



Quality Matters

Inter-Institutional Quality Assurance in Online Learning

Rubric for Online and Hybrid Courses

FY 06/07

Introduction: The *Quality Matters*TM Project (QMTM) is a collegial continuous quality improvement process. Reviewers provide feedback on the course design in two ways: 1) awarding of points for specific review standards, and 2) providing substantial, constructive, and specific comments and suggestions with regard to both areas for improvement and existing strengths. Reviewers are asked to take the students' perspective with regard to clarity and organization.

The Quality Matters Rubric and review process are dynamic and reflect national standards of best practice and the research literature (*Quality Matters Research Matrix*). Before conducting a course review, refer to the *Glossary of Terms* and the *Instructor Worksheet* that accompany the course you will review. In conducting your review, be sure to refer to the *Rubric Annotation*. Remember that QM uses a collegial review process and that the course developer is a member of the team who should be consulted if you have any questions or trouble locating evidence that a particular standard has been met.

Design, Not Delivery: The *Quality Matters* Project specifically focuses on course design, rather than on course delivery or course academic content. For the purposes of this review, consider the design aspect to include the course developer's role in the forethought and planning of the course, as well as the creation, assembly, and layout of instructions and course components. Not under review here is the faculty member's implementation of the design as he or she delivers the course and interacts with students.

Alignment: Critical course components – Learning Objectives (II), Assessment and Measurement (III), Resources and Materials (IV), Learner Engagement (V), and Course Technology (VI) – work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes. When aligned, each of these course aspects is directly tied to and supports the learning objectives. Specific standards included in Alignment are indicated in the rubric annotations.

Glossary: To ensure that you are interpreting the standards accurately, refer to the *Quality Matters Glossary* for a detailed explanation of some of the key terms in this rubric, such as activity, assessment, evaluation, feedback, goal, grading, learning objective, and learning outcome

When To Use This Rubric: This rubric is intended to be used for courses that are delivered fully online or with a significant online component (hybrid and blended courses). The distinguishing feature of courses for which this rubric is applicable is the use of technology (a course management system) to structure and drive the teaching and learning in the course. Refer to the *Quality Matters Course Format Chart* to determine into which delivery category your course falls, and to verify the specifications of the contents that must be made available for review through QM. Note that QM course reviews are conducted solely in the online classroom. For this reason, all content, materials, activities, handouts, support materials, etc. included in any face-to-face meetings should also be made available in the online classroom. For components that are obviously specific and confined to the face-to-face meetings (speeches, labs, drama, movies), their design and purpose should be explained in the online classroom.

The Quality Matters Rubric was developed under a grant from the U. S. Department of Education. However, the Quality Matters Rubric and Quality Matters course recognition process do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the federal government should not be assumed.



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I. COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

General Review Standard: The overall design of the course, including online and face-to-face (in the case of hybrid courses) components such as navigational information and course, instructor, and student information, is made clear to the student at the beginning of the course.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
<p>I.1 Navigational instructions make the organization of the course easy to understand.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Instructions provide a general course overview, present the schedule for activities, guide the new student to explore the course website, and indicate what to do first, rather than list detailed navigational instructions for the whole course.</p> <p>Instructors may choose to incorporate some of this information in the course syllabus. If so, students should be directed to the syllabus at the beginning of the course. A useful idea is a “Read Me First” or “Start Here” button or icon on the course home page, linking students to start-up information.</p> <p><u>Hybrid Courses:</u> Instructions in the online classroom make it apparent to students that this is a hybrid course with both online and face-to-face components and activities. Specific instructions are given that indicate the requirements for participation in both the online and face-to-face portions of the course. The introductory information clearly states when and where students should participate each week, and a structured set of topics and schedule is provided for each face-to-face meeting.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A course “tour” 2. Clear statements about how to get started in the course 3. A “scavenger hunt” assignment that leads students through an exploration of the different areas of the course areas 4. A graphical table or diagram that depicts and explains the relationship between the online and face-to-face portions of a hybrid course
<p>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.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>The instructor’s statement gives the new student an idea of how the learning process is structured, including schedule, communications modes, types of activities, and assessments. These features are often found in the course syllabus, but they may also be found in an introductory or welcome document.</p> <p><u>Hybrid Courses:</u> Instructors should explain the overall purpose of the online and face-to-face portions of the course, and how they work together and reinforce each other. The instructor indicates how and why both formats are important to the learning, and the value that each format brings to the students’ learning experience.</p> <p>Look for some or all of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The course schedule (self-paced, following a set calendar, etc.) 2. Course sequencing, such as a linear or random order 3. Types of activities the student will be required to complete (written assignments, online self-tests, participation in the discussion board, group work, etc.) 4. Fully developed course calendar with assignment, activity, and test due dates. In the case of a hybrid course, the calendar should fully cover both the online and face-to-face portions of the course. 5. Preferred mode of communication with the instructor (email, discussion board, etc.) 6. Preferred mode of communication with other students 7. Testing procedures (online, proctored, etc.) 8. Procedure for submission of electronic assignments

