Wake Technical Community College

EPIC Quality eLearning Standards

Prepared by EPIC Implementation Teams

Approved by the QEP Steering Committee

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Quality Course Standards

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EPIC Goal, Objectives, and Outcomes

Wake Tech will reduce online learning barriers and support student learning, persistence, and success in online courses through the following two strategies:

- **Objective 1- Student Preparedness:** Help students overcome online learning barriers and gain the skills they need to be successful online learners
- **Objective 2 - Faculty Preparedness**: Help faculty design and deliver online courses in accordance with Wake Tech's Quality eLearning Standards

By implementing these strategies:

SLO 1 – Students will identify online learning barriers and strategies to overcome them

SLO 2 – Students will demonstrate online learning skills and use them in online courses

SLO 3 – Students will navigate online courses to complete tasks

SLO 4 – Students will communicate with online instructors

SLO 5 – Students will collaborate in online courses

and

- Faculty will organize online courses according to the LMS Course Menu Template
- Faculty will design and deliver online courses according Wake Tech's Quality eLearning Standards

so that

- Student persistence in online courses improves
- Student success in online courses increases

Introduction

Through Wake Tech's QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan) called EPIC, Quality eLearning Standards have been established to help faculty define quality design and delivery of online courses. The standards form the basis for the EPIC Quality eLearning Standards Rubric, which will help faculty become certified online instructors via Pathway 1 (Certification by Professional Development); Pathway 2 (Certification by Peer Review); or Pathway 3 (Certification by Lateral Entry). Thirty hours of EPIC professional development courses for Pathway 1 are also designed to align with the standards.

The standards are based on best practices in online learning and teaching, tailored to fit the needs of Wake Technical Community College students. The components of the standards include Navigation, Communication/Collaboration, and Assessment. The standards were created by a team of faculty members and eLearning Support staff vetted through the Faculty Association, and the EPIC Assessment Team, and Advisory Board, before final approval by the EPIC Steering Committee in March 2015 (1st round)

and August 2015 (2nd round after pilot testing). An updated version (2.0) was approved in August 2016.

Navigation Standards

- EPIC Quality eLearning Standards include standards related to best practices in online course design, which are called the Navigation Standards.
- Pursuant to the QEP Proposal, one student learning outcome of EPIC is that students will be able to navigate their online courses. Faculty play a critical role in helping students achieve this SLO and can do so by providing consistent navigation structure and design in all online courses at Wake Tech.
- The Navigation Standards focus on the LMS Course Menu Template and the LMS Course Menu Framework.
- The Navigation Standards also address accessibility for all students in online courses.

Communication and Collaboration Standards

- EPIC Quality eLearning Standards include standards related to best practices in online course delivery, which are called the Communication and Collaboration Standards.
- Pursuant to the QEP Proposal, a second student learning outcome of EPIC is that students will be able to communicate effectively with both online faculty and their peers in an online environment. Faculty play a critical role in helping students achieve this SLO and can do so by providing consistent communication and feedback to students, and by creating collaboration opportunities for students in online courses.
- Best Practices research indicates that communication and collaboration in an online course is paramount to a student's success.
- The Communication and Collaboration Standards focus on building an online learning community, providing quick and consistent feedback, and establishing a strong faculty presence in an online course.

Assessment Standards

- EPIC Quality eLearning Standards include standards related to best practices in online course alignment, which are called the Assessment Standards.
- Pursuant to the QEP Proposal, one student learning outcome of EPIC is that students will be able to identify online learning barriers and find strategies to overcome those barriers. Faculty play a critical role in helping students achieve this SLO and can do so by providing clear, measurable course objectives and alignment in assessments.
- The Assessment Standards focus on the alignment between Course SLOs, Lesson/Week/Module/Unit-level SLOs, and Assessments.

Part I: Explanation of Navigation Standards

Course Navigation and Technology

The overall course design is made clear to the student at the beginning of the course. Course navigation, structure, and technology facilitate student learning.

LMS Course Menu (Rubric A1)

The LMS Course Menu follows the Course Menu Template structure with the following menu items:

- Course Entry Quiz*
- Announcements
- Getting Started**
- Faculty Information
  Divider line
- Lessons
- Collaboration
  Divider line
- Course Resources
- Tools
- My Grades
- Student Support

For consistency, course menus should follow the order listed above.

* The Course Entry Quiz should be available through the 10% point only; after that point, this menu item should be hidden.

