



**DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING RECOURSES**

**POLICY ON COURSE MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) at Iconic Open University is predicated on the principle that learning can occur effectively without the physical co-location of the learner and the facilitator. Unlike the facilitation guide, which addresses the delivery of instruction, this policy addresses the genesis of instruction: the systematic design, development, production, and quality assurance of course materials that replace the traditional lecture as the primary vehicle of learning.

At Iconic Open University, the quality of an ODL programme is inextricably linked to the quality of its learning materials. Iconic University is committed to developing materials that are not merely textbooks, but self-instructional learning resources that simulate the teaching function, guide the learner through structured activities, and accommodate the diverse learning contexts of our Icons. This policy establishes the framework, standards, and procedures for the development of all course materials across the University, ensuring alignment with the National Universities Commission (NUC) guidelines for ODL in Nigerian universities and the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS).

The scope of this policy covers all credit-bearing courses offered through the ODL mode, including print materials, digital texts, multimedia resources, and Open Educational Resources (OER) integrated into the curriculum.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

The specific objectives of this policy are to:

1. Establish a standardized, team-based approach to course material development that ensures pedagogical rigor and instructional coherence.
2. Ensure that all course materials are self-instructional, learner-centered, and aligned with the learning outcomes stipulated by the NUC and the Iconic University curriculum.
3. Define the roles, responsibilities, and composition of Course Development Teams.
4. Institute a robust quality assurance and review mechanism for materials before, during, and after production.
5. Provide guidelines for the integration of appropriate technologies and media formats to enhance accessibility and interactivity.
6. Establish protocols for the periodic review and revision of course materials to ensure currency and relevance.

### 3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Course material development at Iconic Open University shall be guided by the following principles, drawn from best practices in ODL and the NUC guidelines:

**3.1 Self-Instructional Pedagogy:** Materials shall be designed to "build the teacher into the text." This means the material must identify objectives, explain concepts step-by-step, provide illustrative examples, and engage the learner in active exercises, thereby reducing reliance on real-time facilitator intervention.

**3.2 Learner-Centeredness:** The design and language of materials must reflect the characteristics of our learners—working adults, geographically dispersed individuals, and those with varying levels of digital literacy. Content must be accessible, free of ambiguity, and respectful of diverse learning styles.

**3.3 Alignment with National Standards:** All course content must be congruent with the approved Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) and benchmark statements of the National Universities Commission (NUC). Learning outcomes must be clearly articulated in terms of competencies, skills, and behavioral attributes.

**3.4 Team Approach:** Course development is not the solitary work of a single lecturer. It is a collaborative effort involving Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), instructional designers, editors, and media specialists.

**3.5 Media Integration:** While interactive text (print or digital) remains the core of our materials, development shall incorporate appropriate supplementary media (video, audio, simulations, or OER) where these add pedagogical value and are accessible to learners.

**3.6 Continuous Improvement:** Materials shall not be static. A schedule for periodic review and revision shall be maintained to incorporate feedback, correct errors, and reflect advancements in the discipline.

### 4.0 COURSE MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The development of course materials shall follow a structured, multi-stage process coordinated by the Directorate of ODL in collaboration with Faculties and Departments.

#### 4.1 Phase 1: Needs Analysis and Course Approval

Before material development begins, the proposing Department must demonstrate that the course is aligned with the approved curriculum. The Dean of the Faculty, upon the recommendation of the Head of Department, shall authorize the commencement of material development for specific courses, ensuring that the course is listed in the approved programme structure and that credit units are correctly assigned.

## 4.2 Phase 2: Course Design and Blueprinting

A **Course Development Team** shall be constituted for each course. The team shall produce a **Course Design Blueprint** (or Course Guide) which serves as the architectural plan for the material. The Blueprint must specify:

- Course title, code, and credit units.
- General and specific learning objectives/outcomes.
- A detailed outline of modules and units.
- A mapping of learning activities, assessments, and media to specific objectives.
- The estimated learner workload (hours) per unit.

## 4.3 Phase 3: Material Authoring and Development

The Subject Matter Expert (SME), guided by the Blueprint and in consultation with the Instructional Designer, shall write the course material. The material shall be structured into **Modules** and **Units**. Each Unit must contain:

- **Unit Objectives:** Clear, measurable statements of what the learner will achieve.
- **Introduction:** Contextualizing the unit within the broader course.
- **Main Content:** Presented in accessible language, broken into digestible sections with frequent examples and analogies.
- **Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs):** Embedded within the text to allow learners to check their understanding.
- **Summary:** A concise recap of key points.
- **References and Further Reading:** For deeper exploration.
- **Self-Assessment Questions:** At the end of the unit or module, aligned with the NUC minimum requirement of at least one question from the of study.

