MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR E-LEARNING (MSEL)

ICRC

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INTRODUCTION

An e-learning module needs to meet certain criteria for the diffusion team to upload it to the iLearn platform. These criteria are defined as the "**minimum standards for e-learning**". If the module does not meet these criteria, the diffusion team will return it for review.

This whole process is important for the organization because it ensures that each e-learning module that reaches ICRC staff has a **consistent level of quality**. The minimum standards for e-learning are also important for module creators because following them helps **increases the efficiency of production and the quality of the product**.

The minimum standards for e-learning modules include criteria for different aspects of the module such as the structure, user interface, text, assets/resources, assessment and applicability.

There is **support** around the minimum standards for e-learning for creators of modules. A dedicated **e-learning module** guides creators through the standards and a **checklist** allows them to evaluate the modules they have developed. In addition, **templates** for creating e-learning modules are being developed based on these standards (with the first delivery at the end of Q2 2021).

See the example: part 1[1], part 2[2], part 3[3], part 4[4].

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1. https://vimeo.com/660703821/3a1f14c5c0
2. https://vimeo.com/660703780/f1e71b655e
3. https://vimeo.com/660703684/42e9004f65
4. https://vimeo.com/660703603/8232b7e149

1. STRUCTURE

A well-structured e-learning module should meet the following criteria:

1.1. Introduction page/section

There is an introductory page/section after the start/home page.

- An introductory page(s)/section(s) introduces the learners to a specific topic.
- The introduction should be a part of the module to make it a stand-alone piece. However, it is acceptable to create an introduction directly in BlendedX as long as the module is not shared outside BlendedX.
- Introductions are usually text-based, but it is acceptable to have an introductory video if it provides an overview of the module.

1.2. Navigation page/section

There is a page/section that explains navigation.

- This page/section explains how to progress and interact with the module.

1.3. Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are presented.

The module either:

- contains a page/section with a list of learning outcomes
- OR contains multiple pages/sections with learning outcomes e.g. per chapter
- OR does not contain learning outcomes because they are listed in the BlendedX path.

The module covers no more than 3-5 learning outcomes.

- If the purpose of the module is to present information (e.g. a guide), you should state that purpose instead of learning outcomes.

Each learning outcome is covered by a corresponding page(s)/section(s).

- A single page/section, a set of pages/sections or whole chapter can correspond to a single learning outcome.

1.4. Content warning standards

Our new content warning standards focus on enhancing the safety and well-being of all learners and authors of e-learning content within our iLearn platform. We implemented these standards as we strongly believe in fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment for everyone.

What are content warnings?

Content warnings are brief notifications that alert learners to potentially sensitive or triggering material before they encounter it. These warnings serve as a proactive measure to allow learners and authors to make informed decisions about engaging with such material based on their individual comfort levels and personal experiences.

> ✎ Note
>
> Content warnings have to be included throughout the entire production phase.

Why are content warnings essential?

1. **Empathy and respect:** We recognize that learners come from diverse backgrounds, each with unique sensitivities and experiences. Content warnings show empathy and respect for different perspectives within our community.

2. **Mental well-being:** Providing content warnings enables learners to get emotionally prepared before engaging with challenging topics and thus it reduces any risk of unexpected distress.

3. **Accessibility and inclusion:** Content warnings promote accessibility by allowing learners to navigate content in a way that aligns with their emotional needs, making sure everyone can benefit from our e-learning platform.

How do content warnings work?

When authors create content that may contain potentially distressing material (images, videos, sounds, etc.), they will be prompted to include a content warning. Learners will see these warnings displayed right before accessing the material, giving them the opportunity to proceed or skip it. Furthermore, learners can provide feedback on how useful they find content warnings, helping us to continually improve the system.

> 💬 Content warning can be placed in the introduction of an e-learning course or at the beginning of a module that contains possible distressing content.
>
> See below an example of a content warning within the introduction of the e-learning courses that contain potentially distressing material.