**Optional: Getting Started can be hidden after the 10% point (see Getting Started section)

There are no more than three menu items, including sub-headers, to be added in addition to those required by the LMS Course Menu Template. Additional dividers can be added as needed to logically organize the menu items. The initial ten menu items in the standard Course Menu Template should always appear in the order presented, with any additional menu items or sub-headers inserted where appropriate.

Research [please see the QEP Proposal's Literature Review Section (opens in new window) URL: https://www.waketech.edu/sites/default/files/ieandresearch/EPIC_Proposal.pdf] recommends a course menu that:

- Contains a limited number of items to make the course easier for our students to navigate.

- Demonstrates consistency, which allows our students to transition easily among different online courses at Wake Tech.
- Is intuitive, with related information posted under appropriate menu items.
- Does not require students to scroll to see all menu items.
- Uses color contrast to create text that is readable and consistent.

While a limited, consistent course menu facilitates navigation and the transition among different courses at Wake Tech, faculty also need flexibility in the structure of the LMS Course Menu to suit their courses. Faculty may add up to three additional menu items, which might include items such as Course Project, Questions, Assignments, External Resources, etc.

More than three additional menu items create a longer menu that becomes less simplified for students. With the ten standard menu items in the template, plus the addition of up to three optional items, students may see thirteen separate menu items. More than thirteen menu items can make navigation more difficult for students.
Also, faculty may add additional words* to customize the standard course menu item titles, as long as the standard names are preserved and occur first; for example:

- Lessons/Assignments
- Lessons/Modules
- Course Resources/Syllabus
- Course Resources/Information
- Course Resources – Course Documents
- Faculty Information – Contact [Faculty Name]
- Collaboration – Discussions
- Collaboration – Journals
- Collaboration – Wikis

* Ensure when adding words to a menu items that the entire title is legible.

LMS Course Menu Framework

Announcements Menu Item (Rubric E1)

Providing announcements keeps students updated with any important changes to the course, establishes a record of these changes, and promotes timely communication between instructor and students.

Examples of appropriate announcements include answering questions from multiple students, clarifying issues, and informing students of inclement weather assignments, approaching due dates, college announcements, scholarship opportunities, etc.

Announcements that included information with a specific date can be set to “date restricted” to avoid cluttering the page.

Getting Started Menu Item (Rubric A3)

Instructions on how to get started in the course are provided. Course instructions:

- Clearly direct students how to get started and where to find various course components.
- Introduce students to the purpose and structure of the course and how best to succeed in an online learning environment.
- Are easy to find and understand.
- Clearly list and accurately define technology requirements. (Student should be directed to Course Resources).
- Provide an explanation on the role of eLearning Support and the IT Help Desk for LMS help issues.
- Provide a link to Student Support which includes a description of the services the college offers.

Faculty may choose to incorporate some of the information in the course syllabus. In this case, Getting Started should direct students to the course syllabus. The Getting Started menu item may be hidden after the first two or three weeks of the course when students are no longer "getting started." Any information that students need throughout the course should remain accessible in a permanent location (i.e. Course Resources).

Faculty Information Menu Item (Rubric B1 & B2)

Faculty contact information is easy-to-find and provides options for multiple forms of communication* (i.e. email and office phone), office hours, office location (room and campus), and clear instructions on the preferred method of communication for the fastest response time.

Faculty who have earned their EPIC Online Teaching Certification should post their badge in this location.

* Adjunct faculty may only have email as a form of communication.

A faculty self-introduction is appropriate and available on LMS to assist in building community. In addition, the self-introduction should **create a sense of connection between faculty and students**; it presents the faculty member as professional, friendly, and approachable.

Examples of information that helps build this connection include the following (not all of the examples below are required, and other possibilities exist):

- A photograph or avatar (required)
- Faculty credentials
- Schools attended

- Hobbies
- Comments on teaching philosophy
- A summary of teaching experience
- Travel experiences
- Family

The self-introduction could be part of a welcome message posted in Announcements, Getting Started, Faculty Information, or an introductory discussion board, especially if students are also asked to introduce themselves.

Lessons Menu Item

Lessons Menu Item includes information essential to teaching the course material. Examples include lectures, presentations, assignments, etc.

These are subdivided by lesson, week, module, unit, or other logical subdivision at the faculty member's discretion.

It is suggested that course content be made available or "chunked" in manageable segments. Content can be presented using a variety of appropriate mechanisms (i.e. content modules or distinct learning units, single items, or links to external resources).

