

Peer Course Review Rubric Standards with Point Value and Annotations

I. COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

General Review Standard: The overall design of the course, navigational information, as well as course, instructor, and learner information are made transparent to the learner at the beginning of the course.

| Specific Review Standards: | Points | Annotation: What's the idea? |
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| I.1 There is a statement introducing the learner to the course, how learning is structured | 3 | <p>Look for a statement by the instructor that gives the new learner an idea of how the learning process is structured. These are often found in the course syllabus.</p> <p>The instructor may describe some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course schedule (self-paced, following a set calendar, etc.) • Course sequencing, such as a linear or random order. • Types of activities the learner will be required to complete (written assignments, online self-tests, participation in the discussion board, group work, etc.) • Course calendar with assignment and test due dates • Preferred mode of communication with the instructor (email, discussion board, etc.) • Preferred mode of communication with other learners • Testing procedures (online, proctored, etc.) • Procedure for submission of electronic assignments |
| I.2 Course layout, as designed by the instructor, is easy to navigate and understand. | 3 | <p>Instructions should provide a general course overview, guide the new student to explore the course website, and tell 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 onset 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>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A course "tour". • Clear statements about how to get started in the course. • A "Scavenger hunt" assignment that leads students through an exploration of the different areas of the course areas. |
| I.3 Expectations regarding academic honesty, including plagiarism concerns, are clearly stated in the instructor's course syllabus. | 2 | <p>Expectations and policies, both instructor and institutional, regarding academic honesty and plagiarism are clearly stated.</p> <p>Consider</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking directly to student policy handbook. • Link specifically to page and/or section of the handbook. • Look for definition of plagiarism • Look for rules about quoting sources. |
| I.4 Netiquette guidelines for the course, including etiquette regarding discussions and email communications, are clearly stated. | 1 | <p>Expectations of learner conduct online should be clearly stated, however brief or elaborate they may be. Do not evaluate the expectations themselves.</p> <p>Consider explanations of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules of conduct for participating in the discussion board • Rules of conduct for email content |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Speaking style” requirements i.e. use correct English as opposed to net acronyms. • Spelling and grammar expectations, if any. |
| I.5 The self-introductions by the instructor, learners, and learner mentor (if utilized) are available and appropriate and designed to build the learning community. | 1 | <p>The initial introduction should help to create a sense of community between the instructor and the learners. It should present the instructor as professional as well as approachable, and it should go beyond essentials, such as the instructor’s name, title, field of expertise, email address and phone.</p> <p>The self introduction should help learners get to know the instructor. It could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on teaching philosophy. • Past experiences with teaching online classes. • Personal information such as hobbies, etc. • A photograph gives the introduction a personal touch. |
| I.6 Learners are requested to introduce themselves to the class to build the learning community. | 1 | <p>The learner introduction helps to create a supportive learning environment and a sense of community.</p> <p>Look for a request that learners introduce themselves as well as for instructions on where and how they should do so. Do not evaluate the learners’ introductions.</p> <p>Instructors may ask learners 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 learner decide. Instructors should consider providing an example of an introduction and/or start the process by introducing themselves.</p> |
| I.7 There is a statement about where to find technical support if problems should occur. | 1 | Campus or D2L support information is given. |

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES (COMPETENCIES)

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

| Specific Review Standards: | Points | Annotation: What’s the idea? |
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| II.1 The posted outcomes of the course include the outcomes in the approved course outline. | 3 | Instructors should list course objectives within the course and/or post the official college course outline. |
| II.2 Learning activities are relevant to course outcomes. | 2 | <p>Evidence that learning activities are tied to course objectives and outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider listing appropriate objectives within each learning unit/activity |

III. RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

General Review Standard: Instructional materials are designed to be sufficiently comprehensive to achieve announced objectives and learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. (Materials, other than standard textbooks are 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? |
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| III.1 Resources and materials are easily accessible to and usable by the learners. | 3 | <p>If some of the course resources, including textbooks, videos, CD-ROMs, etc., are unavailable within the framework of the course website, investigate how learners would gain access to them, and examine their ease of use.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If textbooks and/or CDs are used, titles, authors, publishers, ISBN numbers, copyright dates, and information as to where copies can be obtained, are listed. • A navigation button is devoted to “Resources” and appropriately tied in with the overall course design. • Required software plug-ins are listed, along with instructions for obtaining and installing the plug-ins. |
| III.2 The elements of the course-learning content, instructional methods, technologies, and course materials complement each other. | 2 | <p>Online courses often use multiple types of instructional materials. These materials should be organized so that students can easily understand how the materials relate to each other. Also, the level of detail in supporting materials should be appropriate for the level of the course.</p> <p>Example: Suppose 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.” Reviewers would need to determine whether or not such diversely formatted course materials are integrated well enough to be useful to the uninitiated student.</p> |
| III.3 All instructional materials are presented in a format appropriate to the online environment. | 1 | <p>Students who have the required technical equipment and software should be able to view and access the materials online. Materials used in a face-to-face class may not work well in an online course without modification.</p> <p>Examples of some visual format problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text size may be too inconsistent for typical View/Text Size setting. • Large text files are presented without table of contents or unit numbering; hyperlinks may improve students’ access to information • Multimedia files require plug-ins or codes students do not have. <p>Science lab courses may include learning activities that are not easy to format for online learning.</p> |
| III.4 Instructional methods are appropriate for course content in an online environment. | 1 | <p>Online courses often use multiple types of instructional methods. These methods should be appropriate to the online environment.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion boards • Lectures (notes, presentations, voice and video options) • Live Chats |
| III.5 The purpose of | 2 | Learners should easily be able to determine the purpose of all materials, |

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| resources and materials is clearly explained. | | <p>technologies and methods used in the course. For example: a course may be richly garnished with external links to Internet resources, but students may not know whether those resources are for background information, additional personal enrichment, or whether they are necessary for an assignment.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If links to an external web sites are used, the purpose of the links is clearly explained to students or is completely self-evident. • The function of animated games or exercises are clearly explained or is completely self-evident. |
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IV. LEARNER INTERACTION

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

| Specific Review Standards: | Points | Annotation: What's the idea? |
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| IV.1 The course design provides learning activities to foster community interaction: instructor-learner, content-learner, and learner-learner. | 3 | <p>The learning activities in the course should foster the following types of interaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor-learner: Self-introduction; discussion postings and responses; feedback on project assignments; evidence of one-to-one e-mail communication, etc. • Learner-content: essays, term papers, group projects, etc. based on readings, videos, and other course content; .self-assessment exercises; group work products, etc. • Learner-learner: Self-introduction exercise; group discussion postings; group projects; peer critiques, etc. |
| IV.2 The learner requirements for course interaction are clearly articulated. | 3 | <p>A clear statement of requirements is particularly important when a type of interaction (e.g. participation in a discussion) is not optional. What are the penalties for non-participation? Impact on grade etc.?</p> <p>Example: Learners required to participate in discussions are told how many times each week they must post original comments, how many times they must post responses to other's comments, what the quality of the comments must be, how the comments will be evaluated, and what grade credit they can expect for various levels of performance.</p> |
| IV.3 Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turn-around time for email, grades posted, etc.) | 2 | <p>Learners need clear information about how quickly the instructor will respond and how frequently he or she is available. Informing learners about instructor response and availability times prevents unreasonable expectations from developing (such as anticipating a response from an email in the middle of the night).</p> <p>Look for clear standards for instructor response time for key events and interactions, including e-mail turnaround time, time required for grade postings, discussion postings, etc. Also look for clear standards for 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> |
| IV.4 The course design | 2 | Learners need to feel that the instructor is close at hand, but the opportunities for |

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| provides a variety of opportunities for interaction between instructor and learner. | | <p>interaction will vary with the discipline of the course.</p> <p>Look for examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An actively used and well organized instructor-facilitated discussion board. • Optional “electronic office hours” provided in the chat room or chat sessions on selected topics, archived/edited and posted as a FAQ for other learners. • An invitation for the class to email the instructor with individual concerns. |
| IV.5 Directions for contacting instructor and learner mentor (if utilized) are clear and specific. | 2 | <p>Students need to feel that the instructor is close at hand, but the opportunities for interaction will vary with the discipline of the course.</p> <p>Look for examples such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An actively used and well organized instructor-facilitated discussion board. • 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. • An invitation for the class to email the instructor with individual concerns. |

