



جامعة السلطان قابوس
Sultan Qaboos University

e-Learning System Use Procedure

May/2021

Procedure Title	E-Learning System Use Procedure
Procedure Number	02-02
Policy theme	Teaching and Learning
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Procedure Owner	Center For Educational Technology

1. Definitions and Acronyms

- 1.1 **Administrator/System administrators:** Staff who manage the system from the front end.
- 1.2 **CET:** Center for Educational Technology.
- 1.3 **CIS:** Center for Information Systems.
- 1.4 **CPS:** Center for Preparatory Studies.
- 1.5 **e-learning:** e-learning is an approach to deliver A well-designed learner-centered learning environment through the use of various technologies that enable learners to learn and communicate with others at anytime and anyplace.
- 1.6 **e-learning academic site:** The site is dedicated only for all courses registered in the Deanship for Admissions and Registration.
- 1.7 **e-learning non-academic site:** The site is used for all other purposes such as, research, testing, training, community services ... etc.
- 1.8 **e-learning System:** the Learning Management System (LMS) (Moodle) used by SQU.
- 1.9 **e-courses:** Course templates in the LMS.
- 1.10 **Fair use:** legal use of portion of copyright materials without permission of the copyright owner.
- 1.11 **Maximum upload size:** The maximum upload size for a single file.
- 1.12 **Non-registered user:** Users who do not have SQU internet user name and password.
- 1.13 **SQU:** Sultan Qaboos University.
- 1.14 **SQUH:** Sultan Qaboos University Hospital.
- 1.15 **System Customization:** modifications of the hard coding of the system.
- 1.16 **System:** Used interchangeably with e-learning system.
- 1.17 **Template:** Electronic space in the e-learning system that allows instructors to upload e-material, offer e-assessment and interact with students.
- 1.18 **Unit:** an administrative body that has a direct access to the Vice Chancellor or the deputies (e.g. college, center or administrative department).
- 1.19 **Users:** students, instructors, staff and guests who have SQU internet user name and password, and have at least logged in once to the e-learning system.

2. Responsibility for Implementation

2.1 Center for Educational Technology:

- 2.1.1 Ensures the proper operation of the system.
- 2.1.2 Provides the required technical support.
- 2.1.3 Updates the e-learning system.
- 2.1.4 Studies and recommends useful system plug-ins and customizations.
- 2.1.5 Coordinates with SQU units regarding their training needs.
- 2.1.6 Provides an up-to-date user training on the use of the system.
- 2.1.6.1 Issues the annual statistical report of system usage and provide it to the decision makers and Quality Assurance Office

2.2 Center for Information Systems:

- 2.2.1 Provides the required infrastructure in coordination with CET.
- 2.2.2 Provides the required support for the backend of the system.
- 2.2.3 Ensures the availability of the system.
- 2.2.4 Ensure the security of the system

9.3 SQU Units

- 9.3.1 Communicate the procedure with their staff.
- 9.3.2 Ensure the implementation of this procedure.
- 9.3.3 Provide the CET with their e-learning system training needs every academic year.

3. Procedures

3.1. Site System Procedures:

3.1.1 e-learning System role privileges:

- a. *Administrator:*
Can do everything in the system .It is granted only to CET and CIS.
- b. *Teacher/course creator:*
Teacher can edit everything in their course. They can add and edit course contents such as activities and resources, edit the design, change the theme of the course, view student work, assign and edit grades, access course reports and more. Teacher generally has full access to the course. Adding another teacher to a course is only done through system administrators.
- c. *Non-editing Teacher:*
A non-editing teacher can within an assigned course view and grade students' work but cannot modify or delete any of the activities or resources. Teacher can add non-editing teachers by themselves.
- d. *Student:*
Student can participate in course activities and view all visible resources. They can participate in forums, chats, take quizzes, and submit assignments. They can see their own grades if the teacher/instructor has allowed this.
- e. *Guest:*
Non-registered user to the e-learning system as a guest cannot access the system. Registered user can access courses as guest with a "read-only" privilege if the course teacher has allowed it. They cannot participate in the course as a real student.

3.2. e-learning System Administrative Access:

System administrators may access a course site, without instructor permission or prior notice, to respond to a specific problem or concern.

3.3. e-learning system sites:

e-learning system is divided into two sites:

- a. e-learning *Academic site* (<https://elearn.squ.edu.om>)
It is dedicated only for the use of registered courses in the Deanship of Admissions and Registration.
- b. e-learning *Non-Academic site* (<https://elearnt.squ.edu.om>)
It is dedicated for templates requested for student projects, research, community services, professional development, SQUH...etc., that are not registered as academic courses in (DAR).