Expectations (Rubric D7)

All lesson/week/module/unit expectations and activities are clearly stated. Due dates are clearly stated in a prominent place. This includes all readings, learning activities, and assessments within each lesson/week/module/unit.

Collaboration Menu Item (Rubric Section I)

Collaboration menu item includes a means of student collaboration in the course via Discussion Boards, Groups, Wikis, Blogs, social media, Journals, and/or other collaboration tools. The Collaboration menu item can be customized; see examples under LMS Course Menu.

Course Resources Menu Item (Rubric Section C)

If the syllabus contains any/all of the following information, then that information does not have to be repeated separately in Course Resources; however, because students often do not read the entire syllabus, it is more effective to include the below information in "chunks" separate from the syllabus and provide a printable syllabus in its entirety.

- **Communication Expectations (Rubric C8)** - The expectations for student interaction and participation are clearly articulated. Netiquette and communication expectations for online discussions, email, social media, and other forms of written interaction are stated clearly. (In the future, communication expectations may be pre-populated in all classes.)
- **Syllabus (Rubric C1)** - A syllabus is posted that clearly states any prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies, including

technical skills. The syllabus is posted under Course Resources and should be located in no more than 3-4 clicks. It is provided in a printable format, such as .docx. The syllabus can be also linked to or posted in other locations such as Getting Started.

- **Course Calendar or Schedule (Rubric C5)** – A Course Calendar or Schedule is provided so that students know when to expect major assignments and assessments. Course calendar or schedule includes a clear breakdown based on lesson/week/module/unit structure of the course either on syllabus and/or as a separate item. The course calendar/schedule should be accessible and provided in a printable format, such as .docx. It is posted within Course Resources and should be located in no more than 3-4 clicks. It can be also posted or linked in other locations.
- **Attendance Policy (Rubric C6)** – The Attendance Policy can be located in one or more of the following places: Lessons, Getting Started, Course Resources, and/or Student Support menu items. Attendance Policy is clearly explained, including:
    - What constitutes “entry” into the course (Course Entry Quiz)
    - What constitutes “attendance” in the course
    - The consequences of non-attendance
    - A statement letting students know the high correlation between regular attendance and student success in courses. (To persist and succeed in the course, students need to understand what is expected of their “attendance” and why attendance is important.)

  Many departments have a two-week non-attendance policy, which states that a student is to be withdrawn from an online course if the student misses two consecutive weeks of work. If this is policy in a faculty member’s department, it needs to be clearly stated.
- **Instructions (Rubric C7)** - General assignment and assessment instructions are provided, including instructions on how to submit assignments. Instructions are written clearly and with sufficient detail to ensure comprehension. Course instructions answer basic questions related to research, writing format, and technology, or link to tutorials or other resources that provide the information when such information is needed in the particular course. Examples include instructions for downloading and installing required software, accessing publisher content, and submitting assignments, links to MLA/APA page formatting guidelines, etc.
- **Course Materials (Rubric C3)** - Information on Instructional Materials is present and clearly communicated:
    - Any materials (i.e. textbooks, readings, publisher materials, supplies, access keys, software, websites, multimedia, etc.) required for class are clearly communicated. The correct ISBN numbers for materials are provided when available.

    - Any materials that are recommended but not required are clearly communicated. The purpose of the recommended course materials and how students should use the recommended course materials are clearly communicated. There is a clear distinction between required course materials and recommended course materials.
    - The purpose of the instructional materials and how the materials are to be used are clearly explained.
    - Publisher content is linked through the LMS whenever possible.
    - The course instructional materials chosen by the faculty member are relevant and aligned with the communicated learning objectives of the course
    - It is recommended that supervisors arrange for each online course to be regularly observed for relevance or currency of the course materials.
- **Intellectual Property and Instructional Materials (Rubric D5)**
    - Faculty members are to use copyrighted materials in accordance with federal copyright laws and Wake Tech policy.
    - All resources and materials used in the course are appropriately cited.
    - All course materials should comply with copyright laws.

Course Policies (Rubric C9) - Course and/or institutional policies with which the student is expected to comply are clearly stated, or a link to current policies is provided. Required information: student code of conduct, academic integrity expectations, grievance policy (including how to lodge a complaint), attendance policy, and withdrawal policy (including how to withdraw from a course). Course policies can be posted either on syllabus and/or as a separate item and/or linked to content in Student Support.