> 👁 Example
>
> Content warning: The following e-learning course contains graphic images and descriptions related to [content description]. Viewer discretion is advised.

1.5. Practice activity

Practice activity corresponds to a specific learning outcome and contains clear instructions.

- If there is an interactive practice activity, it corresponds to a specific learning outcome and contains clear instructions that explain what learners need to do.

1.6. Interactive elements

Clickable elements through which learners interact with content are clear.

- Examples of clickable elements that allow learners to interact with content include flip cards, click and reveal, accordion, interactive tabs, carousel (sequence of images) and text.

- In addition to the content, learners need to receive clear instructions on what they need to do (for example, "Click 'Play' to start the video" or "Click 'Next' to move through the carousel").

1.7. Module in smaller sections

The module is broken into small sections in a logical way.

- Long modules must be divided into sections (such as chapters or lessons). These sections must be consistent and visible (e.g. contain a page that represents the beginning of the chapter or have distinctive headers or titles).

- There is a menu which clearly represents the structure of the module. It can be a dedicated page/section or part of the module interface.

- It is strongly recommended that content be broken into short modules with a simple structure rather than long modules with a complex structure.

1.8. Module flow

Module flow is clear.

- There is a clear indication for the learner that they are starting a new lesson, chapter, section or activity

- Content warnings are placed at the beginning of the modules that contain potentially distressing material. See below an example.

◉ | Example

Content warning: This e-learning module contains distressing images and information that may be difficult to view. Viewer discretion is advised.

- This can be a separate page/section or a visual indicator on the page/section.

1.9. Conclusion page/section

There is a conclusion page/section at the end of the e-learning module.

- It is strongly recommended that this conclusion page/section be positioned second to last.

1.10. Completion page/section

There is a completion page/section at the very end of the e-learning module.

- It must be positioned as the very last page/section.
- It clearly informs the learner:
  - that the module is completed
  - that progress has come to an end (the progress bar is full or the number of pages indicates that the user is on the last page/section)
  - how to exit.

♀ | Tip

If the size of the content allows, the conclusion and the completion page/section should be merged into one page/section. This reduces the risk of the learner missing the completion page/section, which could impact completion tracking.

2. USER INTERFACE

2.1. Module consistency

The module is consistent if:

- the colour of pages/section backgrounds, borders and buttons is the same on all pages/sections (including the colour of buttons that change when you click or hover over them)

- each specific button looks the same on all pages/sections (e.g. the "Continue", "Previous", "Next", "Menu" and "Submit" buttons)

- instructions for the learners have the same position, font colour and size on all pages/sections

- the indication of progress has the same position on all pages/sections (e.g. a progress bar at the top or the page progress indicator at the bottom)

- icons and images representing a concept (e.g. icons representing a hospital or a water pipe) and feedback icons (e.g. correct and incorrect) are used consistently.

♀ | Tip

Using a template will ensure consistency. We recommend that you do not change any settings.

2.2. Module functionality

The module is functional.

The module is functional if:

- the navigation buttons work (e.g. the "Previous" button takes the learner to the previous page/section)

- printable material can be printed

- audio and video can be controlled by learners (e.g. pause, play, stop)

- quizzes allow learners to select or type the answer and submit it

- learners can see their progress (e.g. through a progress bar or pages/sections number out of total number)

- each page/section is correctly linked to another page/section in the module or an external source, there are no dead ends.

> ⚠ **Warning**
>
> Note that the bullets above refer to the ICRC's default browser (currently Edge).

3. TEXT

3.1. Language

The language is clear and understandable.

- The language is aligned with the basic requirements in the <u>ICRC's style guide</u>[5]
- Everything is written in plain English (or written plainly in the learners' language – Style guide for <u>French Manuel de style de francais</u>[6])
- There are no spelling mistakes or typos (refer to the style guide).
- Acronyms and specific technical words are explained (e.g. in a pop up, in a glossary or directly in the text).
- Quotes are enclosed in inverted commas ("text").

3.2. Paragraphs

Paragraphs are short.

