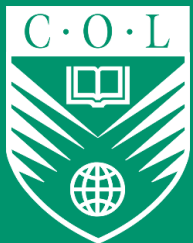# Benchmarking Quality in Open Distance & Online Learning : COL Experience

Professor Asha Kanwar
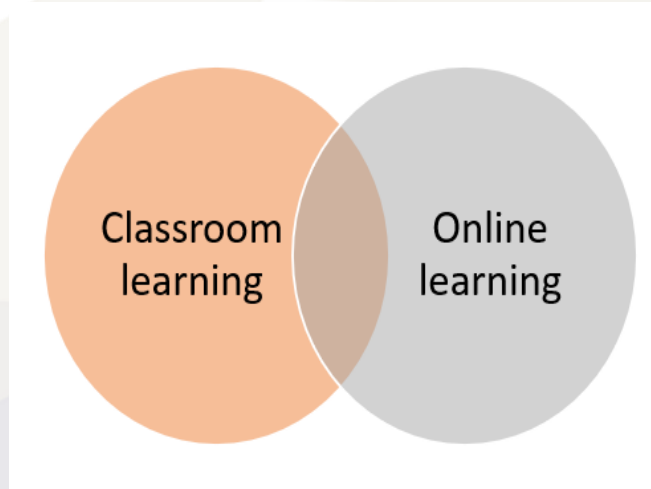COL President & CEO

Quality in online, open and distance Higher Education Across borders: A multi-sectoral, cross country policy dialogue
WHEC, Barcelona 19 May 2022, 16:15

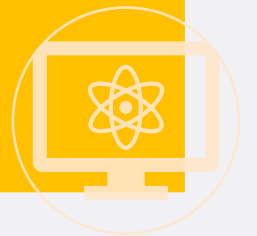# Global pivot to open distance & online learning