Any other course-specific content, except individual lessons, should be posted in Course Resources.

Tools Menu Item (Rubric F1)

Faculty can customize the availability of Tools in LMS. Unused Tools should be made invisible to users to avoid confusion, make relevant content easier to find, and streamline course design.

Examples of frequently-used Tools include Send Email, Starfish, and Discussion Board.

Examples of rarely-used Tools include Course Messages, and Glossary.

Tools like Pearson's MyLab & Mastering or SmarterProctoring or Web Assign or NBC Learn should be hidden if they are not used in the course.

Links to LMS Tools within course content can be used to reduce labor intensity (e.g. Links to needed resources and streamlined access to supplementary materials should be provided where they will be used in the course.).

Gradebook (Rubric G1)

Grades for all assessments or averages of assessments should be included in the LMS gradebook or via a third-party vendor.

If faculty uses a third-party grading system, then a link to that grading system needs to be contained under My Grades. In this case, faculty could create a separate menu item called My Grades, place the link in that item, and then delete the default "My Grades" tab.

At any time, the faculty member should be able to provide, by secure means to ensure that FERPA regulations are not violated, a student's current estimated course average if he/she has inquiries about his/her grade. As long as students know where to find their grades and have consistent access to their grades and feedback, the standard is satisfied.

Student Support Menu Item (Rubric Section H)

The Student Support Menu Item is pre-populated on LMS Course Menu Template and should not be deleted or hidden.

Faculty provides information and links directing students to college resources essential to their success. Faculty provides an explanation of how these resources can help students succeed in the course and how students can access these services. Faculty directs students to and provides information about the Student Support menu item during the first weeks of the course.

List of pre-populated information that should be in the Student Support menu item (instructors may not delete any of this content):

- College Catalog
- Wake Tech Help Desk
- 24-hour Blackboard Support
- Blackboard Help Site
- Student Success
- Disabled Student Services (DSS)
- Individualized Learning Center (ILC)
- Library
- Open Computer Labs
- Career and Employment Resources

Faculty can add additional, customized information, such as links to division or department web pages, links to publisher content tech support, etc.

Required information: Student Code of Conduct, Academic Integrity expectations, Grievance Policy, Withdrawal Policy, and withdrawal procedures.

Structure, Mechanics, Consistency, Access, and Navigation

Structure (Rubric D3)

Content within lesson/week/module/unit is sequenced and structured in a consistent manner by employing lesson/week/module/unit folders. Using folders or modules is recommended, as this structuring enables learners to readily access course material.

A form of “task list” is provided within each lesson/week/module/unit folder to guide a student through the course material and provide clear expectations.

Because students are more engaged when information is presented in short paragraphs, content is “chunked” into short paragraphs whenever possible. Content is organized and divided using accessible titles, subtitles, etc. to facilitate reading and use of assistive technologies.

Mechanics (Rubric D4)

Course has few to no errors, typos, or broken links to ensure it conveys a level of academic quality and professionalism; for example, course documents have been proofread for grammatical errors, links are operational, etc.

Consistency (Rubric D2)

The course uses appropriate design elements, including colors, fonts, spacing, graphics, and formatting to facilitate readability and minimize distractions for the student. Design elements should not present a barrier to students accessing the content.

Course content can be accessible, but still inconsistent, which can lead to confusion for students; for example, having some font in 12 pt. and some in 16 pt. may lead a student to believe that the 16 pt. information is more important than the 12 pt. information, which may not be the case.

Consistent layout and design easily orient students. Font type, size, and color contrast create text that is readable and consistent throughout the course. Color alone is not used to communicate information; fonts and spacing do not crowd words.

Compatibility (Rubric D9)

Instructional materials posted in LMS are easily opened in both PC and Mac computers. If third-party instructional resources have limitations (such as only working on a Windows PC), they should be clearly stated. To avoid document compatibility issues, it is suggested to use .docx (Word Format).

Access (Rubric D8)

Students can readily access the instructional materials required in the course. Instructional materials/course documents open easily on both PC and Mac computers.

Within the course, students are directed to contact the faculty member if they cannot access a course file or resource.

Accessibility advocates recommend the use of MS Office files rather than .pdfs. MS Office files can be read by a screen reader and can be modified by students with limited vision to increase readability.

Accessible MS Office and .pdf files are both acceptable file formats.

Large files are identified to help learners consider download times. Alternative (smaller) files are provided where appropriate.

