HPass

Learning provider standards for humanitarian action – a working document

Glossary

Competencies – a set of behaviours a person must demonstrate, based on their knowledge, skills and experiences, to perform effectively in a given situation.

Competency frameworks – an established group of competencies needed to carry out specific roles.

Humanitarian action – action taken to save lives, reduce suffering and maintain human dignity during and after crises and natural disasters, as well as action to prevent and prepare for them. (Adapted from ALNAP's Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide 2016, page 369.)

Key actions – action you take to achieve the standards.

Learners – people who are taking part in a learning programme, for example non-governmental organisation (NGO) staff and volunteers, government staff, community members.

Learning needs – what individuals or groups need to learn to develop competencies.

Learning objectives – describe what learners are expected to know or be able to do by the end of the programme.

Learning programmes – programmes you develop and deliver which allow learners to meet set learning objectives. A learner will take part in a learning programme to develop their competencies.

You (the learning provider) – organisations, companies, departments, groups and institutes providing learning services to anyone involved in humanitarian action.

Learning services – services you offer to people and organisations to build competencies, knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Modality – the method you use to deliver learning programmes, for example, online, face-to-face, distance learning, simulation exercises (in person and virtual), blended learning, internal staff learning and development programmes, coaching, gamified learning, mentoring, and academic courses.

Resources – money, materials, staff and other assets that a person or organisation needs to be able to carry out their work.

Standards – requirements, specifications, guidelines or characteristics that can be used consistently to make sure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose (ISO definition https://www.iso.org/standards.html) . In this document they describe what you should do to meet the overall commitment that those involved in humanitarian action will have access to high-quality learning programmes that will allow them to work more effectively.

The learning provider standards aim to improve the quality of learning linked to humanitarian action, and so allow people to be more effective in helping communities who are vulnerable to or affected by crises.

These standards are based on extensive consultation by a consortium made up of Bioforce, the Humanitarian Leadership Academy, Pearson and RedR UK. They are the result of a joint drafting process involving many people and organisations, and do not represent the views of any one organisation.

Acknowledgements

Contents

**The standards provide <u>criteria to measure the quality of learning</u> that you are providing.
You can use them as a basis for checking your performance and to guide improvements.**

Introduction

What are the learning provider standards?

The standards provide criteria to measure the quality of learning that you are providing. You can use them as a basis for checking your performance and to guide improvements.

We have designed them for organisations, companies, departments and institutes who provide learning services to anyone involved in humanitarian action.

If you meet these standards, you are contributing to the overall commitment that people involved in humanitarian action will have access to high-quality learning programmes that will allow them to work more effectively.

Background

Since 2012, an initiative led by 22 key-sector organisations has aimed to develop a way of displaying learning credentials and experience of humanitarian work (HPass). One of the aims of the initiative was to give people credentials they could show to employers so that they could quickly begin work in humanitarian organisations.

There are eight learning provider standards, each with associated key actions.

HPass is a step towards making the humanitarian sector as professional as it possibly can be, with the highest levels of competence and integrity. To achieve this, we will need to:

■ establish the main competencies that are needed;

■ provide high-quality learning and assessment of these competencies; and

■ recognise skills, experience and learning.

The preliminary HPass inception report, commissioned by the Humanitarian Leadership Academy (the Academy), showed that learning and assessment providers would welcome standards that can measure the quality of their services (HPI Inception Reports, Outputs 2 and 3, 2016 (unpublished material)). Many learning and assessment providers invest considerable resources in making sure their services are of a high quality. However, the report found that, while providers used some internal and external standards, there was no single, affordable standard that was widely accepted or which directly met their needs.

In 2017, we (the Academy, Bioforce, Pearson Education, and RedR UK) formed a consortium to help develop a quality framework for providing learning and assessment, including standards, quality-assurance tools and guidance material.

How the standards were developed

In February 2017 we began a comprehensive consultation to design the standards. Before the consultation, we decided the key questions we would ask people. We asked the questions using a virtual notepad, in the four languages chosen for the standards: Arabic, English, French and Spanish. This first set of questions focused on what high-quality training and assessment mean.

