Academic Quality Standards: **Online Courses** Near Final User Draft 6-14-16

**(**including Contract Education Online, variable-week/condensed, and hybrid)

**Instructions: In each column, circle each element you have achieved. All “Required” elements must be met; most “Effective” elements should be met; meeting 80% in Effective signifies achievement; meeting Exemplary items entitles you to add additional points to your total. Complete scoring at end.**

**Syllabus**

**EXPECTATIONS REQUIRED ON THE COURSE SYLLABUS:**

**Expectations for Instructors**

1. Response time from instructor to correspondence is clearly stated (email, voice mail, discussion postings, grade posting) [24-48 hours is customary]
2. Response time for grading papers/exams/labs/discussion postings/etc. and posting scores are clearly stated (e.g., “I will grade your assignment within 5 days of when it was due”)
3. Instructor’s methods of collecting and returning work are clearly explained
4. Instructor's role and participation in the course are clearly explained (e.g., participation in discussions and activities, instructor’s depth of feedback in discussion forums, and statement of whether feedback will be public or private, or both).

**Expectations of Students**

1. Guidelines explaining required levels of student participation (i.e., quantity of interactions).
2. Quality of communications (e.g., what constitutes a “good” answer) are clearly defined.
3. Expectations for netiquette, email, and other forms of communication are clear.

**EFFECTIVE**

**Course Syllabus Includes** (Note: use the College online template)

1. General introduction to the course.
2. Contact information for the instructor that is easy to find and includes multiple forms of communication (e-mail, phone, voicemail, office hours, chat, etc.)
3. Instructor’s preferred method of contact.
4. Encouragement of students to initiate communication with the instructor.
5. Instructor’s drop policy for no shows and inactive students
6. Information about how to withdraw
7. Information about textbooks, materials, access codes, TurnItIn etc. (title, ISBN#, author, edition number, and publisher if applicable).
8. FAQs, including student Internet/cyber safety and other relevant information including minimum technical skills expected of the student
9. Clear, organized schedule
10. SLOs associated with the course (CSLOS, PSLOS, or ISLOS)
11. Clear, detailed instructions to ensure understanding

**EFFECTIVE (Course Syllabus Includes, cont.)**

**Assignments/Grades**

1. List of all assignments/information about how the student will be assessed
2. Clear table/list showing how points/grades are earned
3. Course grading policies (late work, etc.)
4. A rubric or model for each assignment so students know how their work will be graded.
5. Grading standards (may be represented in rubrics/models)

**Succeeding and Services**

1. Information about how to use the College learning resources related to your discipline (Virtual Library, computer labs, etc.)
2. Information about how to contact College academic support resources (Student Success Centers)
3. Suggestions about how to succeed in the course
4. Information about College’s student support services (SPSD, counseling)

**Course and College Policies and Conduct**

1. Class policies for online student conduct, including disruptive behavior; reference to the College Code of Conduct Policy
2. Information about academic dishonesty (e.g., consequences for violation) and reference to the College Academic Honesty Policy
3. Detailed course policies and procedures

**Instructor Behaviors**

The instructor:

1. Ensures that the syllabus addresses these items from the Course Outline of Record: all SLOs, content, methods of student evaluations.
2. Acts to continuously improve the syllabus and the course through systematic self evaluation to assure currency, to improve teaching and learning strategies, and to promote student success.

**EXEMPLARY**

1. Enhanced suggestions for how to succeed in the course or referrals to outside study sites (e.g., OWL, *Study Guides and Strategies*)
2. Information or links to outside information related to the course (research, writing, technology, sources, professional organizations), etc.

