



# National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	E-Learning/Virtual Learning Policy
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/TEL/015
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Directorate of Learning Content Management System (DLCMS)
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## 1.0 Introduction

In the era of rapid technological advancements and the global shift towards digitalised education, the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) recognises the transformative potential of e-learning and virtual learning. As one of the premier institutions in Nigeria, NOUN is committed to harnessing this potential to provide accessible, flexible, and high-quality education to its diverse student population, regardless of their geographic locations or socio-economic backgrounds.

As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of digital education, this policy will serve as a beacon, guiding NOUN's efforts in delivering world-class e-learning and virtual learning opportunities to its students. It underscores our commitment to innovation, inclusivity, and academic excellence in the digital age as stated in our vision and mission statements.

## 2.0 Purpose

This policy aims to provide a framework for the design, development, delivery, assessment, and review of e-learning/virtual learning at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN).

## 3.0 Scope

This policy covers the design, development, delivery, assessment, and review of e-learning/virtual learning at NOUN.

## 4.0 Definitions

- 4.1 **E-Learning:** Refers to structured learning experiences delivered or facilitated by electronic technologies, often via the internet. E-learning can encompass a variety of formats, from interactive online courses and simulations to podcasts and educational videos. It allows learners to engage with content on their own schedules, making it a flexible and often self-paced educational option. While e-learning can be a standalone mode of instruction, it is frequently used to supplement traditional classroom instruction, especially in blended learning environments.
- 4.2 **Virtual Learning:** More encompassing than e-learning, virtual learning involves creating a comprehensive digital environment that mirrors traditional learning settings. This can include live virtual classrooms, discussion forums, peer collaboration tools, and digital resources. Virtual learning is characterized by its ability to connect learners from diverse geographical locations in real-time (synchronous) or at a time that is convenient for them (asynchronous). It provides an immersive learning experience, breaking the barriers of location and time while retaining, and often enhancing, the interactive and collaborative aspects of traditional education.
- 4.3 **Asynchronous Learning:** A student-centred teaching method that utilizes online resources to facilitate learning, allowing students to engage with materials on their own schedules, free from the confines of time and location.
- 4.4 **Blended Learning:** An educational approach that combines traditional in-person classroom methods with online activities, providing a more integrated and diverse learning experience.
- 4.5 **Content Management System (CMS):** A digital platform that enables users to publish, edit, and modify content from a centralized interface. It streamlines the collaborative workflow, either manually or through computer-based processes.
- 4.6 **E-Learning:** The use of electronic technologies, primarily via the internet, to deliver education and training. It encompasses a wide range of applications, from online courses and materials to interactive simulations and mobile learning applications.
- 4.7 **Hybrid Learning:** Synonymous with Blended Learning, it merges in-person classroom instruction with online activities to offer a comprehensive learning experience.

- 4.8 **Learning Management System (LMS):** A software platform designed for the creation, distribution, and management of educational content. It facilitates the administration, tracking, and reporting of various learning activities, both in classrooms and online.
- 4.9 **Service Level Management:** The principal management of IT services, ensuring that agreed-upon services are delivered effectively and efficiently. It encompasses the overall coordination and monitoring of IT service delivery.
- 4.10 **Synchronous Learning:** A mode of teaching where learners engage with the content and the instructor simultaneously, often facilitated by tools like video conferencing.
- 4.11 **Totally Online:** Describes a course or program that is delivered exclusively in a virtual environment, leveraging digital technology and the internet.
- 4.12 **Virtual Learning:** A broader educational experience where teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. It can encompass synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (self-paced) learning activities, allowing learners to access content and resources from any location with internet connectivity.
- 4.13 **Web-based:** Refers to platforms or systems that operate on the internet, utilizing the infrastructure of the "world wide web."

## 5.0 Principles

NOUN's e-learning and virtual learning initiatives are guided by core principles. These are.

### 5.1 Equity and Accessibility:

NOUN is committed to ensuring that every student, irrespective of geographical location, physical abilities, or socio-economic background, has unimpeded and equal access to top-tier e-learning resources.