- Each paragraph has a maximum of 480 characters/around 100 words (buffer 20%).
- The text on one page/section must:
  - ideally be kept to two paragraphs.
  - or not exceed the number of characters/words.

> ⚠ Warning
>
> Please note that some tools, such as Articulate Rise and BranchTrack (new player), appear text-heavy if you use the maximum number of characters/words, as per the guidelines. Therefore, we recommend that you divide the text in separate sections.
>
> The same advice applies to the old player in BranchTrack (Legacy Player) where the length of the text in a section varies based on different factors (for example, on the number of options). Therefore, in case of any overlapping or if a section appears text-heavy, we suggest that you split the text.

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5. https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_COM/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?ID=TSCOM-13-4159
6. https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_COM/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?ID=TSCOM-13-4163

3.3. Titles

The titles are consistent and in clear language.

- The course title is written in title case ("Name of the Course").
- The module titles and pages/sections titles are written in sentence case ("Name of the module").
- The page/section titles contain keywords/key objectives of the module.

3.4. Lists

Textual lists are clear and easy to read.

- The rule of thumb is that each page/section may have up to seven bulleted items, however:
  - if bullets have more than 250 characters, there can only be four of them on a single page/section (note that there is a 20% buffer on the character limit)
  - if bullets only have one to three words each, there can be up to ten of them on a single page/section.
- Bullet symbols are consistently used throughout the module.
- Bullet points are capitalized according to the requirements in the ICRC's style guide.

> ✎ Note
>
> For more detailed guidelines refer to the ICRC's style guide[7].

3.5. Numbers

Numbers are written according to the requirements in the ICRC's style guide.

- Numbers from one to ten are written out in full (except in math equations $1+2=3$).
- Numbers from 11 on are expressed in figures.
- Numbers larger than 1,000 are separated with a comma.
- Dots are used for decimal numbers (0.5).
- Ordinal numbers are written without superscript ("1st" not "1st").

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7. https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_COM/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?
ID=TSCOM-13-4159

✎ | Note

For more detailed guidelines refer to the <u>ICRC's style guide</u>[8].

3.6. Fonts

The font style aligns with the recommendations in the ICRC's style guide.

- Bold is used only for key words or phrases.
- Italic is used only for references.
- Titles are emphasised with increased font size and/or font type (provided in the template).
- Underline is used only for hyperlinks

✎ | Note

For more detailed guidelines refer to the <u>ICRC's style guide</u>[9].

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8. https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_COM/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?
ID=TSCOM-13-4159
9. https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_COM/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?
ID=TSCOM-13-4159

4. ASSETS AND RESOURCES

4.1. Videos

> ⚠ Warning
> - We strongly recommend that the videos you integrate in e-learning modules are up to five minutes long.
> - You should integrate other videos which are longer by default, such as talking heads videos (e.g. interviews, longer extracts...), in your BlendedX path. Follow the recommendations described under Video - talking heads [p.15] section.

4.1.1. Video - live action

Live action video recording (e.g. testimonies, educational demonstration, tricks and tips) is short with clear sound and image. Additionally, it needs to be accessible.

- Keep the videos brief with the focus on learning outcomes.
- Use audio and visual elements to convey appropriate parts of an explanation; make them complementary rather than redundant.
- Keep in mind your target audience - time allowed for training, their motivation and level of attention to watch the videos. Also, internet connectivity and bandwidth vary as the audience is diverse and large. In a nutshell, the shorter and simpler the video, the better.
- We strongly recommend that the videos you integrate in e-learning modules are up to five minutes long.
- You should integrate other videos which are longer by default, such as talking heads videos (e.g. interviews, longer extracts...), in your BlendedX path. Follow the recommendations described under Video - talking heads [p.15] section.
- The image is clear, meaning that the resolution is 480p -1080p (not over 20MB).

> ⚠ Warning
> Note that for embedded videos, the file size does not apply. However, be aware that embedded videos will not work offline.