Videos are streamed whenever possible; graphics are optimized for web delivery and display without needing extensive scrolling.

In certain circumstances, instructional materials can be provided in more than one format.

As appropriate, links are provided to software, plug-ins, or other utilities; for example, if the course uses .pdfs, a link to download Adobe Acrobat Reader could be posted under Course Resources; if the course uses MS Office files, a link can be provided to alternative, no-cost software options that will convert these files (i.e. OpenOffice, LibreOffice, etc.).

Navigation (Rubric D1)

Navigation throughout the course is logical and efficient. Unused navigation elements have been removed.

Accessibility (Rubric Section J)

Course design and content demonstrate a good faith effort on the part of the faculty members to design their courses in accordance with accessibility guidelines (Appendix A).

If there are any elements or content of a course that are not accessible (such as 3rd party content), the eLearning Support Department will provide faculty with assistance and training in their efforts to create equivalent access to content. The Disability Support Services Department will also provide students who have documented disabilities with the support they need for equivalent access.

The National Center on Disability and Access to Education (NCDAE) provides “cheat sheets” for educators with helpful information on creating accessible content. General recommendations are listed in the one-page handout, Creating Accessible Electronic Content (opens in new window) [URL: http://www.ncdae.org/resources/cheatsheets/pdf/electronic-content.pdf]. Please note that "videos must have captions and a transcript."

Part II: Explanation of Communication and Collaboration Standards

Introduction

Communication and collaboration in an online course foster student engagement. According to Blackboard's Exemplary Course Program, "Interaction denotes communication between and among learners and instructors, synchronously or asynchronously. Collaboration is a subset of interaction and refers specifically to those activities in which groups are working interdependently towards a shared result."

Welcome Message (Rubric A2)

A welcome message is posted and is visible when the student first enters the course at the start of the semester. A welcome message should be posted in either Announcements or Getting Started depending on which is set as the initial opening page for the course.

Introductory Assignment/Ice Breaker (A4)

Ice Breakers encourage positive rapport and build community within the course.

Students are asked to introduce themselves to the class and interact with their classmates using a collaboration tool early in the course.

The ice breaker can be customized to fit the course subject matter.

Clear expectations are given for student participation in this introductory assignment.

Interaction (Rubric Section I)

Faculty-to-Student Interaction

Meaningful interaction between the instructor and students is employed to motivate and support. Faculty members should:

- Interact with students in a professional manner.
- Provide a clear, constructive message supportive of student achievement.
- Model established practices of netiquette.
- Encourage students to initiate communication as needed.

Faculty interaction demonstrates their understanding that effective online communication is different from face-to-face communication (i.e. absence of body language) that they are sensitive to the unique needs of online communication.

Just as in-person body language and tone enable students to discern additional meaning in communication, the content and tone of online communication from the faculty member should reflect the intended message (encouragement, positive regard, and respect for diversity).

Student-to-Student Interaction

Meaningful interaction among students is employed to motivate, foster intellectual commitment, and help develop a sense of community. Student-to-student interaction is required as part of an online course.

Engagement

Instructional materials are varied, and different perspectives are presented (including, if relevant, perspectives from different cultures) and include guidance for students to work with course content in meaningful ways.

It is clear within the course how the instructional strategies will enable students to achieve SLO's.

It is recommended that higher order thinking (e.g. analysis, problem-solving, or critical reflection) is required of students and explained with examples or models.

Active Learning

Course learning activities provide opportunities for faculty-student, content-student, and, if appropriate, student-student interaction.

Examples include wikis, journals, discussions, and group work.

Faculty member provides appropriate multimedia support to supplement textual materials.

Faculty Expectations (Rubric D12)

Clear standards are established for instructor responsiveness and availability.

Faculty member's method of grading and returning work, with feedback, if applicable, is clearly explained.

Standards for faculty availability and turn-around/response time are clearly stated and are consistent with division or department standards. There is evidence that these standards are upheld.

Student grades are updated in a regular, timely manner; are easily accessible; and are located in a secure environment.

If a division or department standard does not currently exist, the following are recommendations of "timely":

- Responding to emails/voicemails: within 24 hours or next business day (excluding weekends, holidays, semester breaks).
- Discussion Boards/Weekly Assignment: within 7 days
- Grading Intensive Assignments/Projects: Faculty should state when students will receive feedback and their grade.

Note: Turn-around time expectations will be extended as needed to accommodate college holiday and breaks.

