

Online courses and MOOCs

Online courses are learning units of any kind that are delivered completely over the internet and do not require physical presence at all. As any other course, they have specific learning objectives and a well-defined curriculum offering training on a set of competences and learning outcomes that the students should be able to achieve within a reasonable period of time. Online courses can make use of learning materials and tools of any kind that are suitable for online delivery (videoconferencing, digital documents, recordings, quizzes, blogs, chats, fora, email, social media, etc.). The foreseen activities can be synchronous or asynchronous, i.e., interaction between teachers and learners and among students may be immediate (live sessions, chats, etc.) or take place with a certain delay (fora, email, etc.). Online courses may have rather strict time frames and pacing or be very flexible, encouraging the learners to self-organize their participation in accordance with their prior knowledge, interests or goals. There may even be unattended standalone courses that do not require any interaction with teachers, tutors, supervisors or even other learners. Nevertheless, there should at least be some mechanisms for quality assurance and communication channels for feedback with the course providers. The learners should, furthermore, have opportunities to check the progress made so far and to prove that they have achieved the competences at the end of the course. Recognized and reliable certification of the learning achievements should also be possible.

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) are a specific type of online courses that offer training for large numbers of learners in an open and freely accessible way. In order to actively involve as many participants as possible, they promote community building and direct interaction among the learners, provide self-assessment tools, offer peer-to-peer evaluation, etc. Due to their open character, MOOCs tend to focus on topics of general interest and to avoid any kind of prerequisites. Although MOOCs and their educational resources are freely accessible, specific personalized services such as follow-up, mentoring, correcting and grading of assignments, or final assessment and certification may be subject to fees. In addition, free access to MOOCs does not necessarily mean that the course materials are open resources that can be reused freely.

Closed questions for activity description	Detailed description	
Place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On campus • Off campus (online) • Blended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off campus (online) 	<p><i>Courses are always taken online</i></p>
Pace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-paced (at their own pace) • Time bound (synchronous/asynchronous) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-paced (at their own pace) • Time bound (synchronous/asynchronous) 	<p><i>Online courses and MOOCs can be both: self-paced and time bounded, depending on a choice.</i></p>
Access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open • Restricted • For limited number (add comment, what is the maximum number of participants) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open • Restricted • For limited number (add comment, what is the maximum number of participants) 	<p><i>Online courses can be restricted, because fees may be charged. Also, they can be for a limited number of participants, depending on the course and its context.</i></p> <p><i>MOOCs are usually open and free of charge, because they are set for a large number of participants.</i></p>
Funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-funded • Grant/ Government funded • Alliance-funded/ project funded • Free of charge/ funded by university • Other (comment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-funded • Grant/ Government funded • Alliance-funded/ project funded • Free of charge/ funded by university • Other (comment) 	<p><i>All options are possible. As for the funding it is important to add that online courses are usually fee based and MOOCs can offer additional services such as mentoring, correcting and grading of assignments, final assessment and certification for additional fee.</i></p>

<p>Inclusion into the curriculum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the compulsory study subject ◦ the elective study subject • Extracurricular • Both options are possible (included/ apart from it) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the compulsory study subject ◦ the elective study subject • Extracurricular 	<p><i>Both courses can be taught as part of the curriculum as a:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compulsory subject (not for MOOCs) • elective subject. <p><i>Also, both can be taught extracurricular as separate subjects. Such extracurricular subjects can lead to microcredential certificates (in case they provide students with specific competences) or can be mentioned in a diploma as separate courses.</i></p>
<p>Open questions of activity description</p>	<p>Detailed description</p>	
<p>Volume of the activity Length in ECTS/ semesters</p>	<p><i>The volume of online courses and MOOCs is very flexible. Typical values are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Duration: from one week to one semester</i> • <i>Weekly workload: from 5 to 15 hours per week</i> • <i>Credits earned: one credit for 25 to 30 hours of work</i> 	
<p>Price of the activity If the academic offer activity has a fee (as indicated in question above), what is the fee</p>	<p><i>Online courses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>According to the fee policy of the offering institution</i> <p><i>MOOCs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free of charge (Nevertheless, additional services such as mentoring, correcting and grading of assignments, final assessment and certification) may be fee-based.)</i> 	
<p>Student application & selection How students can apply and/ or are selected/ approved for each activity</p>	<p><i>Online courses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>According to the admission policy of the offering institution and the context of the course</i> <p><i>MOOCs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free admission</i> 	
<p>Student evaluation What methods are used to evaluate student performance in each activity</p>	<p><i>Online courses</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Any kind of evaluation and assessment tools that do not require the physical presence of the students (including online interviews and exams).</i> • <i>Some online courses require one or several physical exams.</i> <p><i>MOOCs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Free MOOCs: usually based on non-interactive evaluation tools (quizzes, questionnaires, self-evaluation, peer-to-peer evaluation, ...)</i> • <i>Paid or sponsored evaluation services: see online courses</i> 	
<p>Recognition of student results How student results are transferred (if applicable)</p>	<p><i>According to the recognition policy of the recognizing institution</i></p>	
<p>Sustainability strategy How the sustainability of each academic offer would be ensured</p>	<p><i>Online courses and MOOCs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Embedding the courses in official programmes and action lines of the offering institution (regular curricula, lifelong learning/continuing education, teacher training and retraining, extracurricular activities, summer/winter schools, ...)</i> • <i>Diversification of funding sources</i> • <i>Dedicated promotion and dissemination plans</i> • <i>Enhanced quality assurance strategies</i> • <i>Specific support structures and training opportunities for teachers</i> <p><i>MOOCs only</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bundling the offer on dedicated local, regional, national or international platforms.</i> <p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Spain: AbiertaUGR</i> ◦ <i>Italy: EduOpen</i> ◦ <i>Austria: iMooX</i> ◦ <i>Coursera</i> ◦ <i>edX</i> 	

<p>Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How students are supported while studying through each academic offer activity • How teachers are supported to develop each academic offer activity (administrative, academic support, training, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Support for students: Each course offers course-specific support opportunities or provides information about support activities offered by the organizing institution.</i> • <i>Support for teachers and course developers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Specific support centers for digital teaching and learning.</i> ○ <i>Recognition of online courses and MOOCs as regular teaching load</i> ○ <i>Specific funding and calls for course development</i> ○ <i>Recognized training opportunities</i>
<p>Infrastructure</p> <p>What infrastructure and technical equipment is necessary for successful implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for teachers • for students. 	<p><i>Infrastructure for teachers and students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fast and reliable access to the internet</i> • <i>Computer with camera, microphone and pen tablet</i> • <i>LMS (Learning Management System) or other type of online training platforms</i> • <i>Storage and back-up services</i> • <i>Access to editing and design software</i> • <i>Video and audio recording facilities</i> • <i>Group work facilities</i>
<p>Analysis and QA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data (and how) is collected to evaluate each academic offer activity success; • What QA tools/ policies are existing to assure quality (if there are any) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The offering institutions should apply the regular quality assurance procedures also for online courses of any type (reporting, self-assessment, questionnaires for students and teachers, internal quality assurance committees, regular external evaluation...)</i>