

## **Position Paper on the use of blended learning in initial qualification and periodic training of professional drivers according to directive 2003/59/EC**

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EU directive 2003/59/EC on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers does not prohibit the use of e-learning. Some EU Member States have in their implementation of the directive in national law, provided for the possibility to pass parts of the periodic training of professional drivers via e-learning units. Austria even allows for entire modules to be taken with e-learning methods. In MOVING's point of view, the implementation with a blended learning approach is more expedient and efficient than e-learning alone.

Blended Learning is a combination of autonomous, media-assisted learning (e-learning) and classical presence based classroom teaching. The goal of blended learning techniques is to combine the advantages of face-to-face teaching with entirely digital e-learning units and to avoid the disadvantages of both methods.

Blended learning supplements phases of students learning independently using their smartphone, computer or tablet with face-to-face teaching. In class, after having examined the individual progress of each student, the instructor can discuss contents which have proven difficult, answer questions and teach topics which are better conveyed in person.

For this reason, blended learning has several advantages over simple e-learning:

- The connection and motivation of students is higher when they learn as part of a social group under the supervision of an instructor, instead of studying alone at home. This way, significantly lower drop-out rates have been observed. Furthermore, the exchange with other students and the possibility to ask questions on the material in an informal setting are advantageous to the learning process.
- The coupling of autonomous learning units and mandatory class sessions gradually teaches the participants important competences like discipline, time management, self-motivation and the capacity to study on their own. Nevertheless, the student does not carry the entire responsibility for his success by himself but is supported and supervised by a teacher, just like in a traditional class room setting.
- Some topics are better taught in class or with study groups, for example practical exercises on cargo securing or communication. Other contents are more easily displayed digitally, such as models of processes, dates and facts or technical proceedings. Those topics can be studied more easily with the e-learning method, via repeated exercises. The combination of both methods assures that each subject can be taught with the appropriate technique.
- Studying becomes more individual: the students can learn in a more flexible way, independent of time and place, at their own pace. During the classroom phase, they then have the opportunity to ask specific, individual questions since the instructor teaches and revises problematic content.

For these reasons, the method of blended learning is especially apt for recurring employee-training such as continuing training for professional drivers or training on workplace safety. Since a majority of participants is already familiar with the topic, they can easily work with a media-based format at their own pace. Nevertheless, the instructor can still point out frequent mistakes and discuss them with all participants. Therefore, the use of blended learning would be recommendable in continuing training for professional drivers.

With the use of blended learning concepts, the efficacy and economic efficiency of training and continued education can be improved. However, in order to actually raise efficiency and avoid abuse, the coupling of e-learning elements with classroom teaching units under the direction of a training centre is indispensable.

Therefore, MOVING supports measures trying to introduce or establish blended learning, e.g. in training elements according to EC/2003/59. In order to reach its full potential and to avoid abuse that could be created with the use of purely digital teaching units without combination with classroom phases, MOVING favours the blended-learning concept developed above, where the instructor can at any moment accompany and review the progress of each participant and consequently adapt their training. This is how the desired gains in efficiency and results can be obtained.

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