

Quality Online Course Review Rubric

The following rubric has been approved by the Faculty Senate as a tool for reviewing the instructional design and accessibility of fully online courses at UMass Dartmouth. This rubric is based on the [Open SUNY Course Quality Review \(OSCQR\) rubric](#).

The goal of reviewing online courses with this rubric is to ensure an effective learning experience for all online learners. As such, the rubric is formative rather than evaluative. This review process seeks to engage faculty in a collaborative conversation regarding course design and to assist with ongoing revision and improvements to the course design and execution. This rubric is not attached to faculty review processes.

Section One: Course Overview and Information

- 1.1. Course includes Welcome and Getting Started content.
- 1.2. The course provides an orientation for the overall course as well as an overview in each individual unit section. Students know how to navigate and can identify what tasks are due and how they are to proceed within the course site.
- 1.3. A printable syllabus is available to learners, (PDF or HTML format preferred).
- 1.4. Course includes a deconstruction of key syllabus components for learners, in a clear and navigable way. (For example, areas such as a Course Welcome, Getting Started, or Course Information.)
- 1.5. Course includes links to relevant campus policies on Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity, a statement regarding Incompletes, and guidelines on accommodations for disabilities.
- 1.6. Course provides access to campus Support Services, including the Center for Access and Success, eTutoring, and Technical Resources.
- 1.7. Course information and/or the syllabus accurately state whether the course is fully online, blended, or web-enhanced.
- 1.8. The syllabus defines any significant asynchronous/synchronous meetings upfront, at the start of the course.
- 1.9. Appropriate methods and devices for accessing and participating in the course are communicated to students upfront at the start of the course. (For example, mobile, publisher websites content, pop-ups, browser issues, microphone, or webcam).
- 1.10. Course objectives and outcomes are clearly defined, measurable, and are in alignment to student learning assessment and activities.
- 1.11. Course provides contact information for instructor.

Section Two: Course Technology and Tools

- 2.1. Requisite skills for using technology tools, (i.e., websites, software, and hardware) are clearly stated and supported with resources.
- 2.2. Technical skills required for participation in course learning activities and assessments scaffold in a timely manner (i.e., orientation, practice, and application - where appropriate).
- 2.3. Frequently used technology tools can be easily accessed and support course outcomes/objectives. The course menu does not contain any technology tools that are not in use.
- 2.4. Any technology tools utilized in the course site meet accessibility standards. (i.e., people with disabilities can navigate, perceive, understand, and interact with the technology tools.)

Section Three: Design and Layout

- 3.1. A logical, consistent, streamlined, and uncluttered layout makes the course easy to navigate. (For example, consistent color scheme and icon layout, related content are organized together, and self-evident titles are used.)
- 3.2. Large blocks of information are divided into manageable sections. There is ample white space around and between the blocks for the easy use of screen readers.
- 3.3. There is enough contrast between text and background for the content to allow for easy viewing.
- 3.4. Well-written instructions are available throughout the course. For example, navigational instructions and sections containing unit overviews and assessments.
- 3.5. Course is free of grammatical and spelling errors.
- 3.6. Text is formatted with titles, headings, and other automated styles to enhance readability and improve the structure of course site web pages and all documents.
- 3.7. Flashing and blinking text is avoided.
- 3.8. A sans-serif font with a standard size of at least 12 pt. is used.
- 3.9. When possible, information is displayed in a linear format instead of as a table.
- 3.10. Tables are accompanied by a title and summary description.
- 3.11. Table header rows and columns are assigned relevant titles.
- 3.12. Slideshows use a predefined slide layout (i.e., default software theme) and include unique, differentiating slide titles.
- 3.13. For all slideshows, there are simple, non-automatic transitions between slides.

Section Four: Content and Activities

- 4.1. Course offers access to a variety of resources that facilitate communication and collaboration, deliver content, and support student learning and engagement.
- 4.2. Course provides activities and assessments that help students develop skills, which are identified in the course objectives and/or weekly outcomes.
- 4.3. Publisher content is supplemented with additional materials and/or activities (i.e., experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities) that support course objectives and outcomes.
- 4.4. Course materials and resources include copyright and licensing status, clearly stating permission to share where applicable.
- 4.5. 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.
- 4.6. A text equivalent for every non-text element is provided. (For examples, alt-tags, captions, transcripts, etc.)
- 4.7. Text, graphics, and images are understandable when viewed without color.
- 4.8. Hyperlink text is descriptive and makes sense when out of context. (For example, avoid using "click here.")

Section Five: Interaction

- 5.1. Expectations for timely and regular feedback from the instructor are clearly stated. (For example, protocol for questions on assignments and email response time.)
- 5.2. Expectations for interaction are clearly stated; with regard to netiquette, grade weighting, models or examples, and the timing and frequency of contributions.
- 5.3. Course provides opportunities for varying levels of interaction between instructor and student.
- 5.4. Course contains resources or activities intended to build a sense of class community, support open communication, and establish trust. (For example, Icebreaker, Bulletin Board, Meet Your Classmates, Ask a Question discussion forums.)
- 5.5. Course offers opportunities for student-to-student interaction and constructive collaboration.
- 5.6. Students are encouraged to share resources and inject knowledge from diverse sources of information in their course interactions.

Section Six: Assessment and Feedback

- 6.1.** Course grading policies, including consequences of late submissions, are clearly stated upfront in the course information area or syllabus.
- 6.2.** Course includes frequent, varied, and appropriate methods to assess students' mastery of content.
- 6.3.** Assessment strategy will result in various types of feedback being provided; giving students the opportunity to review their performance and assess their own learning throughout the course.
- 6.4.** A brief but detailed description of notable assessments and routine activities is included, either in the course or in the syllabus.
- 6.5.** Criteria for the assessment of a graded assignment are clearly articulated. (For example, rubric and/or descriptions of exemplary work.)
- 6.6.** Students are informed in advanced when a timed response will be required. (Proper lead-time is provided to ensure there is an opportunity to prepare an accommodation for disabilities; including allotted time and opportunity to complete assessment in an online workweek.)
- 6.7.** Students have easy access to a well-organized and up-to-date gradebook.
- 6.8.** Students have multiple opportunities to provide descriptive feedback on course design, course content, course experience, and ease of online technology. (For example, a mid-semester check-in, the Ask Questions Here forum, reflective minute papers, etc.)