### What Areas To Consider If You're Writing a LMS Use Policy

A policy sets and clarifies expectations, facilitates consistency, and creates a structure for authority. One policy I consider essential in the realm of online learning is a Learning Management System (LMS) Use policy.

#### What To Include In An LMS Use Policy

An LMS use policy outlines the appropriate usage, roles, responsibilities and authority for an organization’s learning platform.

Here is a list of 10 areas to consider if you are writing or reviewing your own LMS Use policy:

#### 1. Purpose

This section is at the beginning of the policy and clearly states what the policy is intended to do. For example, this policy sets out the company ABC's requirements for use of its Learning Management System (LMS).

#### 2. Applicability

Who does this policy apply to? What activities does it cover? For example, this policy applies to all users of company ABC’s LMS. It covers access to the LMS for the purposes of participating in, developing, implementing, administering or supporting online learning experiences.

#### 3. Related Policies

Here you identify how this policy relates to other organizational policies, such as IT or confidentiality policies.

#### 4. Content Inclusion

If someone wants to include their content in the LMS, what conditions does it need to meet? What will be excluded from the LMS?

For example, to be included in the LMS, the learning program must:

* Support the company ABC’s mission, values, and strategic goals
* Be owned and facilitated by a department, function, or project team
* Comply with good practice, as defined by company ABC’s online learning team

Items excluded from the LMS include:

Messages, announcements, policy statements, and other communications that are not learning programs

#### 5. Course Creation

Who needs to approve course creation? What is the process for it to be created once it is approved? For example, the creation of fully or partially online learning programs within the LMS must be approved by the LMS administrator using the online course request form. Once approved, an Instructional Designer will be assigned to help facilitate the design and development of the learning program.

#### 6. Content Ownership

Who owns the content once it is created? What is the owner responsible for? For example, every learning program must be owned and facilitated by an individual or department, who serves as the content owner. The content owner is responsible for:

* Ensuring the course is relevant, up-to-date, accurate, and in compliance with any applicable local or copyright laws
* Responding to learner inquiries related to the course and its content
* Backing up their course content

All course owners with active learning programs in the LMS are required to participate in scheduled content reviews.

#### 7. Content Review and Retention

Who is responsible for reviewing courses? How often will course reviews be conducted? How long will courses be kept? What conditions need to be met?

For example, course owners will monitor usage of learning programs under their purview and update the course as needed. Active courses will be subject to a mandatory review cycle, occurring every two years in coordination with an Instructional Designer. LMS administrators reserve the right to require a review earlier than two years, at their discretion.

Online courses meeting one or more of the following conditions will be archived:

* Not accessed in more than 6 months
* Not offered in more than 12 months
* Not reviewed in more than 2 years

Archives will be kept for a maximum of 2 years from creation.

#### 8. Role Permissions

What are the roles involved in running/using your LMS? What permissions does each role have? For example, can the whole online learning team add, update or remove courses, or is that the sole responsibility of the administrator?

#### 9. User Access

How are users intended to access the system? What are your guidelines for deactivating accounts? For example, all users of the LMS must access the system through a designated account using unique user credentials. Non-company ABC access will be granted with approval from the course owner. Internal user accounts will be deactivated at the time a person’s network account is deactivated. External user accounts will be reviewed and deactivated on a quarterly basis, or as needed.

#### 10. Policy Compliance

What will happen if the policy is not followed? What are the consequences of misuse? For example, non-compliance with this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including the archival or removal of learning programs, or temporary or final suspension of users. The LMS administrator has the authority to remove or disable access to the LMS.

#### Communicating The Policy

Even if you have written a great policy, it does not help if people do not know about it. Who needs to know about the policy? How will you tell them? When will you remind them? To be effective, it is important that the policy is consistently accessible, communicated and enforced.

#### Creating Alignment

Once you have written or reviewed your LMS use policy, consider your procedures, guidelines, and conventions. How do they support and enact the policy? If they do not, they need to be changed to facilitate alignment, otherwise you will be creating confusion and communicating the policy does not need to be followed. You may also need to create new procedures, guidelines or conventions if your current structure is inadequate. For example, if you have not required a regular review process previously, you may need to create a review template and give access to course owners.