



المركز الوطني
للتعليم الإلكتروني
National eLearning Center

Emergency Remote Learning Guide



Table of Contents

Glossary	03
Introduction	05
Objectives	06
Phases of Emergency Remote Learning	07
 Main Dimensions of Emergency Remote Learning Across Different Phases	 08
1. Leadership and Governance	08
2. Technology	08
3. Curriculum Design and Planning	09
4. Teaching and Academic Support	09
5. Measurement and Assessment	09
6. Learner Support	10
7. Continuous Evaluation and Improvement	10
 Phase One: Preparedness	 11
Phase Two: Response	15
Phase Three: Return and Recovery	19

Glossary

The following terms are defined in this guide according to the eLearning terminology issued by the National eLearning Center (NeLC) and other related national references:

Distance Learning:

A mode of learning in which online means and technologies are used in the educational process and interaction management. It is characterized by a separation between the educator and the learner, among learners themselves, or between learners and learning resources. This separation can occur either in terms of location, outside the premises of the educational institution, and/or in the timing of learning.

eLearning:

The utilization of educational, information and communication technologies to enhance the efficiency of the learning and training process in all modes and ensure its quality.

Emergency:

A sudden event (natural or human-made) that may affect the educational process either partially or completely, requiring exceptional measures to ensure rapid response and continuity of education.

Emergency Remote Teaching:

The temporary shift from the regular mode of teaching to alternative modes due to emergency circumstances. This includes using all available remote learning and training solutions, with the return to the regular or blended mode once the emergency circumstances have completely or partially subsided.

Emergency Preparedness:

A set of preemptive measures that ensure the institution's readiness to deal with emergencies, including training, contingency plans, technological infrastructure, and communication systems.

Continuity of Education:

The ability of an educational institution to continue delivering its core educational services during or after crises without significant disruptions that may affect the quality of education.

Risk Management:

A methodology aimed at identifying, analyzing, and evaluating potential risks that may affect the institution's objectives, and taking appropriate measures to mitigate them.

Response:

Immediate actions taken during an emergency to reduce its impact and restore stability in the educational process.

Recovery:

The phase of reorganizing and resuming educational operations after the crisis has ended, aiming for a gradual or full return to the regular or blended mode.

Technical Infrastructure:

The technical equipment, platforms, systems, and software required to support eLearning and ensure its continuity.

eLearning Framework:

A national framework issued by the National eLearning Center (NeLC) to assess the quality of planning, design, and delivery of eLearning.

