



DigiCulture

06.1 Quality Assurance Framework FINAL

Outcome 6 Activity 1 Quality Assurance Framework

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Imprint

This paper is document 1 produced as part of Outcome 6.1 and aims to outline the quality assurance framework for the project by means of a set of guidelines

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Executive Summary

This document describes the overall quality assurance framework used during the lifetime of the project. It outlines the general principles of quality control employed, the elements of the project which required monitoring and the processes by which this was achieved. Quality assurance was achieved through mutually agreed peer review systems of project outputs at all stages, of the ongoing management of the project and of specific project meetings. These included both face to face meetings, which were fewer than anticipated and online meetings, which assumed greater importance in the later stages of the project.

Objectives of this document

The objectives of the QAF are to

- Monitor the quality of project during all its stages
- Ensure that stated deliverables can be realized.
- Ensure that the project delivers value to the target beneficiaries
- Fulfil the requirements of the project sponsor
- Assist in strategic decision making during and after the project lifetime.

Who is this document for?

This document is intended for

- Project partners, who will need to operate in accordance with its specifications
- Project sponsors, who will need to ensure that the project is progressing in a timely manner
- Project beneficiaries, who will need to be satisfied that project deliverables have been subjected to a rigorous quality control process
- Other interested parties who are involved in planning or delivering similar projects

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Aims and Scope

This document explains the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) for the DigiCulture Project, 2018-1-RO01-KA204-049368 Improving the Digital Competences and Social Inclusion of Adults in Creative Industries. It is part of project Output 6 (Evaluation of the effectiveness of DSC Course, Quality Assurance and Sustainability) in compliance with the project description and all applicable rules and guidelines.

Quality assurance is an integral part of the project and aims to ensure that objectives are met in the most effective way. The QAF defines the general approach to quality control, internal and external evaluation and the procedures to be followed by the partners for effective communication as well as production and documentation of the project deliverables. The document outlines the strategy for how the quality control mechanisms will be applied so that the operational, management and working procedures are comprehensively monitored and improved throughout the project duration.

The QAF contains a set of scheduled activities and defines their objectives, together with the roles and responsibilities of project partners. The QAF includes established indicators, methodology and procedures for evaluation of project activities and results. For each task it determines the responsible partner(s), timeframe and tools of implementation, the expected results or products, as well as the respective quality criteria.

The quality assurance framework for DigiCulture will ensure that quality is planned for both the deliverables and activities. This QAF will consist of the methodology on implementation of the project's internal guidelines for reporting and reviewing procedures to ensure the project's Quality Assurance. It will focus on the assessment of quality assurance, as well as monitoring and evaluation of project management, communication, dissemination strategies, working meetings and the steering group performance. It will review the quality of project outputs in the framework of quality indicators approved by all the partners. The monitoring of project progress and quality of outputs in each WP will ensure the high quality of project outcomes and will guarantee the compliance of project results with project objectives.

The QAF has two levels of evaluation of the Project: internal and external.

Internal Evaluation

The internal evaluation of the Project comprises two main components:

Day-to-day internal evaluation of the project: A Quality Control Committee (QCC) will be set up during the first phase of the project comprising one contact person from each project partner organisation. The QCC will evaluate the project implementation process on a day-to-day basis and report during the Coordinating meetings.

Each workstream of the project will be led by one partner organisation. The QCC will decide on a separate partner organisation to be attached to each workstream to act as a critical friend to the lead partner and ensure that QC activities are undertaken effectively.

O1 - Conceptual Guidelines for Digital Competences for CI

Lead Partner – UNIROMATRE

QC Partner - DCU

O2 - Integrated Virtual Learning Hub - online and mobile MOOC platform

Lead Partner - UPT

QC Partner – AAU and DCU

O3 - The Digital Skills and Social Inclusion for Creative Industries Online Course (DSC)

Lead Partner – UPT

QC Partner – TRIADE, UNIROMATRE and DCU

O4 - Digital Skills E-Assessment and Open Digital Badges for Adult Education

Lead Partner – AAU

QC Partner - UNIGRAZ

O6 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of DSC Course, Quality Assurance and Sustainability

Lead Partner - JMEA

QC Partner – NADE

External Evaluation

The external evaluation of the Project comprises the following components:

External evaluation of the entire project was to be conducted by two independent experts (to be agreed). However this element of the original project plan was not funded..

Monitoring of the project will be implemented by National Erasmus+ Offices and EACEA according to their schedule of projects' monitoring process.

The quality assurance activities will be based on qualitative data (i.e. meeting the specified deadlines, achievement of targets and indicators) and on quantitative data (i.e. answers to questionnaires and reports). Data will be gathered from all project partners and key stakeholders.

Background and rationale

Introduction

A Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is one of the fundamental aspects for the success of the DigiCulture project. Quality is defined by Conole (2013, p.3) as 'the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something'.

Design Based Research

The DigiCulture QAF will be based on the Design Based Research (DBR) methodology, first described by Reeves (2006) as a cyclic process for product creation. The DBR model is based on the five stages of training development originally developed by the US Army which are often abbreviated to ADDIE: Analysis > Design > Development > Implementation > Evaluation.

