

# VISCED

## A Transnational Appraisal of Virtual School and College Provision

If e-learning initiatives are to be sustainable and cost-effective, it is of the utmost importance to identify those factors that are contributing to that sustainability and that will enable setting up successful virtual schools. During the EU-project VISCED a number of success factors were identified which can help make virtual schools and colleges successful. These are factors that contribute to their sustainability and are likely to enable the setting up of successful virtual schools and colleges in the future. A distinction can be made between Critical and Key Success Factors.

### 1. Critical Success Factors

Within the VISCED project a list of 8 Critical Success Factors – those factors, which every single virtual school would need to be good at to be able to be a truly successful virtual school - were defined. Critical Success Factors are considered specific to the whole virtual schools sector, and can be used in defining monitoring indicators and performance benchmarks within institutions. They are expected to be useful both in monitoring internal processes as well as benchmarking institutional performance against other actors in the field.

This tool presents the consolidated list Critical Success Factors, accompanied by contributing factors and measurement indicators. A self assessment commenting space allows institutions to benchmark their own performance related to each of the specific Critical Success Factor.

### 2. Key Success Factors

Key Success Factors can be thought of as **management- and school-specific Critical Success Factors**, built upon the sector-wide ones. They are those factors that might be critical but only to some types of virtual schools and not all. As an add-on to the Critical Success Factors, Key Success Factors can thus be defined for individual institutions. Due to the fact that there are a number of factors which are different for each virtual school, institutions will need to define those Key Success Factors themselves. This approach allows the institutional management to coordinate the definition of additional success factors with their institutional goals taking into account. Once defined, they achieve the same status as Critical Success Factors and at that point there is no difference between key and Critical Success Factors in terms of importance.

This tool proposes a step by step approach to help and guide virtual schools and colleges in the process of defining Key Success Factors. It allows institutional leaders to find those success factors adapted to and specific for their own school or college.

The Key Success Factors that come out of this process can be added to the set of Critical Success Factors, so that an institution ends up with a list of in between 11 and 15 success factors which will allow virtual schools and colleges to better outline, benchmark and monitor the own policies.



## VISCED Critical Success Factors

CSF	Name	Criterion
1	<b>Leadership in e-Learning</b>	The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding staffing, student issues, and virtual school administration is fully developed at all levels of management.
2	<b>Market research</b>	Market research (to assess demand for virtual schooling) done centrally and updated annually or prior to major programme planning.
3	<b>Relationship Management</b>	Effective processes designed to achieve high credibility with relevant government and public agencies
4	<b>Technical infrastructure</b>	The technical infrastructure is reliable and fault tolerant (in terms of availability and backup) and support is readily available to the system users.
5	<b>Usability</b>	All systems (being used to support students, teachers, and others involved) usable, with internal evidence to back this up
6	<b>Professional development</b>	Appropriate professional development available to staff (subject matter, pedagogical principles, teaching tools which they are utilising for instruction, as well as in understanding the specific nature of students involved)
7	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	All teaching has clearly defined learning outcomes, which are assessed for purposes of certification and progression. Learning outcomes and their assessment are uniform for equivalent units throughout the institution.
8	<b>Understanding the regulations</b>	Students have a clear understanding of the school/college regulations

**Contributing Factors**

structure of organisation, leadership selection, management structure and degree of hierarchy - See the Pick&Mix list for likely sources of evidence. Who makes decisions? How are they communicated? How are they endorsed? Who can contribute?

availability of technical help and support, remotely? Infrastructure used - and standards expected, BYOD or provided?

students skills, teachers skills, location in terms of access, budget questions - who pays for home-based hardware, software and access, BYOD or specified

staff selection constraints related to employment conditions, availability of expertise to provide training as they are all quite specialist, peer learning opportunities

role and inputs of others - parents, other professionals, etc - so maybe this criterion is better with a more general name to imply the transparency with which everyone understands how progression is achieved.

## Measurement Indicators

Aspects to be rated

- ☐ Is responsible for meeting the organization's annual goals and communicating these goals to its constituents.
- ☐ Maintains a disciplined knowledge of its future with projections of income, expense, enrollment, and trends in its educational and business environment.
- ☐ Provides a productive collaborative environment for learning and work, and the leadership necessary to plan both day-to-day operations and the long-term future of the online program.
- ☐ Verifies that measures are in place to ensure quality, integrity and validity of information.

effective fault and technical issue handling, numbers of break-downs and problems measured over time, helpdesk analysis. Aspects to be rated: ☐ Provides timely, effective technical support.

checklists and regular usability checks, help-desk stats and experiences, system stats over time

regularity of training, evaluation by those taking part in any such training, balance between learning-on-the-job type opportunity and relective and dedicated time to learn new skills and practices, time available for training, in staffs own time or during work hours - Aspects to be rated

- ☐ Provides and encourages participation in induction and mentoring programs.
- ☐ Provides regular feedback regarding teacher performance.
- ☐ Provides a wide variety of professional development opportunities.

Aspects to be rated

- ☐ Sufficient professional, administrative and support staff are provided to carry out the mission and annual organizational goals
- ☐ Ongoing training and support are provided to the staff to carry out the mission of the program.
- ☐ Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are evident to create a collegial team to assure effective delivery of quality education.
- ☐ Evaluations of staff and faculty occur on a regularly scheduled basis.

**Self assessment - Comments**

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# Defining Key Institutional Su

## Step 1: Id

	No.
List your operational institutional objectives:	Obj 1.
	Obj 2.
	Obj 3.
	Obj 4.
	Obj 5.
	Obj 6.
Do you have any additional short-term objectives?	Obj 7.
	Obj 8.
	Obj 9.
	Obj 10.
	Obj 11.
Are any factors in your overall environment (government policies, changes in technology, funding priorities, competition, industry pressure etc..) causing you to set additional objectives whether formalised or not?	Obj 12.
	Obj 13.
	Obj 14.
	Obj 15.
	Obj 16.
	Obj 17.
	Obj 18.
	Obj 19.
	Obj 20.











