

## ONLINE COURSE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

This guide describes the criteria that assessors will use to determine whether a course meets the online course standards. Each standard is named and defined, then the baseline criteria for meeting the standard are listed (left column). In most cases, these criteria are further described and illustrated with examples (right column). In addition to baseline criteria, notable and exemplary criteria are provided to help assessors recognize excellence. All online courses are expected to meet all standards at least at the baseline level.

<b>Standard 1. Achievement of course outcomes and learning objectives</b>	Learning objectives and course outcomes are clearly explained and are addressed in content resources, explored in assignments, and measured through assessments.
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<b>Criteria for meeting standard</b>		<b>Description/Examples</b>
Baseline 1.	Course outcomes from most recent B/335 are enumerated in the syllabus.	The syllabus clearly lists the expected course-level learning outcomes in a way that is fully consistent with the official course description form (B/335).
Baseline 2.	Responsibilities of students and instructors for achieving the course learning outcomes are clearly explained in the syllabus or course survival guide.	Explanations should include how and how well a student is expected to demonstrate mastery of learning outcomes. They should provide guidance about how to prepare to demonstrate mastery (study, practice, discussion, etc.). They should also include explanations of how the instructor will facilitate this learning (teaching method, kinds of formative feedback on assignments, etc.).
Baseline 3.	Course content, assignments, and assessments are in alignment with learning objectives.	<p>The study and assignments that students are expected to do in order to master learning objectives clearly helps them do so.</p> <p>The assessments ask the students to demonstrate mastery in the way students were prepared to demonstrate them through assignments and study.</p> <p>Example of misalignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a lesson on walking, then assign work that helps students practice running, and finally assess students on their ability to jump.</li> </ul>

Notable 1.	Course outcomes are translated into module/unit level learning objectives.	Course outcomes are parsed into specific learning objectives that can concretely be addressed in individual course modules, units, or lessons. These learning objectives are clearly stated in each module, unit, or lesson.
Notable 2.	All expected learning objectives and outcomes are assessable and are clearly explained in the learning modules/units.	<p>Students <i>can</i> demonstrate in an assessment that they have mastered the knowledge and skills they are expected to master.</p> <p>Example of unassessable objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Students who complete this lesson will prefer the color blue over the taste of grapes.”</li> </ul>
Exemplary 1.	At every level of the course (course, module & activity) students are provided with learning objectives.	Not only does the whole course have course outcomes, and the units/modules/lessons have learning objectives, but individual assignments and activities have an explained connection to lesson learning objectives and course outcomes.
Exemplary 2.	The relationship between all elements of content and the corresponding objective(s) is spelled out for the students, including how the objectives will be achieved and assessed.	Students are provided with sufficient explanatory material at the course, unit/module/lesson, and assignment/activity level, that in all cases they can understand why they are doing what they are doing, and what level of mastery they will be expected to achieve.

<b>Standard 2. Assessment</b>		Appropriate assessments of student learning are provided.
<b>Criteria for meeting standard</b>		<b>Description/Examples</b>
Baseline 1.	Evaluation instruments assess the stated learning outcomes.	<p>Examples of inconsistency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objective is to solve multiple-level problems, and true-false quiz is used.</li> <li>• Objective is to write a persuasive argument, and multiple-choice quiz is used.</li> </ul>
Baseline 2.	The instruments are appropriate for an online delivery system.	<p>Appropriate examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submissions by email or drop box</li> <li>• Exams in proctored settings</li> <li>• Timed quizzes</li> <li>• Online discussions/chats</li> <li>• Group projects</li> <li>• Research projects/papers</li> </ul>
Baseline 3.	An adequate number of assessments are used.	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sufficient number of instruments are used to ensure that outcomes are adequately assessed, sufficient variety of instruments is used, and several levels of learning styles are addressed.</li> </ul>
Baseline 4.	Each assessment comes with clear directions and grading criteria.	
Notable 1.	A variety of instruments are used.	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tests/quizzes</li> <li>• Discussions/chats</li> <li>• Homework assignments</li> <li>• Writing assignments</li> <li>• Group projects</li> <li>• Research projects/papers</li> </ul>
Notable 2.	Instruments are designed to address a variety of cognitive levels and learning styles.	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruments assess cognitive levels from the simple recall or recognition of facts through increasingly complex and abstract mental levels, to evaluation.</li> <li>• Evaluations use a wide variety of words, pictures, self-reflection activities, cooperative learning, art activities, role play, multimedia, field trips, etc.</li> </ul>
Notable 3.	Instructors provide a timetable for when feedback will be given to students.	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors indicate if and when they will participate in discussions.</li> <li>• Instructors indicate when grades will be available or sent.</li> </ul>
Exemplary 1.	Assessment instructions indicate that prescriptive, formative feedback is provided.	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answers to assignments are posted after due date has past.</li> <li>• Instruments are used that have feedback built-in.</li> </ul>

**Standard 3. Academic quality**

The course has comparable rigor, depth, breadth, content, currency, coverage, completeness as the same or similar courses taught traditionally and/or online.

