

Quality Standards Checklist for ONLINE OR HYBRID (online components only) COURSES

Instructor(s) _____

Department/Program/ and School _____

Course Name and 8-digit Number _____

Reviewer (if applicable) _____

Purpose of this document:

This checklist will be used to identify key elements that contribute to promoting quality in the design and delivery of online courses.

The use of these standards is being rolled out in two stages:

- Stage One: CETL will use the document as a course review tool for all online certification classes, allowing for a formal testing and vetting of the document. Additionally, the quality standards may be used in stage one for various course reviews when requested by Deans, Associate Deans, and individual faculty.
- Stage Two: Full rollout to the college, with yet to be determined usage guidelines.

About the standards in this document:

The checklist criteria are based on the nationally recognized [Quality Matters \(QM\)](#) rubric, which consists of 40 specific elements shown in research literature to positively impact student learning in online courses. In addition to the QM rubric, the [iNACOL National Standards for Quality in Online Courses](#) have been used as guiding documents.

CHECK ALL ITEMS THAT APPLY:

COURSE DELIVERY METHOD

___ **Hybrid** - a blend of online and face-to-face delivery. In these courses, substantial portions of the content are delivered online and some portion of the face-to-face class meetings is replaced with online work. (As little as 1/3 or as much as 3/4 of the traditional classroom instruction will be replaced with the online instructional methods.)

___ **Online Asynchronous**- typically have no required face-to-face or synchronous meeting times, and the content is delivered asynchronously online. Exams, labs, and other course requirements may be proctored.

___ **Online Synchronous**- typically have required real-time web-conference meetings at set times throughout the semester. Students are expected to show up at a specific time online. This course may use a traditional web conference system, such as Adobe Connect, or a 3-D virtual world, like Second Life. Exams, labs, and other course requirements may be proctored.

COURSE ORGANIZATION--Main Menu

___ Syllabus area contains a sample syllabus in print-friendly (.pdf) format.

___ Instructor Profile area should contain a profile appropriate for the course, or provided in another area.

___ Link to course grade information should appear on main menu.

___ Main menu labels accurately and precisely reflect the content in each area

___ Main menu supports a logical sequence for overall instructional strategy (project-based, discussion-based, weekly modules, etc)

___ All main menu links contain content—blank areas have been removed or hidden.

___ Main menu links have no fields that increase load time (e.g., audio files or animations) or alterations

___ Main menu areas are not more than three clicks “deep”—from the top level to any content area.

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- ___ Links to all parts of the course or external sources are functional and up-to-date
- ___ Spelling, grammar, fonts, and text sizes are accurate, and a consistent writing style is used throughout
- ___ Color, image, and texture choices do not overwhelm the course, but enhance the course functionality, features, and content.

CONTENT AREA INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND DELIVERY

- ___ Course schedule is available in a printer-friendly format for student convenience
- ___ Course schedule matches the dates published in the course timetable--course does not end early or later than published dates; final exam matches final exam week (if applicable).
- ___ Content areas are unified throughout in terms of visuals and navigation.
- ___ Initial content area introduces the student to the purpose of the course and to its components; in the case of a hybrid course, the statement clarifies the relationship between the face-to-face and online components.
- ___ Content is available in a logical progression within the folders or learning units
- ___ Folders or learning units have clear descriptions
- ___ Outcomes or learning objectives are tied to each module/unit/week/project; a learning cycle sequences activities to achieve course outcomes.
- ___ Time requirements for assignments are included to emphasize time on task
- ___ Design keeps course pages to a comfortable length with white space. If longer texts are used, the design is optimized for printout and offline reading
- ___ Orientation module is present. Instructions include how to get started and where to find various course components.
- ___ Multimedia files are appropriately linked to the course, rather than uploaded into Blackboard.

CONTENT AREA FORMATTING AND WRITING

- ___ Headings and sub-headings chunk content into readable units
- ___ Typeface choice and contrast between text and background enhances readability (e.g., light background with dark text)
- ___ Concise and meaningful text is used for embedded links; any URLs should be clearly defined
- ___ Clear directions are given for each task or assignment
- ___ Instructions are concise - steps are written in numbered or bulleted lists
- ___ Numbers identify sequenced steps; bullets list items that are sequential
- ___ Language of written material is stated in a positive way
- ___ Assignments are submitted primarily through Blackboard rather than through email
- ___ Instructions on how assignments are to be submitted and the location of any practice assignments
- ___ Acceptable file formats are explicitly stated
- ___ Resources and assignments are separated into "required" and "optional" categories (if applicable)
- ___ Content file formats are indicated when necessary (e.g. mp4, mp3)
- ___ Images are optimized for speedy display and include alt-tag text