3.4. Course Procedures:

By Spring 2021, every registered course in the Deanship of Admissions and Registration Should have a corresponding e-course template in the e-learning system. Colleges/centers are responsible to ensure the implementation of these templates.

3.4.1. Minimum requirements for an e-course:

An e-course must have the following minimum requirements:

- Announcement forum and discussion forums related to course topics
- Course Syllabus
- Instructor contacts
- Resources
- Online synchronous and asynchronous lectures (wherever applicable)
- Required readings from the SQU single search (wherever applicable)
- Online tests (wherever applicable)
- Online assignments (wherever applicable)

3.4.2. Course Management for the academic site:

- Instructors are responsible for teaching and managing their online course.
- Individual instructors and HoDs (or curriculum committee if applicable) are responsible for the material posted in their e-course and they must monitor them.
- Course instructor has the right to request for adding other users to be granted "teacher privilege". The request must be sent through the instructor SQU email to the system administrator via email: elearn@squ.edu.om.
- Instructors with "teacher privilege" have the right to add other users as "non-editing teachers".
- Students are not allowed to be a "teacher" or "non-editing teacher" in any course in the academic site. PhD students can be exempted with a written request from the course instructor.

3.4.3. e-Course creation:

To request a course in both sites (e-learning academic and e-learning non-academic), a user must adhere to the following steps:

1. The request for a new course in the academic site of the e-learning system is available one month before the beginning of the semester.
2. The request for a new course in the non-academic of the e-learning system site is accessible throughout the year.
3. To request for a new course, fill in the "online course request form" in the e-learning system via the following links:
For academic site: <https://elearn.squ.edu.om/course/request.php>
For non-academic site: <https://elearnt.squ.edu.om/course/request.php>
4. The system administrator reviews the course request and the system will send an approval/rejection notification to the instructor's SQU email.
5. Approved courses will appear automatically in the system, under the instructor course list.

Note:

In the academic site of the e-learning system, if multiple instructors teach a single course, only one instructor should request the course.

3.4.4. e-Course transfer or share access privilege for the academic site:

Course access privilege may be transferred or granted as a co-instructor via written request from the first instructor, head of department or college dean. This also applies to those e-courses whose instructors have left SQU for any reason if the college would like to reuse his/her e-course(s). The steps of transfer are as follows:

1. Course instructor, HoD or Dean must send an email via SQU email to ellearn@squ.edu.om requesting to add the new instructor or transfer its privilege to him
2. The email must specify the new assigned instructor along with his/her SQU email.
3. The specific course must be specified in the same email.
4. The new assigned instructor must have at least logged in once to the system.

3.4.5. e-Course deletion:

Deletion of any e-course from the e-learning system (Academic site) must be requested by course instructor and approved by the concerned HoD by sending an email to ellearn@squ.edu.om.

System administrator has the right to delete any course that has no content or no students.

3.4.6. Course Size Limitations

- There is no limit for course size.
- The default maximum upload size for each file is set at 250 Mb. If an instructor needs to upload a file that exceeds this quota, he/she needs to contact e-learning Technical Support Department. Instructors are encouraged to follow the guidelines of file formats (see *appendix V*)
- For Videos/audios above 250 MB should be uploaded to live video streaming platforms such as YouTube using their SQU G Suite account.

3.4.7. Student Course Enrollment

- Instructors are responsible for enrolling their official registered students into their e-courses by giving them the enrollment key of their courses.
- Instructors are responsible for changing the enrollment key frequently to prevent others from enrolling themselves to their course.
- Instructors have the ability to manually add/remove students and non-editing teachers -as long as they have logged in to the system at least once- in their courses.

3.4.8. Course Content Importing, Copying, and Exporting:

Instructors can at any time backup their full courses or selected components, activities, or data to reuse them in future and this can be without user data.

3.4.9. Course Backup and Recovery:

- The e-learning system takes frequent backups of the entire site automatically. However, it is strongly recommended that instructors take frequent backups of their own e-courses during the semester and at the end of the semester.
- Course instructor can keep only one course backup in his e-course.
- System administrator has the right to delete old multiple backups and keep only the latest one.

3.4.10. Course Structure

- Courses are categorized on a semester base in the academic site (Fall, Spring, Summer)
- Under each semester, there will be different categories and sub-categories for each college and its departments.