**Criteria for meeting standard**

Baseline 1. Rigor

**Description/Examples**

The level of challenge for students in mastering the course knowledge and skills is appropriate.

Baseline 2. The content of the course has appropriate depth, breadth, coverage, and completeness.

Content includes the range of topics appropriate for the course. The topics are developed with appropriate richness and detail. No major topics are wholly omitted from the course.

Baseline 3. Currency

The topics of the course reflect current understanding, or explain current controversy.

Baseline 4. Overall quality

The quality of the course content, viewed holistically, is comparable to that in face-to-face courses.

<b>Standard 4. Usability</b>		The course is user-friendly. Students can easily find and use all course components.
<b>Criteria for meeting standard</b>		<b>Description/Examples</b>
Baseline 1.	The course home page offers first-time users clear guidance on how and where to begin participating in the course.	<p>First-time users clearly understand what to do upon first entry into the course.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the following kinds of links to a document or module is present on the home page: First day materials, Start here, Step One, Orientation, etc.</li> </ul>
Baseline 2.	The course home page offers a document that gives general overview of the various components of the course and instructions concerning how each component functions.	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview example: Survival guide or similar document.</li> <li>• Instructions example: WebCT manual and tutorials</li> </ul>
Baseline 3.	The course is easy to navigate.	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic tools and components are easily accessible.</li> <li>• Course organization facilitates movement through the levels of material, minimizing clicking.</li> <li>• All links within the course work.</li> <li>• All pages within the course link back to a higher level.</li> <li>• Unused tools are invisible to students.</li> </ul>
Notable 1.	There is an initial assignment requiring students to locate and employ the various components of the course.	<p>Examples of first week assignments that build familiarity with basic tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating an original discussion post.</li> <li>• Responding to a discussion thread.</li> <li>• Emailing the instructor within the course.</li> <li>• Retrieving information from the course calendar.</li> <li>• Logging into assigned chat room.</li> </ul>
Notable 2.	Each tool, content source, activity, and assessment comes with clear instructions about how it should be used.	<p>Directions for using tools, accessing sources and completing activities are written clearly.</p> <p>Directions are present (or linked) at the logical point of need.</p>
Notable 3.	The course adheres to web page design best practices and uses web appropriate file formats.	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of white space to text maximizes readability.</li> <li>• Choices of color for backgrounds, text and digital objects enhance contrast and resolution.</li> <li>• Long files are “chunked” into multiple linked pages.</li> <li>• Font size is larger than 6 point.</li> <li>• Font choices increase legibility (sans serif examples: Verdana, Arial, Tahoma.)</li> <li>• Students should be warned before accessing large files.</li> </ul>
Exemplary 1.	Modules/lessons/units are all organized similarly.	<p>Course materials are arranged predictably from unit to unit.</p> <p>Directions and other repeating elements are positioned consistently.</p>
Exemplary 2.	Interactive content is technologically easy to use.	<p>Interactive content is accessed through a minimum number of steps.</p> <p>Interactive content is available to students using older technology as well as students with the most current hardware and software.</p> <p>Any special software needed to access interactive content is freely available for download or provided through Virtual Campus</p>