Hybrid learning

Classroom learning

Online learning
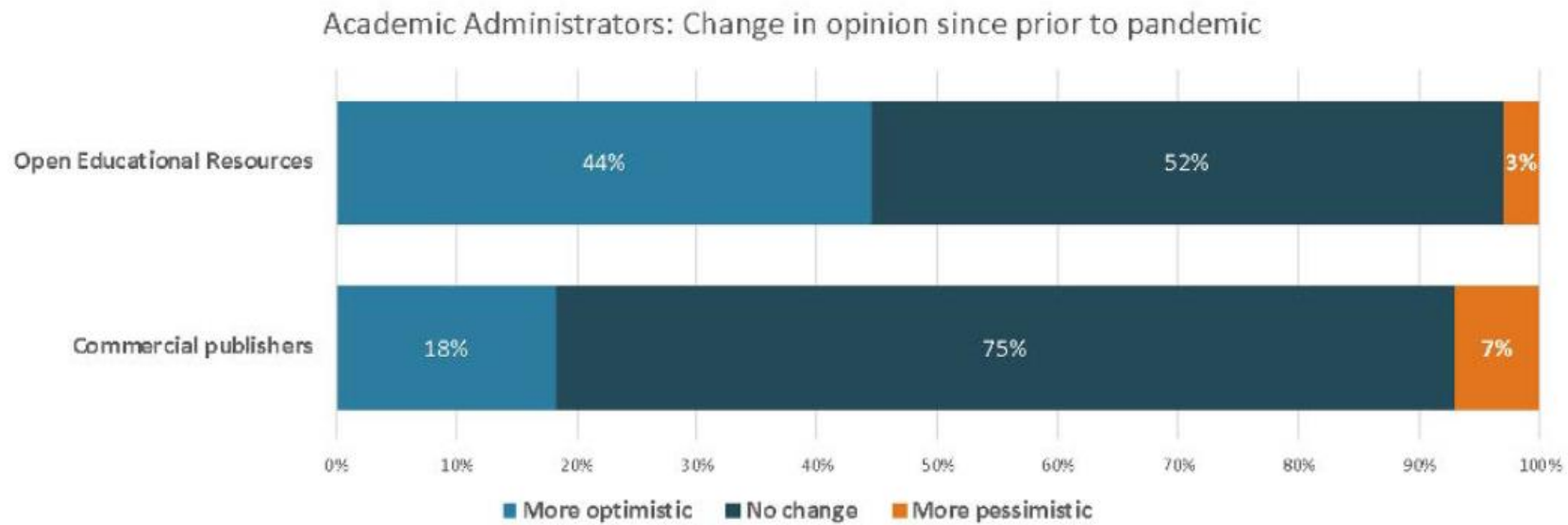
Blended learning

E-learning

Technology: University of Hyderabad

- 40% students indicated "unreliable connectivity

- 30% worried about cost of data

- 18% can't access online classes at all.

Source: https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/2020/apr/20/covid-19-lockdown-digital-divide-among-students-forces-university-of-hyderabad-to-drop-e-classes-2132571.html

Increased use of OER

Academic Administrators: Change in opinion since prior to pandemic

	More optimistic	No change	More pessimistic
Open Educational Resources	44%	52%	3%
Commercial publishers	18%	75%	7%

■ More optimistic ■ No change ■ More pessimistic

Source: Johnson, et al. (2021). *Teaching during pandemic.* Bayview Analytics

Issues in QA for OER

- Who is responsible for the quality of repurposed content?

- How do institutions ensure the integrity of content?

- What is the role of QA agencies?

Quality Assurance Guidelines for
Open Educational Resources:
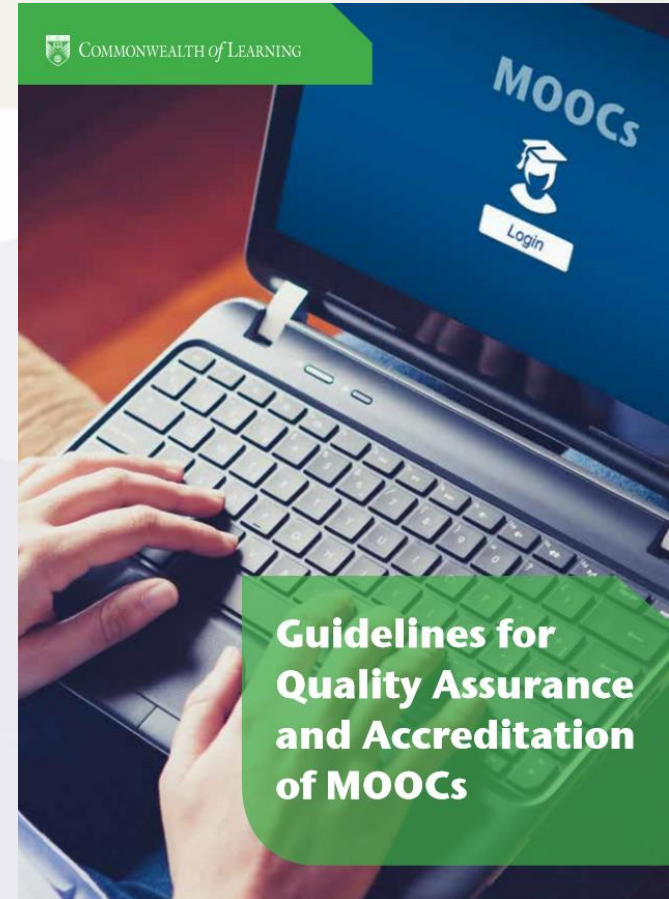*TIPS Framework*

