



ABSTRACT

A Quality Framework for Open and Distance Higher Education

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The web-based technologies have been gaining great prominence in Higher Education (HE) context, fostering new forms of communication and interaction between teachers, students and institutions. The openness to the world is now a strategic option for Higher Education Institutions (HEI), arising from the need to go beyond borders to attract new audiences and to internationalise. Faced with this reality, HEI should increase focus on the development of Open and Distance Education (ODE), both formal and non-formal.

In Portugal there is no any regulatory and normative framework in the context of ODE in Higher Education, making it difficult for HEI to monitor the quality of ODE practices. Given this reality, HEI need an instrument in order to evaluate and monitor the quality of ODE courses, involving them actively in the development of a continuous improvement strategy.

In this way, this paper describes the creation process of a quality framework, part of a PhD research on Education in the Open University of Portugal. It aims to explain the process of identification and analyses of 40 international quality models in the ODE area, in order to create the preliminary version of the framework with a set of 33 dimensions, 47 criteria and 125 indicators. It also focus on a Delphi Study that was carried out with a panel of experts in ODE, to validate the framework created previously.

The results of the first Round of the Delphi Study are provided and some considerations for the next steps of the research are outlined.

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