and by the teachers in their instruction.</p>

# Accessibility of digitally supported learning

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Open digital learning resources and environments are available.</p> <p>Use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <a href="#">How to account for the quality of OER?</a></li> <li>➤ <a href="#">How to account for quality in Open Educational Practices?</a></li> </ul> <p>A useful tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In projects, think of openness already at the planning stage, for example by agreeing with expert speakers on rights to use recordings.</li> </ul>	
<p>Accessibility requirements have been considered in the learning material.</p> <p><b><u>Act on the Provision of Digital Services</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Follow the accessibility guidelines and recommendations of your higher education institution.</li> <li>➤ Also draw on the <a href="#">Web accessibility requirements of the Regional State Administrative Agency</a>.</li> <li>➤ A text version of podcasts and audio content should be provided in an accessible environment.</li> <li>➤ Add subtitles to recordings. Budget for subtitles when drawing up the project plan.</li> </ul>	
<p>The learning material is clear and logical, and the information is easy to find.</p>	



REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The education provider makes sure that the content is visually accessible (e.g. font, colour contrasts, layout, alternative texts for images).</p>	
<p>The education provider makes sure that the content is easily accessible with different terminal devices, aids, and connections.</p> <p>A useful tip:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Also provide digital content in offline mode, such as a downloadable PDF file.</li> </ul>	
<p>The education provider has published an accessibility statement indicating possible shortcomings and the possibility of providing feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In addition to the registration page, also include a link to the accessibility statement in content pages.</li> <li>➤ Make sure that accessibility statements can be found at the learning environment level. Include a link to the accessibility statement of the learning environment in individual education programmes.</li> </ul>	

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# Availability

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The learning process and its progress are visualised on the learning platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In connection with the course, clearly describe its content, the time needed for completing it, the learning outcomes and the assessment to the learner.</li> <li>➤ In a podcast series, describe the themes of each section.</li> <li>➤ For a series of videos, create a playlist that shows its contents in the right order.</li> <li>➤ Use time stamps in your videos.</li> </ul>	<p>The learner can easily navigate on the learning platform.</p>
	<p>The relevant information can be found effortlessly on the learning platform.</p>
	<p>The learning platform has a consistent structure, preferably uniform within the higher education institution, e.g. utilising a few different course templates.</p>

PART 2:

# Formal content

# Ideas and examples for producing high-quality formal education content

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# Research-based education

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The content of the educational offering is based on research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Content based on research evidence is the education provider's quality label and a sign of a reliable education provider.</li> <li>➤ The contents of education programmes are based on up-to-date research evidence.</li> <li>➤ The content has workplace relevance and is based on research, development and innovation.</li> <li>➤ Start from a versatile concept of knowledge. In addition to research evidence, information based on experience is also important. For example, methods piloted in RDI projects and experiences gained from them provide interesting information for sharing.</li> <li>➤ Spoon-feed the most important sources to the learner if they do not yet have the capability to search for information.</li> </ul>	
<p>Education is based on research while taking into account the special features of each education and scientific disciplines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rely on teaching methods and assessment based on up-to-date research evidence.</li> <li>➤ Note the specific features of fields of education and scientific disciplines: whether the relevant, latest and best information is based on professional knowledge/information produced in the workplace or, for example, a scientific publication depends on the field.</li> </ul>	<p>Multidisciplinary is considered in research-based education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A useful tip: Guide the learner to the latest knowledge and introduce them to discourse in the field.</li> </ul>

# Modularity



REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Parts of the educational offering that the higher education institutes bring to Opin.fi are offered to be completed as micro-credentials<sup>1</sup> or micro-learning<sup>2</sup>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Start with a light touch: make use of micro-learning tools in one part of the course.</li> <li>➤ Draw on self-study materials and other results produced by RDI projects as part of study units.</li> <li>➤ Divide larger modules into smaller sections that enable independent study.</li> <li>➤ Consider if study unit content could also be used outside the specific study unit, for example as open learning material that supports informal learning.</li> </ul>	

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<sup>2</sup> Micro-learning refers to an amount of learning worth less than one credit.