Version 2.0
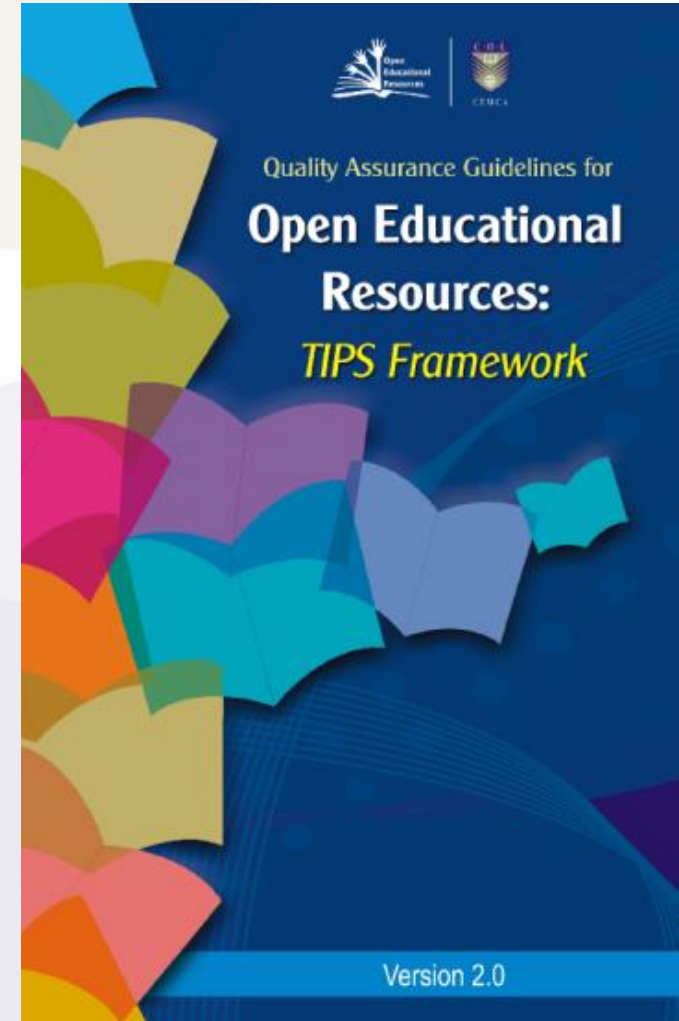
MOOCs: Accreditation and Recognition

