DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCEDURE FOR ORGANISING AND CONDUCTING BLENDED AND REMOTE STUDIES AT VILNIAUS UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Description of the Procedure for Organising and Conducting Blended and Remote Studies at Vilnius University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter – Vilnius UAS) (hereinafter referred to as the Description) regulates the organisation and conduct of blended and remote studies, the duties and responsibilities of teaching staff and students, and the procedure of preparation and certification of a subject (module).

2. Blended learning is a form of study where contact work takes place both in the classroom and in a virtual learning environment and/or using synchronous[1] / asynchronous[2] digital learning tools. Remote contact work accounts for at least 30 % and no more than 70 % of the total study programme.

3. Remote learning means a form of study where contact work involving direct participation of teaching staff and students (non-remote contact work) accounts for at least 10 %, but not more than 30 % of the study programme.

4. Key definitions in this Regulation:

Open educational resources (hereinafter – OER) are digital tools of various kinds, including learning content (courses, learning objects, collections), learning tools (software that supports the creation, delivery, use and enhancement of open learning content), and implementation resources (intellectual property licences that govern open publishing, design principles and localisation of content).

Attestation of an e-subject/module – a procedure to confirm the suitability of an e-subject/module for remote learning.

Author of an e-subject/module – a person having developed the e-subject/module in accordance with the requirements for the e-subject/module. An e-subject/module may be developed and taught by several teachers.

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[1] Synchronous - occurring at the same time rhythm as other related processes occurring at the same time.
[2] Asynchronous - occurring at its own time rhythm, not coordinated with other related processes occurring at the same time.

Hybrid study method is a mode of study when some students participate in a subject/module in a classroom setting and some students participate in a classroom setting using synchronous digital learning tools.

Contact work is student's work (lectures, practical training, evaluation for the completed assignments) under the direct supervision of a teacher at the time scheduled in a timetable. Contact work can also be remote.

Remote contact work is the work of a student under the guidance of an instructor in a virtual learning environment and/or using synchronous/asynchronous digital learning tools.

Learning object (LO) is an element of e-learning content (text, self-checking tool, image, video footage of classroom sessions, other video, audio material, etc.).

Remote learning subject (module) (hereinafter – e-subject (module)) is the learning material, learning activities, communication, assessment and monitoring tools for a subject (module) presented in a virtual learning environment.

Digital teaching (learning) tools – software tools that can automate learning functions (video conferencing software for communication, tools for creating assignments, tests, etc.).

Auditorium-based study methods are classes (lectures, seminars, practices, final theses, etc.) with direct participation of a teacher and students in it (non-remote contact work).

Virtual learning environment (VLE) is an information system of learning content, learning process management, student support, feedback and communication tools for learning process participants.

CHAPTER II
ORGANISING AND CONDUCTING BLENDED AND REMOTE STUDIES

5. The planning and accounting of remote contact and non-contact work hours is regulated by the Description of the Procedure for Establishment and Accounting of Full-Time Workload of Teaching Staff at Vilnius UAS.

6. When conducting blended and remote studies, the Study Programme/ Field Committee and the department supervising the study programme sets the proportion of synchronous and asynchronous remote contact work. The allocation of all hours is provided for in the descriptions of study subjects/modules and the study plan of the study programme.

7. If a course/module description allocates at least 50% of contact hours to remote contact work, the course/module must be attested. If the proportion of contact hours for remote contact work accounts for less than 50%, the conformity of the content of the course/module study material submitted to the VLE to the course/module description shall be assessed by the Department and approved by minutes.

8. When conducting remote studies, e-subjects (modules) must be attested.

9. When conducting blended and remote studies, internships and final thesis preparation subjects (modules) are not subject to attestation.

10. When conducting blended studies, the Study Programme/ Field Committee and the department supervising the study programme may provide for subjects (modules) delivered remotely only, using VLE and other digital teaching tools. Such subjects (modules) must be attested.

11. When conducting remote studies, the external professional activity practice and the final thesis defence are not conducted remotely. The Study Programme/ Field Committee and the

department supervising the study programme may provide for other study subjects (modules) conducted non-remotely.

12. Synchronous contact work and examination sessions for blended and remote studies are carried out in accordance with the timetable approved by the Dean of the Faculty at Vilnius UAS.

12.1. The blended learning sessions provided for in the timetable may be delivered in classrooms, by way of videoconferencing or in a hybrid manner.

12.2. The remote learning sessions provided for in the timetable shall be conducted by way of videoconferencing.

13. When conducting video-conferencing classes, students must turn on a video camera and a microphone at the teacher's request.

14. Blended and remote learning asynchronous remote contact work is carried out according to the activities and deadlines provided by the teacher in the virtual learning environment.

15. For remote learning, tests are organised in a virtual learning environment and/or using digital learning tools. In the exceptional case that due to technical difficulties the teacher is not able to carry out tests at the scheduled time, tests shall be carried out at a different time agreed with the students and the Faculty administration.