3.5. Course Archiving and Availability

3.5.1. e-learning academic site:

- Courses are archived for a maximum of 4 semesters. (See appendix I)
- The new semester courses will be automatically created by the system administrators through duplicating them from the correspondence old semester. This creation process will include ONLY the pre-enrolled instructor/s and content of the previous semester
- If the course was not offered in the last semester, then instructors are required to request a new template
- Instructors are not allowed to delete course content or students after the semester finishes
- Instructors are not allowed to use the old semesters courses for teaching in current semester
- Courses will be deleted by the system administrators after 4 semesters
- CET will announce the deletion of courses that passed 4 semesters in the academic site (See appendix I)

3.5.2. e-learning non-academic site:

- Courses are archived for a maximum of one year from the last active use.
- In-active courses will be deleted by the system administrators after the above mentioned periods.
- CET will announce the deletion of the inactive courses (course that has not been used actively by students) for one year in the non-academic site.

3.5.3. Validity of e-courses for students:

At the end of each semester, courses will be archived for four consecutive semesters before deletion from the system. Students and Instructors can access the courses for -but not limited to- revision, grade claims, downloading recourses, export participations to e-portfolio (**injazi**).

3.6. User management:

3.6.1. Special Accounts:

A number of users who are not officially associated with SQU (for example, guest speakers, lecturers or external examiners) may each be provided an account that is specifically for the e-learning system, at the request of SQU instructor or staff member (see appendix II.)

These accounts (referred to as "exceptions") are considered temporary for a specific period, but are renewable on a semester basis

These exceptions will be created with a special naming protocol, so that they may be easily identified and distinguished from standard student, instructor and staff accounts

Example: Ahmed Mohammed would have a username such as *07_NSQU_20*. A personal /non-SQU email account would also be required to create the exceptional account.

3.6.2. User Support:

Users (students, instructors, staff and guests) may request for technical support through the e-learning system support email: ellearn@squ.edu.om.

3.7. e-learning Intellectual Property

SQU recognizes the e-learning work of instructors and students through the following guidelines:

3.7.1. Student-created Materials on the e-learning System:

Instructors must get a written consent from the students (*see appendix III*) if they would like to present students' work (e.g. research papers, reports, discussion forums, chat session or other activities) as an exemplary student work to others in current and future e-courses.

3.7.2. E-materials Copyright Issues

Instructors are strongly recommended to adhere to SQU and international copyright laws by respecting property of others. In case of using work of others, permission must be obtained.

3.7.3. Posting Copyrighted Materials:

You may refer to some copyright law, and fair use references.

3.7.4. Linking to External Sites from SQU e-learning system:

SQU e-learning system allows instructors to embed external links within their course page. Therefore, they are recommended to utilize this feature instead of copying the desired content directly into their courses. This retains the originality of the material.

3.7.5. Ownership of e-course:

- The e-course material prepared by individual instructor is the property of the college/ department/ SQU.
- In case of using outsourced material, link it in your course instead of copying and pasting the material.
- CET keeps the ownership of all variety of teaching and learning materials produced in its departments.
- All recorded video lectures that have been produced by CET will be ONLY uploaded in the CET YouTube channel and it is not allowed to upload them in other channels or platforms. Teachers will be given the URL of these videos to add them to their e-courses.

3.8. Site system management:

3.8.1 System Statistics:

a. System usage data:

Information regarding the e-learning system usage is considered the property of Sultan Qaboos University and will be held confidential. CET is the official unit to publicize the usage statistics per semester.

b. Data for Research:

Any request for e-learning system usage for research must be accompanied by a letter identifying the data fields requested, timeframe, and other appropriate parameters to the extent the system supports. The letter must contain appropriate approvals from the college assistant dean for postgraduates and research. Data request letters should be directed to the Director of Center for Educational Technology. CET has the right to make certain data unavailable.

3.8.2. System Hardware and Software:

Information regarding system hardware and software is confidential and will be retained only by CET and CIS.

3.8.3. System Additions/Customization:

Instructor/college/center may request for an addition of a particular plug-in/module that is compatible with the e-learning system and/or system settings customization. The request must be justified and submitted officially to CET (see *appendix IV*). The request will be evaluated by CET and a decision will be taken accordingly.

3.8.4. System-Wide Announcements

System-wide announcement includes but not limited to: servers shut down and maintenance, upgrades, updates, stop of feature/s, add of new feature/s, reset courses, etc. CET releases announcements to the e-learning system users through the SQU email.