This phase of the consultation led to the first version of the standards, which was reviewed by an advisory group chosen from key-sector stakeholders, and a management group representing all consortium partners. We then drafted a version to use in the face-to-face consultation phase. Face-to-face consultation took place between May and July 2017 in seven international regions. 163 people took part from 16 countries and 102 organisations. We carried out 55 semi-structured interviews with 70 stakeholders and held three focus-group discussions, which 12 people took part in.

To try to reach as many stakeholders as possible, we carried out an online consultation survey in July 2017. This survey was completed by 148 people.

A writers' group, made up of interested stakeholders identified during the face-to-face consultation, reviewed the consultation findings. The group included 55 people from 14 countries.

Overall, 408 stakeholders from 382 organisations from more than 60 countries contributed to the content of these standards.

The need to make sure that the standards can be quality-assured was a theme that ran through all stages of the consultation.

What the standards cover

We have developed these standards to meet the learning needs of people who respond to crises, including those working in preparedness, prevention and recovery.

People working in development and other areas closely linked to humanitarian action may also find that these standards apply, although they may need to be adapted to specific needs and contexts.

The standards are meant to support national regulations (where they exist), not replace them. They offer you the opportunity to compare your services with similar providers working in other parts of the world.

Who are these standards for?

We have designed these standards for organisations, companies, departments and institutes who provide learning services to anyone involved in humanitarian action, for example NGO staff, community members, volunteers, government staff and donors. You can use them to guide external learning, or include them as part of your organisation's internal learning provision.

These standards apply to all learning providers, whatever their size and the scope of their services.

Structure

There are eight learning provider standards, each with associated key actions. Standards 1 to 4 cover learning and the learning programmes, and standards 5 to 8 describe support processes and requirements. Together they contribute to the overall commitment that people involved in humanitarian action have access to high-quality learning programmes that will allow them to be more effective.

- The **standards** describe what you need to do to meet the overall commitment.

- Each standard has associated **key actions** that you need to carry out.

- The following three **principles** support the standards.
  - Accessibility
  - Impartiality
  - Inclusivity

- Learners comment on each standard and demonstrate what they experience when a standard is met.

How to use the standards

We have designed the standards so that they are flexible enough to be used by different types of learning providers and circumstances in different regions, countries, areas and communities.

To meet the standards, you must carry out the key actions. Key actions are **what need to be in place** to make sure the learning services are of a high quality. There is more information and guidance on how to carry out the key actions in the handbook that accompanies this document.

There is also a quality-assurance mechanisms manual, which will tell you how to measure, and show evidence of, key actions.

To help you provide high-quality learning we have also identified the following three principles.

Principles

Humanitarian action is generally guided by the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. We have created these standards with these principles in mind because their goal is to contribute to more effective humanitarian action.

To help you provide high-quality learning we have also identified the following three principles.

Accessibility: Aim to reach those who have limited or no access to learning and assessment opportunities. Also look at barriers to taking part in learning (these may include location and financial restrictions, language skills, literacy and numeracy levels, and physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments).

Impartiality: Carry out processes and treat people fairly and equally.

Inclusivity: Include everyone, whatever their age, sex, marital status, race, nationality, disability, religious or other beliefs, sexuality, or social or educational background.

Overview of the learning provider standards

Overall commitment

People involved in humanitarian action have access to high-quality learning programmes that will allow them to work more effectively.

Standard 1 – Analysis

Relevant learning needs are identified and prioritised.

Standard 2 – Design

Learning programmes are designed and prepared according to identified needs.

Standard 3 – Delivery

Learning programmes are delivered effectively.

Standard 4 – Assessment

Learning is assessed against the learning objectives.

Standard 5 – Evaluation and accountability

The quality of learning services is maintained and improved.

Standard 6 – Resources

There are enough appropriate resources.

Standard 7 – Communication

Communication is open and accessible.

Standard 8 – Administration

Administration systems are secure and accurate.