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<p>I.3. Etiquette expectations with regard to discussions, email, and other forms of communication are stated clearly.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Expectations of student conduct online and in the classroom are clearly stated, however brief or elaborate they may be. The expectations themselves are not evaluated.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rules of conduct for participating in the discussion board 2. Rules of conduct for email content 3. "Speaking style" requirements (e.g., use of correct English required as opposed to net acronyms) 4. Spelling and grammar expectations, if any 5. Rules of conduct for classroom participation 6. Expectations for the tone and civility used in communicating with fellow students and the faculty member, whether the communication be via electronic means, telephone, or face-to-face 7. A link or reference to the school's student handbook/code of conduct
<p>I.4 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and available online.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The initial introduction creates a sense of connection between the instructor and the students. It should present the instructor as professional as well as approachable, and include the essentials, such as the instructor's name, title, field of expertise, email address, and phone number.</p> <p>The self introduction helps students get to know the instructor and should extend beyond the essentials. It could include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information on teaching philosophy 2. Past experiences with teaching online classes 3. Personal information such as hobbies, family, travel experiences, etc. 4. A photograph <p>Hybrid Courses: The instructor's self-introduction should be available electronically for students who missed early face-to-face meetings.</p>
<p>I.5 Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The student introduction helps to create a supportive learning environment and a sense of community. Students are asked to introduce themselves and given guidance on where and how they should do so. Student introductions themselves are not evaluated.</p> <p>Instructors may ask students to answer specific questions (such as why they are taking the course, what concerns they have, what they expect to learn, etc.) or may choose to let the student decide what to include. Instructors may provide an example of an introduction and/or start the process by introducing themselves.</p> <p><u>Hybrid Courses:</u> The opportunity for introductions should be available electronically for students who may have missed the opportunity during early face-to-face meetings.</p>
<p>I.6 Minimum technology requirements, minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline are clearly stated.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Explanations of technical requirements, technical skills, and prerequisite knowledge and skills may be found within the course, in documents linked to the course, or in supporting material not on the course site. Look for a link to that content and/or a reminder of it for the entering student.</p> <p>Technology requirements may include information on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hardware 2. Software and plug-ins 3. ISP requirements <p>Examples of technology skills may include the capability to:</p>

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use email with attachments 2. Save files in commonly used word processing program formats (e.g. MS Word) 3. Use MS Excel or other spreadsheet programs <p>Discipline knowledge prerequisites should include academic course prerequisites.</p>
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II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES (COMPETENCIES)

General Review Standard: Learning objectives are clearly defined and explained. They assist the student to focus learning activities.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
II.1 The course learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable.	3	<p>Measurable course learning objectives precisely describe what students are to gain from instruction, and then guide instructors to accurately assess student accomplishment. Objectives should describe student performance in specific, observable terms. If this specificity is not possible (e.g., internal cognition, affective changes), check for clear indications that the learning objective is meaningfully assessed. Note that at some institutions, learning objectives may be referred to as learning outcomes.</p> <p>Examples of measurable objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select appropriate tax strategies for different financial and personal situations. 2. Develop a comprehensive, individualized wellness action program focused on overcoming a sedentary life-style. 3. Describe the relationship between the components of an ecosystem. 4. Explain the factors that contribute to economic inflation. <p><u>Special situations:</u> In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), the course objectives are institutionally mandated and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. If the institutionally-mandated learning objectives are not measurable, then please be sure to make note of this in the "comments" box. If the course objectives are institutionally mandated, then the reviewer may need to consider Standard II.1 in conjunction with Standard II.2 as follows:</p> <p>Standard II.1 is considered as being MET under the following circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the course objectives are measurable, whether set by the institution or faculty member 2. the institutionally-mandated course objectives are not measurable, but the faculty-driven module/unit-level objectives <i>are</i> measurable <p>Standard II.1 is NOT MET under the following circumstances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. there are no course-level objectives 2. there are course-level objectives that are not institutionally-mandated and that are not measurable 3. the institutionally-mandated course-level objectives are not measurable, and the faculty-driven module/unit objectives are either not measurable or are not present 4. there are no institutionally-mandated course-level objectives, and the faculty-driven module/unit objectives are either not measurable or not present <p>It is especially important to assess the presence of measurable course and module/unit-level learning objectives, as their effect on course design and the review process is wide-ranging. Learning objectives form the base of the</p>