<b>Standard 5. Interactivity</b>		Engagement, interaction and motivation are developed and maintained.
<b>Criteria for meeting standard</b>		<b>Description/Examples</b>
Baseline 1.	The course is designed to allow for email, discussions and at least one other form of communication between the students and faculty. (Student to Faculty Interactivity)	Examples of forms of communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asynchronous—announcements, calendar</li> <li>Synchronous—chat, who’s online, telephone, face-to-face office hours.</li> </ul>
Baseline 2.	The syllabus or course documents encourage students to fill out SEEQ’s. (Student to Faculty Interactivity)	Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The syllabus contains a statement encouraging the students to fill out the survey at the end of the course and directions telling them where to find the survey (better yet a link directly to it).</li> </ul>
Baseline 3.	The students are encouraged but not required to interact within the course. (Student to Student Interactivity)	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The course contains items such as ungraded discussion areas, ungraded chat rooms, methods for creating study groups.</li> </ul>
Notable 1.	The course provides additional opportunities for constructive feedback from the students to the faculty about the course. (Student to Faculty Interactivity)	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The course contains items such as “feedback” discussion topics and course surveys (other than SEEQs)</li> </ul>
Notable 2.	The course has graded interactions such as threaded discussion activities. (Student to Student Interactivity)	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The course contains items such as graded discussion areas, graded chat rooms, small group assignments.</li> </ul>
Notable 3.	The course contains content interactions such as text based activities. (Student to Content Interactivity)	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The course contains items such as practice quizzes or HTML pages that provide some type of automated feedback. The key point here is that the students are provided with the automated feedback based upon their responses.</li> </ul>
Exemplary 1.	The course is designed to allow for email, discussions and at least three other forms of communication one of which must be synchronous between the students and faculty. (Student to Faculty Interactivity)	Examples of forms of communication (same as in Baseline 1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asynchronous—announcements, calendar</li> <li>Synchronous—chat, who’s online, telephone, face-to-face office hours.</li> </ul>
Exemplary 2.	The course offers a variety of interactions for the students such as discussions, small group assignments and study group chat rooms. (Student to Student Interactivity)	The difference between Exemplary and Notable is the number of different opportunities the students have for interacting with each other. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The course contains items such as graded discussion areas, graded chat rooms, small group assignments.</li> </ul>
Exemplary 3.	The course contains content interactions such as multimedia-based activities and/or simulations. (Student to Content Interactivity)	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The course contains items such as simulations, games and animations that provide some type of automated feedback. The key point here is that the students are provided with the automated feedback based upon their responses.</li> </ul>

<b>Standard 6. Communication of expectations</b>		Course documents clearly indicate what students and the instructor expect of each other.
<b>Criteria for meeting standard</b>		<b>Description/Examples</b>
Baseline 1.	The syllabus contains clear and thorough explanations of all the expectations the instructor has of the student such as academic integrity, attendance, due dates, etc.	The syllabus clearly describes all the graded components of the course, and explains how final grades will be determined. If participation is graded, the criteria for grading it are clearly explained. The syllabus includes clear statements about expectations for student honesty and attendance that are consistent with official Academic Procedures (AP 594 Academic Dishonesty and AP 661 Attendance). The syllabus should also be clear on the instructor's policy regarding the submission of late work or retake of missed exams (also consistent with AP 661 Attendance). The syllabus clearly lists required texts, required additional media or materials, and required hardware, internet connection, and browser, if different from Virtual Campus standards.
Baseline 2.	The syllabus contains clear and thorough explanations of all the expectations the student should have of the instructor, such as e-office hours, timely responses, etc.	Regular office hours are required of all faculty (College Policy 821). Full-time faculty should indicate their HACC office hours, location, and phone number. Face-to-face office hours are not required of adjunct faculty. All faculty must indicate that emails requesting a response will be answered within two business days (per AP 772 Distance Education Courses).
Baseline 3.	The syllabus contains required items (see checklist).	All syllabi should include, in addition to the items above, the CRN, key dates (start, end, holidays, refund and withdrawal deadlines, assignment due dates).
Baseline 4.	The course documents are written clearly using correct grammar and spelling.	
Exemplary 1.	While the VC has "boiler plate" messages to inform students about relevant policies and procedures, these messages could be helpful in the syllabus as well.	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Enrolled students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact the Office for Disability Services (717) 780-2614 as soon as possible."</li> <li>• "Students who do not log in to the course at least twice in the first two weeks will be dropped from the course for non-participation."</li> </ul>
Exemplary 2.	Supplementary documents are included in the course which offer redundant exposure to important information, making it less likely that the student will miss it.	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAQ's, "Start Here" modules or files, etc.</li> </ul>
Exemplary 3.	The syllabus and the supplementary documents contain internal hyperlinks to simply and conveniently go directly to the area referenced.	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The syllabus links students to FAQ's or to specific assignments or lesson modules.</li> </ul>
Exemplary 4.	Announcements and other alerts add more redundancy to the important messages.	Due dates or other events with chronological specificity (such as holidays, or exam periods) are announced as event approaches.