Standard 1 – **Analysis**

Relevant learning needs are identified and prioritised

Key actions

You will:

1.1 ✔ use evidence to analyse learning needs;

1.2 ✔ analyse learning needs at the relevant level, for example sectoral, organisational or individual;

1.3 ✔ identify competencies that need to be developed, using relevant competency frameworks when available;

1.4 ✔ prioritise learning needs based on current and most urgent needs;

1.5 ✔ analyse learners in terms of their culture, language, existing skills and experience, conditions and learning limitations; and

1.6 ✔ analyse learning needs regularly or when appropriate (for example, in response to a sudden disaster).
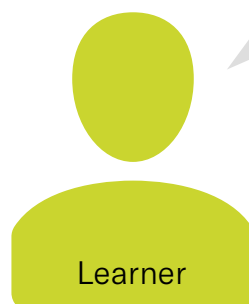
Learning opportunities are relevant to the work I need to do

Learner

2 Standard 2 – Design

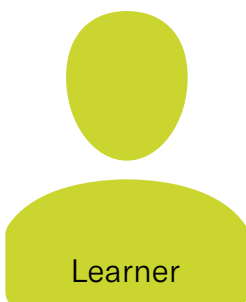**Learning programmes are designed and prepared according to identified needs**

Key actions

You will:

2.1 ✔ develop SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) learning objectives to cover gaps in competency;

2.2 ✔ choose existing learning programmes with suitable content, materials and activities, or create new ones;

2.3 ✔ take into account learners' existing knowledge, skills and experience;

2.4 ✔ choose appropriate modalities to deliver learning programmes, taking accessibility and available resources into account;

2.5 ✔ make sure learning programmes are relevant and culturally appropriate;

2.6 ✔ decide selection criteria or recruitment processes if necessary;

2.7 ✔ adapt learning programmes to cover people's specific needs, for example literacy and numeracy levels and language skills;

2.8 ✔ design methods and tools to assess learning; and

2.9 ✔ plan how you will deliver learning programmes, taking into account conditions and limitations, for example regulatory, financial and time restrictions, and the availability, motivation and ability of learners.

The materials and activities help me learn

Learning is relevant to my circumstances

Learner

3 Standard 3 – Delivery

## Learning programmes are delivered effectively

Key actions

You will:

3.1 ✔ apply agreed selection criteria or recruitment processes for learners;

3.2 ✔ deliver learning programmes as designed;

3.3 ✔ support learners throughout the programme to help them to meet the learning objectives;

3.4 ✔ use learners' knowledge and experience when delivering the learning programme;

3.5 ✔ monitor learners' progress;

3.6 ✔ respond and adapt to learners' progress; and

3.7 ✔ have in place reasonable measures to make sure learners are safe and secure and that their wellbeing is protected.

I am supported to learn and I can ask for help if I don't understand

Learner
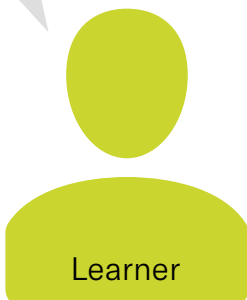
My knowledge, skills and experience are acknowledged and drawn on during the programme
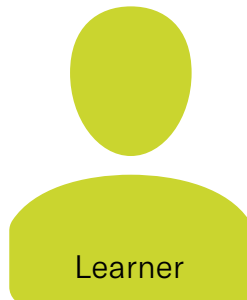
Learner

4

Standard 4 – Assessment

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Learning is assessed against the learning objectives
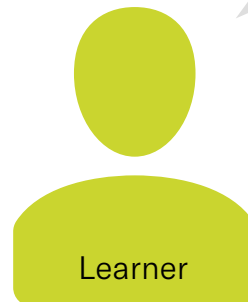
Key actions

You will:

4.1	✔	put in place learning assessments;
4.2	✔	carry out assessments fairly and consistently;
4.3	✔	share results of assessment with learners;
4.4	✔	if it applies, provide formal recognition of learning; and
4.5	✔	record evidence-based results.

(There is more information on how to assess competencies in the Assessment Provider Standards.)

