

Associação Nacional de Farmácias

By Vanda Vieira, CECOA

1. Facts about the institution

Name of institution	Associação Nacional de Farmácias
URL of institution	www.anf.pt
Country	Portugal
Number of Employees	140
Revenue in 2005	Not applicable
Experiences with e-learning since	Since 2004
Business sector	Entrepreneurs Association
Target group/participants in e-learning	Pharmacists
Content	Continuing Vocational Training
Form	e-Learning (asynchronous learning sessions)
Interviewed people	Ana Mendes Sofia Silva, responsible for the e-Learning Courses of ANF (Associação Nacional de Farmácias) – National Pharmacy Association

2. How the institution has used e-learning

2.1. Description of the entity

The National Pharmacy Association (ANF) was born in 1975 with the purpose of defending the legitimate interests of the pharmacy owners, as public interest service providers.

Although the membership in ANF is optional, this Association represents almost all the pharmacies in Portugal.

Among ANF objectives, there is the pharmacists' and pharmacist assistant's continuing vocational training. Since 2004, ANF has been investing in e-learning as a way to facilitate the access to continuing vocational training to a larger number of professionals, using the possibilities offered by the information and communication technologies.

2.2. The courses

- The courses provided by ANF have a self-directed, individual and autonomous workload in the training process;
- Pedagogic contents are available through multimedia material, glossaries and support texts;
- Practical case-studies and exercises solving provide learning through discovery;
- Trainees can clear-up their doubts through individual and constant tutoring support;
- Trainees can access to online assessments tests to measure their level of performance and their learning progresses;
- The courses final assessments (at distance and at presence) give credits for the revalidation of the pharmacist's professional certificate.

2.3. Number of employees involved

“Gastroesophageal Reflux and Peptic Ulcer Disease: physiopathology, clinic and therapeutic” course with 146 trainees enrolled and “Vaginal Infections: hygiene and therapeutic” course with 12 trainees enrolled.

2.4. E-learning platform and technology issues

The ANF e-learning platform is a technologic support that gathers the required ICT tools to promote education and learning.

The contents are available in HTML format and can integrate flash animations, interactive simulations and scenario-based activities; documents are available to be printed out in PDF format.

The interactivity and the communication between trainer-trainees and trainees-trainees can be synchronous (through a chat) or asynchronous (through e-mail and forum).

Trainees can have access to the platform through the web site www.anfonline.pt or through the Internet Explorer web browser <http://e-formacao.anf.pt>; no other software is needed.

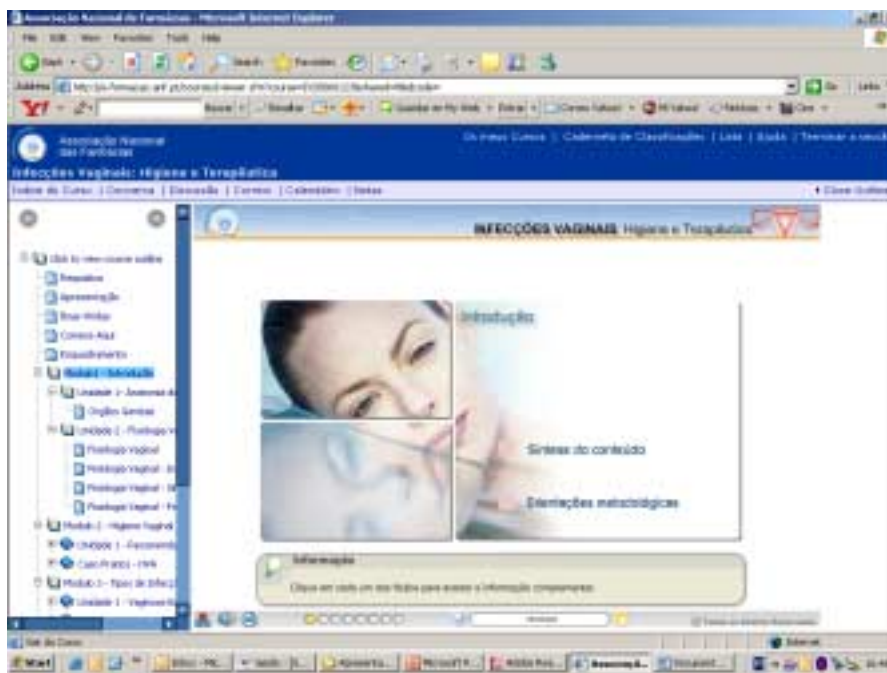


Fig. 1 – Screenshot - Intralearn Portal - access to the course.

