

GOER Accreditation Training Manual

A practical guide for accreditors

Table of Contents:

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Teaching and Learning.....	1
3. Student Welfare.....	1
4. Safeguarding.....	2
5. Leadership.....	3
6. Governance.....	4
7. Communication with School Community.....	4
8. Ethos.....	5
9. Extra-Curricular Activities.....	6
10. Staff Support.....	6
11. Use of AI.....	7
12. Future Vision.....	8
13. Conclusion.....	9



Introduction



Welcome to the GOER Accreditor Training Manual. This manual provides a comprehensive guide for accreditors to effectively evaluate online education providers against GOER's established accreditation standards. Each section outlines a key standard, provides a realistic scenario, and includes an activity to enhance your assessment skills. Throughout this manual, remember to keep GOER at the forefront of your mind when evaluating a school.

Teaching and Learning



GOER Standard: The online education provider demonstrates effective teaching methodologies, a robust curriculum, and assessment practices that ensure student learning and achievement.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

You are reviewing an online history course. The course syllabus outlines weekly readings, pre recorded lectures, and discussion forums. During your review, you access a discussion forum and observe that student engagement is minimal. Many students post superficial comments and fail to engage with the core themes of the assigned readings. Further investigation reveals that the instructor rarely participates in the forum and provides limited feedback on student posts.

Task: Assess the teaching and learning standard based on this scenario. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the course design and delivery. Identify any areas of concern and suggest potential recommendations for improvement.

Answer Box:

Student Welfare



GOER Standard: The online education provider prioritizes student well-being, offering adequate support services, fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment, and addressing student concerns promptly and effectively.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

A student reports experiencing online harassment from a classmate in a virtual classroom setting. The student claims that the harasser has been sending them direct messages with offensive language. Upon investigation, you discover that the school's policy on online harassment is unclear and the reporting mechanism is not easily accessible. The school has not provided training to staff on how to handle online harassment incidents.

Task: Evaluate the student welfare standard based on this scenario. Consider the school's policies, reporting procedures, and staff training related to student well-being. Identify any deficiencies and propose recommendations for improvement.

Answer Box:

Safeguarding



GOER Standard: The online education provider implements robust safeguarding measures to protect students from all forms of harm, including online abuse, exploitation, and neglect. The provider ensures that all staff undergo appropriate background checks and receive regular safeguarding training.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

You are reviewing the background check policies of an online school that serves students under 18. You discover that the school only conducts background checks on full-time faculty but does not screen part-time instructors, tutors, or volunteers who interact with students online. The school's safeguarding policy does not address the risk of online grooming or exploitation.

Task: Assess the safeguarding standard based on this scenario. Consider the comprehensiveness of the school's background check policies and safeguarding measures. Identify any vulnerabilities and propose recommendations to enhance student safety.

Leadership



GOER Standard: The online education provider demonstrates effective leadership, clear vision, and a commitment to continuous improvement. The leadership team provides guidance and support to staff, promotes a culture of collaboration, and ensures accountability at all levels.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

During a leadership team meeting, you observe a lack of clear goals and objectives. The team seems to be operating without a defined strategic plan. Staff morale is low, and there is a lack of communication between departments. The leadership team is unresponsive to staff concerns and feedback.

Task: Evaluate the leadership standard based on this scenario. Consider the effectiveness of the leadership team's vision, communication, and support for staff. Identify any weaknesses and recommend improvements.

Answer Box:



GOER Standard: The online education provider has a well-defined governance structure, clear roles and responsibilities, and effective policies and procedures. The governing body provides oversight and ensures that the provider operates ethically and in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

You review the school's governance documentation and find that there is no documented process for managing conflicts of interest among board members. Several board members have close ties to vendors that provide services to the school, and there is no mechanism to ensure that these relationships do not influence decision-making.

Task: Assess the governance standard based on this scenario. Consider the adequacy of the school's policies and procedures for managing conflicts of interest and ensuring ethical conduct. Identify any potential risks and propose recommendations to strengthen governance practices.

Answer Box:

Communication with School Community



GOER Standard: The online education provider maintains open and transparent communication with students, parents, staff, and other stakeholders. The provider provides timely and accurate information about policies, procedures, academic progress, and other relevant matters.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

A group of parents complains that the school has changed its grading policy without providing adequate notice or explanation. They argue that the new policy disadvantages students and creates confusion. Your investigation reveals that the school's communication channels are ineffective and that parents are not receiving timely updates about important changes.