ADDIE however is rather too linear and inflexible for dealing with fast moving projects. Mckenney & Reeves (2012) later suggested a slightly amended version – Analysis (Exploration) <> Design (Construction) <> Evaluation (Reflection), with feedback in both directions, informed by theoretical understanding and leading to the possibility of more mature and considered intervention.

Design Based Research has a lot in common with the Successive Approximation Model (SAM) (Allen 2012), which sees project management as a continually iterative process rather than a straight line and AGILE, in which each small component of a project is seen as something which should be developed as quickly as possible independently of other concerns.

Methodology

Outline

The design of the QAF for DigiCulture has three overall aims

- QA standards for the various components of the project – the Digital Skills for Culture course, the various components of the MOOC and the Open Digital Badges.
- The design of a quality assurance process for linking and integrating quality standards to all stages of development of intellectual outputs, e.g. by applying effective design and development methodology such as agile quality-driven development, peer-reviews of iterations and final outcomes as well as quality implementation process and corrective actions.
- QA instruments for quality assessment of teamwork (such as bi-monthly assessments) based on a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators such as mood, agility, congruence and velocity.

DigiCulture QAF Process

The various tasks and instruments included in the QAF for the DigiCulture project will be designed, implemented and assessed in an iterative cycle following the DBR model. They are based on models that have been successfully implemented in other similar international projects.

The following table presents the the three aims above with links to the instruments associated with each

Aims	Instruments
1	DBR cycle for the <i>design of single elements</i> (DSC, MOOC, Badges) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal assessment by review partner ● After amendment, second assessment by external experts. ● After further amendment, initial assessment by pilot users ● User-testing assessment ● Learning analytics
2	DBR cycle for the <i>construction of a peer-review process</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal assessment by review partner ● After amendment, second assessment by external experts. ● After further amendment, initial assessment by pilot users

	<p>Design-Based Research cycle for the construction of <i>the assessment of final outcomes</i>, based on E+ assessment guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal assessment by review partner • After amendment, second assessment by external experts. • After further amendment, initial assessment by pilot users
3	<p>DBR cycle for the <i>construction of surveys</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal assessment by review partner • After amendment, second assessment by external experts • After further amendment, initial assessment by pilot users

Instruments

For each of the three reviews above, draft versions of the outputs will be assessed by means of a simple matrix.

- Relevant means the extent to which the draft instrument is in line with what was outlined in the project proposal.
- Appropriate means the extent to which the draft instrument is likely to achieve the aims of the project proposal
- Feasible means the extent to which the draft instrument is likely to deliver results within the lifetime of the project

Internal assessment by a project partner	Relevant 1 2 3 4 5	Appropriate 1 2 3 4 5	Feasible 1 2 3 4 5
External assessment by external experts	Relevant 1 2 3 4 5	Appropriate 1 2 3 4 5	Feasible 1 2 3 4 5
User assessment by pilot users	Relevant 1 2 3 4 5	Appropriate 1 2 3 4 5	Feasible 1 2 3 4 5

Further questions to be asked during the review process include

- Would you recommend any alternative instrument for the aim in question?

Alternative instrument 1 <i>brief description</i>	Relevant 1 2 3 4 5	Appropriate 1 2 3 4 5	Feasible 1 2 3 4 5
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Alternative instrument 1 <i>brief description</i>			
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- How would you rate the internal coherence of the different tasks and instruments proposed in the QAF?

Coherence 1 2 3 4 5	Brief explanation
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Results

To assess the responses to the QAF outlined above, a simple online survey form will be created to be completed by the internal experts (project partners), external experts or pilot users as appropriate. The survey will cover three dimensions - relevance (the importance of the output in the context of the project); appropriateness (the extent to which the proposed instrument will produce what is required); and feasibility (how realistic is it to implement it within time and financial constraints), European Commission (2018) and Escobar-Pérez and Cuervo-Martínez (2008)

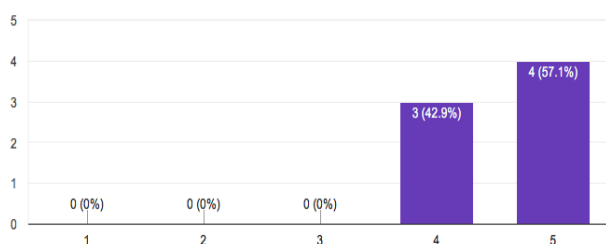
Reviewers will be asked to rate each element on a simple Likert scale with five levels ranging from total disagreement (1) to total agreement (5), together with some final open questions about the overall coherence of the strategy and suggestions for the addition or replacement of any other task or instrument. This will produce a total score for each line with a maximum of 15.

To go forward to the next stage without any substantial changes to an instrument will require a score of at least 12, with no dimension scoring less than 3.

Results from the reviews will be presented in simple graphical form.

Assessment by partner (internal)- RELEVANT

7 responses



Next steps / Discussion

The strategy was presented at the second transnational meeting (Rome) and subsequently revised before the final version.



Conclusions

The QAF has so far proved effective in ensuring the overall quality of the project. No further amendments are likely to be necessary.



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