Farmingdale State College
State University of New York

Best Practices Checklist for Online and Hybrid Course Development

This document is a checklist format of the OSCQR Course Design Review Rubric for the development of online and hybrid courses. This tool was created by the State University of New York, through the OpenSUNY Center for Online Teaching Excellence, and has been adopted by the Online Learning Consortium (OLC).

1. Course Overview and Information

- ❑ Course includes Welcome and Getting Stated content.
- ❑ An orientation or overview is provided for the course overall, as well as in each module. Students know how to navigate and what tasks are due.
- ❑ Course includes a Course Information area that deconstructs the syllabus for learners in a clear and navigable way.
- ❑ A printable syllabus is available to learners (PDF, HTML).
- ❑ Course includes links to relevant campus policies on plagiarism, computer use, student grievances, accommodating disabilities, etc.
- ❑ Course provides access to student success resources (technical help, orientation, tutoring)
- ❑ Course information states whether the course is fully online, blended, or web-enhanced
- ❑ Appropriate methods and devices for accessing and participating in the course are communicated (mobile, publisher websites, secure content, pop-ups, browser issue, microphone, webcam).
- ❑ Course objectives/outcomes are clearly defined, measurable, and aligned to student learning activities and assessments.
- ❑ Course provides contact information for instructor, department, and program.

2. Course Technology and Tools

- ❑ Requisite skills for using technology tools (websites, software, and hardware) are clearly stated and supported with resources.
- ❑ Technical skills required for participation in course learning activities scaffold in a timely manner (orientation, practice, and application—where appropriate).
- ❑ Frequently used technology tools are easily accessed. Any tool not being utilized are removed from the course menu.
- ❑ Course includes links to privacy policies for technology tools.
- ❑ Any technology tool meets accessibility standards.

3. Design and Layout

- ❑ A logical, consistent, and uncluttered layout is established. The course is easy to navigate (consistent color scheme and icon layout, related content organized together, self-evident titles.)
- ❑ Large blocks of information are divided into manageable sections with ample white space around and between the blocks.
- ❑ There is enough contrast between text and background for the content to be easily viewed.
- ❑ Instructions are provided and well written.
- ❑ Course is free from grammatical and spelling errors.
- ❑ Text is formatted with titles, headings, and other styles to enhance readability and improve the structure of the document.
- ❑ Flashing and blinking lights are avoided.
- ❑ A sans-serif font with a standard size of at least 12 pt. is used.
- ❑ When possible, information is displayed in a linear format instead of a table.
- ❑ Tables are accompanied by a title and summary description.
- ❑ Table header rows and columns are assigned.
- ❑ Slideshows use a predefined slide layout and include unique slide titles.
- ❑ For all slideshows, there are simple, non-automatic transitions between slides.

4. Content and Activities

- ❑ Courses offer access to a variety of engaging resources that facilitate communication and collaboration, deliver content, and support student learning and engagement.
- ❑ Course provides activities for students to develop higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills, such as critical reflection and analysis.
- ❑ Course provides activities that emulate real world applications of the discipline, such as experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities.
- ❑ Where applicable, Open Educational Resources, free, or low cost materials are used.
- ❑ Course materials and resources include copyright and licensing status, clearly stating permission to share where applicable.
- ❑ Text content is available in an easily accessed format, preferably HTML. All text content is readable by assistive technology, including a PDF or any text contained in an image.
- ❑ A text equivalent for every non-text element is provided ("alt" tags, captions, transcripts, etc.)
- ❑ Text, graphics, and images are understandable when viewed without color. Text should be used as a primary method for delivering information.
- ❑ Hyperlink text is descriptive and makes sense when out of contexts (avoid using" click here").

5. Interaction

- ❑ Expectations for timely and regular feedback from the instructor are clearly stated (questions, e-mail, assignments)
- ❑ Expectations for interaction are clearly stated (netiquette, grade weighting, models/examples, and timing and frequency of contributions).
- ❑ Students have an opportunity to get to know the instructor.
- ❑ Course contains resources or activities intended to build a class community, support open communication, and establish trust (at least one of the following—Ice-breaker, Bulletin Board, Meet Your Classmates, Ask a Question discussion forums).
- ❑ Course offers opportunities for students-to-student interaction and constructive collaboration.
- ❑ Students are encourages to share resources and inject knowledge from diverse sources of information in their course interactions.

6. Assessment and Feedback

- ❑ Course grading policies, including consequences of late submissions, are clearly stated in the course information area or syllabus.
- ❑ Course includes frequent and appropriate methods to assess students' mastery of content.
- ❑ Criteria for the assessment of a graded assignment are clearly articulated (rubrics, exemplary work).
- ❑ Students have opportunities to review their performance and assess their own learning throughout the course (pre-tests, automated self-tests, reflective assignments, etc.).
- ❑ Students are informed when a timed response is required. Proper lead time is provided to ensure there is an opportunity to prepare an accommodation.
- ❑ Students have easy access to well designed and up-to-date gradebook.
- ❑ Students have multiple opportunities to provide descriptive feedback on course design, course content, course experience, and ease of online technology.