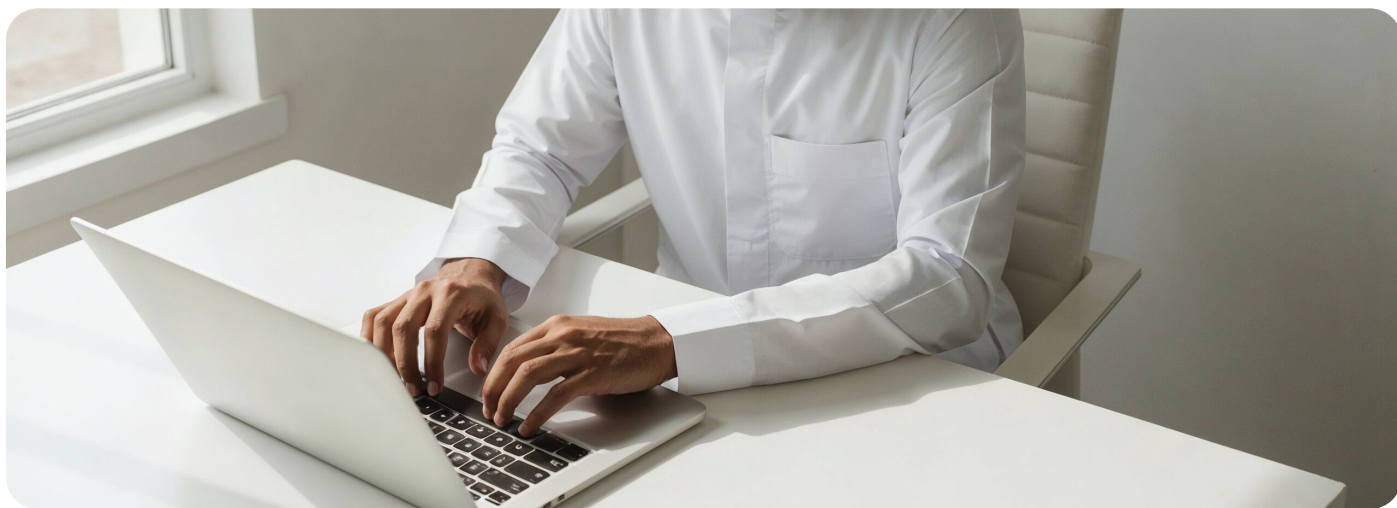
Introduction

In view of the potential crises that may arise—whether natural disasters, pandemics, or conflicts, the need emerges for a national mechanism that ensures continuity of effective and high-quality education, while safeguarding the core of the educational process through shifting to remote learning as one of the recognized eLearning modes. In line with its mandate to govern and ensure the quality of eLearning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the National eLearning Center (NeLC) has developed this guide to support educational and training institutions in adopting remote learning during emergencies, providing a clear reference based on best practices.

This guide focuses on three key phases: preparedness, response, and recovery. It draws upon the eLearning Framework issued by NeLC and is aligned with the policies and regulations of the relevant authorities, including the National Framework for Risk, Emergency, and Business Continuity Management issued by the General Secretariat of the National Risk Council, in addition to other reference documents that support the continuity of education and promote the integration of efforts across various related sectors.

The guidelines outlined in this document shall be applied in accordance with the directives issued by the relevant authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia concerning the declaration of emergencies. These authorities serve as the official reference for determining the state of emergency and prescribing the appropriate mode of learning to ensure the continuity of effective and reliable education.





Objectives



Providing a unified reference guide that supports the continuity of education and training during emergencies through the effective transition to remote learning.



Enhancing the readiness of educational and training institutions across all levels (K-12, higher education, and vocational education) to handle crises and disasters and ensure the continuity of high-quality and effective education.

Phases of Emergency Remote Learning

This guide is structured around three main phases that form an integrated cycle for handling emergencies. Each phase requires specific procedures and integration across various institutions to ensure successful response and continuity of high-quality education.

1

Preparedness

This phase represents the preventive stage prior to the occurrence of an emergency. It involves the development of plans, the capability building, the readiness of technical and educational infrastructure, and the promotion of institutional and community awareness regarding the importance of preparedness for remote learning.

2

Response

In this phase, remote learning plans are implemented immediately after an emergency occurs. The focus is on ensuring immediate and equitable access for learners to the digital learning environment, maintaining the continuity of educational activities, and providing technical and mental support to learners and educators.

3

Return and Recovery

This phase begins once the emergency ends or subsides. It aims to restore the educational process to its normal state, with an emphasis on conducting a comprehensive assessment of the experience, leveraging lessons learned, and improving future preparedness policies and plans.



Guidelines for Emergency Remote Learning

This guide is based on the reference framework for eLearning assessment, which outlines a set of core dimensions serving as the foundation for a successful shift to remote learning throughout the different phases of an emergency. These dimensions provide guidance for educational institutions in planning, implementation, and evaluation to ensure an effective transition to remote learning. The eLearning Quality Standards issued by the National eLearning Center (NeLC) serves as the primary reference for ensuring efficient design, high-quality delivery, and effective learning outcomes.

Main Dimensions for a Successful Transition to Remote Learning Across Emergency Phases



1. Leadership and Governance

This dimension highlights the importance of having a clear strategic vision for eLearning, regulatory policies that support its continuity, and effective governance structures that define responsibilities and ensure coordination among various stakeholders, including:

- Preparing a business continuity plan.
- Forming teams and defining roles and responsibilities.
- Developing policies and protocols for remote learning.
- Making rapid and flexible decisions during crises.
- Continuous monitoring and regulatory follow-up to ensure compliance.



2. Technology

This dimension focuses on the readiness of the technical infrastructure, including learning platforms, communication tools, networks, and learning management systems (LMSs), as well as ensuring that learners and educators can access these resources easily and seamlessly. This includes:

- Reliable and secure LMSs.
- Internet access and device availability.
- Technical support systems and rapid response to malfunctions.
- Cybersecurity and data protection.



3. Curriculum Design and Planning

This dimension focuses on having high-quality instructional design for courses and educational content, ensuring alignment with learning outcomes and delivery methods that are appropriate for the remote learning environment. It emphasizes the diversity and quality of digital content to support an interactive and comprehensive learning experience, which includes:

- Planning lessons with clear objectives and measurable outcomes.
- Diversifying learning activities (individual, collaborative, interactive).
- Developing digital content in various formats (texts, audio, and visual materials).
- Ensuring alignment of digital content with curricula, ease of use, and support for learner interaction.
- Ensuring ease of access and usability through different devices.
- Providing alternatives for individuals with special needs or limited access.
- Linking content to learning outcomes and providing licensed content that complies with intellectual property rights.