### 5.2 Quality Assurance

The quality of e-learning content and its delivery at NOUN is held to the highest standard, aiming not just to match but to surpass the rigor and effectiveness of traditional classroom instruction.

### 5.3 Flexibility

Recognizing the varied needs and preferences of our diverse student body, NOUN's e-learning approach will be designed to provide an adaptable and personalized learning pathway.

## **5.4 Interactivity and Engagement**

NOUN's virtual learning platforms will prioritise fostering active student participation. By integrating collaborative tools and interactive elements, we aim to create a dynamic and engaging online learning environment.

## **6.0 Policy Statements**

- 6.1 The content and delivery shall be interactive and easily accessible to users.
- 6.2 Assessment shall foster deeper understanding and critical thinking for continuous academic excellence.
- 6.3 There shall be robust and unwavering infrastructure to support successful e-learning/virtual learning delivery.
- 6.4 There shall be continuous training of staff for upskilling and updating of knowledge towards excellent delivery of e-learning/virtual learning.
- 6.5 There shall be helpdesk team to support the learners and faculties.
- 6.6 NOUN shall be committed to safeguarding the integrity, confidentiality, and accessibility of data.
- 6.7 NOUN shall ensure that learners and faculties can engage in online learning with the utmost confidence and peace of mind.
- 6.8 NOUN shall be committed to continuous improvement on the university e-learning/virtual learning. This shall require persistent efforts to adapt, refine, and innovate.

## **7.0 Policy Implementation**

### **7.1 Content Development and Delivery**

#### **7.1.1 Standardization**

- i. **Consistency in Quality:** All course contents developed at NOUN shall adhere to the institution's rigorous in-house styles and standard, ensuring uniformity and excellence across all e-learning modules, courses, and programmes.

- ii. **National Alignment:** Additionally, the content shall align with national e-learning benchmarks set by the National Universities Commission (NUC), guaranteeing that our offerings meet or surpass national expectations.

#### 7.1.2 **Interactivity**

**Engaging Learning:** To foster active participation and deepen comprehension, course materials will incorporate interactive elements. Features such as quizzes, simulations, and discussions shall be integral components of our e-learning offerings.

#### 7.1.3 **Updates**

**Staying Current:** Recognizing the dynamic nature of academic content and technology, faculties and instructors at NOUN will periodically review and update e-learning materials. This ensures that students consistently have access to the latest, current and most pertinent information.

#### 7.1.4 **Feedback Mechanism**

**Student Voice:** NOUN values and prioritizes the perspectives of its learners. A structured feedback mechanism will be established, and students shall be encouraged to share their insights on e-learning content and its delivery. This feedback will be instrumental in guiding the continuous refinement of our e-learning strategies.

### 7.2 **Assessment and Accreditation**

#### 7.2.1 **Integrity**

**Maintaining Standards:** NOUN is unwavering in its commitment to upholding academic integrity. To this end, e-learning assessments will implement rigorous measures, including proctored exams, sophisticated plagiarism detection tools, and secure browsing environments, ensuring that assessments remain credible and fair.

#### 7.2.2 **Variety**

**Holistic Evaluation:** Recognizing that learning is multi-dimensional, our assessments will encompass a diverse range of formats. From quizzes and assignments to discussions and collaborative projects, each assessment method aims to capture different facets of a student's understanding and skills.

#### 7.2.3 **Feedback**

**Guided Learning:** Beyond mere evaluation, assessments at NOUN are a conduit for learning. Facilitators are dedicated to providing students with

prompt, detailed, and constructive feedback, guiding them towards academic improvement and mastery of the subject matter.

### 7.3 Infrastructure and Support

7.3.1 **Foundational Support:** A strong technological backbone is essential for delivering uninterrupted and high-quality e-learning experiences. NOUN will consistently invest in and upgrade its technology infrastructure, ensuring fast, reliable, and secure access to e-learning resources.