V. COURSE TECHNOLOGY

General Review Standard: To enhance student learning, course technology should enrich instruction and foster learner interactivity.

| Specific Review Standards: | Points | Annotation: What’s the idea? |
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| V.1 The selection and use of tools and media enhances learner interactivity and guides the learner to become a more active learner. | 3 | <p>Look for tools and media in the course that help learners actively engage in the learning process, rather than passively “absorbing” information.</p> <p>Examples: automated ‘self-check’ exercises requiring learner response; animations, simulations, and games that require learner input; software which tracks learner interaction and progress; use of discussion tools with automatic notification or ‘read/unread’ tracking feature.</p> |
| V.2 The course includes a description of minimal technology needed by the learner and contains links to any additional requirements such as browser plug-ins, media players or additional software. | 2 | <p>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.).</p> <p>Look for clear instructions on how students can obtain needed plug-ins and software packages.</p> |
| V.3 Instructions for accessing course-required resources at a distance (library, websites, etc.) are clear and easy to follow. | 1 | <p>Online learners need to know about and be able to obtain access to educational resources by remote access. Information on these resources should be readily visible in an online class; clear instructions on how to access them should be provided.</p> <p>Examples: The instructor mails to learners a custom CD he has prepared for the course. An explanation of how to obtain full text journal articles is provided in the assignment that requires their use.</p> |
| V.4 The selection and use of tools and media are compatible with existing standards of | 1 | As standards of delivery mode change over time (for example, from 28.8 modems to broadband) the reviewers may want to judge as a team whether or not course tools, media, and delivery modes meet current standards for widespread accessibility. |

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| delivery modes. | | Example: If most learners have access to DVD players or use streaming media, use of those delivery modes in an online class meets this standard. If the normal consumer of a course cannot be expected to have access to a technology at their out-of-the box home computer off campus, that technology should probably not be used in the course. |
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VI. LEARNER SUPPORT

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

| Specific Review Standards: | Points | Annotation: What's the idea? |
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| VI.1 VI.1 There is a statement reminding learner of the location for academic and learner services. | 3 | <p>Technical support covers questions about such topics as how to login, how to use the software, and how to upload files. It does not include help with course content, assignments, assignments, academic or student support services</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear description of the services, including a link to a technical support website. • An email link to an online learning helpdesk. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ College/Campus information ○ D2L Helpdesk • A phone number for an online learning helpdesk. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ College/Campus information ○ D2L Helpdesk |

VII. ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT

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

| Specific Review Standards: | Points | Annotation: What's the idea? |
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| VII.1 Multiple methods of assessment measure the achievement of stated course outcomes and learning objectives. | 3 | <p>The assessment format used should provide a reasonable way to measure related learning objectives. Assessments, learning objectives, and learning activities should align.</p> <p>Examples of inconsistency:</p> <p>(1) The objective is to be able to “write a persuasive essay” but the assessment is 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 learners are not given any practice with information literacy skills on smaller assignments.</p> <p>Examples of objective/assessment alignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A problem analysis assessment to evaluate critical thinking skills. • Multiple choice quiz to test vocabulary knowledge. • A composition to assess writing skills. |