- Centralised directory of courses

- Institutions decide the courses for which they provide credit

- Transfer of credit up to 40%

- Host institution to communicate the grade directly to the students of the participating institutions
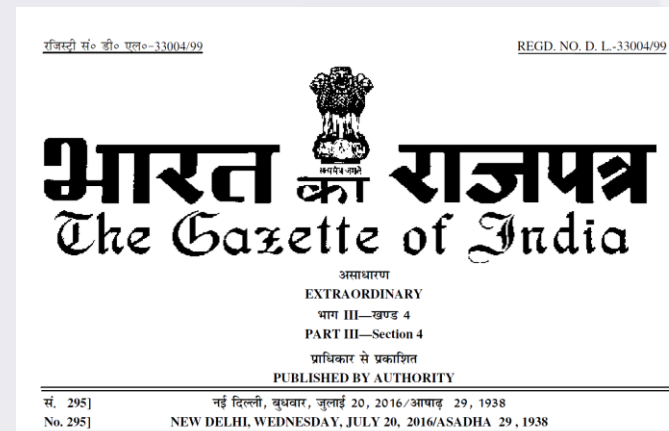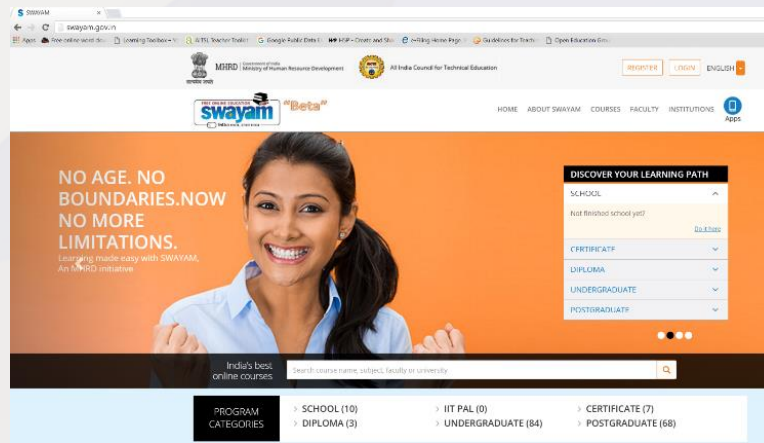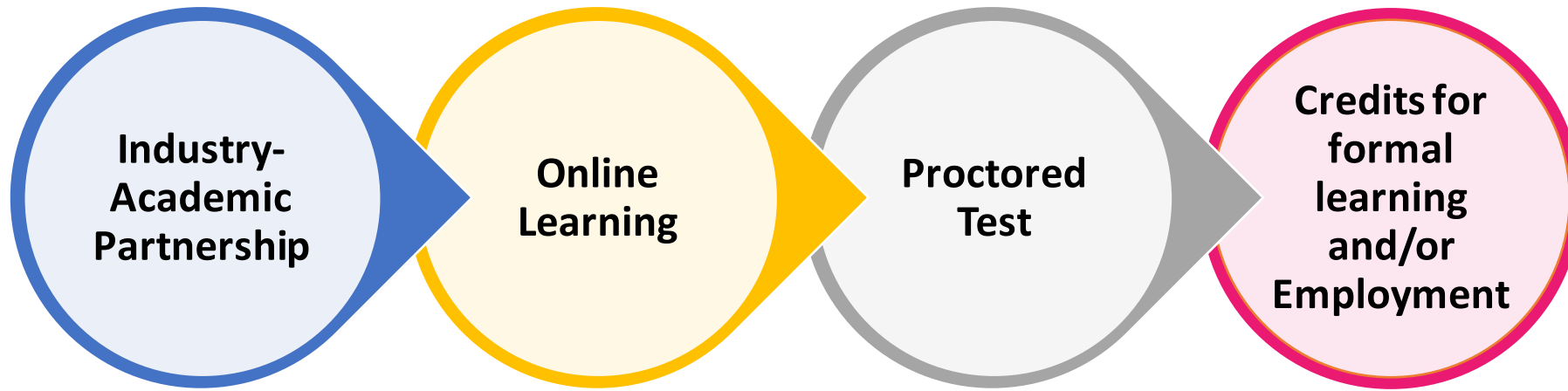
Guidelines for Quality

- One size does not fit all

- Context critical

- Accreditation/QA agencies need to consider credit equivalence

Micro-credentials

MicroMasters™

Industry-Academic Partnership

Online Learning

Proctored Test

Credits for formal learning and/or Employment

- Short duration
- Modular approach
- Skills based

- Community learning
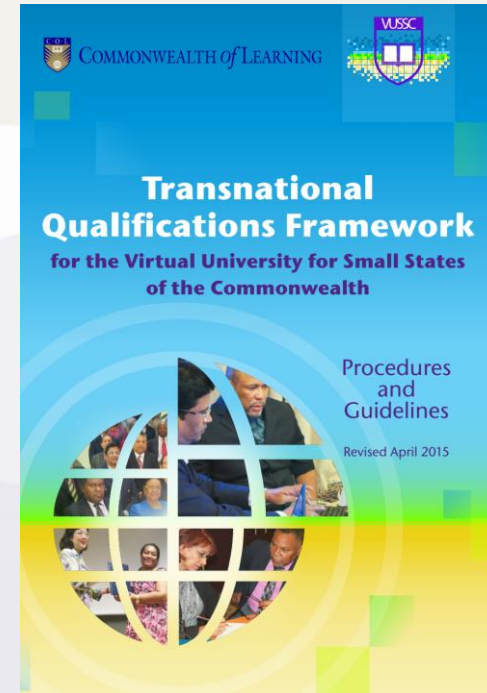- Self-paced
- Mentoring support

- Verifiable credential
- Project-based

- Job-ready
- Reduced cost
- Blended with F2F for formal degree

Implications for QA

- Recognition of badges/micro-credentials
- Accrediting prior learning
- Transnational Qualifications Frameworks for mobility

How will these developments impact QA?