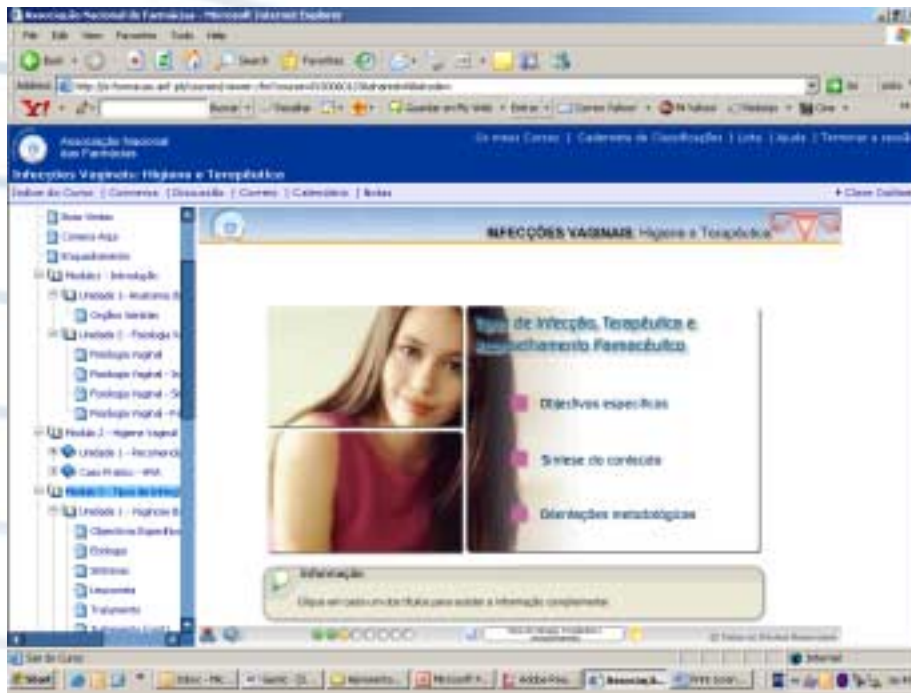


Fig. 2 – Screenshot - course's first page.

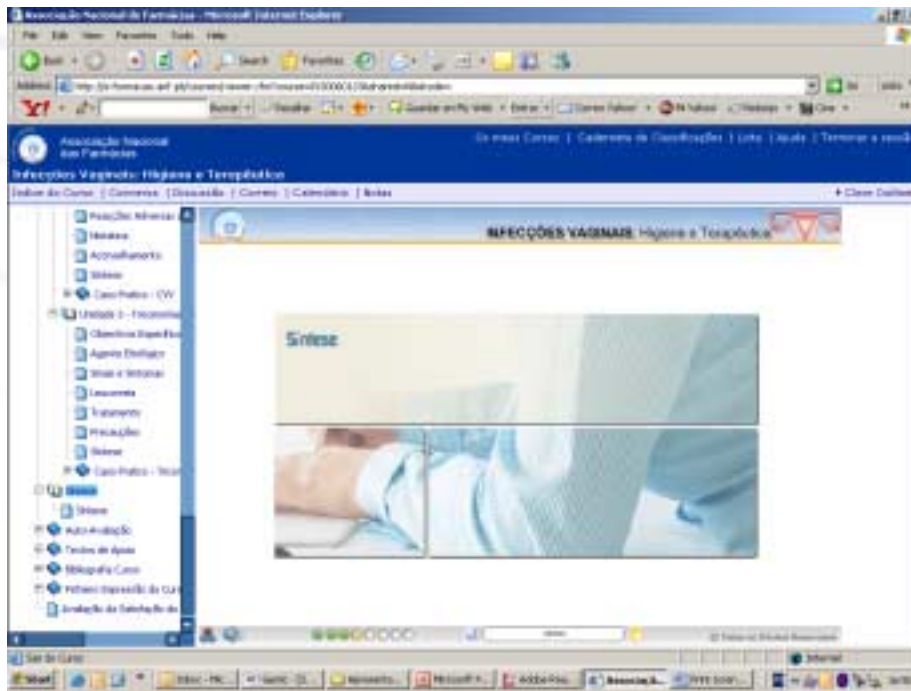


Fig. 3 – Screenshot of the course (self-study).

2.5. Course development

The courses were developed as an integrated continuing vocational training programme targeted to pharmacists.

2.6. Course administration

- The courses have a self-study, individual and autonomous component supported by multimedia materials, glossary and written materials.
- Learning through individual discovery is fostered using case studies and resolution of practical exercises.
- Existence of an active tutorial system aiming to solve eventual constraints and doubts.
- The self-assessment tests allow learning progresses measurement.

3. Effects and outcome of the e-learning activities

3.1. Completion rates

- Course “Gastroesophageal Reflux and Peptic Ulcer Disease: physiopathology, clinic and therapeutic” had 146 trainees enrolled and all students completed all modules (100% completion rate);
- Course “Vaginal Infections: hygiene and therapeutic” had 12 trainees enrolled and is still on going (no completion rates available yet).

3.2. Satisfaction

The average level of satisfaction was approximately 3,5 (in a 4-point scale). Through individual interviews, the trainees confirmed a high level of satisfaction with e-learning, as a training methodology.

The following benefits were presented:

- Remote access to training contents;
- Possibility to learn according to their own rhythm, time and priorities.

4. Challenges and barriers

The ANF distance learning main objective is to take the continuing vocational training to a larger number of health professionals, using the possibilities offered by the ICTs. ANF training policy aims to assure:

- Equal access to information and standard training contents to all ANF members;
- Fast access to a significant number of individuals geographically diffuse;
- Constant updating of the training contents.

ANF training provision of e-learning courses is organised in order to overcome the above mentioned challenges.

5. Success factors

According to ANF perception the success factors are:

- Training planning according to strategic objectives and end-users needs;
- Training models lined up with training objectives;
- Quality of the pedagogic material;
- High level team (trainers and other training staff receive specific training to improve the skills and the competences required on their daily work);
- Usage of the most suitable technologies adjusted to the end-users needs and to the course contents;
- Existence of classroom training sessions, at the beginning of the training courses is seen as a very relevant measure to promote socialisation among trainees and trainer and to get familiar with the platform.

6. E-learning investments, developmental costs and operational costs

Not available.