



**DIRECTORATE OF ACADEMIC PLANNING
QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT**

A GUIDE ON COURSE FACILITATION FOR LECTURERS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has revolutionized the education landscape by providing flexible and convenient learning opportunities to a diverse group of learners. At Iconic Open University, we pride ourselves on being among the pioneers in the field of ODL in Nigeria, and strive to provide our students (Icons) with a high-quality learning experience. To achieve this goal, we rely on the expertise of our facilitators/lecturers. This guide aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of course facilitation at Iconic Open University, outlining the key characteristics of ODL, the role of facilitators, learner characteristics, and expectations from our facilitators.

1.1 KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)

ODL is a form of education that makes use of various technologies for delivering course content to learners who are separated from the instructor by time and/or location. The following are the key characteristics of ODL:

1. **Flexibility:** ODL allows learners to study at their own pace and convenience, without the restrictions of a traditional classroom structure.
2. **Accessibility:** ODL opens up learning opportunities to those who cannot attend regular on-campus classes due to various reasons such as geographical location, work commitments, and family responsibilities.
3. **Technology-enabled:** ODL relies heavily on technology to deliver course content and for communication between learners and facilitators.
4. **Learner-centered:** ODL focuses on the needs and learning styles of individual learners, allowing them to have more control over their learning experience.
5. **Self-directed learning:** ODL encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning, requiring them to be self-motivated and self-disciplined.
6. **Continuous learning:** ODL provides opportunities for lifelong learning, allowing individuals to upgrade their skills and knowledge at any stage of their lives.

1.2 WHAT IS FACILITATION IN ODL?

Facilitation in ODL refers to the process of enabling and supporting learners to achieve their learning outcomes through the effective use of technology and resources. Facilitators play a crucial role in creating a conducive learning environment and guiding learners through the course material. They act as a bridge between the course content and the Icons, facilitating the transfer of knowledge and skills. Facilitators in ODL are also known as instructors, tutors, or lecturers.

1.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACILITATORS/LECTURERS

1. Course content delivery: Facilitators are responsible for delivering course content to learners through various mediums such as online modules, webinars, and discussion forums.
2. Instructional design: Facilitators collaborate with instructional designers to create course materials that are engaging, interactive, and aligned with learning outcomes of the NUC CCMAS and the Iconic University curriculum.
3. Facilitating discussions and interactions: Facilitators promote peer-to-peer and student-teacher interactions, encouraging discussions and debates to enhance learning.
4. Feedback and assessment: Facilitators provide timely and constructive feedback to students on their assignments and also assess their performance in exams or quizzes.
5. Technical support: Facilitators assist learners in navigating the online learning platform and troubleshoot any technical issues that may arise.
6. Guidance and support: Facilitators serve as mentors and counselors to students, providing guidance and support in their academic journey.

1.4 LEARNER CHARACTERISTICS

At Iconic Open University, we cater to a diverse group of learners with varying backgrounds and learning styles. Some key characteristics of our learners include:

1. Self-motivated and disciplined: ODL requires learners to be self-motivated and disciplined, as they have to manage their own learning without the constraints of a traditional classroom.
2. Good time-management skills: ODL learners need to manage their time effectively to balance their studies with other commitments.
3. Technologically savvy: ODL relies heavily on technology, so our learners should have basic computer skills and be comfortable with using online platforms.
4. Diverse backgrounds: Our learners come from different geographical locations, cultures, and professions, adding to the richness of the learning experience.

1.5 ATTRIBUTES OF A “GOOD FACILITATOR/LECTURER”

Being a facilitator in ODL requires a unique set of skills and qualities. Some of the attributes that we look for in our facilitators include:

1. Subject-matter expertise: Facilitators should have in-depth knowledge of the subject they are teaching.
2. Effective communication skills: As ODL relies on technology for communication, our facilitators should be able to convey information and instructions clearly and effectively.
3. Adaptability: With the ever-changing technology landscape, our facilitators need to be adaptable and willing to learn new tools and techniques to deliver course content.
4. Empathy: ODL learners may face challenges while studying, and our facilitators should be empathetic and understanding towards them.
5. Organizational skills: Facilitators should have good organizational skills to manage their workload and meet deadlines.

1.6 EXPECTATIONS FROM ICONIC FACILITATORS

At Iconic Open University, we hold our facilitators to a high standard and have certain expectations from them. Our facilitators are expected to:

1. Deliver course content effectively and efficiently.
2. Be available for student support and respond to queries promptly.

3. Provide timely and constructive feedback on assignments.
4. Engage and stimulate discussions and interactions among students during interactive lectures.
5. Keep up-to-date with the latest trends and advancements in their field.
6. Conduct themselves professionally and maintain confidentiality.
7. Create tests, assignment and examination questions.

1.7 ONLINE FACILITATION TIPS

Here are some tips on how our facilitators can deliver an engaging and effective online learning experience:

1. Use various mediums to deliver course content, such as interactive lectures in live videos, assignment and report modules, and my classroom chat all in the iCampus.
2. Encourage students to participate in interactive lectures and my classroom chat and provide prompts to stimulate critical thinking.
3. Use real-life examples and case studies to relate the course material to practical applications.
4. Provide timely and meaningful feedback to students.
5. Foster a sense of community and inclusivity among learners.
6. Be approachable and available for student support.

1.8 THE KEY COMPONENTS OF ICONIC UNIVERSITY COURSE CONTENT DELIVERY

1. Live Interactive Lectures: Our course content is primarily delivered through online lectures, which are designed to be interactive and engaging by a lecturer/facilitator.

Period: Minimum of 6 lecture meetings for a course, once bi-weekly throughout the 15 weeks of the entire semester duration.

2. Orientation: To supplement the module content, we conduct live orientations with our facilitators, where students can ask questions and participate on general programme matter.

Period: Minimum of 3 orientations for a course, once per 5 weeks throughout the 15 weeks of the entire semester duration.

3. My Classroom Chat (Discussion forums): We have dedicated discussion forums for each course where Icons can interact with their peers and facilitators, ask questions and make research on a contemporary issue, and share their thoughts and ideas within the iCampus.

Period: Minimum of 3 discussions for a course, once per 5 weeks throughout the 15 weeks of the entire semester duration.

4. Assignments and assessments: There are regular assignments and tests to assess students' understanding of the course material.

Period: Minimum of 1 research assignment for a course, once throughout the 15 weeks of the entire semester duration.

5. Support resources: We provide additional resources such as reading materials, pre-recorded videos, and PPTs to enhance the learning experience.

Period: Available on-demand throughout the 15 weeks of the entire semester duration.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Facilitation is a crucial aspect of Open and Distance Learning, and our facilitators play a significant role in ensuring a high-quality learning experience for our students. At Iconic Open University, we are committed to providing our students with the best possible education, and we believe that our facilitators are instrumental in achieving this goal. By understanding the key characteristics of ODL, the role of facilitators, learner characteristics, and our expectations, our facilitators can deliver an engaging and effective learning experience for our students. We hope this guide has provided you with a comprehensive understanding of course facilitation at Iconic Open University.