



## DRAFT FOR PUBLIC COMMENT— 03/641836 DC BS 8426 A code of practice for e-support in e-learning systems

A fundamental and obligatory stage in the development of any standard is the Draft for Public Comment. This is a period of 60 days where the draft is available for public comment, allowing input from any interested parties. This is your opportunity to influence the content of standards lying in your area of expertise.

BS 8426 A code of practice for e-support in e-learning systems has now reached this crucial stage in its development and can be obtained from BSI for you to comment and influence this Standard. Comments on the draft will be accepted for consideration until 31 May 2003.

Growth in the power and capabilities of ICT has led to the increasing use of e-learning systems to mediate the provision of learning in a wide range of educational and other contexts. Suitably used, e-learning systems can increase the flexibility of, and access to, learning and training courses. They can also enable effective, efficient and satisfying achievement of learning objectives. However, their increased use has raised issues about the quality and effectiveness of the e-support that learners receive as they undertake ICT-mediated learning.

The aims of this British Standard for e-support in e-learning systems are to provide a means for the provider, purchaser or commissioner of e-learning systems, materials and services among others, to:

- establish a consistent level of e-support to learners undertaking e-learning courses;
- assess the effectiveness of the e-support provided on a course;
- give an assurance of quality of e-support to users of “off-the-shelf” courses provided through e-learning systems, and to organizations providing, commissioning or purchasing e-learning systems, materials and services.

The achievement of these aims will have benefits for learners undertaking e-learning courses, which include:

- effective and efficient attainment of the courses’ learning objectives;
- high levels of satisfaction, confidence and motivation with the courses;
- positive attitudes to e-learning and motivation to do further learning;
- accessibility of e-support for learners with physical, sensory or cognitive impairments, environmental or language constraints;
- provision to learners, when appropriate, of communication tools to enable group-work, collaboration and dialogue.

The achievement of these aims will also have benefits for people directly involved in the delivery of e-learning, such as tutors, other support staff, and instructional designers, which include:

- reduced demand for e-support on tutors and other support staff, thereby increasing their effectiveness;
- clarity for instructional designers as to the e-support issues which learning materials and e-learning systems should address.

In turn the recommendations in this standard have benefits for other stakeholders in e-learning, which include:

- higher retention, completion and attainment rates for courses;
- higher levels of participation and inclusion in e-learning courses;
- predictable and standardized requirements for learning materials, e-learning systems and e-support processes;
- improved matching of tutor- and other staff-training against the e-support requirements of e-learning provision;
- a large and open market for e-learning, by making it more cost-effective and of higher quality.

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