COURSE TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGY USAGE

- ___ Tools that support the course competencies deliver the content of the course
- ___ Minimum technical skills expected of the student are clearly stated
- ___ Available tools and media are embedded into course design
- ___ Ready access to the technology that students are required to use in the course is available and supported
- ___ Policy concerning technical problems when submitting assignments or assessments
- ___ All social networking tools selected work in cross-platform (work on Mac and PC)
- ___ Instructional materials have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency for the student to learn the subject
- ___ Tools selected should consider ease of use and download requirements
- ___ Number of third-party tools does not increase overwhelm students
- ___ Tools and media support student engagement and guide students to be active learners, rather than passive recipients
- ___ All resources and materials used in the course are appropriately cited. All materials fulfill Fair Use Guidelines for e-resources
- ___ Student privacy is maintained in selecting and utilizing social networking tools. Student information remains confidential, as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- ___ Library database resources are linked into the course, rather than copied

ADA ACCESSIBILITY

- ___ Content files incorporate accessibility tools (e.g. use of styles and style tags in Word or .html documents rather than formatting tools) to accommodate screen readers
- ___ Transcripts of any audio or video are provided or closed captioned videos are selected
- ___ Alternative formats of materials are provided, when possible (e.g., optional print packet of extensive reading materials available, CD of audio clips used in course, low bandwidth alternative for multimedia elements, PDF for a print option, etc.)
- ___ Images support course content; non-content related images are minimized
- ___ Use of background images is avoided, as these are distracting to some students with learning disabilities
- ___ Color, image, and texture choices do not disadvantage those with color blindness (e.g., color of text (red) is not used to communicate meaning)

COURSE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES (note: some of these may be detailed in the syllabus)

- ___ Course design provides opportunities for appropriate instructor-student interaction, including timely feedback about student progress
- ___ Explanation of how the course format will work in the online or hybrid format included early in the course or on the syllabus
- ___ Course shell uses Madison College student email for official communication with students
- ___ Expectations for response time from instructor clearly stated
- ___ Instructor contact does not require student to come to campus for meetings
- ___ Expectations for response time from students clearly stated
- ___ Requirements for student interaction, such as deadlines and late work policies, are clearly articulated
- ___ Instructor Introduction included, with clear contact information and preferences

ASSESSMENT--Formative and Summative

- ___ Types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources
- ___ Assessment instruments selected are sequenced, varied, and appropriate to the content being assessed
- ___ Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students' work and participation
- ___ Tools are used to ensure Academic Integrity appropriate to the course (e.g. Turnitin or SafeAssign for papers; pools and random order for summative exams)

LEARNER SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

- ___ Technical Resource Links: to library tutorials, such as Bb, email directions, and other required applications (Word, PowerPoint, Acrobat Reader, Real Player) are available
- ___ Link to plug-in checker
- ___ Course shell articulates or links to clear description of the technical support offered by the college
- ___ Explanation of help with technical problems
- ___ Browser Information: Current acceptable browser information
- ___ Link to Online Learning Self-Assessment is available <http://matcmadison.edu/online-readiness-students>)
- ___ Information about the Services for Students with Disabilities (<http://matcmadison.edu/disability-resource-services-drs>)
- ___ Link to Library
- ___ Academic Resource Links: to online tutoring, online academic support and methods. Tutoring, advising, writing center, business lab, math lab, etc., relevant to the course

SYLLABUS

The following elements are obviously stated in the syllabus document

- ___ Syllabus clearly reflects either an online course or multi-mode/hybrid course
- ___ Contact information for the instructor including office hours, contact info preferences, instructor response times
- ___ Textbook information, and online sources of the textbook
- ___ Outcomes or learning objectives
- ___ Minimum technical competencies required, such as computer, internet access, etc.
- ___ Minimum student preparation, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline are clearly stated.
- ___ Synchronous or f2f requirements specifically explained with dates and times, if applicable
- ___ Complete course schedule
- ___ Course policies and procedures
- ___ Attendance definition, policies and student study expectations
- ___ Email protocol (student-instructor, student-student, and instructor-student contact)
- ___ Discussion board policies including frequency, content and netiquette, if applicable

- ___ Grading policies, including late work policy
 - ___ Information about Academic Integrity (<http://matcmadison.edu/academic-integrity>)
 - ___ SafeAssign or Turnitin statement (if applicable)
 - ___ Available in print-friendly (.pdf) format
- (Note: The syllabus template is available at <http://matcmadison.edu/in/new-faculty>)

INSTRUCTOR'S MANUAL – FOR MASTER COURSES and MASTER SHELLS ONLY

- ___ Course is accessible to all faculty in the content area (for course copies, etc.).
- ___ Sample weekly announcement included, to indicate instructor presence
- ___ Suggested grading strategies related to the overall instructional strategy (portfolio-based, case-based, collaborative, etc.)
- ___ Week-by-Week facilitation plan for instructors included
- ___ Clear indicators of what assignments in each module require feedback from instructor or from other students or have auto-feedback
- ___ Suggestions for handling virtual office hours or private, one-on-one communication with students
- ___ Suggestions for handling interpersonal conflict in the online classroom, given the content area and course design
- ___ Suggestions for technology tools used for effective feedback
- ___ Course note in PeopleSoft indicates how to access the course and any required technology or prerequisites, as applicable
- ___ Other notes or details as related to connecting the face to face and online portions of hybrid courses
- ___ Additional, optional resources

OTHER NOTES OR COMMENTS