3.9. e-learning Instructor professional development Procedures:

3.9.1. Instructor Training:

Instructors who have no experience in using the e-learning system are required to attend training programs offered by CET. Training is offered through the following methods:

- a. One-to-one Training (Individual):
One to one meeting between instructor and an e-learning specialist to help in using the e-learning system and its features.
- b. College/department training (group training):
It is arranged for the department/college.
- c. General workshops:
General workshops are announced by CET for all staff throughout the year via SQU email. Staff can register in them accordingly.
- d. Self-learning:
Watch the online tutorials available in the e-learning non-academic site

CET is the only authorized unit in SQU to run any training programs on the use of SQU e-learning system. Instructors may run group-training sessions in their colleges on the use of SQU e-learning system with the coordination of CET.

3.9.2. Student Training on e-learning System:

- CET offers online manual and tutorials on how to use the e-learning system as a student which available in the e-learning non-academic site
- Students' hands-on training on how to use the e-course is the responsibility of the instructor.

3.10. E-tests via the e-learning system

Colleges/CPS are allowed to conduct e-tests for students in their e-courses whether classes are online or face-to-face. They are also permitted to use software or systems that the university offers to reduce or prevent students cheating while doing the test. This includes software that lockdown the browser so that students cannot copy, print, or access other applications or search the internet during the test. In addition, they can use proctoring software or any similar application that uses webcams to monitor students while taking tests.

3.10.1 Students integrity while taking tests

Students must adhere to academic integrity while taking online tests. A student is considered misconducting the academic integrity and will be subjected to the penalties and punishments stated in the "Academic Integrity Misconduct Policy" if they commit any of the following but not limited to:

- Cheating from another student
- Seeking help from another person to take the test on his/her behalf or helping them answer the questions
- Using resources that are not authorized by the teacher
- Using websites that help in answering the test
- Leaking test questions while or after the exam to other students via any communication tool
- Not adhering to the guidelines or instructions specified by the instructor

3.11. Online Synchronous Lectures

All users must comply with the following general guidelines (but not limited to) while attending the online synchronous lectures or meetings:

- Wear decent dress
- Follow public decency
- Respect others' privacy
- Not to do any acts or behavior that obstruct the flow of the lecture or disturb the learning process of others
- Not sharing the link (URL) of the online synchronous session to other unauthorized students
- Students are prohibited from recording the online synchronous session without prior permission
- Students are prohibited from sharing/publishing the recorded online synchronous session without prior permission

A student is considered misconducting the code of academic ethics and an action of punishment shall be taken against him/her as specified in the "Academic Integrity Misconduct Policy" if not adhering to the above mentioned guidelines.

3.12. Citation

Academic integrity is part and parcel of e-learning. Therefore, instructors are permitted to use software and tools that help them ensure the academic integrity of their students' academic work such as reports and research papers. This includes using text matching software integrated in the SQU e-learning system which aims at improving Students' skills in writing original reports and research following academic integrity practices. It allows students to discover the similarity of their writing and how much they quoted from websites and other resources so that they rewrite their work following academic conventions.

Copying other people's work without referencing may result in student committing a misconduct of the "Academic Integrity Misconduct Policy".

3.13. CONDITIONS OF USE

"A Conditions of Use Agreement" sets the terms and conditions of the use of SQU e-learning system. It is expected that all users (students, instructors, staff and guests) read and abide by the terms and conditions of this agreement. Failure to abide by of this agreement may result in disciplinary actions according to SQU regulations and bylaws. CET reserves the right to monitor and report inappropriate use of the e-learning system.

3.13.1. General Behavior Expectations:

- Users must present themselves in responsible, respectful, and ethical behaviour while online.
- Unethical behavior such as threatening messages, hate posts, discriminatory and Islamic sects' remarks, and politics are not tolerated.
- SQU e-learning system is provided exclusively for educational purposes. The system must not be used for commercial purposes, product advertising and purchasing, political campaigning (such as SQU student council, Majlis Al Shura and Municipal Councils, etc.).
- Users are prohibited from submitting, receiving, publishing any illegal, officially confidential, sexual, racist, threatening materials on the SQU e-learning system.
- Users are prohibited from using or trespassing another user's password, folder, work, or file.
- User accounts must be used only by the authorized owner of the account. Users are responsible for all activity within their account.