Faculty Presence

Consistent faculty presence and responsiveness are evident in the course.

Faculty provides meaningful, content-related feedback weekly, at the minimum, either by way of individual or group feedback.

Faculty member may provide feedback via announcements for the class, email for groups or individual students, participation on discussion forums, assignment feedback, etc.

Regular, meaningful feedback helps establish faculty presence and promotes student engagement.

Student Participation, Collaboration Tools, and Activities

Guidelines are provided for required levels of student participation. Each course should have evidence that student interaction exists within the course. Interaction can be asynchronous and/or synchronous.

A mechanism for measuring quality and quantity requirements is provided; consequences for students who do not comply with participation requirements are clearly communicated. Examples can be provided of what is considered quality communication.

Tools and media used in the course help students actively engage in the learning process rather than passively absorb information. Selected tools and media help the student engage in reflection that leads to deep learning. Types of learner interaction include student-content, student-faculty, and student-student. Interactions can provide opportunities to increase students' comfort with course material and technology with the goal of facilitating the broadest and deepest learner engagement possible in the course.

Collaboration activities are designed to reinforce course content and SLO’s while developing skills useful in the workplace such as cooperation, teambuilding, leadership, and consensus building.

Some examples of tools and media that support engagement include (list is not exhaustive, and all need to meet accessibility guidelines):

- Interactive, real-time software, such as real-time collaborative tools, webinars, and virtual worlds.
- Software that facilitates interactions and collaborations, such as shared documents or wikis.
- Animations, simulations, and games that require student input.
- Discussion tools.
- Automated self-check exercises requiring student response.
- Blogs, Journals, Wikis, Discussions, and group work.

Part III: Explanation of Assessment Standards

Student Learning Outcomes

Student Learning Outcomes are clearly stated and measurable. Instructional materials clearly align with course and lesson/week/module/unit SLO's. Instructional materials provide appropriate information and resources to allow students to achieve the SLO's.

Course-level SLO's (Rubric C2)

- Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) for the course are clearly stated and measurable (refer to Blooms Taxonomy).
- SLO's directly reflect the content and expectations described in the Course Description provided by the NCCCS.
- SLO's are representative of the scope of the course.
- SLO's are commonly included on the Course Syllabus.

Lesson/Week/Module/Unit-level SLOs (Rubric D6)

- Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) are measurable, clearly stated within each lesson/week/module/unit folder, and are consistent with course-level SLO's.
- Within each lesson/week/module/unit folder, SLO's are posted first and labelled appropriately – for example Lesson Outcomes or Objectives or Lesson Learning Outcomes.

Assessments (Rubric D10)

Student evaluation strategies are consistent with course student learning outcomes; the types of assessments used in the course logically complement course activities and resources. Assessments should be aligned with lesson/week/module/unit level SLO's.

Assessments use multiple methods, providing faculty with the flexibility to assess students in a variety of ways. Examples of assessments include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Quizzes/Tests/Exams
- Writing assignments
- Interactive exercises (discussions, blogs, journals, etc.)
- Projects
- Essays
- Surveys

Course includes adequate and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.

Assessments are sequenced to promote the learning process and to build on previously-mastered knowledge/skills.

Assessment strategies and tools make the student continuously aware of his/her progress in class and mastery of the content.

Assessments used are suitable for a distance learning environment within LMS, proctored, or via third-party vendor.

Rubrics (Rubric D11)

When used, rubrics should:

- Provide specific, descriptive, measurable criteria used to assess student work and participation; criteria should describe various levels of proficiency.
- Provide a breakdown of point structure/weighting of assignment requirements. The required length and format of the assignment for written work should be included.
- Be easy to locate (within 3-4 clicks).
- Relate criteria and point structure directly to the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and course grading policy.
- Be included for substantive, subjectively-graded assignments (worth at least 5% of course grade).

Grading Policy (Rubric C4)

The Course Grading Policy is available to students so that students know what to expect in terms of grading. Course grading policy is stated clearly (including scale and weights) either on the syllabus and/or as a separate item. Penalties assessed to grades for late or incomplete work, if applicable, are provided. Penalties assessed to grades for late or incomplete work, if applicable, are provided.

Glossary

Accessibility guidelines

Standards set by the college to ensure the format and content of an online course can be accessed through assistive technology or other means to ensure all students have equal access. See Appendix A.

