

Understanding eLearning

eLearning is a method of education that utilises technology to provide access to learning materials and programs. This approach most commonly refers to courses, programs, or degrees that are delivered entirely online. eLearning comprises a range of exciting and challenging practices, providing a dynamic environment for learners to engage in. It may take several forms:

- **Fully online** – students learn in a fully online environment
- **Blended** – students learn through a mix of online and face-to-face
- **Synchronous** – students and trainers connect at the same time from different locations
- **Asynchronous** – students learn on their own schedule, within a certain timeframe
- **Distance** – student is remote to the trainer and may include online and traditional learning methods

In the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, it is common for a course to include at least some elements that are delivered online. This might take the form of one or more units within a course. While not a new concept, the online delivery of VET qualifications has become increasingly relevant as a method for providing diverse learning options to students.

eLearning Essentials for RTOs

Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) must consider certain essentials for effective eLearning delivery, including:

- Compatible hardware and software platforms for content development
- Reliable online communication services for learner access
- A Learner Management System (LMS)
- Instructional design techniques
- Authentication measures
- Upskilling practitioners
- Taking into account the online learner's perspective

Quality and Standard of Online Learning and Assessment

The delivery of online learning and assessment must uphold a quality and standard that sufficiently equips learners with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities for the workplace and/or further study. This means that eLearning programs must be designed and implemented with the same rigour and focus on outcomes as traditional, face-to-face educational programs.

Adapting Training for Distance and Online Delivery

Consider the following when adapting training for distance and online delivery:

- **Evaluation of Knowledge and Skills Components:** Assess the training content to determine which components can be effectively delivered in text format, audio format, or video format. Consider the suitability of each medium for conveying different types of information and engaging learners.
- **Technological Support:** Utilise technologies such as video recording and communication software to facilitate the delivery of training materials. Explore the use of platforms for video conferencing, online collaboration, and interactive learning activities.
- **Managing Assessment Requirements:** Review the assessment requirements for each unit of competency and identify how specific conditions can be managed in an online training context. Consider factors such as proctoring, secure platforms for assessment submission, and verification of authenticity.
- **Evidence Recording:** Determine how activities conducted in a simulated workplace environment can be recorded as assessment evidence. Explore the use of digital tools for capturing and documenting learner performance during simulations.
- **Sequencing of Training and Assessment:** Plan the sequencing of training and assessment to prioritise theoretical components. Ensure that learners have a solid foundation of knowledge before progressing to practical components. Consider offering continued learning opportunities for theoretical aspects across single or multiple units.
- **Practical Components:** Recognise that practical components may need to be deferred until physical work placements can occur. Determine alternative methods for simulating practical scenarios and providing hands-on experiences in a virtual environment.

- **Limitations and Suitability:** Acknowledge that not all training is suitable for distance or online delivery due to the nature of the content. Identify topics that require in-person interactions, equipment handling, or specific physical environments.
- **Assessment and Work Placement Requirements:** Recognise that assessment and work placement requirements may pose challenges in an online setting. Consider alternative approaches or contingencies for fulfilling these requirements when face-to-face interactions are not possible.

Note: This VET Fact Sheet provides general information and should not be considered as legal advice.