**Instructional Delivery and Content**

**EFFECTIVE**

1. There is substantive content (the instructional materials have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency for the student to learn the subject.)
2. All content, SLOs, and methods of student evaluation listed on the Course Outline of Record (COR) are used in class (use of a textbook and assigned essays, projects, writing assignments, etc., as stipulated on the COR).
3. Instructional methods, assignments/activities are aligned with learning outcomes and methods of student evaluation listed on the COR.
4. Course content is well organized into consistent, functional learning modules/lessons within the required time framework (e.g., 4-week, 8-week, or 16-week session).
5. Material within each lesson is organized into in sections such as pre-organizer, presentation, practice, summary.
6. The learning modules include assigned readings that include chapters or page numbers, files, or Websites.
7. Learning objectives are written in measurable outcomes (students know what they are expected to be able to do).
8. A variety of activities, materials, and resources support learning by providing a variety of experiences that encourage active engagement with the course content (discussion, role playing, debates, virtual field trips, Virtual Library, Internet, publisher materials, etc.).
9. Content is presented using a variety of activities, materials, and resources that encourage active engagement with the course content (video, print, PowerPoints, textbook, self-assessments, Internet, flashcards, discussion, role playing, debates, virtual field trips, Virtual Library, Internet, publisher materials, etc., not JUST textbook or publisher material).
10. Assignments/activities allow students to apply concepts and skills in realistic and relevant ways.
11. Assignments/activities help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
12. Assignments/activities allow students to learn by inquiry (links, referral to outside readings, Internet searches).
13. Assignments/activities give students hands-on practice.
14. Assignments/activities encourage students to use libraries, Virtual Library, Web-based sources, or other electronic resources.
15. Appropriate labs, software, models, or other demonstration materials are available to aid learning [as appropriate to course].
16. Tools available within the course management system (CMS) are used to facilitate learning by engaging students with course content (e.g., self-test quizzes with feedback comments, collaboration).
17. There are sufficient assignments or activities to ensure students are regularly participating in the course [Recommended: weekly for a 16-week course; twice a week for an 8- week course, etc.].
18. For a 3-unit, 16-week course, 9 hours of instructional activities per week have been planned (for a 3-unit, 8 week course, 18 hours, etc.).

**Instructor Behaviors**

The instructor:

1. Interacts weekly with students for a duration equivalent to that of onsite classes (e.g., for a 16-week 3-unit class=3 hours a week)
2. Reminds students of prior week’s learning.
3. Adheres to regular drop deadlines indicated on the course roster, actively and consistently dropping students who are not fulfilling attendance and participation requirements outlined on the syllabus. a
4. Has included sufficient graded activities throughout the course so that, when students are dropped, a “last date of attendance” in the course can be recorded on the drop roster.

**EXEMPLARY:**

1. The instructor enhances content by inviting guest speakers, leading field trips, or conducting other activities that relate learning to real world experiences.
2. Individualized learning opportunities, remedial activities, or resources and advanced learning activities are provided
3. The instructor measures and studies student outcomes for CSLOS, PSLOs, and ISLOs that are associated with the course.
4. The instructor acts to continuously improve the content and the course through systematic self-evaluation to assure currency, to improve teaching and learning strategies, and to promote student success.

a [participation and dropping] An exception can be made for students in active military deployment.

**Interaction and Collaboration**

**EFFECTIVE**

**Collaboration and Interactivity**

1. Regular and substantive interaction and regular and effective contact are REQUIREDb using strategies such as graded discussion boards, group projects, group problem-solving, discussion of assignments, exercises/activities, small group activities, or other collaborative activities, as applicable to the course. Participation by students and instructors in the learning community should be at least weekly (at least twice a week for an 8-week class), etc.
2. There should be an opportunity for students to interact and to make introductions with one another at the course outset.

**Instructor Behaviors:**

1. The instructor facilitates distance learning and community-building by requiring student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions (e.g., participation is graded).
2. The instructor initiates at least weekly contact in 16-week courses (more in compressed courses) with students, using a variety of activities and multiple assessment measures to accommodate different learning styles; interactions are demonstrable and documented according to the definitions of RSI\* and REC.\*\* (Examples are announcements that are academic, timely, and reactive; chat rooms when instructor dialogues actively with students; discussion replies and discussion board participations that are academic; e-mails; feedback that is academic and personalized on student blogs, Wikis, quizzes, papers, portfolios, exams, and other assignments; field trips guided by instructor; Instant Messaging; office hours when instructor meets with student(s); phone calls; private messages; Q&As about academic content; review sessions; rubrics; social networking; video conferences, Webcasts, Webinars, podcasts, and recordings that are timely, customized, and reactive).
3. The instructor organizes activities so students will participate throughout the week (not just at the end of the week “at midnight”).
4. The instructor sends class-wide announcements, emails, or messages weekly at a minimum. A majority of these communications should contain “academic” as opposed to “administrative” content.
5. The instructor maintains regular deadlines and due dates and responds to student inquiries according to stated response times in the syllabus. (REC\*\*)
6. The instructor sends a welcome message to students prior to the start of class that includes a course overview and information about how to access the course and how to get started.

**EXEMPLARY**

1. Collaboration activities are planned that reinforce course content and learning outcomes while building workplace-useful skills such as teamwork, cooperation, negotiation, and consensus-building.
2. The instructor uses state-of-the-art learning activities and technology tools that make the best use of computer/online technology (interactive activities with auto feedback, role play simulations, virtual labs and field trips, etc.) by providing links to needed resources or integrating publisher resources that are tailored to the course materials.

**b** An exception might be made for students in active military deployment and some skills courses where group problem solving is not apropos; in these instances activities should be developed so students are NOT working in “independent study” situations.