16. For blended studies, the faculty administration may instruct to carry out tests using classroom-based study methods, virtual learning environments and/or digital learning tools.

17. Students must come to defend their final theses before the Thesis Defence Committee.

18. In an exceptional case, when a student is unable to attend the thesis defence, he has the right to request the organising faculty to allow the thesis to be defended by way of videoconferencing.

19. If oral tests are carried out by way of videoconferencing, they must be recorded. At the end of the semester when the subject (module) was delivered, the recordings will be stored for one month in the teacher's Office 365 repository.

20. Students must have a video camera and a microphone in tests conducted by way of videoconferencing. Student must provide their student ID card or other proof of identity at the request of a teacher.

21. Duties and responsibilities of teachers:

21.1. adhere to the planned workload allocation and the approved timetable;

21.2. prepare subject (module) materials for blended and remote learning courses at the VLE and submit them for departmental assessment and attestation in accordance with the requirements set out in the Description;

21.3. at the beginning of the study of the subject (module), provide students with all the necessary information for logging in to the e-subject (module) VLE, familiarise students with the procedure and specifics of the e-subject (module), the methods for organising and evaluating studies;

21.4. delivering lectures, seminars, etc., using video-conferencing in a synchronous manner, according to a timetable approved by the Faculty. Making recordings of the synchronous sessions of timetabled blended and remote learning courses and making them available to students for later review is recommended;

21.5. warn students before starting videorecording;

21.6. participate in sessions with a video camera and microphone turned on. The teacher's video camera may be turned off during a video demonstration;

21.7. check and evaluate students work, providing comments and feedback;

21.8. communicate with students, encourage active learning, support the use of self-study tools, communicate deadlines, etc.

21.9. comply with the provisions of the Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius UAS and copyright requirements.

22. Duties and responsibilities of students:

22.1. ensure that technological, technical and software requirements for studies are met;

22.2. use learning materials (text, video, audio, broadcasts and video recordings) of e-subjects (modules) for study purposes only. These materials may not be published, reproduced or otherwise transmitted to third parties without the consent of the authors;

22.3. attend classes, come to tests and complete any other tasks assigned by teachers in a timely manner;

22.4. turn on a video camera and a microphone at the request of a teacher during a session conducted by way of videoconferencing or a test;

22.5. store personal login details to all information systems of Vilnius UAS;

22.6. comply with the provisions of the Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius UAS and copyright requirements.

CHAPTER III
PREPARATION AND ATTESTATION OF AN E-SUBJECT (MODULE)

23. E-subjects (modules) are prepared and delivered using the following technologies: VLE, video conferencing, live streaming and video recording of lectures, and other digital teaching/learning tools.

24. The author(s) of the e-subject (module) are responsible for the content of the e-subject (module) in terms of subject matter, the quality of the e-subject (module), the correctness of the language and its compliance with copyright legislation.

25. The preparation and/or updating of an e-subject (module) and its submission for attestation is planned by the teacher in the teacher's full-time equivalent workload record card.

26. E-subjects (modules) is registered electronically with VLE of Vilnius UAS by completing the registration form available on VLE website.

27. Teachers present VLE material for blended and remote studies at department's meeting, where the relevance of the content to the subject (module) description is discussed. Once the Department confirms the compliance, the prepared e-subject (module) may be submitted to the Attestation Commission.

28. Teachers submit the materials for VLE blended and remote learning courses, which are not in Lithuanian, to the Foreign Language Centre (hereinafter – FLC), which assesses the language (spelling) of the materials. If the FLC confirms the suitability of the language (spelling), the e-subject (module) may be submitted to the Attestation Commission.

29. If studies are delivered by way of a modular system, individual module subjects may also be submitted for attestation. A whole module is considered attested if all the subjects included in that module have been attested. Once an e-module has been attested, all its e-subjects are considered as attested.

30. Compulsory preparation requirements for an e-subject (module) to be submitted for attestation:

30.1. the name of an e-subject/module corresponds to the name in the subject/module description;

30.2. the structure of the e-subject/module is consistent with the content specified in the subject/module description;

30.3. the following information on the study of the subject/ module is indicated at the beginning of an e-subject/ module:

30.3.1. an abbreviated description of the subject/module (purpose of the subject/module, annotation of the subject/module, links between the programme learning outcomes and the subject/module learning outcomes, content of the subject/module);

30.3.2. contact details of the teacher(s);

30.3.3. structure and criteria for assessing learning outcomes;

30.3.4. consultation methods;

30.3.5. a recommended list of required and supplementary readings;

30.3.6. a glossary of definitions and abbreviations;

30.3.7. a list of frequently asked questions;

30.3.8. information on technological, technical and software requirements, payment procedures and deadlines;

30.4. learning materials are prepared using in-house VLE tools and various LOs;

30.5. various synchronous and asynchronous delivery and communication tools are used (text, audio and/or video conferencing, chat, discussion, etc.);

30.6. all mid-term assignments provided for in the course/module outline are submitted on the VLE;

30.7. self-control tools used:

30.7.1. self-control questions and/or assignments are provided after each topic in the subject/ module description;

30.7.2. self-control questions and/or assignments are in line with learning objectives. Incorrect answers must be commented, providing, where appropriate, a link to the place where learning material or to an internet source where direct and indirect answers are available;

30.8. provide functioning links to sources of information;

30.9. a coherent visual style for the e-subject (module), ensuring good readability of the information (using appropriate style elements - font size, format, etc.);

30.10. easy browsing of content;

30.11. good quality audio, video and graphic material used.