Animations

A series of drawings, computer graphics, and/or photographs of objects (such as puppets or models) that are slightly different from one another and that, when viewed quickly one after another, create the appearance of movement.

Asynchronous learning

Faculty-provided course materials, lectures, tests, and assignments that can be accessed at any time. Students may be given a timeframe – usually a one-week window – during which they need to connect at least once or twice. But overall, students are free to work on course whenever they choose.

Availability

The faculty member's time commitment to students in the form of being in his/her office or online during his/her posted office hours.

Blogs

Websites or web-based tools on which someone writes about personal opinions, activities, and/or experiences that relate to the course content for the purpose of facilitating learning.

Broadest and deepest learner engagement

When students are most fully involved in the learning experience by reflecting on their learning using metacognition and demonstrating responsibility for their own learning.

Build community

Creating an environment for students where they feel a sense of positive connection and are in collaboration with other students to cooperate and exchange intellectual ideas.

Course navigation

The ease of moving from area to area and/or locating resources and information within an online course.

Discussions

Another name for “discussion boards,” in which the faculty member posts a thread related to a concept studied and guides student responses. Discussions may require students to respond to another student or just to the faculty member.

Divider lines

Lines that faculty can add to the course menu to separate menu items into sections that support organization of the course for the student.

Games

Physical or mental activities or contests that have rules and that people do for fun in order to learn more about concepts and terms.

Grading policy and practices

Rules to assess a student’s accomplishment of student learning objectives and course directives as measured by an absolute standard or set criteria that has been previously communicated to the student via course documents, assignment instructions, and/or rubrics.

Group work

Any activity that requires students to work as a team to complete.

Intuitive

Something that is easily understood and simple to use or follow.

Journals

Writing exercises that are typically shorter in length and shared between the student and the faculty member. They are often used to encourage personal reflection, analysis, and exploration of a specific topic.

Levels of proficiency

Written statements that reflect definitions of various levels of ahcievement for the purpose of explaining what the student should know or be able to do to earn a certain grade.

LMS Course Menu/LMS Course Menu Template

The main navigation pane containing links to major areas of the course, such as Announcements, Getting Started, etc. It is pre-populated with required items and is located at the top left within an online course.

Meaningful interaction

Faculty-student and student-student communication that enhances the learning process and provides feedback to a student to allow him/her to assess his/her progress and make quality improvements.

Multimedia support to textual materials

Supporting text-based materials with video, still image, and/or audio in order to engage various learning styles and enhance students' ability to master course topics.

Netiquette

Also known as "online etiquette." Describes the set of accepted conventions for communicating information and tone in an electronic format. Examples include a positive, encouraging tone and respect for diversity. Avoiding ALL CAPS, which implies yelling; avoiding texting language and unnecessary abbreviations; etc.

Positive rapport

The ability to relate to others in a way that creates trust, understanding, and considers the other person's point of view, while expressing one's own point of view.

Positive regard

The belief that a person's behavior, manners, and/or messages are meant to be positive, and, therefore, acceptance and support is given to that person.

Professional manner

Behavior that shows the faculty member is following the professional behavior policy of the college by communicating with students in ways that support learning and appropriate relationship building.

Real-time collaborative tools

Technology tools that enable users to exchange information as soon as it is published by its authors.

Respect for diversity

Acceptance and even celebration of differences among people, groups, or communities shown by lack of judging and open-mindedness. These differences may include age, gender, generations, backgrounds, abilities, experiences, perceptions, or other variables.

Responsiveness

Reacting to a student's request or question in a timely manner, based on the student's specific issue and the department's definition of "timely."

Shared documents

Documents shared in a virtual environment allowing students and faculty members to be collaboratively immersed in a topic or project**.**

Simulations

Something that is made to look, feel, or behave like something else, especially so that it can be studied or used to train people.

Student evaluation strategies

Methods used to assess a student's level of learning.

Substantive, subjectively-graded assignments

Assignments graded by the faculty member that are worth 15% or more of the student's grade.

Synchronous learning

Synchronous online classes are those that require students and faculty to be online at the same time. Lectures, discussions, and presentations occur at a specific hour. All students must be online at that specific hour in order to participate.

Teaching methods

The general principles, pedagogy, and management strategies used to teach. Examples include lecture, discussion, demonstration, Socratic Method, Inquiry-based learning, Cooperative learning, etc.

Technology tools

Functions used to manage content and interaction in an online course.

Virtual worlds

Complex online simulations of our physical reality that can facilitate educational interaction and achievement of learning objectives.