**\*Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)**

 “Substantive” and “effective” mean that an instructor’s feedback is academic rather than administrative. Thus, an instructor initiates scholarly dialogue with individual students and responds to students’ academic queries. Examples of substantive and effective contact include personalized, scholarly, discipline-specific dialog and feedback (as opposed to generic praise) on a student’s specific strengths and weaknesses, critical reasoning, argumentation, approach to a problem, organization, and grammar, which may include citations, links, articles, research, and other academic content.

**\*\*Regular and Effective Contact (REC)**

Every week instructors interact substantively and personally with online students through various activities (e.g., academic or problem-solving discussions, video conferences, synchronous or asynchronous Q&A). Instructors commit to interacting weekly with online students for a duration equivalent to that of onsite classes.

**Assessment and Grading**

**EFFECTIVE**

1. All SLOs and methods of student evaluation listed on the Course Outline of Record and syllabus are used in the course.
2. Ongoing multiple types of assessments are used (discussion board, research project, objective test, essay test, journal, case study, reflections, critical analysis, etc.) (Not JUST quizzes and exams) [Note: all courses are required to have graded discussion boards or equivalent collaborative activity as applicable to the course.]
3. The assessments are appropriate to the course objectives.
4. The assessment instruments are varied and appropriate to the content being assessed.
5. The assessments are *valid* measures of the SLOS [multiple choice tests are not valid measures of most SLOS].
6. In addition to other assessments, and NOT counting a midterm essay, at least one written assignment assesses learning [some skills courses are the exception].\*\*\*\*
7. A rubric is included for each assignment so students know how their work will be graded.
8. Plagiarism detection strategies are used.
9. Exams, quizzes, assignments, or other assessments are changed or updated frequently to prevent cheating; random test items are assigned from a bank of items at least 2.5 times the size of the test.
10. When there is a new textbook edition, the instructor updates all quizzes/exams and course materials to match the edition (at the least, quizzes and exams are updated every two years)
11. A combination of self-assessment, formative assessment (such as non-graded quizzes) and summative\*\*\* assessment (such as scored quizzes and graded papers) is included throughout the course so students can measure their achievement of the learning outcomes.

**Instructor Behaviors**

1. Regular feedback about student performance is provided in a timely manner (as defined in the syllabus) throughout the course (e.g., posting scores to the grade book and/or sending feedback on group or individual assignments).
2. The instructor provides academic feedback (not JUST “well done”) to at least a moderate number of individual students on major assignments, at the very least, on a rubric or other measurement/reporting device.
3. The instructor engages in scholarly dialogue with individual students and responds to students’ academic queries (e.g., personalized, scholarly, discipline-specific feedback on a student’s specific strengths and weaknesses, critical reasoning, argumentation, approach to a problem, organization, writing and grammar, which may include citations, links, articles, research, and other academic content).
4. The instructor analyzes why students may not meet SLOs and makes a plan to improve SLO attainment in succeeding semesters.
5. The instructor checks “item analysis” in “quiz statistics” to adjust any question items that may not be well understood by students.
6. The instructor proactively identifies at-risk learners and achieves resolutions (“early alert.”)

**EXEMPLARY**

1. Non-graded opportunities for student self-assessment are available, (such as crossword puzzles, flashcards, short Q-A, short multiple choice self-tests, matching, etc.)
2. A mix of traditional and alternative assessments are used throughout the course such as essays, portfolios, interviews, role playing, discussion forums, journals, blogs, Wikis, case studies, etc.
3. Students are given choices in selecting assessments.
4. An assessment of simulated real-world experiences is used to evaluate the student’s ability to apply critical thinking and knowledge or to perform tasks that may approximate those found in the work place or other venues outside the classroom.
5. An assessment of higher order thinking is required (e.g., analysis, problem-solving, etc.)
6. Assessments and grading practices are compared and discussed with other instructors to increase effectiveness and create a culture of collegiality.

**EXEMPLARY Instructor Behaviors**

1. The instructor provides academic feedback to a large number of (or all) individual students on major assignments, at the very least, on a rubric or other form of measurement/reporting device.
2. The instructor assesses each student’s progress in meeting each SLO and provides feedback to the student [this is not the same as grading or scoring].
3. The instructor acts to continuously improve student outcomes through systematic self-evaluation to assure currency, to improve teaching and learning strategies, and to promote student success.

**Navigation and User Interface**

**All online courses, including those directing students to publisher course materials, must include these Homepage topics (Note: use the college template):**

**Homepage**

1. Welcome message from the instructor (on Home page or other place in the course) is included.
2. Course image or other graphic is included to “brand” the course
3. Appropriate image of the instructor (on Home page or other place in the course) is included.
4. Home page clearly tells the student where to start (e.g., “Start Here” button).
5. Clearly labeled tutorial materials explain how to navigate the CMS and where to find various course components.
6. Clearly labeled directions or links explain technical support.