<sup>3</sup> Vertical stacking of studies refers to progress within a specific theme. Horizontal stacking of studies means learning on different themes at the same difficulty level.

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The content is designed to be stackable. There are tangible vertical and horizontal<sup>3</sup> transitions between content units, and preliminary information requirements and further possibilities are taken into account.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Point the learner to potential studies available in higher education networks to recognise possibilities for stacking.</li> <li>➤ Describe different options for continued learning available to a learner who has acquired basic competence (different orientations and modules).</li> </ul>	
<p>The educational offering comprises independent modules that the learner can compile into studies suitable for them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Direct the learner to opportunities for further studies enabled by the completion of a study unit (incl. field-specific tips or network offerings).</li> <li>➤ Give a competence-based description of the education, including previous competence requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>The learner can compile studies suitable for them across higher education institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ You can suggest to the learner studies in which they can learn more about a theme.</li> </ul>
<p>The contents of the educational offering are presented intelligibly, both as individual content and study units and as parts of larger modules.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Describe the competence produced by the course both as an independent module and as part of a more extensive learning path.</li> </ul>	

Part 2

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# Diversity

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p><b>Learning is flexible.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How can you promote flexibility? Flexibility can be related to time, place, methods of completion, rate of progress or utilisation of previous competence.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Alternative ways to complete studies are offered.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ For example, could the learner give a demonstration of competence to complete a study unit?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learners with diverse backgrounds have been taken into account.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When giving the learner assignments and using concepts, account for learners from different backgrounds, ensuring that everyone understands what you mean (operating in the online learning environment, language skills, etc.)</li> <li>➤ Use various tests for identifying learners' initial level.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>The learner's activity in the learning process is planned in advance.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Describe the learning process clearly.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Diverse working methods, including learner-centred active learning methods and collaborative learning, are preferred.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide learners with optional paths where different forms of learning can be emphasised according to personal choice.</li> <li>➤ Use gamification of learning, for example by means of learning analytics.</li> <li>➤ Ensure that the learner has a possibility and capabilities for communal work.</li> <li>➤ Select for each course the working methods that best support learning.</li> </ul>

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The learner receives feedback on their learning during the learning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Describe clearly how and where learners can get guidance.</li> </ul>	<p>In addition to teachers, the learner also receives feedback from peers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Plan peer work: schedule working time and set up pairs/groups in advance.</li> </ul>
<p>The learner receives guidance during the learning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Describe the feedback channels and opportunities clearly.</li> </ul>	
<p>Assessment is competence-based.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensure consistency: Describe the competence criteria and learning outcomes clearly, deriving the assessment criteria directly from them. Tell the learner at the beginning what they need to learn.</li> <li>➤ When formulating assessment criteria, ensure that the learner understands what kinds competence development objectives they must achieve on the course.</li> <li>➤ When describing the learning outcomes, make sure that their achievement can be assessed and that the learner knows what they are expected to do to receive a certain grade.</li> </ul>	<p>The chosen assessment methods also support the development of the learner's self-assessment skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide clear and step-by-step instructions for self-assessment assignments, use supportive questions, and account for the learners' levels and stages in their studies.</li> <li>➤ Boldly experiment with different methods of self-assessment and peer assessment – learn by doing! Also remember feedback given by the teacher.</li> </ul>
<p>Diverse assessment methods are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Pay attention to pedagogical consistency: the selected objectives, contents, methods and assessment should be consistent with each other.</li> </ul>	

