

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

UPDATE ON THE PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION**1. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

This paper provides the background to, and an overview of, the Principles of Education and the [associated web pages](#). These Principles should apply to different modes of teaching, whether in person, online or hybrid.

Members of the UEC are asked to **discuss** the paper.

2. PREVIOUS CONSIDERATION BY /FURTHER APPROVAL REQUIRED

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by		

3. RECOMMENDED ACTION

This paper is provided for **discussion** of the following:

- Whether the updated Principles of Education are still relevant, appropriate and encompass all aspects and modes of delivery of teaching, learning and assessment.
- What, if any, additional information would be valuable on the webpages, including relevant examples/case studies and possible approaches.

4. INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 The Principles for the Delivery of Education were first introduced as the Principles of Blended Learning at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, they have been updated and enhanced into the five Principles described in Section 6, which were launched in AY 2022/23.
- 4.2 The naming convention throughout this paper refers interchangeably to the full name of the Principles for the Delivery of Education, and the more informal title of the Principles for Education. Principles of Blended Learning refers to the version of these Principles that was originally developed in the second half of AY 2019/20 and which applied in AY 2020/21 and, with revisions, in 2021/22.

5. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 5.1 The Principles of Blended Learning were originally developed in 2020, at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, by a workstream of the Blended Learning Implementation Task & Finish Group (BLITFG), as a toolkit to support staff in making the transition to a blended delivery model (see UCTL/210520/005).
- 5.2 A revised version for the [Principles of Blended Learning](#) for AY 2021/22 was approved at UEC in May 2021 (see UEC/250521/005b), which reflected the commitment of the University to deliver more on-campus teaching than in the previous AY as a result of the easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

- 5.3 After BLITFG was dismantled, the Aberdeen 2040 Delivery of Education TFG was established in October 2021, with the purpose of building on the [evaluation of blended learning](#) to develop and evidence-based framework for the Delivery of Education which aimed to enhance the student learning experience (see UEC/170222/008, UEC/130422/007a, UEC/100522/004 and UEC/230622/007).
- 5.4 The Delivery of Education TFG published its [final report](#) in June 2022, setting out a new set of Principles for the Delivery of Education, for AY 2022/23.
- 5.5 During the AY 2023/24 and with the establishment of the Online Education Forum, the Principles of Education were revisited and revised to recognise all modes of delivery (online, in-person or hybrid) for teaching, learning and assessment. In particular, some wording referring specifically to in-person delivery was updated.

6. UPDATED PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION 2023/24

- 6.1 The Principles of Education webpages list five Principles, which are detailed and described below. In addition, the web pages list one further element, titled Evaluation and Review. Along with each Principle, a set of possible approaches is also provided. The landing page for the Principles of Education gives a brief description of their purpose and stresses that they are equally applicable to in person, online or hybrid learning and teaching practices.
- 6.2 **Principle 1: Nurture active learning**
Active learning involves both guided and independent learning and should be designed with the achievement of learning outcomes as a focus. Provide active learning opportunities for students to encourage deeper learning, making effective use of in-person or live web conferencing sessions to engage and interact with your students. Try to complement live (synchronous) sessions with activities students can complete within their own schedule by a certain time/date (asynchronous).
- 6.3 **Principle 2: Design in opportunities for community building**
Provide opportunities for students to create connections with other students, with staff, and with others (e.g. employers, internationally) in person on-campus and online in the virtual learning environment.
- 6.4 **Principle 3: Assessment should be authentic, building in integrity, and be efficient**
Provide assessment that tests learning outcomes, where appropriate is 'authentic' (reflecting or recreating real-life situations and/or enabling students to demonstrate the applicability of their learning to various discipline contexts and scenarios), tests skills and thinking (rather than solely based on fact recall) and is streamlined to avoid over-assessment.
- 6.5 **Principle 4: Provide timely and meaningful feedback**
Provide feedback at an appropriate time for students to benefit from it, in accordance with the 3-week timeframe, focusing on developmental next steps that can be actioned by the student.
- 6.6 **Principle 5: Accessibility & inclusivity**
Provide teaching, learning and assessment that ensures that students are not disadvantaged or directly/indirectly discriminated against, with the aim of providing students with the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Alongside our inclusivity and accessibility in Education Framework the University is also committed to decolonising the curriculum.
- 6.7 **Evaluation & Review**
Wherever possible, ask colleagues to review your learning and teaching practices and participate in self-reflective review of your own practices as well. Likewise, consider feedback from your students and externals, to assist you with continually reviewing and updating your own practices.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTINUED UPDATES

- 7.1 UEC is invited to discuss the current Principles of Education, consider whether they are still relevant and if they apply to all modes of delivery.

- 7.2 Our recommendation would be to maintain the current set of Principles of Education but, going forward, to ensure that the set of possible approaches listed within each Principles is kept up to date, providing a variety of methods and ideas that are equally applicable to in person or online delivery.
- 7.3 The next stage of development is to link these possible approaches to practical examples of good practice from our own community. If anyone has any suggestions, we encourage them to get in touch.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information is available from Kirsty Kiezebrink, Dean of Educational Innovation (k.kiezebrink@abdn.ac.uk), Catherine Ogilvie, eLearning adviser (online) CAD (catherine.ogilvie@abdn.ac.uk), Isabella Fausti, eLearning adviser CAD (isabella.fausti@abdn.ac.uk).

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Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status: Open