**EFFECTIVE**

**Organization**

1. Navigation is intuitive, and content flows in a logical progression
2. Students can easily find, access, and review content.
3. Course has logically organized learning modules (lessons or units).
4. Module titles are present and are meaningful. All headings are consistently formatted.
5. Module pages have consistent formatting and structure.
6. Module content (pages, documents, files) is organized in manageable chunks to promote student engagement and learning.
7. Course design includes guidance for learners to work with content in meaningful ways (at the least, each module tells students what they are supposed to do each week).
8. Content is presented using a variety of mechanisms (content modules, single pages, links to external resources, and/or multimedia, etc.).
9. Instructions for viewing or opening files (e.g., PowerPoint, PDF, and Word), viewing videos, or downloading files are clearly stated.
10. All Web links are current and functional.
11. All calendar dates and due dates are correctly set for the current semester.
12. All exams are set to open and close for the current semester.
13. No grammatical, spelling, or typographical errors are found.

**Technical/Accessibility**

1. Links to CMS technical support and DSPS support are provided, and easy to find.
2. All videos must be closed-captioned.
3. All course content and materials (documents, video, audio, text, tables, etc.) should be accessible to all students and comply with federal accessibility requirements.
4. Pictures and other graphics are included to add interest and to demonstrate concepts. All pictures are appropriately labeled with alt tags and placed “in-line” within documents for screen readers.
5. All materials used in the course are developed by the instructor or are copyright-free, including pictures [take pictures yourself or search for free pictures on Flickr.com].
6. Clear explanations of optional and/or required software (in addition to the CMS) are provided within the course. Links are located within the course where learners will use the software (i.e., near the materials requiring its use). Links to where software can be captured and installed are included.

**Instructor Behaviors**

1. The instructor will configure course CMS settings in a timely manner to allow accommodations for students with disabilities, upon request by DSPS. [24 to 48 hours is recommended]

**EXEMPLARY**

1. Learners have the opportunity to give anonymous feedback to the instructor regarding course design and course content both during course delivery and after course completion.
2. CMS tools are used to reduce the labor-intensity of learning (e.g., providing links to needed resources where they will be used in the course, integrating publisher resources that are tailored to the course materials, and providing streamlined access to supplementary materials.

\*\*\* Formative assessment generates useful feedback for development and improvement. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity [for students] to perform and receive guidance (such as in class assignments, quizzes, discussions, lab activities, etc.) that will improve or shape final performance. Summative assessment refers to the final result of an assessment on which the participant may never receive feedback for improvement such as on a standardized test or licensing exam or final exam. Statewide Academic Senate: Glossary of Terms

\*\*\*\*Skills courses: some skills development courses like PE, keyboarding, math, or spelling may not have written assignments because of the nature of their course content.

**Rubric to Measure if Your Online Course and Instructor Behaviors are at the Effective Level:**

**Instructions:** In each of the five sections above, circle each item that you have met in the Effectiveness portion of each section; if you have achieved items in the Exemplary sections, you may add them to your count according to the instructions below the chart. Then count the circled Effectiveness items and write the totals in the corresponding boxes below. Divide achieved number in each section by the total number of items in each section to see if you have achieved 80% of the elements in each category. (If you have not met 80%, return to the rubric and consider how you can improve, or ask for help).

**Name of Instructor:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Course ID and Name of Course:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Element** | **Number of Elements in the Effective Section** | **Number of Effective Elements You Achieved** | **% of Effective Elements You Achieved**  | **Feedback to Yourself** |
|  *Example* | 10 | 8 | *8/10 = 80%* | *I’m great in this section –Yay!* |
| Syllabus | 34 |  |  |  |
| Instructional Delivery/Content  | 26 |  |  |  |
| Interaction and Collaboration | 10 |  |  |  |
| Assessment and Grading  | 26 |  |  |  |
| Navigation and User Interface | 28 |  |  |  |
| Additional Exemplary Points\* | 19 |  |  |  |
|  *Overall Score* | 133 |  |  |  |

\*There are 19 total Exemplary items in the Online Standards. If you achieved at least 9 of them, you may add an extra 5 points to your achievement score (divide by 133).

Send a picture of this completed rubric (or a print screen or a Xerox copy) including the feedback comments, to the Academic Senate Professional Development Committee to get verification of your status as a “master teacher.” Master teachers will be entitled to display a badge in their syllabus, handbook or Canvas course.