- The sound is clear, meaning:
  - there are no background noises
  - diverse accents are acceptable, but they need to be clearly understood.
- Accessible means that the video has subtitles or a transcript (or at least contains the transcript as text, e.g. a button with popup next to the video that contains the transcript).

4.1.2. Animated video

Animated video is short with clear sound and image, accessible and contains meaningful motion.

- We strongly recommend that the videos you integrate in e-learning modules are up to five minutes long.
- You should integrate other videos which are longer by default, such as talking heads videos (e.g. interviews, longer extracts...), in your BlendedX path. Follow the recommendations described under Video - talking heads [p.15] section.

> ⚠ **Warning**
>
> Note that for embedded videos, the file size does not apply. However, be aware that embedded videos will not work offline.

- The sound is clear, meaning:
  - there are no background noises
  - diverse accents are acceptable, but they need to be clearly understood.
- Accessible means that the video has subtitles or a transcript (or at least contains the transcript as text, e.g. a button with popup next to the video that contains the transcript).
- Meaningful motion means that only the part of the animation that tells the story or reveals a logical sequence of items is animated (there are no animations just for sake of being there that distract learners from focusing on the point).
- If narration is included, synchronization is clear and meaningful, meaning:
  - images follow the speed of narration
  - animations illustrate at least the key points in the narration in a synchronized way.

- If audio is included, synchronization is clear and meaningful, meaning:
  - the text and image are not revealed at the same time, but in a sequence
  - there is enough time to read from the video.

4.1.3. Video – talking heads

Video (e.g. interview) recording is short with clear sound and image and is accessible.

- The video is up to 12 minutes long. Longer videos can be cut into shorter videos.

- The image is clear, meaning that the resolution is 480p -1080p (not over 20MB).

- From the pedagogical point of view, we advise that you follow the 12-minute limit. However, please bear in mind that the 20 MB-limit is set to ensure accessibility. The length of a video directly impacts its size, which means that the file size of a longer video is usually larger than the size of a shorter one.

- You should integrate videos which are longer by default, such as the talking heads videos, in your BlendedX path. Follow the recommendations described above.

> ⚠ Warning
>
> Note that for embedded videos, the file size does not apply. However, be aware that embedded videos will not work offline.

- The sound is clear, meaning:
  - there are no background noises
  - diverse accents are acceptable, but they need to be clearly understood.
- Accessible means that the video has subtitles or a transcript (or at least contains the transcript as text, e.g. a button with popup next to the video that contains the transcript).

4.2. Audio

Audio (stand-alone e.g. a podcast) is short with clear sound and is accessible.

