

Memorandum



To: Academic Council
From: Becky A. Smith
Date: April 6, 2009
Subject: Online Course Approval and Ongoing Evaluation

In trying to find any online course policies, I find nothing posted in any official place. The only thing Pam could find was a reference to online courses in workload policy and Gary couldn't find anything either. Is online delivery a policy or procedure?

Here is what I think should be in place and should happen when an online course is developed and delivered.

- An online course, before delivery, should undergo an evaluation based on a Quality Standards document and rubric. I have attached samples from USU which are based on standards from Quality Matters—a national organization geared to the development of quality standards for online courses.
- Online courses would receive a periodic evaluation of online quality after initial approval.
- DSC online courses should follow a template standard so that courses delivered online from DSC build on each other with regards to familiarity.
- Faculty who deliver online courses should go through an online training course designed to help them prepare the online course while teaching them effective methods of delivering information online.
- Students may take an optional Introduction to Online course which would familiarize them with the various tools and habits needed to effectively succeed in an online course.
- This online development and evaluation may also apply to hybrid courses.

Courses that are already being delivered online would receive an evaluation and direction, only if necessary, to bring current courses into line with approved delivery standards.

Exemplary Course Standards

Course Name: _____

Instructor: _____

Standard		Status
Course Overview & Introduction	The course is well organized and easy to navigate and includes a statement covering etiquette and participation expectations for course communication and technology requirements. The course should also include an instructor introduction and provide an opportunity for students to introduce themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning Objectives	The course contains learning objectives contain outcomes that are measurable and clearly stated, and are consistent with the course material, assessments and assingments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment & Measurement	The course contains assessments consistent with the course activities and resources. The course grading policy is clearly stated with specific descriptive criteria provided for the evaluation of student's work and participation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources and Materials	The instructional material support the learning objectives and is sufficient for the student to learn the subject. The purpose of each course element is explained and logically sequenced.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learner Engagement	Learning activities foster interaction with instructors, content, and other students with clear expectations for instructor response and engagement in a timely manner. Activties should promote acheivement of stated learning objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course Technology	The tools and media support the learning objectives and are appropriately chosen to enhance student interactivity with the course content. Technologies used are compatible with user standards, easily used, and contain sufficient instructors for students.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learner Support	The course instructions articulate or link to a description of technical support services, academic support, student support and additional tutorials or resources as needed to accomplish the learning objectives.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessibility	The course acknowledges the importance of ADA requirements with equivalent alternatives to auditory or visual content and a sensitivity to readability issues.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sample from Utah
State University
Online Program

Rubric Standards with Assigned Point Values

		Standard	Points
Course Overview & Introduction	I.1	The course is well-organized and easy to navigate. Students can clearly understand all components and structure of the course.	3
	I.2	A statement introduces the student to the course and to the structure of the student learning and, in the case of a hybrid course, clarifies the relationship between the face-to-face and online components.	3
	I.3	Etiquette expectations with regard to discussions, email, and other forms of communication are stated clearly.	2
	I.4	All pages are visually and functionally consistent throughout the course.	2
	I.5	The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and available online.	2
	I.6	Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class.	1
	I.7	Minimum technology requirements, minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline are clearly stated.	1
Learning Objectives	II.1	The course learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable.	3
	II.2	The module/unit learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives.	3
	II.3	The learning objectives are stated clearly and written from the students' perspective.	2
	II.4	Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and stated clearly.	2
	II.5	The learning objectives address content mastery, critical thinking skills, and core learning skills.	2
Assessment & Measurement	III.1	The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources.	3
	III.2	The course grading policy is stated clearly.	3
	III.3	Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students' work and participation.	3
	III.4	The assessment instruments selected are sequenced, varied, and appropriate to the content being assessed.	2
	III.5	"Self-check" or practice types of assignments are provided for timely student feedback.	1
Resources and Materials	IV.1	The instructional materials support the stated learning objectives.	3
	IV.2	The instructional materials have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency for the student to learn the subject.	3
	IV.3	The purpose of each course element is explained.	2
	IV.4	The instructional materials are logically sequenced and integrated.	1
	IV.5	All resources and materials used in the course are appropriate.	1
Learner Engagement	V.1	The learning activities promote the achievement of stated learning objectives.	3
	V.2	Learning activities foster instructor-student, student-student, and, appropriate to this course, student-student interaction.	3
	V.3	Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turn-around time for email, grade posting, etc.).	3
	V.4	The requirements for course interaction are clearly articulated.	2
	V.5	The course design prompts the instructor to be active and engaged in providing student feedback in a timely manner.	2
	V.6	The course provides multiple visual, textual, kinesthetic and/or auditory activities to enhance student learning.	1
Course Technology	VI.1	The tools and media support the learning objectives, and are appropriately chosen to deliver the content of the course.	3
	VI.2	The tools and media enhance student interactivity and guide the student to become a more active learner.	2
	VI.3	Technologies required for this course are either provided or easily downloadable.	2
	VI.4	The course components are compatible with existing standards of delivery modes.	1
	VI.5	Instructions on how to access resources at a distance are sufficient and easy to understand.	1
	VI.6	The course design takes full advantage of available tools and media.	1
Learner Support	VII.1	The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.	2
	VII.2	Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's academic support system can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided.	2
	VII.3	Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student support services can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided.	1
	VII.4	Course instructions articulate or link to tutorials and resources that answer basic questions related to research, writing, technology, etc.	1
Accessibility	VIII.1	The course acknowledges the importance of ADA requirements.	3
	VIII.2	Course pages and course materials provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content.	1
	VIII.3	Course pages have links that are self-describing and meaningful.	1
	VIII.4	The course demonstrates sensitivity to readability issues.	1

Sample from Utah State
University Online
Program

To meet review expectations a course must: Answer 'Yes' to all 3-point standards; I.1, I.2, II.1, II.2, III.1, III.3, IV.1, IV.2, V.1, V.2, V.3, VI.1 AND earn 70 or more points.