Assessing the Quality of Online Courses

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Agenda

- Overview of course evaluations
- Popular standards to evaluate courses/instruction
- What are your resources?
- Course design and navigation
- Pedagogy
- Regulatory issues
Overview of Course Evaluations

Areas commonly evaluated

- Course design and navigation
- Subject matter rigor
- Copyright
- Web accessibility
- Student engagement
- Grammar, spelling, due dates, broken links, gradebook
- Timeliness of feedback
- Assessments
- Learning objectives
- Alignment
- Technology
Popular Standards

Overarching
- Quality Matters (QM)
- iNACOL (K-12)
- Univ. of Florida Standards and Markers of Excellence
- Penn State e-Learning Design Standards

Pedagogy
- @ONE Standards for Quality Online Teaching (CA Comm. Colleges)

Accessibility
- WCAG 2.0
- Section 508

Copyright
- Fair Use or Teach Act
# Popular Standards

## Quality Matters

### Standards from the QM Higher Education Rubric, Fifth Edition

For more information or access to the full QM Rubric, visit [www.qualitymatters.org](http://www.qualitymatters.org) or email info@qualitymatters.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Overview Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.</td>
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<td>1.3 Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are clearly stated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4 Course and/or institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated, or a link to current policies is provided.</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5 Minimum technology requirements are clearly stated and instructions for use provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.6 Prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.7 Minimum technical skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.</td>
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<td>1.8 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and is available online.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.9 Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.</td>
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| Learning Objectives (Competencies) | |
| 2.1 The course learning objectives, or course/program competencies, describe outcomes that are measurable. | 3 |
| 2.2 The module/unit learning objectives or competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies. | 3 |
| 2.3 All learning objectives or competencies are stated clearly and written from the learner’s perspective. | 3 |
| 2.4 The relationship between learning objectives or competencies and course activities is clearly stated. | 3 |
| 2.5 The learning objectives or competencies are suited to the level of the course. | 3 |

| Assessment and Measurement | |
| 3.1 The assessments measure the stated learning objectives or competencies. | 3 |
| 3.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly. | 3 |
| 3.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners’ work and are tied to the course grading policy. | 3 |
| 3.4 The assessment instruments selected are sequenced, varied, and suited to the learner work being assessed. | 2 |
| 3.5 The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress. | 2 |

| Instructional Materials | |
| 4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives or competencies. | 3 |
| 4.2 Both the purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learner activities are clearly stated. | 3 |
What are Your Resources?

- Match the scale of your evaluation to your institutional resources.
- Focus on low hanging fruit.
- For those with light resources, consider:
  - Delegating components to others; e.g. course design, gradebook, etc.
  - Peer review
- For those with low expertise, consider outsourcing course evaluation; e.g. QM
- How frequently should you evaluate instruction?
Course Design and Navigation

- Is course content easy to find?
- Is the purpose of modules, activities, and assignments introduced? Are directions sufficient?
- Does your institution use a standardized course navigation?
Pedagogy

- Learning objectives
- Alignment
- Variety of assessments
- Feedback on assignments
- Properly set up gradebook
- Up-to-date gradebook
- Student engagement
Regulatory Issues

- Can be overwhelming.
- Handle the low-hanging fruit.
- Accreditation
  - No mandatory on-ground requirements* (*discuss testing)
  - Look for regular and substantive interaction
- Accessibility
  - Take and provide accessibility training; e.g. Deque University
  - Captions on videos, transcripts for podcasts
  - Headings on webpages and documents
  - No scanned images/PDFs
- Copyright
  - Be aware of course resources other than those adopted
Links

- CSU Chico Rubric - https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxN4M6qCVbDPOElod1dKWmFXOEk/view
- Penn State e-Learning Design Standards - https://weblearning.psu.edu/resources/penn-state-online-resources/penn-state-quality-assurance-e-learning-design-standards/
Links - cont.

- Deque University Accessibility Training - https://dequeuniversity.com/curriculum/online-classes/
- Portland CC Accessibility Resources - https://www.pcc.edu/instructional-support/accessibility/