- The audio is short, meaning it is up to three minutes long.
- The sound is clear, meaning:
  - there are no background noises
  - diverse accents are acceptable, but they need to be clearly understood.
- Accessible means that the audio has subtitles or a transcript (or at least contains the transcript as text, e.g. a button with popup next to the video that contains the transcript).
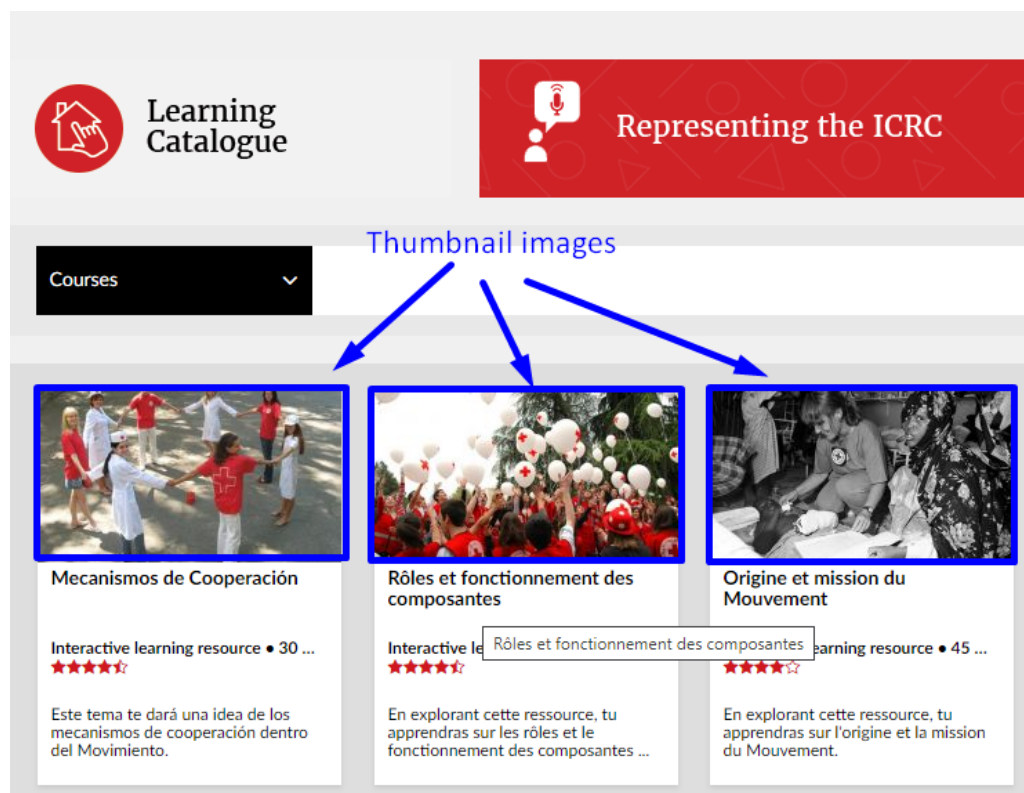
4.3. Images

Images are related to the content, are clear and are in line with the ICRC's brand identity.

- Images are related to the content if they:
  - directly support learning
  - support presented content
  - illustrate
  - are not altered to distorts reality or to change the context.
- Images are clear if:
  - resized images keep the original size ratio to avoid a stretched look
  - images are sharp; blurry photos that prevent the learner from understanding the information transmitted in them are not acceptable.
- Images are in line with the ICRC's brand identity if:
  - this [photography guidance](#)[10] is followed (for questions concerning ICRC photos, contact your regional communication centre or the [Geneva photo library](#)[11]).

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10. https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_RHLND/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?ID=TSRHLND-2-20115
11. https://avarchives.gva.icrc.priv/

- Cropping tips:
  - Avoid cropping whenever possible.
  - If you crop, ensure the message in the photograph has not been altered.
  - Never crop a photograph that serves as the main message, i.e. in a photo exhibition.
- Thumbnail image (see the image below) tip:
  - The thumbnail for the module should not have text to ease the translation process.

⚠ **How to optimize images for web**

Image characteristics may affect loading time. Make sure your images are set as follows:
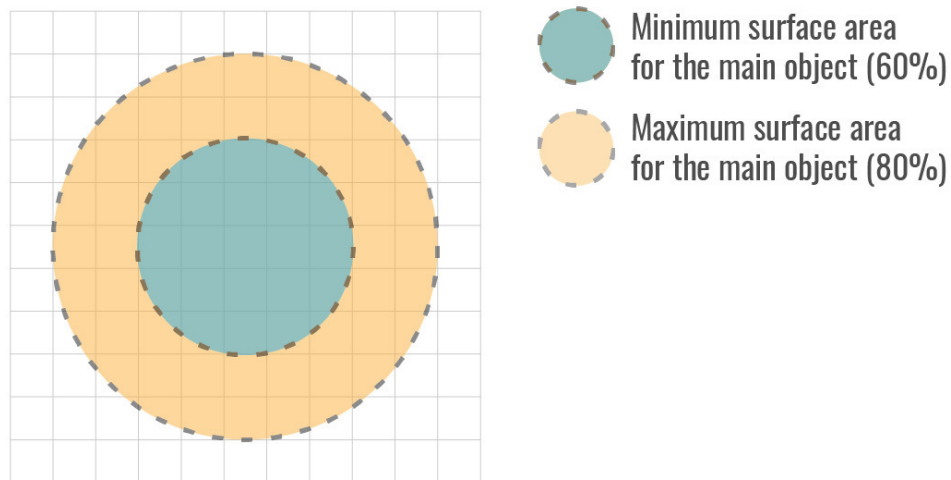
Maximum image dimensions 1920x1080