31. Additional requirements for the preparation of an e-subject (module) to be submitted for attestation:

31.1. video recordings of lectures;

31.2. students are encouraged to find and use OER;

31.3. evaluation logbook is used;

31.4. terms used are linked to a glossary.

32. The prepared e-subjects (modules) are attested by a 5-member e-subject (module) Attestation Commission (hereinafter – the Commission) approved by Order of the Rector of Vilnius UAS on the proposal of Deans of Faculties. A Digital Studies Manager of the Study Office is appointed as the Secretary of the Commission.

33. The Chairperson of the Commission is elected by majority vote at the first meeting of the Commission.

34. If a member of the Commission is the preparer of an e-subject (module), he may not take part in the attestation of the e-subject (module) which he has prepared.

35. The Commission holds meetings at least twice per academic school year (at the end of the autumn semester and the end of the spring semester) or as required. Meetings may also be held electronically.

36. A Commission's meeting is effective if it is attended by more than a half of members of the Commission.

37. All documents required for the attestation of an e-subject (module) must be submitted to distance@viko.lt.

38. The Commission is provided with the following:

38.1. an application for attestation of an e-subject (module) in the prescribed form (Annex 1);

38.2. a description of the study subject (module) approved by Vice Dean of the faculty.

39. On the presentation of the Chairperson of the Commission, members of the Commission complete an e-subject (module) assessment form upon receipt of the material submitted for attestation one week before an e-subject (module) attestation meeting.

40. In the course of an attestation, an e-subject (module) is assessed according to all the e-subject (module) preparation requirements and their weightings set out in Annex 2. It is assessed against additional requirements only if more than 50 % of the principal requirements have been scored.

41. The Commission evaluates the material submitted to VLE in terms of its technical and visual presentation and compliance with remote study requirements, and has the right to ask the teachers to demonstrate the material. The Commission may call on experts in the relevant field if additional assessment of the quality of the content of an e-course (module) is required.

42. An assessment must be carried out no later than 1 month from the date of receipt of the application for attestation of the e-subject (module).

43. Having assessed the material submitted, the final decision is made at the Commission meeting by a simple majority of votes. The Commission makes one of the following decisions:

43.1. attestation – to declare an e-subject (module) suitable for remote studies when it meets more than 80% of the compulsory preparation requirements referred to in clause 30 hereof;

43.2. attestation on condition – to declare that an e-subject (module) is partially suitable for remote studies when it meets more than 50% of the compulsory preparation requirements referred to in clause 30 hereof;

43.3. refused attestation – to declare an e-subject (module) unsuitable for remote studies when less than 50% of the compulsory preparation requirements specified in clause 30 hereof have been met or at least one of the compulsory preparation requirements specified in clause 30 have not been met.

44. The Commission provides the author(s) of the e-subject (module) with an extract of the minutes of the Commission's meeting by email within 5 business days of the Commission's meeting.

45. The attested e-subject (module) shall be entered in the Register of attested e-subjects (modules) and shall be given a tag.

46. In case of an attestation of an e-subject (module) on condition, the author of the e-subject/module may, within 3 months from the date of the Commission's decision, correct the deficiencies indicated by the Commission. Upon receipt of the form drawn up by the Commission, he shall indicate in the form which deficiencies he has corrected. The completed form shall be sent by e-mail to distance@viko.lt. The reassessment shall be carried out no later than 1 month from the date of submission of the e-subject (module) for reassessment. An e-subject/module shall be deemed not to have been reassessed if it has not been submitted for reassessment within 3 months from the Commission's decision date.

47. The study material for a non-attested e-subject (module) may be used in a partial, fragmented way, i.e. covering a part of the content of the subject/module in auditorium-based, blended studies or hybrid teaching methods.

48. An attested e-subject (module) must be re-attested upon a change of more than 50% of the content of the subject/module.

49. If the Department finds that the study material of the attested e-subject (module) does not comply with the requirements of the subject (module) description, it may apply to the Commission for the cancellation of the attestation of the e-subject (module).

50. Commission members may be remunerated for the assessment of e-subjects (modules).

CHAPTER IV
FINAL PROVISIONS

51. The study materials provided on VLE of Vilnius UAS for subjects (modules) may be used for the purposes of Vilnius UAS only.

52. At attested e-subject (module) is property of the author and Vilnius UAS.

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