4. Teaching and Academic Support

This dimension is dedicated to enabling educators to deliver interactive learning in a virtual environment, developing remote teaching skills, and providing academic support. This includes:

- Managing the virtual classroom and interacting with learners.
- Providing continuous feedback.
- Using participation tools (chat, forums, interactive quizzes).
- Scheduling activities according to the emergency.



5. Measurement and Assessment

This dimension focuses on having effective mechanisms to measure learners' performance and assess the achievement of learning outcomes, ensuring fairness, reliability, and flexibility in applying assessment tools, including:

- Using online assessment tools for tests and assignments.
- Designing diverse assessment tools (essay, objective, performance, etc.).
- Implementing academic integrity mechanisms to prevent cheating.
- Providing constructive feedback to learners to improve performance.
- Analyzing learning outcomes and using them to improve teaching practices and curriculum development.



6. Learner Support

This dimension ensures the provision of guidance and technical, social, and psychological services that support learners and enable them to interact positively with the eLearning environment. This includes:

- Providing direct technical support to learners.
- Offering academic, mental, and social guidance based on learners' needs.
- Developing special support plans for learners with disabilities or those affected by crises.
- Designing motivational activities that enhance learner engagement and continuity of learning.



7. Continuous Evaluation and Improvement

This dimension emphasizes the implementation of methodologies and mechanisms that ensure regular review of educational processes and outcomes, and adopting performance indicators for remote learning to ensure continuous development and improvement, including:

- Identifying performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of remote learning.
- Implementing self-assessment and external review to ensure transparency.
- Data analysis and evidence-based decision making.
- Developing continuous improvement plans based on feedback.

Phase One: Preparedness

This phase aims to ensure the readiness of the educational ecosystem for a rapid transition to remote learning when an emergency occurs. This is achieved by developing proactive policies and plans and providing the required resources to ensure the continuity of the educational process. This phase is implemented through practical procedures based on the following key dimensions:

Implementation mechanisms according to main dimensions

Dimension	Description
Leadership and Governance	• Develop an emergency and business continuity plan for the educational process. • Establish a committee or a team responsible for implementing the plan within the educational institution, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. • Develop and update policies and regulations related to remote learning during crises, form national education emergency teams, and define their roles and responsibilities.
Technology	• Evaluate the readiness of digital platforms, test systems, identify technical gaps (such as poor internet or lack of devices), and prepare alternative solutions. • Provide multiple access tools for remote learning, such as digital platforms, TV channels, mobile learning apps, and downloadable content. • Ensure the availability of technical support for all parties and establish clear channels for rapid troubleshooting during emergencies. • Link the technical infrastructure with the institution's operational emergency plans and define continuity procedures in case of disruptions. • Periodically test the readiness of the technical infrastructure through scenario simulations of emergencies and document assessment results and recommended improvements.

Dimension

Description

Curriculum Design and Planning

- Develop flexible instructional design models that adapt to emergency situations and provide clear guidance for educators on designing appropriate lessons for remote learning.
- Plan educational modules with clear objectives and measurable outcomes, incorporating varied learning methods (collaborative, individual, interactive).
- Create high-quality, interactive digital content supported by multimedia (text, videos, simulations, images) for different ages and educational levels.
- Ensure alignment of digital content with national curricula and ease of access for all learners, including those with disabilities or limited access.
- Ensure that content is licensed, complies with intellectual property rights, and is compatible with various devices and platforms.

Teaching and Academic Support

- Develop training programs for educators on eLearning tools and technologies.
- Enhance educators' skills in managing virtual classrooms and delivering content effectively through digital learning ecosystems.
- Set up guidelines for educators that include strategies for interaction, feedback, and motivating learners remotely.