Resolution: 75-150ppi*

Colour space: RGB

Colour profile: sRGB

Metadata: all disabled such as geolocation, camera info, keywords etc

*ppi = pixel per inch, also known in some programs as p/i

4.4. Diagrams, infographics and flowcharts

Diagrams, infographics and flowcharts are clean and clear.

Diagrams, infrographics and flowcharts are clean and clear if:

- they contain the ICRC logo
- the colour palette and font will follow the requirements laid out in the ICRC's visual identity[12].
- the image width is over or equals 1440px
- the image density is over or equals 72ppi
- they contain no more than six colours: primary, accent, body text colour, headline colour, background colour, secondary background colour (regardless Logo, Illustrations) in a way that respects ICRC's visual identity.[13]
- they do not contain photographs
- the background textured image has opacity set to up to 20%, without strong contrast and saturated colours.

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12. https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_RHLND/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?ID=TSRHLND-2-15849
13. https://collab.ext.icrc.org/sites/TS_RHLND/_layouts/15/DocIdRedir.aspx?ID=TSRHLND-2-15849

4.5. Links

Links in the module open properly.

Links in the module open the stated/expected web page or resource.

5. ASSESSMENT

The purpose of an assessment is for learners to practice or be tested .

Assessments used for practice purposes are **formative assessments.** They support learners while they are still developing new skills and knowledge. There are no consequences for failing. On the contrary, learning from mistakes is encouraged. Thus, they **must include specific feedback** which explains the reasons why something is correct or incorrect. These activities may either be mandatory to continue through the module or may be skipped depending on the module design.

Assessments used for testing purposes are **summative assessment**s. They are used to test skills and knowledge, and can be passed or failed. When passed, they allow for module completion and **scoring points** or certification. If failed, the learner may be offered another attempt or the opportunity to redo the whole course/module.

- Each learning outcome **must** be covered by the **formative assessment** directly in the module.
- Each learning outcome **should** be covered by the **summative assessment** either directly in the module OR in the BlendedX path.
- If you are producing presentational module (e.g. a guide), an assessment is not mandatory.
- There is a clear instructions on what the learners should do on each page/section (e.g. select the right answer and click on "Submit").

♀ | Tip
    Note that that if there are no assessments in the learning module, they should be present in the BlendedX.

A formative assessment (Elucidat knowledge check):

- corresponds to a specific learning outcome (it doesn't have to be clearly indicated)
- provides individualized feedback for both correct and incorrect answers.

⚠   Warning
    Note that this formative type of assessment cannot be scored in Elucidat.

A summative assessment (Elucidat assessment):

- has a set number of attempts, which is clearly communicated in the assessment introduction
- has a clear indication of the number of questions and the progression through the assessment (e.g. question 1/10 or an assessment progress bar)
- clearly displays assessment results on the score summary page/section
- pass rate is set.

Question type boundaries:

- **One answer – multiple choice questions** have three to five options.
- **Multiple answer – multiple choice questions** have three to seven options.
- **Matching pairs questions (drag and drop)** have four to seven pairs (exceptionally there can be more than seven pairs if droppers are single words or two-word phrases).
- **Categorization questions (drag and drop)** have two to five categories and up to 20 droppers.
- **Image explorer questions (clickable hot spots)** have up to seven hot spots.

6. APPLICABILITY

It is a subject matter expert's (SME's) responsibility to make sure that the following criteria are met. However, the iLearn team may point out if they see some obvious signs of failing to meet applicability criteria, e.g. a lack of life-like examples.

- Learning activities are based on relevant and concrete life-like examples and behaviors.
- There are clear instructions for on-the-job application.
- The language used is concrete and describes real tasks.

ICRC