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The assessment criteria are explicitly described.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use an assessment matrix.</li> </ul>	
<p>The assessment criteria are openly available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Make sure the assessment criteria are easily available in the learning environment.</li> <li>➤ Ensure that assessment is transparent: assessment is a form of learning.</li> </ul>	
<p>Progress and performance monitoring or other learning analytics tools are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use progress tracking or a progress bar for core assignments in the online learning environment.</li> <li>➤ Use automatic reminders as a guidance tool that supports the learner's work.</li> <li>➤ A useful tip: could the template include a ready-made progress monitoring tool?</li> </ul>	<p>Learning analytics are used to support the learner's ownership of their own learning process and to support participation and responsibility in building their own study path.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Where possible, use progress tracking and other tools that help the learner understand their progress in an online learning environment.</li> <li>➤ Regularly direct learners to use the available analytics during the course.</li> <li>➤ Use learning analytics data to support such aims as group formation.</li> <li>➤ Place the learning analytics view in as visible a location as possible in the (virtual) learning environment.</li> </ul>

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>A feedback channel has been implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Make sure the feedback channel is easily available in the learning environment.</li> </ul>	
<p>Learning analytics results and learner feedback are taken into consideration in the implementation development work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Let learners know that the course has been developed/modified based on earlier feedback.</li> <li>➤ Respond to feedback from learners.</li> <li>➤ Collect feedback on each of your implementations and plan in advance how you will use it in future implementations.</li> </ul>	<p>Learning analytics are used by the higher education institution in their continuous implementation development work and by the teachers in their instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Experiment with using data to support everyday pedagogy and guidance.</li> <li>➤ Find out about the learning analytics your higher education institution offers and how you could use it.</li> <li>➤ If possible, use learning analytics to find out about learners' prior learning before a study unit.</li> </ul>

# Accessibility of digitally supported learning



REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Open digital learning resources and environments are available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Try to avoid multiple logins.</li> <li>➤ Use the aoe.fi website or materials found in other open environments.</li> <li>➤ Account for licences to learning materials in libraries and other similar sources. All learners must have access to the materials.</li> </ul>	
<p>Accessibility requirements have been considered in the learning material.</p> <p><u>Act on the Provision of Digital Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Remember to provide subtitles or a text version for videos.</li> </ul>	
<p>The learning material is clear and logical, and information is easy to find.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Get to know and use the Universal Design Learning (UDL) principles.</li> <li>➤ Aim to use simple language and clear expressions.</li> </ul>	

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The education provider makes sure that the content is visually accessible (e.g. font, colour contrasts, layout, alternative texts for images).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use automated tools for checking accessibility in software offered by your higher education institution and accessibility checklists.</li> </ul>	
<p>The education provider makes sure that the content is easily accessible with different terminal devices, aids, and connections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Make sure that the contents are also accessible and available to learners who are not students at your home institution.</li> </ul>	
<p>The education provider has published an accessibility statement indicating possible shortcomings and the possibility of providing feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Be aware of efforts to develop/promote accessibility and the accessibility statement in your higher education institution.</li> </ul>	

# Availability

REQUIREMENT	RECOMMENDATION
<p>The learning process and its progress are visualised on the learning platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Visualise the learner's process on a timeline.</li> <li>➤ Include previous competence required for a study unit in the study unit description.</li> <li>➤ Prepare a learner's guide for what to do during the study unit.</li> </ul>	<p>The learner can easily navigate on the learning platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Select the learning platform tools that best support learning on your course.</li> <li>➤ In the learning environment, use shared course or model templates or a jointly defined method of progressing to make it easy and logical for the learner to proceed.</li> </ul>
	<p>The relevant information can be found effortlessly on the learning platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Give the learner the most important information about progressing on the course at the beginning.</li> </ul>
	<p>The learning platform has a consistent structure, preferably uniform within the higher education institution, e.g. utilising a few different course templates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use shared templates created for higher education institutions' learning environments that guide you to take many diversity issues into account.</li> <li>➤ Use shared templates, for example those produced by Digivisio (to be published at the end of 2024).</li> </ul>

This workbook was jointly produced by the pilot HEIs of Digivisio and the project office.



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