## 4.4 Phase 4: Review and Quality Assurance

All draft materials shall undergo a rigorous review process before production:

- **Internal Peer Review:** By another academic in the relevant field within Iconic University.
- **Instructional Design Review:** By the Course Material Development Unit (CMDU) to assess self-instructional quality, readability, and alignment of activities with objectives.

- **Editorial Review:** For grammar, clarity, and consistency in style.
- **Pilot Testing:** Where feasible, materials or representative units shall be trialed with a small group of students or reviewed by student representatives to gather feedback on usability and clarity.

#### 4.5 Phase 5: Production and Deployment

Once approved by the relevant Faculty Board and the CMDU, materials shall be produced in the designated formats (PDF for iCampus, print-on-demand if required, and supplementary media). The final materials shall be uploaded to the iCampus learning management system and made available to learners according to the course schedule.

#### 5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

| Role                                                            | Responsibilities                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vice Chancellor/<br>Academic Board                              | Approves the policy and provides overall strategic direction and resources.                                                    |
| Course Development<br>(CMDU)                      Material Unit | Coordinates the entire material development process; ensures adherence to standards; manages the instructional design team.    |
| Dean/Faculty Board                                              | Approves course development requests; nominates Subject Matter Experts; ensures academic rigor and curriculum alignment.       |
| Subject Matter Expert<br>(SME)                                  | Authors the course material; ensures content accuracy and depth; responds to reviewer feedback.                                |
| Instructional Designer                                          | Guides the SME on ODL pedagogy; reviews materials for self-instructional quality; designs learning activities and assessments. |
| Editor/Proofreader                                              | Ensures linguistic accuracy, clarity, and consistency.                                                                         |
| Media Specialist                                                | Produces or sources supplementary audio/visual or interactive content.                                                         |
| Quality Assurance Unit                                          | Conducts final checks for compliance with NUC standards and internal benchmarks.                                               |

## 6.0 FORMATS AND MEDIA

**6.1 Core Text:** The primary learning material shall be a comprehensive, self-instructional text, available digitally on the iCampus. This is the anchor of the learning experience.

**6.2 Supplementary Media:** To cater to diverse learning preferences and enhance understanding, materials may include:

- **Pre-recorded Video Lectures:** Short (10–15 minute) focused videos explaining difficult concepts.
- **Audio Podcasts:** For learners who prefer auditory learning or have limited screen time.
- **Interactive Elements:** Quizzes, simulations, or branching scenarios embedded in digital texts.
- **Open Educational Resources (OER):** Where appropriate, high-quality OER may be integrated or adapted, provided they meet the quality and licensing standards of the University.

**6.3 Accessibility:** All materials must be designed with accessibility in mind, ensuring compatibility with screen readers and providing transcripts for audio/video content.

## 7.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND REVIEW

**7.1 Pre-Production QA:** As outlined in Section 4.4, all materials must pass internal peer review, instructional design review, and editorial review before production.

**7.2 Post-Production Monitoring:** The ODL Directorate shall monitor the usage and effectiveness of materials through:

- Learner feedback surveys at the end of each semester.
- Analysis of learner performance on SAQs and examinations.
- Facilitator feedback on the adequacy and clarity of materials.

**7.3 Periodic Revision:** Every course material shall be subject to a formal review at least once every **three (3) years**, or more frequently if there are significant developments in the field or persistent learner difficulties are identified. The revision process shall follow the same quality assurance stages as original development.

## **8.0 COPYRIGHT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

**8.1 Ownership:** All course materials developed for Iconic Open University, whether by internal staff or contracted external experts, shall be the intellectual property of the University, unless otherwise agreed in a written contract.

**8.2 Originality and Attribution:** Authors must ensure that materials are original or properly licensed. All external sources, including text, images, and data, must be fully cited. Plagiarism in any form is strictly prohibited and will be treated as a serious breach of academic integrity.

**8.3 External Collaboration:** Where materials are developed in partnership with or purchased from external entities, a formal agreement shall be executed specifying rights of use, adaptation, and quality standards.

## **9.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT**

Iconic Open University recognizes that effective material development requires skilled personnel. The University shall:

- Provide training workshops for academic staff on writing for ODL (self-instructional techniques, assessment design).
- Offer technical and instructional design support through the ODL Directorate.
- Encourage staff to participate in ODL conferences and seminars to stay abreast of best practices.

## **10.0 CONCLUSION**

Course material development is the cornerstone of quality assurance in Open and Distance Learning. At Iconic Open University, we are committed to producing learning resources that are not only academically rigorous but also pedagogically transformative. By adhering to this policy, our Subject Matter Experts, instructional designers, and quality assurance teams will ensure that every Icon is equipped with materials that empower independent learning, critical thinking, and academic success. This policy is a living document and will be reviewed periodically to reflect the evolving needs of our learners and the advancements in educational technology.