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		<p>Alignment concept and are used to assess Standards II.1-II.5, III.1, IV.1, V.1, and VI.1. Therefore, if course and/or module/unit learning objectives are not found, reviewers should communicate with the instructor to gather more information.</p> <p>Alignment: This standard is included in Alignment. (Critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.)</p>
II.2 The module/unit learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives.	3	<p>Measurable module or unit-level learning objectives are important. They precisely describe the specific competencies, skills, and knowledge that students should be able to master and demonstrate at regular intervals throughout the course. They provide students with greater focus and clarity of learning expectations and outcomes on a weekly, modular, or unit basis.</p> <p>Module- or unit-level objectives may be written by the instructor or come from the textbook. Module/unit learning objectives guide instructors to accurately assess student accomplishment. Objectives should describe student performance in specific, observable terms. Note that at some institutions, learning objectives may be referred to as learning outcomes.</p> <p>The module/unit-level objectives should be consistent with the course-level objectives. The module/unit objectives may either be implicitly or explicitly consistent with the course-level objectives. For example, the module/unit objective “<i>Students will write sentences that demonstrate correct usage of commas, semicolons, and periods.</i>” is implicitly consistent with the course objective “<i>Students will demonstrate correct writing skills.</i>”</p> <p>It is especially important to assess the presence of measurable course and module/unit-level learning objectives, as their effect on course design and the review process is wide-ranging. Learning objectives form the base of the Alignment concept, and are used to assess Standards II.1-II.5, III.1, IV.1, V.1, and VI.1. Therefore, if course and/or module/unit learning objectives are not found, reviewers should communicate with the instructor to gather more information.</p> <p>Alignment: This standard is included in Alignment. (Critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.)</p>
II.3 The learning objectives are stated clearly and written from the students’ perspective.	2	<p>The learning objectives are stated clearly in the online classroom for all course delivery formats. The learning objectives are written in a way that allows students to easily grasp their meaning and the learning outcomes expected of them. The use of educational jargon, confusing terms, unnecessarily complex language, and puzzling syntax is avoided. The learning objectives are clearly stated by the instructor both verbally (during face-to-face meetings) and electronically in the online classroom.</p> <p>As a reviewer, consider both the course and module/unit learning objectives in your assessment of this standard.</p>
II.4 Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and stated clearly.	2	<p>Instructions may take various forms (e.g. narratives, bulleted lists, charts) and may appear at different levels within the course, such as module-based or weekly assignment sheets. Instructions are stated clearly, are complete, and are provided electronically in the online classroom.</p> <p>As a reviewer, consider both the course and module/unit learning objectives in your assessment of this standard.</p> <p>Examples:</p>

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		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Module-based or weekly assignment pages in narrative, bulleted list, or chart form indicate a list of steps that guide the student to meet learning objectives for each week. 2. Information indicates which learning activities, resources, assignments, and assessments support the learning objectives.
II.5 The learning objectives address content mastery, critical thinking skills, and core learning skills.	2	<p>Examine the course and module/unit learning objectives as a whole for all three types of skill. All three types of skills need not be present in both the course-level and module/unit-level objectives, nor in every single objective.</p> <p>Content mastery should be appropriate for the type and level of the course. Decisions on this aspect of the standard may be particularly difficult for individual reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Reviewers should consult with the SME (subject matter expert).</p> <p>Core learning skills, including critical thinking, are typically those that transcend an individual course and are integrated across the curriculum. Core learning skills are sometimes called “core competencies.”</p> <p>Core learning skills may include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Written and oral communication skills 2. Ability to compute and process mathematical information 3. Manipulation and organization of information in various ways or using different tools 4. Understanding what one knows and how one knows it, and also understanding what one does not know and what one needs to find it out <p>Critical thinking skills may include the ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distinguish between fact and opinion 2. Distinguish between primary and secondary sources 3. Identify bias and stereotypes 4. Evaluate information sources for point of view, accuracy, usefulness, timeliness, etc. 5. Recognize deceptive arguments

III. ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT

General Review Standard: Assessment strategies use established ways to measure effective learning, assess student progress by reference to stated learning objectives, and are designed as essential to the learning process.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What’s the idea?
III.1 The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources.	3	<p>Assessments and learning objectives align in a clear and direct way. The assessment formats provide a reasonable way to measure the stated learning objectives. As a reviewer, consider both the course and module/unit learning objectives in your assessment of this standard. (Note: At some institutions, Learning Objectives may be called Learning Outcomes.)</p> <p>Examples of objective/assessment alignment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A problem analysis evaluates critical thinking skills. 2. A multiple choice quiz verifies vocabulary knowledge. 3. A composition assesses writing skills. <p>Examples of inconsistent alignment between learning objectives and assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The objective is to be able to “write a persuasive essay” but the assessment is

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		<p>a multiple choice test.</p> <p>2. The objective is to “demonstrate discipline-specific information literacy” and the assessment is a rubric-scored term paper, but students are not given any practice with information literacy skills on smaller assignments.</p> <p>Some assessments may be geared towards meeting objectives other than those stated in the course; for example, a course may have a writing component as part of a college-wide “Writing Across the Curriculum” requirement. In that case, the reviewer should suggest that these including appropriate objectives also be stated within the course.</p> <p><u>Special situations:</u> In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), the course objectives are institutionally mandated and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, consider instead the module/unit-level objectives to assess and score Standard III.1.</p> <p>Alignment: This standard is included in Alignment (Critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.)</p>
<p>III.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>A clear explanation indicates how the course grade is computed. The points, percentages, and weights for each component of the course grade are clearly stated. The relationship(s) between points, percentages, weights, and letter grades are explained. The instructor’s policy on late submissions is clearly stated.</p> <p>Review the clarity of the explanation and presentation to the student, not the simplicity or complexity of a given grading system itself. A relatively complex grading system can still be unambiguous and easy to understand.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A list of all activities, tests, etc. that will affect the students’ grade 2. An explanation of the relationship between the final course letter grade and the student’s accumulated points and/or percentages 3. If points and percentages are used, an explanation of the relationship between these two
<p>III.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students’ work and participation.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Students are provided with a clear and meaningful description of the criteria that will be used to assess and evaluate their work and participation in the course. These criteria are stated up-front at the beginning of the course. This description and/or statement of criteria provides students with clear guidance as to the expectations and required components of work and participation. These criteria give students a clear idea of how to strive for a particular grade on an assignment or activity.</p> <p>In addition, these criteria can be used to focus the instructor’s subsequent feedback to students, feedback that is meaningful and that gives students useful guidance for future growth and improvement. Note, however, that as a reviewer you are not being asked to look for and evaluate the instructor’s feedback to students in Standard III.3.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evidence that the instructor has stated the criteria for evaluation of students’ paper and assignments, such as rubrics or a list of criteria with associated point values 2. A description of the how students’ participation in discussions will be graded, including the number of required postings per week; the criteria for evaluating the originality and quality of students’ comments; responsiveness to other students’ comments; and grade credit they can expect for various levels of

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		performance
III.4 The assessment instruments selected are sequenced, varied, and appropriate to the content being assessed.	2	<p>Multiple assessment strategies are used in both the online and face-to-face settings, and they are appropriate to the content of and format in which they are implemented.</p> <p>Assessments are varied to provide multiple avenues for the demonstration of mastery, and to accommodate multiple learning styles.</p> <p>The assessments are appropriately sequenced to facilitate the learning process and to build on previously mastered knowledge and skills gained in this and pre-requisite courses. Assessments are paced to give students adequate time to achieve mastery and complete the work in a thoughtful manner.</p> <p>Examples that DO meet the standard:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A series of assessments that progress from the definition of terms, to a short paper explaining the relationship between various theoretical concepts, to a term paper that includes the application of theoretical concepts and critical analysis of a journal article 2. Multiple types of assessment which enable the instructor to become familiar with an individual student's work and which discourage "proxy cheating" (someone other than the student completing and submitting work) 3. A series of assessments evenly paced every 2 weeks throughout the course <p>Examples that do NOT meet the standard:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The entire set of assessments consists of 5 multiple choice tests. 2. The first assessment requires students to locate research materials, while library research skills and methods aren't covered until the third assessment. 3. No assessments are administered during the first 12 weeks of the semester, with an essay, term paper, and final exam due during the 13th, 14th, and 15th weeks, respectively.
III.5 "Self-check" or practice types of assignments are provided for timely student feedback.	1	<p>Students have ample opportunity to measure their own learning progress. Students learn more effectively if they receive frequent, meaningful, and timely feedback. This feedback may come from the instructor directly, from assignments and assessments that have feedback built into them, or even from other students.</p> <p>Look for examples of "self-check" quizzes and activities, as well as other types of practice opportunities that provide timely feedback. These types of assignments should be voluntary or allow multiple attempts.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing assignments that allow for the submission of a draft for instructor comment and suggestions for improvement 2. Self-mastery tests and quizzes that include informative feedback with each answer choice 3. Interactive games and simulation that have feedback built in 4. Practice quizzes 5. Practice written assignments 6. Peer reviews 7. Model papers or essays provided for students' viewing 8. Sample answers or answer keys provided for students' viewing

IV. RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

General Review Standard: Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve announced objectives and

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learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. (Materials, other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by the instructor or distance educators skilled in preparing materials for distance learning.)