I know what I have learnt
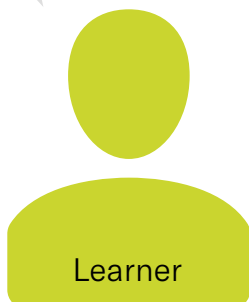
I had a fair assessment of my learning
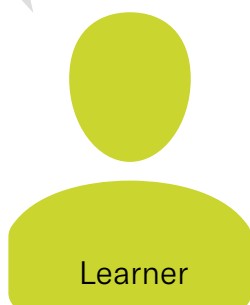
Learner

Learner

Standard 5 – Evaluation and accountability

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The quality of learning services is maintained and improved
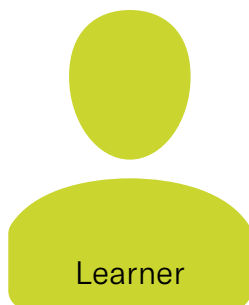
Key actions

You will:

5.1	✔	design and put in place methods of monitoring and evaluating learning services;
5.2	✔	use transparent and accessible methods to receive and give open feedback;
5.3	✔	record and deal with concerns and complaints; and
5.4	✔	use lessons learnt and best practice to guide change, encourage continuous improvement and make sure learning services remain fit for purpose.

I am asked for my feedback and know it is taken into account

Learner

Learning programmes are up to date

Learner

6

# Standard 6 – Resources

**There are enough appropriate resources**

Key actions

You will:

6.1	✔	identify the resources you need to design and deliver effective learning programmes;
6.2	✔	put in place procedures for getting, maintaining and managing enough appropriate resources;
6.3	✔	make sure there are competent and appropriate staff available to design and deliver learning programmes;
6.4	✔	treat staff in a fair and open way and not discriminate against them; and
6.5	✔	have in place reasonable measures to make sure staff are safe and secure and that their wellbeing is protected.

Staff are professional and do their jobs well

I have the right environment and materials to support my learning
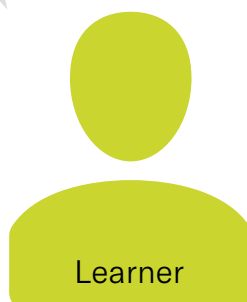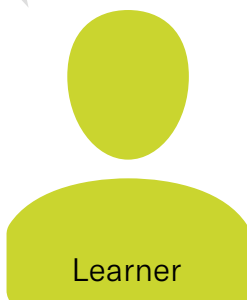
Learner
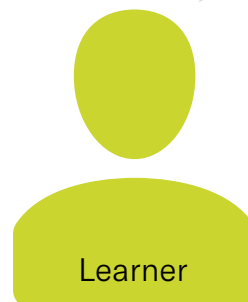
Learner

7 Standard 7 – Communication

**Communication is open and accessible**

Key actions

You will:

7.1 ✔ establish and maintain appropriate and accessible communication, for example with learners and organisations;

7.2 ✔ provide relevant, clear and accurate information about learning programmes and services;

7.3 ✔ communicate clearly, accurately and promptly; and

7.4 ✔ respond to queries appropriately and promptly.

There is clear information about the learning programme and how to apply for it

I can ask questions and get answers when I need them
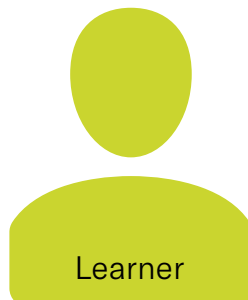
Learner

Learner

8 Standard 8 – Administration
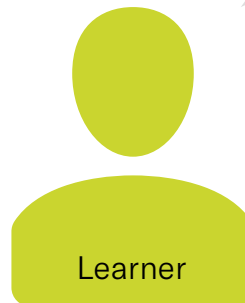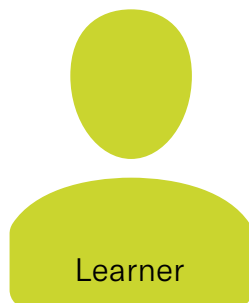
Administration systems are secure and accurate

Key actions

You will:

8.1 ✔ provide effective administrative and logistical support for learners and organisations;

8.2 ✔ store learners' information using secure and appropriate data-management procedures; and

8.3 ✔ keep learners' information and records confidential.

I'm confident my information is secure and kept confidential

I receive administrative support when I need it

Learner

Learner

HPass