Webinars

Live, online educational presentations during which participating viewers can submit questions and comments.

Wikis

Websites or web-based tools that allow students and faculty to make contributions and revisions when collaborating on a project.

Quality eLearning Standards Development Teams

Guided by Diane Albahrawy (QEP Faculty Co-Director) and Alison Consol (Quality Course Standards Team Leader), the following EPIC implementation teams, Faculty Senate, and individuals worked together to innovate these Quality eLearning Standards during spring 2015.

Table 1: Quality Course Standards Development Teams

Quality Course Standards Team	Advisory Committee	Assessment Team
Alison Consol Diane Albahrawy Denise Barton Cindy Foster Kathleen Worsdale Jennifer Evarts Rebecca Berry Katherine Bennett	Angela Bequette Diana Osborne Amy Netzel John Bakken Diane Albahrawy Jeri Valdillez Patti Godin Rebecca Neagle Sandy Dietrich Sharon Welker Tonya Forbes Walter Martin Carrie Bartek - Facilitator	John Bakken Jacqueline Popp Kathleen Worsdale Cathey Jordan Michelle Capps Patti Godin Carrie Bartek-Facilitator

Revision Team (Summer 2016)

Alison Consol, Cindy Foster, Jessica Hatcher, Rebecca Berry, Denise Barton, Sharron Rogers, Poonah Lari, Tracey Cole, and Diane Albahrawy.

Assistance from Emily Holliday.

References

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California State University at Chico. "Rubric for Online Instruction". <http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/resources/rubric/rubric.pdf>.

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Gaston College. "QEP Document". <http://www.gaston.edu/online-learning/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2014/06/Revised__QEP_Writing_Document.pdf>.

Illinois Online Network. "QOCI Rubric and Checklist". <http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/initiatives/qoci/rubric.asp>.

Quality Matters. "The Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric, Fifth Edition, 2014". <https://www.qualitymatters.org/>.

University of Southern Mississippi Learning Enhancement Center. "Evaluating Online Courses: Online Course Development Guide and Rubric". <http://ablendedmaricopa.pbworks.com/f/LEC_Online_course+rubric.pdf>.

Appendix A –EPIC Accessibility Guidelines

Accessible Documents and Content

Use Heading styles and other built-in structures like ordered and unordered lists.
Use real text, not text within a graphic.
Use basic, simple, easy-to-read fonts.
Avoid blinking or moving text
Choices of text size, font, and foreground and background colors enhance readability.
Use alternative text for images.

Accessible File Names and Hyperlinks

Use alphanumeric (abc, ABC, 123). The dash (-) instead of an underscore (_) is used.
Does NOT include spaces.
Does NOT include any special characters, such as: &, ( ) % # $ ¢ / \ { } [ ] < > : ; @
File names do not exceed 31 characters.
Hyperlinks convey: Where is the link going? Why is the link provided? What else happens when the link is clicked?
Hyperlinks that open in a new window are clearly marked as such.
Internet resources, including videos, can be navigated or operated with keyboard shortcuts.

Accessible Images, Charts, Graphs, and Diagrams

Alternative text is provided for images, charts, graphs, and diagrams.
The alternative text is meaningful to the context and replaces (not describes) the images, charts, graphs, or diagrams. It is succinct, generally between 5 and 15 words, or about 100 characters.
A long description is included near images, charts, graphs, and diagrams that are more complex.
Tables have a designated header row and include a title/caption. Verify the reading order using the tab key.
The Title/Caption of the table can be repeated as the table's alternative text. When the table contains more complex information or abbreviations, more explanation, in the form of a long description, is provided near the table.

Accessible Video and Audio

Transcripts are provided for linked and embedded videos and audio files.
Audio and/or video files are not set to Auto start and do not loop.
Linked and embedded multimedia clips are captioned and audio descriptions are included, when appropriate.
A link to the plugin is provided when needed.

PowerPoint Specific Accessibility

The slide show has been created using a built-in PowerPoint slide layouts.
Each slide has a unique title.
Content in the slide show appears in the outline view of the show.
The information appearing in the Selection Pane is in the same order as it appears on the slides.
Slide notes contain appropriate descriptions of images, graphs, tables, and charts that appear on the slides.
Word art has been replaced with real text, or a text alternative is provided in the notes pages.

Modified from Accessibility Checklist developed by Wake Tech Community College ADA Task Force