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
IV.1 The instructional materials support the stated learning objectives.	3	<p>Course materials, resources, and learning objectives align in a clear and direct way. The course materials and resources provide a reasonable base to achieve the stated learning objectives. As a reviewer, consider both the course and module/unit learning objectives in your assessment of this standard. (Note: At some institutions, Learning Objectives may be called Learning Outcomes.)</p> <p>Decisions on this standard may be particularly difficult for individual reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Reviewers should consult with the SME (subject matter expert) and use common sense to determine if the content is appropriate enough to support the learning objectives.</p> <p>The distribution of textbooks to reviewers is typically not done due to cost and logistical limitations. Many publishers provide web links to their textbooks – reviewers may wish to consult these links.</p> <p><u>Special situations:</u> In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), the course objectives are institutionally mandated and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, consider instead the module/unit-level objectives to assess and score Standard IV.1.</p> <p>Alignment: This standard is included in Alignment. (Critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.)</p>
IV.2 The instructional materials have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency for the student to learn the subject.	3	<p>Breadth: The course materials are robust and create a rich learning environment for students. Instructors should provide meaningful content in a variety of ways, including the textbook, PowerPoint presentations, websites, lecture notes, outlines, and multimedia.</p> <p>Depth: The level of detail in supporting materials is appropriate for the level of the course, and provides sufficient depth for students to achieve the learning objectives. For example, an upper-level capstone course should include significantly deeper materials than those required for an introductory general education course.</p> <p>Currency: The materials represent up-to-date thinking and practice in the discipline. Some examples: an introductory computer course should include recent trends such as podcasting; an English writing course should discuss the purpose of Internet research; a chemistry course should include computerized models to demonstrate chemical structures and reactions.</p> <p>Decisions on this standard may be particularly difficult for individual reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Reviewers should consult with the SME (subject matter expert) and use common sense to determine if the content is robust enough to support the course.</p> <p>The distribution of textbooks to reviewers is typically not done due to cost and logistical limitations. Many publishers provide web links to their textbooks – reviewers may wish to consult these links.</p>
IV.3 The purpose of each course element is explained.	2	<p>Students can easily determine the purpose of all content, materials, resources, technologies and instructional methods used in the course, and how each will help them achieve the stated learning objectives. It is clearly stated which materials are required and which are recommended resources.</p>

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		<p>For example, a course may be richly garnished with external links to Internet resources, but it is not clear whether those resources are for background information, additional personal enrichment, or required for an assignment.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Links to external web sites indicate the purpose of the links or are completely self-evident. 2. The function of animated games or exercises is clearly explained or is completely self-evident.
IV.4 The instructional materials are logically sequenced and integrated.	1	<p>Diverse instructional materials (books, manuals, videos, CD ROMs, computer software, etc.) are logically sequenced and related to one another. Reviewers should determine if such diversely formatted course materials are integrated well enough to be useful to the uninitiated student. The integration of these materials may be considered both physically and contextually. Students should easily understand how the materials relate to each other.</p> <p>For example, a course requires students to use the following materials: a textbook divided into chapters, video segments ordered by topics, a website organized around specific skills, and a tutorial CD-ROM that has an opening menu consisting of “practice quizzes,” “images,” and “audio examples.” Consider whether it would be clear to students the order in which they should approach these varied materials, how each is related to the core content and learning objectives, and how they are related to one another.</p> <p>Decisions on this standard may be particularly difficult for individual reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Reviewers should consult with the SME (subject matter expert) and use common sense to determine if the materials are appropriate to this course.</p>
IV.5 All resources and materials used in the course are appropriately cited.	1	<p>Materials created by the instructor and those borrowed from other sources are distinctly identified. Text, images, graphic materials, tables, videos, audios, websites, and other forms of multimedia are appropriately referenced according to the institution’s copyright and intellectual property policy.</p> <p>Courses that use an e-pack or course cartridge may provide a blanket statement acknowledging that a significant portion of the course materials came from the publisher rather than include individual citations for each instance of publisher materials.</p>

V. LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

General Review Standard: The effective design of instructor-student interaction, meaningful student cooperation, and student-content interaction is essential to student motivation, intellectual commitment, and personal development.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What’s the idea?
V.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of stated learning objectives.	3	<p>Activities and learning objectives align in a clear and direct way. The activities provide a reasonable way to measure the stated learning objectives. As a reviewer, consider both the course and module/unit learning objectives in your assessment of this standard. (Note: At some institutions, Learning Objectives may be called Learning Outcomes.)</p> <p>Learning activities are included in both the online and face-to-face components of</p>

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		<p>the course. Learning activities are varied to provide multiple avenues for reinforcement and mastery, and to accommodate multiple learning styles. Activities may include student presentations, science labs, class discussions, case studies, role playing, simulation exercise, practice quizzes, tests, etc.</p> <p><u>Hybrid Courses:</u> For courses that use both the online and face-to-face settings, the learning activities that occur in these two settings should be connected by a common thread or theme, and should be mutually reinforcing. This connection and reinforcement are made clear to students. For example, the sub-parts of a particular activity might be sequenced and staged through successive online and face-to-face meetings of a particular course.</p> <p>Examples of <i>mismatches</i> between activities and objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The objective requires students to be able to deliver a persuasive speech, but the activities in the course do not include practice of that skill. 2. The objective is “Prepare each budget within a master budget and explain their importance in the overall budgeting process.” The students review information about this in their texts, observe budgets worked out by the instructor, and produce only one of the several budgets. <p><u>Special situations:</u> In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), the course objectives are institutionally mandated and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, consider instead the module/unit-level objectives to assess and score Standard V.1.</p> <p>Alignment: This standard is included in Alignment. (Critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.)</p>
<p>V.2 Learning activities foster instructor-student, content-student, and if appropriate to this course, student-student interaction.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>All online courses should include interaction between the instructor and the students and between the students and the content. The degree and type of student-to-student interaction may vary with the discipline and the level of the course.</p> <p>Examples of learning activities that foster the following types of interaction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instructor – student (consider for ALL courses): Self-introduction; discussion postings and responses; feedback on project assignments; evidence of one-to-one email communication, etc. 2. Student – content (consider for ALL courses): Essays, term papers, group projects, etc. based on readings, videos, and other course content; self-assessment exercises; group work products, etc. 3. Student – student (if appropriate to <i>this</i> course): Self-introduction exercise; group discussion postings; group projects; peer critiques, etc. Refer to the Instructor Worksheet to determine if student-student interaction is appropriate for this course. If the Worksheet indicates that such interaction is appropriate then consider this in deciding if this standard is met. If the Worksheet indicates that such interaction is not appropriate, then focus only on instructor-student and student-content interaction to decide whether this standard has been met. As a reviewer, and where possible, include your recommendations and suggestions for including student-student interaction in this course. NOTE: Your evaluation should be based on what you find in this course and not on your personal preferences about student-student interaction.
<p>V.3 Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turn-</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Information clearly indicates how quickly the instructor will respond, when feedback will be provided, and when the instructor is available to meet.</p>

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around time for email, grade posting, etc.)		<p>Information clearly indicates instructor response time for key events and interactions, including e-mail turnaround time, time required for grade postings, discussion postings, etc. Standards also include instructor availability, including e-mail response time, degree of participation in discussions, and availability via other media (phone, in-person) if applicable.</p> <p>This standard does not prescribe what that response time and availability ought to be.</p>
V.4 The requirements for course interaction are clearly articulated.	2	<p>The requirements and expectations for interaction in both the online and face-to-face components are clearly stated.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For discussions, students are given directions regarding the quantity and content of their comments, and whether interaction is required or optional. 2. For email interaction, a statement directs students to include the course number and name in the email subject line. 3. For group work, expectations and guidelines are stated clearly for the formation of groups, roles, responsibilities, timelines, meetings, and how and when students work together.
V.5 The course design prompts the instructor to be active and engaged with the students.	2	<p>Students know that the instructor is approachable and will regularly interact with them. Opportunities for interaction will vary with the discipline of the course and with the schedule of online and face-to-face meetings.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An actively used and well-organized instructor-facilitated discussion board 2. Optional “electronic office hours” provided in the chat room or chat sessions on selected topics, archived/edited and posted as a FAQ for other students 3. An invitation for the class to email the instructor with individual concerns 4. Current announcements, either in the classroom or via email 5. Planned activities that engage instructor and student in both the online and face-to-face setting