Dimension	Description
Assessment	• Design adaptable and applicable assessment tools for eLearning environments during emergencies. • Define alternative evaluation strategies when regular examinations cannot be conducted. • Prepare diverse assessment models (performance-based, self-assessment, projects, etc.) to ensure fairness and reliability. • Train educators on digital assessment tools and online performance analysis.
Learner Support	• Provide interactive mental and social support, in addition to counseling services for learners to ensure their stability during disruptions. • Offer awareness programs for parents on how to support their children's learning during the emergency remote learning. • Provide open communication channels to address learners' inquiries and guide them individually or in groups. • Prepare simple guidelines for learners on how to use learning platforms and engage with them effectively.
Continuous Evaluation and Improvement	• Establish clear performance indicators to measure the educational institution's readiness for emergency remote learning. • Develop periodic self-review tools for schools and educational institutions to measure their preparedness. • Document best practices and recurring challenges as a reference foundation for future improvements. • Conduct regular reviews of remote learning plans and update them based on assessment and analysis results

Recommendations:

- It is essential that emergency and remote learning plans are designed according to learners' needs at every educational level, whether in K-12, higher education, or vocational education, in addition to leveraging open educational resources (OERs) provided by NeLC and adapting them to each learner group.
- Educational institutions are advised to adopt remote learning as a strategic supportive pathway; by delivering certain courses or modules online even under normal conditions to enhance the readiness of learners and educators for a potential full transition when needed.
- It is advisable to integrate the continuity of remote learning into each institution's business continuity plans, ensuring that these plans are tailored to the institution's current state and condition.
- It is recommended to develop flexible national and local education emergency plans, based on prior risk and needs assessments, updated regularly, and aligned with national standards and eLearning quality frameworks provided by NeLC.
- Practical simulation-based training should be conducted to mirror emergency scenarios, engaging educators, administrators, and technical staff to ensure operational readiness during crises. Such training can be linked to accredited professional programs such as the professional certificates in eLearning and training to enhance institutional efficiency.
- Clear assessment models should be adopted to measure the readiness of institutions in terms of technological infrastructure, human resources, and their ability to implement rapid transitions effectively.
- In designing and choosing delivery tools, it is important to consider learners' different technological capabilities and access conditions by offering multiple delivery options, including online platforms, satellite broadcasting, downloadable content, and offline resources. While ensuring compliance with the quality standards for developing online content issued by NeLC.
- Institutions are encouraged to regularly update their databases to include information on device availability, internet connectivity levels, and the digital skills of educators and learners.
- Effective collaboration with public and private sector partners is critical to ensuring the provision of technical resources and logistical support to sustain uninterrupted learning under all circumstances.

Phase Two: Response

This phase is implemented when a crisis affects the continuity of in-person education, whether it is a health crisis, environmental, security, or otherwise according to what is issued by the relevant authorities. It aims to ensure the continuity of education effectively by implementing pre-prepared plans and alternatives and utilizing remote learning systems to ensure that all groups have access to educational services. This phase is implemented through a set of procedures based on the following main dimensions.

Implementation Mechanisms According to the Main Dimensions

Dimension	Description
Leadership and Governance	• Implement the educational emergency plan immediately upon the occurrence of the crisis, including the roles and responsibilities defined in advance. • Form flexible working teams to manage the rapid transition to remote learning at the school, college, or institution level. • Continuous coordination with supervisory authorities and relevant entities to unify procedures, exchange information, and provide support. • Implement operation rooms or urgent contact points to receive real-time challenges and respond to them.
Technology	• Operate the approved digital platforms and systems in the educational institution and ensure their stability. • Provide urgent technical support to educators and learners to deal with technical malfunctions through support teams or call centers. • Provide alternatives to access education when platforms cannot be used (such as TV broadcasting, downloadable content, applications). • Monitor the readiness of internet connectivity in different areas and take measures to reduce access gaps.

Dimension	Description
Curriculum Design and Planning	• Implement modified educational plans focusing on core content and essential skills while reducing learning time if necessary. • Use short, focused learning units that can be implemented remotely, while reinforcing main concepts. • Guide educators to identify educational priorities that can be effectively achieved within the available resources. • Align educational activities to be applicable individually or in groups using available digital tools.
Teaching and Academic Support	• Deliver lessons remotely using multiple channels (platforms, live broadcasts, recorded content). • Allocate the time of interaction, questions and queries, and reviewing assignments clearly for educators and learners. • Use flexible teaching strategies that consider differences in internet availability and attendance, such as asynchronous learning. • Support educators in organizing their time and delivering content within a simplified and balanced timeline.
Assessment	• Adopt flexible assessment tools such as online quizzes or performance tasks that can be submitted through platforms. • Postpone high-stake assessments if they cannot be implemented and track the learning records. • Use continuous feedback as a primary means to support learning instead of relying solely on grades. • Enable educators to adjust assessment criteria to fit exceptional circumstances.