Task: Evaluate the communication standard based on this scenario. Consider the school's communication channels, transparency, and responsiveness to stakeholder concerns. Identify any areas for improvement and recommend strategies to enhance communication effectiveness.

Answer Box:

Ethos



GOER Standard: The online education provider promotes a positive and inclusive school culture that values diversity, respect, and social responsibility. The provider fosters a sense of community and encourages students to develop their character and contribute to society.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

During an online school assembly, you observe that the speakers consistently use biased language and stereotypes when referring to different cultural groups. You also notice that the school's curriculum lacks diversity and fails to represent the perspectives and experiences of all students.

Task: Assess the ethos standard based on this scenario. Consider the school's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and social responsibility. Identify any instances of bias or discrimination and recommend strategies to promote a more equitable and inclusive learning environment.

Answer Box:



GOER Standard: The online education provider offers a range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for students to engage in social, cultural, and recreational pursuits. The provider ensures that these activities are accessible, inclusive, and aligned with the school's educational goals.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

The school website advertises several extra-curricular activities, but upon closer inspection, you find that most of them are inactive or poorly attended. Students report a lack of interest in the available activities and express a desire for more engaging and relevant options.

Task: Evaluate the extra-curricular activities standard based on this scenario. Consider the variety, quality, and accessibility of the school's extra-curricular offerings. Identify any gaps or weaknesses and recommend strategies to enhance student engagement.

Answer Box:

Staff Support



GOER Standard: The online education provider provides adequate support and resources to staff, including professional development opportunities, mentorship programs, and access to technology and equipment. The provider fosters a positive work environment and promotes staff well-being.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

A staff survey reveals that many teachers feel overwhelmed and unsupported. They report a lack of training on effective online teaching strategies, limited access to technology resources, and inadequate communication from school administration. Teacher turnover is high.

Task: Assess the staff support standard based on this scenario. Consider the school's investment in staff development, resources, and well-being. Identify any areas of concern and recommend strategies to improve staff morale and retention.

Answer Box:

The Use of AI



GOER Standard: The online education provider implements transparent, ethical, and responsible policies for the use of AI in educational delivery, assessment, and operations. The provider ensures that AI tools are used to support and enhance human-led learning, without replacing essential teacher-student interactions, and with full consideration of privacy, fairness, and learner wellbeing.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

You are reviewing an online school that has recently implemented an AI-driven learning platform. The platform automatically generates personalized learning pathways, provides automated feedback on student essays, and recommends reading materials. However, you discover that:

- There is no published policy on AI use shared with students or parents.
- Students are unaware which parts of their learning experience are AI-driven.
- Teachers rely heavily on AI feedback without critically reviewing it.
- There is no system for auditing AI outputs for bias or accuracy.

Task: Assess the school's use of AI against GOER's standards. Consider:

- Transparency of AI use for students and parents.
- The role of human oversight in AI-supported learning.
- Safeguards to ensure fairness, accuracy, and wellbeing.
- Data privacy and ethical concerns.

Identify: Areas of non-compliance or risk and key recommendations for safe and effective AI integration.

Answer Box:

Future Vision



GOER Standard: The online education provider has a clear vision for the future and a plan for continuous improvement and innovation. The provider is committed to staying abreast of emerging trends and technologies in online education and adapting its programs and services accordingly.

30-Minute Activity Scenario:

The school's strategic plan is outdated and does not address emerging trends in online education, such as personalized learning, artificial intelligence, or virtual reality. The school's technology infrastructure is also lagging behind, and there are no plans for upgrading or modernization.

Task: Evaluate the future vision standard based on this scenario. Consider the school's strategic planning process, technology infrastructure, and commitment to innovation. Identify any shortcomings and recommend strategies to ensure that the school remains competitive and relevant in the long term.

Answer Box:

Conclusion



This GOER Accreditor Training Manual provides a framework for evaluating online education providers against GOER's established accreditation standards. By applying these standards consistently and effectively, you can play a vital role in ensuring the quality and integrity of online education worldwide. Remember to always keep GOER in mind when assessing a school, and how they embody our high standards.