

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS

Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy 2022 – 2025

Background

The broad vision for Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL) at Open University of Mauritius (OU) is incumbent in meeting the strategic objectives, spelt out in its Strategic Plan, in using technology in teaching and learning and research to its fullest potential within its specific context. The TEL strategy shall enable OU to take stock of its past experience and consider new opportunities laying ahead in sustaining its growth through quality assured deliverables. In the process of implementing a TEL strategy, OU would first need to ensure a systematic process of critical thinking, decision making, implementation and reflection not only to promote but also to demonstrate improved student engagement and learning. What really matters is not the technology, but how the tutors and other technical resources design transactions, tasks and activities to engage students and promote learning.

Operating a TEL environment requires OU to adopt appropriate policies, strengthen its technology infrastructure, build capacities of academics and non-academic staff, empower learners to take advantage of the available technology and Open Educational Resources (OER) for learning while ensuring a rigorous approach to the assessment and evaluation of TEL. The objective is to provide a systematic approach and evidence of improved learning outcomes in a TEL environment which is affordable and sustainable to the institution.

Vision

OU, which is operating as an ODL educational institution, shall endeavour to strengthen its approach to TEL not only with technology but through technology as well. OU shall ensure a judicious and cost-effective approach to accelerate the integration of digital technologies in response to risks but also to opportunities associated with the growing reliance on technology for education.

This TEL strategy shall be in line with the principles of Equity, Inclusivity, Sustainability and Learner-Centeredness as advocated by the university. It focuses on the use of technology to maximise the student learning experience, challenge students and faculty members in being informed participants of an ever-evolving digital culture, to deliver teaching and learning in diverse ways, connect with communities locally and beyond, promote digital literacy and foster innovative practices and research in TEL.

Objectives

OU shall define a framework for establishing expectations and priorities in relation to TEL to encompass:

- A TEL policy that supports and aligns to OU strategic goals.
- An Implementation team with specific term of reference.

- Resource Development Plan to address financial, human resource and infrastructural planning. This should facilitate planning and decision-making about investment and development at divisional levels.
- An Action Plan, Implementation Plan and a Monitoring & Reporting mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the strategy adopted.
- The training and development of staff on the effective use of technologies to support learning, teaching, research and knowledge exchange.
- Train and equip students with the knowledge, skills and expertise to use technology for learning, employability and professional development purposes.
- A technical support service to assist users of TEL in their journey at OU.
- A Quality Assurance Mechanism that ensures the use of technologies are pedagogically driven and have appropriate course coherence and consistency.
- A data collection mechanism to gather relevant user's experience for informed decision making at various decisional levels of the university.

Development Areas

The University will focus its efforts in TEL over the period 2022 – 2025 around five themes:

A. Technological Ecosystem and Infrastructure

Learning Enhancement

- Use selected technology to adapt to the learning styles of the learners.
- Provide necessary flexibility to the learners.
- Make effective use of OU virtual learning environment such as Student Information Management System (SIMS), Learning Management System (LMS) and E-Library to support learning and enhance engagement with active, inclusive learning and teaching.
- Promote flexible access to learning through the use of mobile apps.
- Develop the use of learning and assessment analytics to support student engagement, retention and achievement.
- Identify weaknesses among learners at an early stage and provide necessary support.
- Empower learners to manage their own learning.
- Enrich the learning materials through the use of OERs and other similar sources.

IT infrastructure of OU

- Provide space and opportunities in terms of computer laboratory, recording studio, Internet access on campus, licensing software and LMS mobile app for learners to explore the use of learning technologies.
- There is likely to be greater diversity and choice for staff in the use of technologies that enhance learning together with an expectation for accessibility, consistency and responsiveness.

B. Staff and student Support

- The University will seek to ensure that the use of technologies is pedagogically driven and has appropriate course coherence and consistency.
- Investing in the training and development and workshop for university staff and university students to make the cost-effective use of technologies to support learning, teaching, research and knowledge exchange and Continuous Professional Development.
- Develop LMS Helpdesk to provide an appropriate environment for staff and students to explore teaching and learning possibilities using technology.
- Strengthen induction of student in relation to digital learning (e-Library, Social Media).
- Embed the development of digital and information Literacies within the curriculum development process so that all students are enabled to manage digital identities, evaluate and analyse digital information, as well as make effective use of technologies for learning, working and living in a digital world.
- Support dissemination of project through OU e-Library services.
- Setting up of TEL unit and recruitment of full-time staffs.
- Provide support within a reasonable time through the use of Artificial Intelligence, Chatbots and related technological tools.

C. Assessment

- Develop the use of assessment mapping tools for the planning and management of course strategies. Online activities are embedded in all ECTS modules.
- Integrate plagiarism detection software for electronic submissions and enable its use for formative and summative purposes.
- Implement effective and integrated systems for the electronic management of assessment (e-moderation, e-marking, e-transcripts/results, e-feedback).
- Promote eVIVA/Presentations.
- Implement Proctored exams through LMS.

D. Quality Assurance

- Adapt quality assurance culture embedded for the TEL environment.
- Review the university quality policies to incorporate TEL.
- Incorporate Quality assurance for TEL in programmes and modules.
- This shift shall be reflected in the updated Quality handbook.
- Setting up a feedback and monitoring mechanism to ensure TEL effectiveness and efficiency to support learning.

Implementing the strategy

The strategy is complementary to the University Teaching and Learning strategy. It is recognized that implementation of this strategy will necessitate investment in human resources, including staff time for development, infrastructural, technological and financial resources. Each Unit is expected

to include within its overall strategic plan for learning and teaching, plans for development and implementation related to each of the themes of this strategy. Different committees shall be set up for implementing the TEL strategy:

1. *The TEL Core Consultative Committee*

The TEL Core Consultative Committee shall set overall targets and develop action plans for the TEL Implementation Committee to achieve.

2. *The TEL Implementation Committee*

It is the TEL Implementation Committee shall involve the head of the sections and process owners of each department and shall ensure that the develop action plans are achieved.

Nominated members shall be remunerated as per the PRB Report 2021 rate for sub-committees. The TEL Core Consultative Committees report to the Academic Council through the Director-General.

Composition of the TEL Core Consultative Committee (internal staffs)

The proposed composition is as follows:

- Director-General/Academic Affairs Director as Chairperson
- Two internal academics staff nominated by the Director-General
- Representative from Quality Assurance Division
- Representative from IT unit
- Representative from Finance Unit
- Other Academics staff and other OU staff may be co-opted
- Secretary: Administrative Officer

Members shall serve for a period of two years. This will be renewable for a further period of two years.

Composition of the TEL Implementation Committee

The proposed composition is as follows:

- Academic or Head of Section/Unit nominated by the Director-General to act as Chairperson
- Head of Sections/Units
- Two academics from OU
- Secretary: Administrative Staff (OMA/MSO)

Members shall serve for a period of two years.