VI. COURSE TECHNOLOGY

General Review Standard: To enhance student learning, course technology enriches instruction, fosters student interactivity, and increases access to instructional materials and resources.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What’s the idea?
VI.1 The tools and media support the learning objectives, and are appropriately chosen to deliver the content of the course.	3	<p>Tools and media used in the course support related learning objectives, and are contextually integrated with texts and lesson assignments. Students know how the tools and media support the assignments and how they support the learning objectives. Technology is not used simply for the sake of using technology. For example, a course might require viewing video materials, but it may not be clear how the video materials illustrate or support any learning objective.</p> <p>Examples of tools include discussion boards, chat rooms, gradebook, whiteboard, etc. Examples of media include video, audio, animations, simulations, etc. Media are not required for this standard to be met. Rather, <i>if</i> media are used they should support the learning objectives and be contextually integrated.</p> <p><u>Special situations:</u> In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), the course objectives are institutionally mandated and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, consider instead the module/unit-level objectives to assess and score Standard VI.1.</p>

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		Alignment: This standard is included in Alignment. (Critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.)
VI.2 The tools and media enhance student interactivity and guide the student to become a more active learner.	2	Tools and media used in the course help students actively engage in the learning process, rather than passively “absorbing” information. Examples: 1. Automated "self-check" exercises requiring student response 2. Animations, simulations, and games that require student input 3. Software that tracks student interaction and progress 4. Use of discussion tools with automatic notification or "read/unread" tracking feature
VI.3 Technologies required for this course are either provided or easily downloadable.	2	For this standard, the term “technologies” may cover a range of plug-ins such as Acrobat Reader, media players, etc. In addition, courses may require special software packages (spreadsheets, math calculators, etc.). Clear instructions list the required software and plug-ins, along with instructions for obtaining and installing these items.
VI.4 The course components are compatible with existing standards of delivery modes.	1	Assessments, activities, instructional materials, tools, and media make use of the available technologies and meet current standards for widespread accessibility. Examples: 1. Large text files are presented with a table of contents or unit numbering. 2. If most students have access to DVD players or use streaming media, use of those delivery modes in an online class meets this standard. If the typical student cannot be expected to have access to a technology at his or her out-of-the-box home computer off-campus, that technology should probably not be used in the course. 3. If some of the course resources, including textbooks, videos, CD-ROMs, etc., are only available in the face-to-face sessions and are unavailable within the framework of the course website, the instructor should indicate how students who miss the face-to-face sessions would gain access to them. 4. Learning activities in science lab courses utilize the appropriate delivery mode (online or face-to-face) for each activity. 5. The technology is used in a way to preserve student confidentiality with regard to grades and communication with the instructor. 6. Quizzes and exams are given with time limitations, printing disabled, and other security measures.
VI.5 Instructions on how to access resources at a distance are sufficient and easy to understand.	1	The instructional materials, resources, tools, and media should be easily accessible, obtainable, and useable by the student. Students need to know about and be able to obtain access to educational resources by remote access. Information on these resources is readily visible with clear instructions on how to access the resources. Examples: 1. For textbooks, CD/DVDs, etc., instructors provide the title, author, publisher, ISBN number, copyright date, and information as to where copies can be obtained. 2. A navigation button is devoted to “Resources” and appropriately tied in with the overall course design. 3. The instructor mails to students a custom CD prepared for the course. 4. An explanation of how to obtain full-text journal articles is provided in the assignment that requires their use.

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<p>VI.6 The course design takes full advantage of available tools and media.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Innovative technologies appear on the market all the time, and course technology should be current and reflect an evolution of the field of online education. As new versions of a course management system are released, instructors should integrate the new features into their courses to ensure that students have the most effective and efficient access to the courses. Courses not recently developed may need to be updated. Check the Instructor Worksheet to determine whether this is controlled by the instructor or the institution. In either case, the reviewer should comment on updates and upgrades that could be included.</p> <p>As a reviewer, consider that the tools and media available to an instructor may vary greatly, and are sometimes limited by the access and support provided by the institution. Be sure to check the Instructor Worksheet.</p> <p>Examples of some current technologies that will make the course content and activities more available and interesting to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using compressed files to reduce file downloading time • Delivering audio files in a common file type such as Windows Media or RealPlayer • Using podcasts instead of audiocassettes • Using CD/DVDs rather than VHS tapes • In Blackboard, renaming of the default navigation buttons and use of the Assignment feature rather than the Digital Drop Box feature
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VII. LEARNER SUPPORT

