Quality Assurance Handbook PART A1

POLICY No.15: Digital learning resources policy

15. Purpose of policy

This policy explains FIT's minimum expectations for tutors and delivering partners while they utilise available Tech Apprenticeship delivery resources. It provides direction and support for managing the various resources, as well as the requirements that relevant parties must comply with to maintain good management of Moodle, an integrated aspect of FIT's Learner Management System.

15.1 Policy scope

Tutors should access this policy, as well as Apprentices, FIT staff, Approved Delivery Partners[1], and broader regulatory and accreditor stakeholders where appropriate. The policy applies to tutors who are involved in both in-person/face-to-face and blended delivery formats.

15.2 Overarching considerations

FIT primarily utilises Moodle as a repository for tutors to access a breadth of teaching resources in preparing and delivering all off-the-job modules for Tech Apprenticeships. With

[1] Typically an Education and Training Board.

this in mind, FIT advocates a digital-first approach to disseminating learning resources. A delivering partner may not store resources in any other electronic repository.

The provision of, and access to, a broad range of resources offer a solid base for consistently delivering Tech Apprenticeships across multi-site and Delivering Partner locations. This policy considers the necessity for FIT to induct tutors to accessing and using available resources.

15.3 Policy statement

FIT's Moodle platform will provide secure and controlled access to Tech Apprenticeship resources and curricula, designed separately to all the on- and off-job programme elements for each Tech Apprenticeship programme. Insofar as possible, all relevant resource materials will be accessible to staff and aapprentices, both on-site and off-site, at all times. FIT will inform stakeholders about any planned interruptions to access to Moodle by emailing tutors and/or apprentices. Meanwhile, FIT will take all possible steps to ensure minimum disruption or interruption to users.

While using the learning resources structure that FIT has established, tutors will be responsible for all Moodle pages that are set up to enable their apprentices to complete the various required modular elements. Where a tutor adds supplementary content to Moodle, such materials must be of high quality, relevant to the matters in question, appropriate on terms of their complexity, and free of any copyright infringements. The Teaching Enhanced Learning (TEL) Unit centrally manages user support for Moodle. Each Moodle page should, at a minimum, introduce the module, a description of it, an outline of its aims and objectives, the module resources, and a lesson plan/schedule.

15.3.1 Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)[2] provides a set of concrete suggestions that help ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities. Considering the ICT discipline-specific interest that all tech apprentices have, it is vital that apprentices can avail of the learning opportunities that tech apprenticeships offer. FIT understands that, to realise a positive learning experience, a cornerstone of this learning process will be to provide high-quality resources that present information in various ways. Accordingly, FIT endorses universal design principles to optimise teaching and learning, particularly regarding clarifying vocabulary and symbols, syntax and structure, and illustration, across numerous media types. As noted in Policy No.3, consistently applying a pedological approach to apprenticeship delivery is crucial to the delivery of a high quality programme. FIT employs the Conversational Framework to guide cataloguing learning resources and materials. Programme intakes that optimise the presentation of learning materials to stimulate the various learning styles through acquisition, discussion, practice, production, collaboration and investigation are best positioned to achieve a high-quality training outcome.

15.4 Production of learning resources

Since 2020, FIT has steadily developed a suite of digital learning materials for its Tech Apprenticeship programmes. Older QQI programme documentation formats require descriptions of the key and seminal texts associated with a programme of study. FIT's development efforts have since moved past reference to textbooks toward a deeper approach to curated and specific resources that is cognisant of universal design for learning approaches for delivery throughout all modalities. This approach includes using, where possible, digital materials with optimal approaches deployed for synchronous delivery, sharing content/digital materials/media in a variety of ways, and, most importantly,

[2] https://udlguidelines.cast.org/

disseminating information in formats that are appropriate to the level of the module for the Apprentice.

15.5 Vendor-specific and open-access learning resources

FIT approves and develops core learning resources for tutors. It also approves, in limited cases, the use of resources created by other entities such as Microsoft, IBM, Python Institute and CompTIA and licensed to FIT. These resources are mapped to module level learning outcomes. FIT does not permit tutors to utilise or supplement FIT materials in the form of open educational learning resources without prior approval by FIT's Technology Enhanced Learning Unit.