4. Key Risks

The main risks associated with this procedure are:

- 4.1. Lack of adherence to the SQU e-learning system procedure
- 4.2. Lack of support or follow-up from SQU decision makers in the implementation of this procedure
- 4.3. Lack of financial and human resources
- 4.4. Colleges and teaching units do not refer to CET when implementing new e-learning practices
- 4.5. Faculty resistance on the use of e-learning
- 4.6. Delays in implementing the procedure

5. References

The development of this procedure has, in a contextualized manner, benefited from the following documents:

1. eLearning, The University of Queensland, Australia,
 - a. <https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/6.40-elearning>
2. Policy Document, e-Learning Ontario, Ministry of Education, January 30, 2006 (URL not available)
3. Canvas Policy - myUSF - University of San Francisco https://myusf.usfca.edu/system/files/its-files/canvas_policy.pdf
4. Moodle Docs, Moodle, https://docs.moodle.org/31/en/Main_page

6. Appendices

- 6.1. Appendix I: Diagram of Archive and Deletion of Courses
- 6.2. Appendix II: Non-SQU User New Account Request Form
- 6.3. Appendix III: Permission to Use / Share Student Work with e-course
- 6.4. Appendix IV: Request for Additions/Customization in the e-learning System
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Appendix I: Diagram of Archive and Deletion of Courses

Appendix II: Non-SQU User New Account Request Form

Manual SQU e-learning system User account Request Form			
Request Name: (SQU staff)		SQU Email:	
College/Center/Unit:			
Period of Account Activation:	From:	To:	
Reason for account creation:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community service student/instructor	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	External Examiner	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guest speakers	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Audit	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify):	
e-course Title:			
e-course Code:			
Requester Signature:			
College/Center/Unit Approval:			

New accounts details:

N.	First Name	Last Name	E-mail	Country	Role in Course (Student/instructor)

Note: A digital copy of new account details must be sent to ellearn@squ.edu.om along with signed form.

Appendix III: Permission to Use / Share Student Work with e-Course

Permission To Use / Share Student Work with e-Course	
Title of Student Work to be Shared:	
e-course title:	
e-course instructor:	
"I hereby grant the above mentioned instructor the permission to use materials I created in the above mentioned course"	
Student Name:	
Student SQU ID:	
Student Signature:	
Date:	

Appendix IV: Request for Additions/Customization in the e-learning System

Request for Additions/Customization in the e-learning System		
Name of user:		
SQU email:		Phone:
College and Department:		
Type of request:	<input type="checkbox"/> Addition of plug-in	<input type="checkbox"/> Customization
Name of addition/customization:		
Description of the request		
Benefits		
Does this apply to a specific course? If yes (specify):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If addition: Did you try:	<input type="checkbox"/> Self	<input type="checkbox"/> With Students
	<input type="checkbox"/> With Colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/> None
For official Use: (CET)		
Reviewed by:		
Date of review:		
Type of Benefit:	<input type="checkbox"/> Wide scale	<input type="checkbox"/> Small scale
Similar function tool in the system:	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (specify):
Cost:		
Benefits:		

*Appendix V: Guidelines of File Formats***Note:****PowerPoint presentation**

For PowerPoint presentation always save them as PDF files to reduce the size and secure your presentation.

Video

To shoot proper video always use 720p for uploading purpose in *.mp4 format

Audio

To Record proper Audio for web use *.mp3, *.WMA or *.WAV formats on 96kpbs or 128kpbs

Images

To use images for web your image resolution should be 800x600 and format should be *.JPG

Recommended formats for web are bolded

HD Camera Footage	1080x720	*.mp4	H264	Web Video
SD Camera Footage	640x360	*.mp4	H264	Web Video
HD Youtube Video	1080x720	*.mp4	H264	Web Video
SD youtube Video	640x360	*.mp4	H264	Web Video
HD Flash Animation	1080x720	*.mp4	H264	Web Video
SD Flash Animation	640x360	*.mp4	H264	Web Video
Camera Picture	800x600	*.JPG	JPG2000	Picture
Vector Art	800x600	*.PNG	Adobe Compression	Vector Art
Stereo Recorded Audio	128Kpbs	*.mp3	Mp3 Compression	Audio Clip
Mono Recorded Audio	96Kpbs	*.mp3	Mp3 Compression	Audio Clip
Stereo Recorded Audio	128Kpbs	*.WMA	Mp3 Compression	Audio Clip
Mono Recorded Audio	96Kpbs	*.WMA	Mp3 Compression	Audio Clip