

Distanced/blended learning and assessment policy

Policy statement

Distanced learning is where a learner completes a full programme of study away from a traditional training provider setting. Examples include:

- learners studying using eLearning platforms
- remote lectures/seminars completed over video conferencing software.

Distanced assessment is where a learner completes one or more assessments remotely and away from a traditional training provider setting and without direct – face-to-face – supervision of an assessor. Examples include:

- an online test completed using eProctoring/remote invigilation
- worksheets completed by a learner at home and emailed to an assessor for feedback
- a professional discussion held over video conferencing software, where the assessor and learner are in different locations
- video evidence submitted by a learner to be assessed after the assessment activity has taken place

Blended learning is where a learner completes elements of a programme using distanced learning and other elements in a traditional training provider setting. Similarly, a qualification can be considered to have **blended assessment** where it has both elements of traditional and distanced assessment.

Distanced/blended learning and assessment can provide learners with access to qualifications that they would otherwise be unable to complete due to their physical location or specific needs. This policy sets out YMCA Awards requirements to enable distanced/blended learning and assessment.

Scope

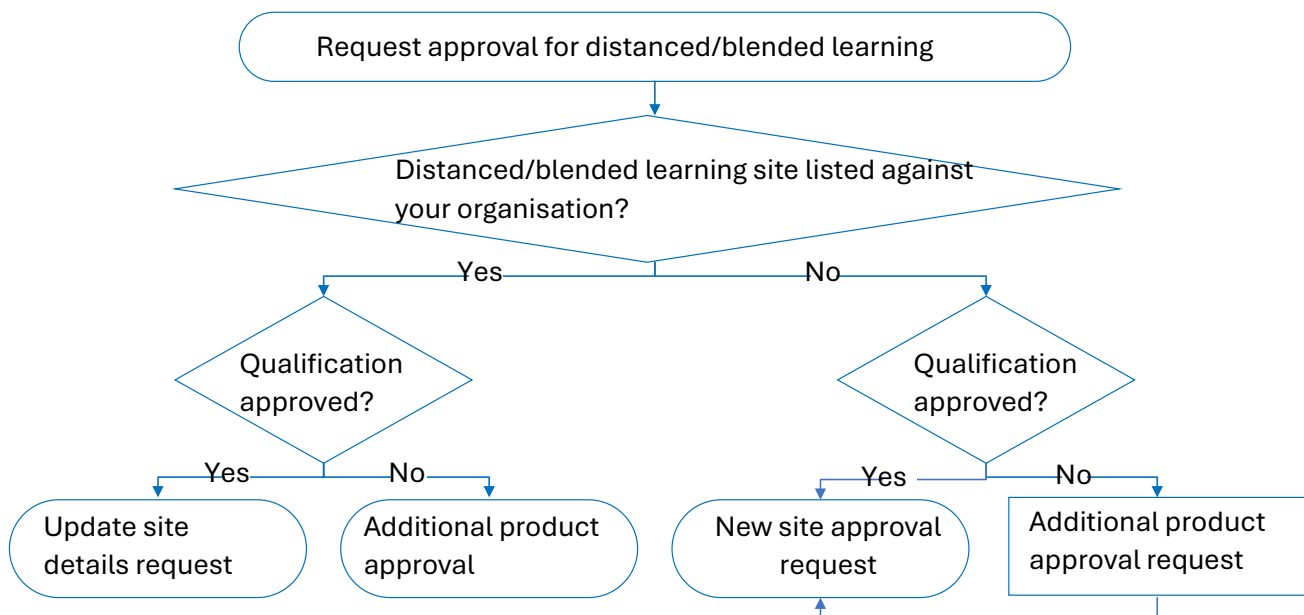
This policy applies to all:

- approved centres
- subcontractors working on behalf of YMCA Awards approved centres.

Policy

You must ensure that we have approved your plans for distanced/blended learning and/or assessment before you start delivery. Applying to us for approval ensures we can put appropriate quality assurance procedures in place to support you and your learners.

Delivering distanced/blended learning and/or assessment without approval could lead to sanctions including the possibility of us removing qualification and/or centre approval.



You can request approval for distanced/blended learning by completing the relevant form(s) in Y-Connect:

As part of your application, you will need to provide:

- A course outline
- A scheme of work.

Planning for distanced/blended learning and assessment

Distanced/blended learning and assessment is likely to present more challenges than conventional delivery modes including:

- varying levels of support required by each learner (See 'Learner support and communication')
- additional authentication of learner work to prevent plagiarism/impersonation.

As part of your approval application, you should outline the arrangements you are putting in place and show that they:

- Ensure that the programme and mode of delivery is appropriate to the needs of your learners and provides opportunities for interaction with their peers.
- Provide clear guidance on the course and delivery mode, including how and when learners can access appropriately trained and qualified support, including technical and subject matter support (e.g. by phone/email/video conferencing).
- Enable learners to access learning and assessment materials and any other required equipment/resources.
- Provide learners with opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through assessment tools that:
 - clearly define the assessment criteria
 - ensure coverage of the knowledge and skills defined in the specification
 - can generate appropriate evidence for the unit outcomes to be assessed

- enable effective authentication of learner work to prevent plagiarism or impersonation.
- Effectively track learner progress and readiness for assessment.
- Effectively quality assure assessment decisions to ensure comparability and credibility.
- Monitor and evaluate support provided to learners, and assessment outcomes, to continually improve the programme.

Learner support and communication

You will need to be in regular, scheduled contact with all learners undertaking a distanced/blended programme. Consider:

- The support mechanisms/channels to be used e.g. telephone, face-to-face tutorials, e-mail, video conferencing etc.
- The availability of each support mechanism/channel and whether there are specific time restrictions (e.g. 7 pm – 10 pm Monday to Friday).
- The number of support contacts needed to provide appropriate support for:
 - induction/onboarding
 - reviews of progress
 - assessment feedback
 - exit/achievement
- How support will be managed i.e. who will do it and how communication will be facilitated by the centre to offer learner support.
- Any agreements/contracts required to enable you to enforce rules with learners, including:
 - time allowed to access resources/cover programme content
 - time allowed to complete assessment(s)
 - rules for extensions
 - arrangements for practical activities.