Dimension	Description
Learner Support	• Provide mental and social support through specialized teams or educational counselors. • Respond quickly to learners' inquiries and provide individual guidance on using platforms or completing tasks. • Provide direct or indirect communication channels to connect with learners facing difficulties in accessing online learning. • Engage parents in supporting their children's learning and providing them with concise guidelines.
Continuous Evaluation and Improvement	• Collect daily or weekly real-time feedback regarding the challenges faced by educators and learners. • Prepare reports on the readiness level and quality of implementation and share them with leadership teams for immediate decision-making. • Use quick tools to measure the effectiveness of content, platforms, and accessibility from the beneficiaries' perspective. • Adjust procedures based on the results of ongoing monitoring and evaluation during the crisis period.

Recommendations:

- The transition to remote learning should be based on pre-established, actionable plans immediately upon the announcement of the suspension of in-person learning.
- Educational authorities should ensure access to content and activities for all learners using the most suitable means for their context.
- It is recommended to adopt flexible teaching and assessment models that align with the nature of emergencies and the varying conditions of access.
- It is beneficial to strengthen the partnership with families in supporting learning and monitoring learners' academic progress.
- Educational authorities must implement mechanisms to monitor field implementation and provide regular feedback to support decision-making.
- It is advisable for institutions to maintain active technical and academic support channels to respond to challenges immediately and effectively.
- It is recommended to document the implemented practices during this phase to leverage them in improving responses in future crises.

Phase Three: Return and Recovery

This phase occurs when the emergency ends or subsides, focusing on restoring the educational process to its normal state. This includes a comprehensive review of the educational experience during the emergency, extracting lessons learned, and improving policies and readiness plans. This phase is implemented through developmental procedures based on the following key dimensions.

Implementation Mechanisms According to the Main Dimensions

Dimension	Description
Leadership and Governance	• A comprehensive review of leadership performance during emergencies, documenting lessons learned regarding the planning and decision-making. • Update education continuity policies based on the experience and include remote learning as a permanent option within the strategic plan. • Enhance joint governance among educational institutions to define future roles in emergency scenarios.
Technology	• Evaluate the performance of the systems and the technical infrastructure used during the emergency period and identify improvement opportunities. • Develop upgrading or scaling plans for the technical infrastructure to make it more flexible and appropriate for future emergency situations. • Support the sustainability of offline alternatives (such as satellite broadcasting or printed content) for areas that faced access challenges.

Dimension	Description
Curriculum Design and Planning	• Review and evaluate the curriculum plans implemented during the emergency to improve the quality of instructional design. • Develop tools and models for curriculum planning that enhance future readiness. • Leverage lessons learned to enhance curriculum flexibility and alignment with different learning styles.
Teaching and Academic Support	• Analyze teaching patterns during emergencies and identify what can be adopted permanently. • Design continuous professional development plans for educators that integrate remote learning strategies into their daily practices. • Support the shift towards the educator's role as a guide and facilitator in digital and flexible learning environments.
Assessment	• Review assessment tools used during the crisis and leverage best practices that can be integrated into the institutional assessment system. • Build a comprehensive assessment system that includes a mix of formative and summative digital assessments. • Integrate elements of e-assessment as part of the quality ecosystem.

Dimension	Description
Learner Support	• Analyze the learners' mental and social support needs post-crisis and include emotional recovery programs. • Enhance the development of digital adaptability skills among learners and enable them to use eLearning tools effectively. • Design individual support pathways for those who faced educational challenges during emergencies.
Continuous Evaluation and Improvement	• Implement an institutional review of the experience in all its dimensions (structure, interaction, accessibility, performance) and integrate the results into policy development. • Update readiness and effectiveness indicators to align with sustainable digital learning. • Promote a culture of continuous improvement through regular review cycles of educational plans.

Recommendations:

- The experience of education during emergencies should be used as a starting point to improve digital learning strategies, not as a temporary exception.
- Educational institutions should review previous emergency plans and improve them based on the challenges and opportunities identified.
- It is beneficial to integrate eLearning into sustainable educational models that are appropriate for each educational stage and its needs.
- It is preferable for upcoming educational plans to be built on a hybrid model that allows a flexible mix of in-person and online learning.
- It is essential to enhance the readiness of educators and learners to adapt to digital learning through continuous professional and educational development plans.
- It is recommended to integrate digital assessment tools into the institutional evaluation ecosystem to ensure quality and flexibility of measurement.
- It is beneficial to establish partnerships with families and the community to enhance support for learners, especially those whose performance has been affected during the crisis.
- Educational institutions should document successful practices during emergencies and share them within local and international learning communities.
- It is advisable to adopt new indicators to measure the efficiency of educational systems in adapting to crises and learning from them.