7.3.2 **Future-Ready:** In addition to maintaining current systems, NOUN is committed to staying abreast of technological advancements, ensuring our infrastructure is always future-ready and scalable.

### 7.4 Training

7.4.1 **Empowering Educators:** Recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities of e-learning, specialized training programmes will be instituted for faculties. These will equip them with the skills and knowledge to harness the potential of digital platforms effectively.

7.4.2 **Supporting Students:** For students, transitioning to e-learning can be daunting. Training sessions and orientation programmes will be available to help them navigate and utilize e-learning tools, ensuring they can make the most of the digital resources at their disposal.

### 7.5 Helpdesk

7.5.1 **Opening Time Assistance:** E-learning transcends traditional time boundaries, and so, does our support. A dedicated technology enabled helpdesk team will be available to address any e-learning related issues or queries, ensuring that students and faculties always have a helping hand when they need it.

7.5.2 **Specialized Support:** The support team will be trained specifically in the nuances of our e-learning platforms, guaranteeing accurate and swift resolution of issues.

### 7.6 Data Protection and Privacy

#### 7.6.1 Confidentiality

- i. **Guarding Personal Information:** Every piece of student data, from personal details to academic records are treated as confidential. NOUN

pledges that this data will not be shared with unauthorized third parties, sold, or misused in any manner.

- ii. **Limited Access:** Access to student data is restricted to a limited number of authorized personnel, ensuring that the risk of unintended disclosure is minimized.

### 7.6.2 Security

- i. **Proactive Measures:** Understanding the potential risks in the digital realm, NOUN will employ state-of-the-art security protocols and measures to protect against data breaches, unauthorized access, and cyber threats.
- ii. **Regular Audits:** To ensure that our security systems remain robust and up-to-date, regular audits and evaluations will be conducted. This proactive approach aims to pre-empt potential security vulnerabilities.

### 7.6.3 Transparency

- i. **Clear Communication:** Students have the right to know what data is being collected about them and why. NOUN will maintain transparent communication channels, informing students about the nature and purpose of data collection.
- ii. **User Control:** Beyond just informing, students will also be given control over their data. They will have the ability to access, review, and, if necessary, request corrections or deletions of their personal data.

## 7.7 Continuous Improvement

### 7.7.1 Feedback Mechanism

- i. **Valuing Stakeholder Input:** Feedback is a powerful tool for growth. By actively soliciting and valuing input from students, faculties, and other stakeholders, NOUN aims to ensure that its e-learning initiatives remain relevant, effective, and responsive to user needs. This will be done using regular polls, surveys, focus groups interviews.
- ii. **Iterative Enhancements:** Feedback-driven insights will be systematically integrated into our e-learning offerings, leading to iterative refinements and enhancements based on real-world experiences and needs.

### 7.7.2 Research

- i. **Staying Informed:** The world of e-learning is characterized by rapid advancements and shifting trends. NOUN is dedicated to staying at the forefront by engaging in ongoing research. This ensures that our strategies and tools reflect the latest in e-learning pedagogy, technology, and best practices.
- ii. **In-house Exploration:** Beyond external research, NOUN will also champion in-house studies and experiments to understand the unique dynamics of our student body and tailor our offerings accordingly.

### 7.7.3 Collaboration

- i. **Leveraging Collective Wisdom:** No institution has monopoly of knowledge. Recognizing the value of diverse perspectives, NOUN will actively seek collaborations with other educational institutions, both nationally and internationally to improve on programmes and course offerings.
- ii. **Shared Growth:** These collaborations aim to foster a culture of shared learning and growth, allowing NOUN to both impart and absorb insights and best practices in the vast domain of e-learning.

## 8.0 Sanctions on Violating this Policy

Any staff who violates the policy or hinders the successful implementation of the policy shall be handed over to the University Disciplinary Committee for the appropriate punitive measures.

## 9.0 Policy Alignment

This policy aligns with:

- 9.1 NOUN Blueprint
- 9.2 Getting to know your university.
- 9.3 NOUN Strategic Plans

## Team of Developers

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