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| | | Sometimes you may find assessments that are 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 you may suggest including appropriate objectives in the course. |
| VII.2 The grading policy is easy to locate and understand. | 3 | Look for clarity of presentation to the learner here, not the simplicity or complexity of a given grading system itself. A relatively complex grading system can still be unambiguous and easy to understand. Example: A list of all activities, tests, etc. that will affect the learners’ grade clearly stated at the beginning of the course. |
| VII.3 Assessment and measurement strategies provide appropriate feedback to the learner. | 3 | Learners learn more effectively if they receive frequent, meaningful, and rapid feedback. This feedback may come from the instructor directly, from assignments and assessments that have feedback built into them, or even from other learners. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor participation in a discussion assignment. • Writing assignments that require submission of a draft for instructor comment and suggestions for improvement. • Self-mastery tests and quizzes that include informative feedback with each answer choice. • Interactive games and simulation that have feedback built in. |
| VII.4 The types of assessments selected are appropriate for the distance learning environment. | 2 | In most online courses, the types of assessments used are appropriate for the online environment and assure the integrity of the learner’s work. Assume that the course meets the standard unless you find evidence to the contrary. Examples that DO meet the standard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of text or media files by email or ‘drop box’. • Quizzes with time limitations, printing disabled and other security measures. • Multiple assessments which enable the instructor to become familiar with individual learners’ work and which discourage “proxy cheating” (someone other than the learner completing and submitting work) Examples that do NOT meet the standard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required assessments that cannot be submitted online, such as a lab practicum in a science course. • A course in which the entire set of assessments consists of 5 multiple choice tests taken online, with no enforced time limit, the print function enabled, and minimal security features in place. |
| VII.5 The grade book tool or alternative communication method is utilized so that learners may monitor their course progress. | 1 | Look for use of D2L grade book tool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categories (if used) are set up • Assignments are clearly labeled or indication of faculty using another grade book tool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for indication of how frequently grades will be updated and distributed. |
| VII.6. The methods used for submitting assessments are | 1 | In most online courses, the types of assessments used are appropriate for the online environment and assure the integrity of the student’s work. Assume that the course meets the standard unless you find evidence to the contrary. |

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| appropriate and ensure the privacy of the learner work. | | <p>Examples that DO meet the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of text or media files by email or ‘drop box’. • Exams given in a proctored testing center. • Quizzes with time limitations, printing disabled, and other security measures. • Multiple assessments which enable the instructor to become familiar with individual students’ work and which discourage “proxy cheating” (someone other than the student completing and submitting work) <p>Examples that do NOT meet the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required assessments that cannot be submitted online, such as a lab practicum in a science course. • A course in which the entire set of assessments consists of 5 multiple choice tests taken online, with no enforced time limit, the print function enabled, and minimal security features in place. |
| VII.7 Assessments are clearly written an easy to understand. | 1 | <p>Students should be able to easily grasp the requirements of assessments. Look for clear, concise directions.</p> <p>Avoid complex terminology or jargon.</p> |
| VII.8 If proctoring is a requirement of the course, instructions are clearly stated. | 1 | <p>If assessments require a proctored testing center, directions are given to students that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe required proctor characteristics • If instructor follow up is required for proctor • Process for using proctors for assessments |

VIII. ADA COMPLIANCE

General Review Standard: Access to course resources is in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and U.S. copyright laws are followed.

| Specific Review Standards: | Points | Annotation: What’s the idea? |
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| VIII.1 There is evidence of some effort to recognize the importance of ADA requirements | 3 | <p>ADA compliance is the most fluid of the review standards. At this time, Blackboard, WebCT, and WebTycho offer features that implement ADA; the use of either course management system satisfies standard VIII.1.</p> <p>Look for a statement in the course that tells learners how to gain access to ADA services.</p> |
| VIII.2 Web pages provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content. | 1 | <p>Alternative means of access to course information should be provided for the vision or hearing impaired learner. Look for 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>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio lecture has a text transcript available. • Video clip, image, or animation is accompanied by text transcript. |
| VIII.3 Web pages have links that are self- | 1 | <p>When instructors provide links to Internet content, they should also provide useful descriptions of what learners will find at those sites. This enables the</p> |

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| | describing and meaningful. | | <p>vision impaired to use screen reader software to understand links.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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". <p>Icons used as links should also have HTML tags or an accompanying text link.</p> |
| VIII.4 | Information conveyed on Web pages in color is also available without color. | 1 | <p>To accommodate learners who are color blind, color text should also be identifiable by other methods (such as bold, italics, etc.)</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use formatting such as bold or italics in addition to color coding text. Provide web page in an alternate, non-color-coded format. |
| VIII.5 | No apparent violations of copyright law exist within the course content or related materials. | 1 | <p>Evidence of copyright compliance is shown.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements of credit for borrowed documents. Learning Object Repository information is given for objects included in the course. |

Meets Expectations if:

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

AND

60 points or more (This is just above 85%)

Total points = 70