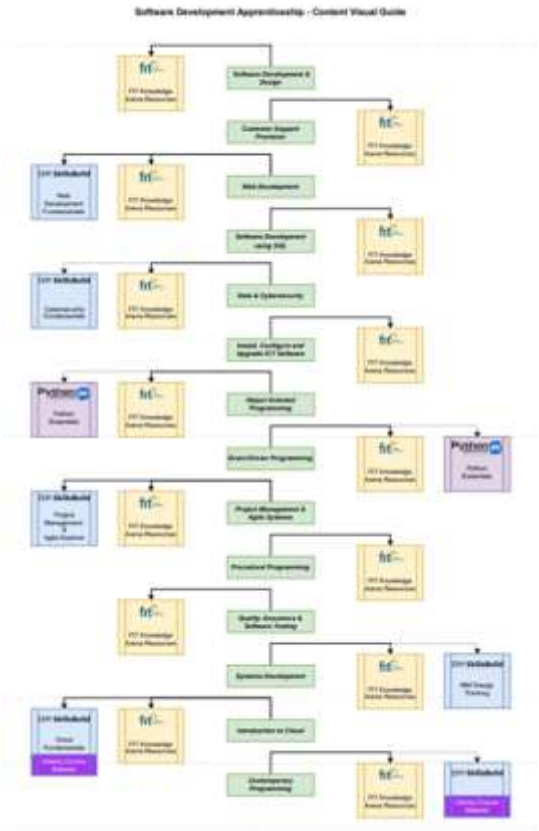


Table 1: Mapping of vendor content to the Software Development Associate Apprenticeship.

15.6 Minimum standards for consistent deployment of learning materials

All available core Tech Apprenticeship learning resources follow a distinct livery and format, which ensures that apprentices can easily access resources disseminated in a digestible format considering a low base of technical knowledge and understanding among apprentices. Using these resources in programme delivery seeks to enhance FIT's national coordination of these programmes while providing an expected and consistent delivery format. Tutor presentations must, at a minimum, include an introductory slide that presents the subject matter, followed by a series of slides that discuss it. Activity sheets available on Moodle follow a consistent style and allow apprentices, with the help of their classmates and tutors, to put theory into practice in various exercises. Specifically, apprentices will research the topic in question, formulate their opinions, and prepare logical arguments.



Slide 1: Software Development Associate module 1 slide presentation (1 of 33)



Slide 2: Clear outline of concept/framework (2 of 33)

15.7 FIT's view on substitution of training materials

FIT's efforts to provide tutor training and facilitate communities of practice aim to share knowledge and information on available resources. As already stated, FIT approves the use of limited open educational resources by tutors to supplement delivery of off-the-job modules. However, FIT is conscious that, during technical training, some experienced tutors have, in some cases, developed content that they are familiar with and that covers aspects of computing that they have utilised in other ICT training programmes. In some cases, this content may now be largely relevant and comfortable for a tutor to deliver, but it may not be sufficient to cover the full array of indicative content that is required of the Tech Apprenticeship programmes. FIT does not permit the use by any tutor of large volumes of tutor-generated training materials that have not been peer-reviewed by the FIT TEL Unit.

15.8 Updating and peer-reviewing training materials

Training materials developed by staff working in the FIT TEL Unit are peer-reviewed. FIT intends to provide some insight into the fact that, in the future, the External Examiner may have a role in peer reviewing these materials and reviewing the appropriateness of various media that are available to support each programme.

15.9 FIT's media production capacity

In early 2024, FIT commissioned the development of a purpose-designed media production suite that is now operational at FIT's head office. This facility is utilised to create high-quality digital media. The main rationale for developing the recording suite was to provide relevant staff access to tools that would not ordinarily be available for recording/producing and editing learning resources. At the heart of the room is a Dell XPS computer capable of live-streaming and recording simultaneously. Ensuring that the presenter is captured in stunning audio and video quality is achieved by an XLR microphone being paired with a HDR-enabled 4K camera. To further enhance video and audio quality, the room has a temperature-controlled lighting kit and full acoustic panelling, keeping the presenter well-lit and sounding great. Tutors wishing to use this facility can do so by booking an appointment slot during the next Tutor Community of Practice meeting.

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