General Review Standard: Courses are effectively supported for students through fully accessible modes of delivery, resources, and student support.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
<p>VII.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Technical support for students differs from institution to institution. Technical support includes information about such topics as how to log in, how to use the software, and how to upload files. It does not include help with course content, assignments, or academic or student support services (see Standards VII.2 and VII.3 below).</p> <p>Look for evidence that students have access to technical support services from within the course. The purpose is not to review the adequacy of those services on an institutional level.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clear description of the services, including a link to a technical support website 2. An email link to an online learning helpdesk 3. A phone number for an online learning helpdesk
<p>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.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Academic support for students, and the scope of what "academic support" entails, differs from institution to institution. For the purposes of review, academic support includes access to library resources, readiness assessment, testing services, tutoring, a writing center, a math center, supplemental instruction programs, and teaching assistants.</p> <p>Look for evidence that students have access to academic support services from within the course. The purpose is not to review the adequacy of those services on an institutional level.</p>

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		<p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clear description of the academic support services and how to access them 2. A link to the academic support website, along with a definition of academic support
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	<p>Student support services, and the scope of what such support entails, differ from institution to institution. For the purposes of this review, student support services include advising, registration, financial aid, student life, counseling, etc.</p> <p>Look for evidence that students have access to student support services from within the course. The purpose is not to review the adequacy of those services on an institutional level.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clear description of student support services and how to access them 2. A link to the student support website, along with a definition of student support services
VII.4 Course instructions articulate or link to tutorials and resources that answer basic questions related to research, writing, technology etc.	1	<p>Students' access to tutorials and help files related to writing, technology, research, etc. differs from institution to institution.</p> <p>This item does NOT refer to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students getting help from another person 2. Tutorials and resources specifically related to course content <p>Look for evidence that students taking the course DO have access to those support services from within the course, for example, a clear description of the tutorials available and how to get them.</p>

VIII. ACCESSIBILITY

General Review Standard: The face-to-face, electronic, and online course components are accessible to all students.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
VIII.1 The course acknowledges the importance of ADA requirements.	3	<p>All courses should direct students to the institution's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) services on their campus. The course should include a statement that tells students how to gain access to ADA services at their institution, including the location and contact information of the appropriate office at the institution. Encourage faculty to consult the office on their campus that provides disability services for the wording of an ADA Statement appropriate to their institution.</p> <p>To meet this standard a course must achieve BOTH of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. include a statement that tells students how to gain access to an institution's disabilities support services (often known as ADA services) 2. be offered in an ADA-compliant Course Management System (Blackboard, WebCT, WebTycho) or provide documentation by the CMS that it is ADA-compliant.
VIII.2 Course pages and course materials provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content.	1	<p>Alternative means of access to course information are provided for the vision- or hearing-impaired student, such as, equivalent textual representations of images, audio, animations, and video in the course website. Presenting information in text format is generally acceptable because screen reader software (used by the vision-impaired) can read text.</p> <p>This standard applies to the information and content provided <i>within</i> the course management system. It does not apply to external web sites to which the course links.</p>

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		<p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audio lecture has a text transcript available. 2. Video clip, image, or animation is accompanied by a text transcript.
VIII.3	Course pages have links that are self-describing and meaningful.	<p>The course provides Internet links that include useful descriptions of what students will find at those sites. These descriptions enable the vision-impaired student to use screen reader software to understand links. In addition, instructors provide directions that clearly direct students to the appropriate sub-pages within an external web site.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All file names and web hyperlinks have meaningful names. For instance, the link to take a quiz should say "Take Quiz 1," not "click here." 2. Icons used as links should also have HTML tags or an accompanying text link. 3. To facilitate access to Internet sites by screen readers, links are arranged in numeric or alphabetic order, rather than simple bulleted form.
VIII.4	The course demonstrates sensitivity to readability issues.	<p>The course employs appropriate font, color, and spacing to facilitate readability and minimize distractions for the student.</p> <p>Examples of practices that facilitate readability and minimize distractions include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If using color coding, use additional means to communicate information, such as the additional use of bold or italics in conjunction with color coding. 2. Sufficient contrast is used for the font and background colors 3. Text size is consistent with typical View/Text Size settings. 4. Course pages provide an alternate, non-color-coded format. 5. Formatting and color coding are used to serve specific instructional purposes. For example, format and color are used purposefully to communicate key points, group like items, emphasize relevant relationships, etc.

The Course Meets *Quality Matters* Expectations if:

1. Answered 'Yes' to all 3-point Essential Standards: I.1, I.2, II.1, II.2, III.1, III.2, III.3, IV.1, IV.2, V.1, V.2, V.3, VI.1, VIII.1

AND

2. Earned 68 or more points

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