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## Benchmarking of Virtual Campuses

## Project goals

The Benvic project focuses on establishing evaluation criteria in order to achieve Quality Standards for Virtual Campuses.

More specifically, the goals are:

- To develop, test and establish an educational approach for the evaluation of “virtual campuses” experiences throughout Europe, particularly those involved in the Socrates ODL Programme;
- To promote a collaborative network able to implement evaluation through comparison and benchmarking;
- To develop a competence map related to the design and implementation of “virtual campuses”;
- To promote the new knowledge and approach gained by the project to the European Academic Community.

## The Consortium

The Consortium of this project has been formed by partners involved in different successful ODL projects: universities and research institutes.

The universities involved in the project have all developed a type of virtual environment devoted to the delivery of ODL programmes. These Virtual Campuses are the main focus of the project, and therefore it is important that the participating institutions have real experience which can be evaluated.

The research institutes involved in the project have contributed the methodological approach to the evaluation of ICT in education. These institutes have long experience in the establishment of quality criteria for ODL products. The project is lead by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, one of the first universities to base its educational model and management organisation on the concept of the Virtual Campus. Moreover, for dissemination purposes, the consortium is complemented with CRE, which guarantees the wide distribution of the project results.

## Project outcomes

1. Case Study descriptions, presenting in depth the Virtual Campus that have been the subject of study and evaluation in the project
2. Evaluation methodology and approach with the detailed description of Quality Criteria and evaluation tools.
3. Dissemination activities of the project results.

## What is a Virtual Campus?

The concept of a virtual campus refers to a specific format of distance education and on-line learning in which students, teaching staff and even university administrative and technical staff mainly “meet” or communicate through technological links.

## Why compare VC?

In order to allow the co-operation among Universities in the field of common developments of Virtual Campus platforms, as well as the virtual exchange of programmes, students and professors, it is essential to establish a system which provides a common language and criteria for the evaluation of ODL platforms. The results of the BENVIC project are intended to facilitate the co-operation among ODL Universities.

## What can Benvic offer?

Benvic offers a methodology and quality standards that make it possible evaluating different models of virtual learning environments created to offer distance learning.

The establishment of tested evaluation methodology for Virtual Campuses will be of great benefit for professionals involved in ODL programmes since it would allow them to cope with decisions related to the definition and establishment of new virtual learning environments. Therefore teachers and trainers, as well as managers, will learn of the advantages and disadvantages in the use of the Virtual Learning Environments in order to enhance its potential and guarantee the quality of education.

## How to enter the Benvic Club?

If you are interested in Benvic, please visit our website at <http://www.benvic.odl.org> or contact one of the partners. A positioning questionnaire is available to all those interested in joining.

The project developed the benchmarking methodology and tools on the basis of a limited number of case studies. To validate this methodology through additional cases of virtual learning environments, we invite you to participate the validation.

If you like to participate, please contact us before the end of November 2000. All other candidates can contact the Benvic consortium at their own convenience or visit the web site.