- QA has operated in structured contexts—how will it embrace openness--OER, open access, open learning?

- Is the QA system ready to recognize and accredit new ways of teaching and learning that the pandemic/ICTs have introduced?

- How will external and internal QA processes need to change?

COL QA Tools

COL Course level tools

Blended course learnability checklist

eLearning Course Review Toolkit

Learning Resources Gender Evaluation Rubrics

Programme level

"Ove 90 per cent of Kenyan universities have adopted the rubric. The biggest factor was the collaborative approach to its development,"
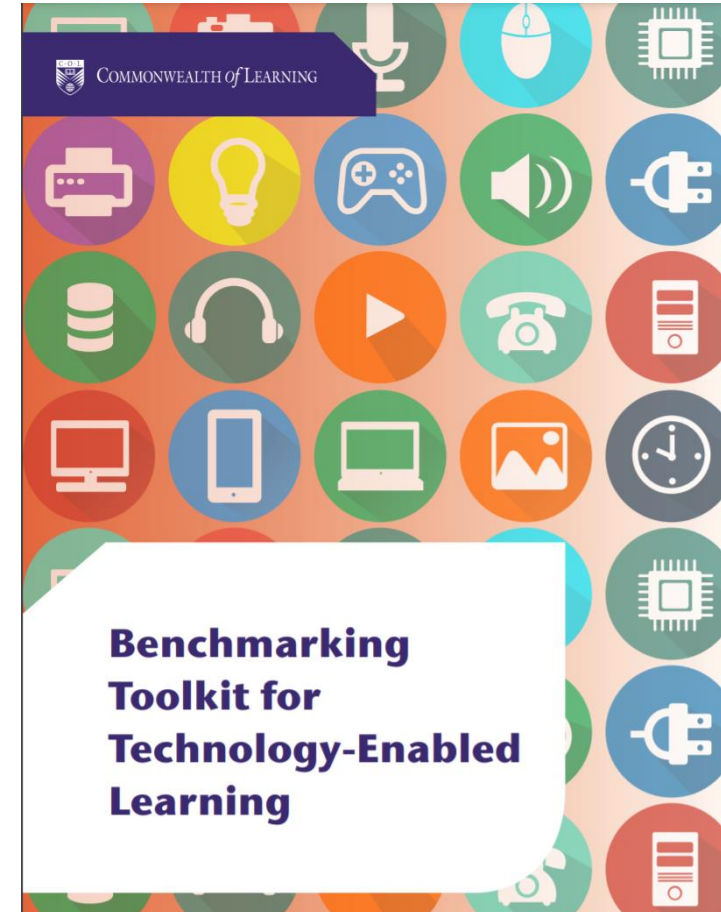
- Dr Mildred Ayere, Maseno University

Quality Assurance in East Africa

Institutional level

1. Policy
2. Strategic Plan
3. IT Support
4. Technology Applications
5. Content Development
6. Documentation
7. Organisational Culture
8. Leadership
9. Human Resource Training
10. Technology-enabled Learning Champions

Benchmarking Toolkit for Technology-Enabled Learning

Benchmarking Process

Self-Study → Review and validation → Action plan and reporting

Benefits

1. Collaborative approach leads to wider ownership.
2. Validation by external reviewer/s leads to authentic evidence.
3. Senior management defines the way forward for stakeholders in the institution and externally with QA Agencies/government.

QUALITY ✓
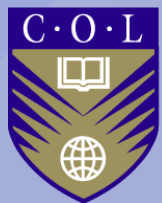
Implications for Policy

- There can be no quality without equity and inclusion
- Empower teachers in digital fluency
- Integrate digital literacy across the curriculum
- Focus on skills and competencies acquired rather than modes of delivery
- QA Agencies need to evolve and embrace emerging developments in pedagogy and technology

Thank you

http://oasis.col.org/

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