

This review rubric and annotations are adapted from the Quality Matters project that was awarded to MarylandOnline and sponsored in part by The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education.

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 student information are made transparent to the student at the beginning of the course.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
I.1 There is a statement introducing the student to the course.	3	<p>Look for a statement by the instructor that welcomes and introduces students to the course.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A course “tour”. • Clear directions about how to get started in the course.
I.2 Course layout, as designed by the instructor, is easy to navigate and understand.	3	<p>The following are easy to locate, navigate and understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course calendar with activity due dates • Syllabus • Course activities • Grading system • Testing procedures (online, proctored, etc.) • Procedure for submission of assignments • Discussion instructions
I.3 Expectations regarding academic honesty, including plagiarism concerns, are clearly stated in the instructor’s course syllabus.	2	<p>The following statement must appear on the course syllabus: Charges of academic misconduct will be brought to the attention of the student and disciplinary actions will be taken. See the Lake Superior College Student Code of Conduct, Policy III.6, Part 8 for further details. In addition, a link to the college policy, an explanation of the instructor’s policy on cheating/plagiarism, and possible consequences should be outlined.</p>
I.4 Netiquette guidelines for the course, including etiquette regarding discussions and email communications, are clearly stated.	1	<p>Expectations of student conduct online should be clearly stated, however brief or elaborate they may be. The expectations themselves should not be evaluated.</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 • “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 and student mentor (if utilized) are available and appropriate.	1	The initial introduction should help to create a sense of connection between the instructor and the students. 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, and email address. It might include information on teaching philosophy, past experiences with teaching online classes, personal information such as hobbies, a photograph.
I.6 Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class.	1	<p>The student introduction helps to create a supportive learning environment and a sense of community.</p> <p>Look for a request that students introduce themselves as well as for instructions on where and how they should do so. Student introductions themselves should not be 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.</p> <p>Instructors should consider providing an example of an introduction and/or start the process by introducing themselves.</p>

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES (COMPETENCIES)

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

Specific Review Standards	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
II.1 The posted outcomes of the course include the outcomes in the approved course outline. Any additional outcomes used are observable, measurable, and achievable.	3	All outcomes from the approved course outline must be present on the syllabus of the course being reviewed.
II.2 Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate, clearly written, and easy to understand.	3	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 should be clear and complete.
II.3 Learning activities are relevant to course outcomes.	2	This may be a bit difficult to assess depending on the discipline, but if a learning activity sticks out as being unrelated to anything the course outcomes detail, the instructor may need to re-evaluate the value of the activity.

III. 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?
III.1 Multiple methods of assessment measure the achievement of stated course outcomes and learning objectives.	3	<p>Example that DOES meet the standard: Students are required to write papers, interact with others through electronic discussions, take quizzes, etc.</p> <p>Example that does NOT: Students are required to take tests and no other method of assessment is utilized.</p>
III.2 The grading policy is easy to locate and understand.	3	The grading policy needs to be easy to locate and access. Language used to describe how course activities are graded and how the final grade is calculated, should be easy to understand.
III.3 Assessment and measurement strategies provide appropriate feedback to the learner.	3	<p>Students 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 students.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <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.
III.4 The types of assessments selected are appropriate for the distance learning environment.	2	<p>In most online courses, the types of assessments used are appropriate for the online environment. Assume that the course meets the standard unless you find evidence to the contrary.</p> <p>Examples that DO meet the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of files by email or dropbox • Exams given in a proctored testing center • Quizzes with time limits and printing disabled • 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>Example that does NOT meet the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A course in which the entire set of assessments consists of 5 multiple choice tests taken online, with no enforced time limit and the print function enabled.
III.5 The gradebook tool or alternative communication method is utilized so that students	1	Are students able to view their assignment/quiz grades at any time and monitor their course progress?

may monitor their course progress.		
III.6 The methods used for submitting assessments are appropriate and ensure the privacy of the student work.	1	<p>Examples that DO meet the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dropbox or course email is used for the submission of assignments. • Quiz feature is utilized. <p>Example that does NOT meet the standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All assignments are to be submitted to the discussion area of the course. Classmates may view others' work and possibly the feedback provided, as well.

IV. 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?
IV.1 The instructional materials have sufficient depth in content and are sufficiently comprehensive for the student to learn the subject.	3	<p>Decisions on this standard may be particularly difficult for individual reviewers whose expertise is not in the area of the course discipline. Reviewers should assume that the instructor/designer is a competent expert in his or her discipline and is guided by a curriculum committee at his or her institution.</p> <p>Scoring should be based upon the collective wisdom of the whole review team.</p>
IV.2 Resources and materials are easily accessible to and usable by the learners.	2	<p>If some of the course resources, including textbooks, videos, CD-ROMS, etc., are unavailable within the framework of the course website, investigate how students 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 CD's are used, titles, authors, publishers, ISBN numbers, copyright dates, and information as to where copies can be obtained, are listed. • An area on the syllabus is devoted to required resources. • Required software plug-ins are listed, along with instructions for obtaining and installing the plug-ins.
IV.3 The elements of the course-learning content, instructional methods, technologies, and course materials complement each other.	1	Does anything in the course "stick out" as being unnecessary, inappropriate, etc.?
IV.4 All instructional materials are presented in a format appropriate to the online environment.	1	Students who have the required technical equipment and software should be able to view the course materials online. Materials used in a face-to-face class may not work well in an online course without

		<p>modification.</p> <p>Examples of some format problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text size may be too inconsistent for typical View/Text Size setting. • Science lab courses may include learning activities that are not easy to format for online learning. • Large text files are presented without table of contents or unit numbering; hyperlinks may improve students' access to information
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V. 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?
V.1 The course design provides learning activities to foster instructor-student, content-student, and if appropriate, student-student interaction.	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 assignments; evidence of one-to-one email 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 (if appropriate): Self-introduction exercise; group discussion postings; group projects; peer critiques, etc.
V.2 The student 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: Students 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>
V.3 Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turnaround time for email, grades posted, etc.)	2	<p>Students need clear information about how quickly the instructor will respond and how frequently he or she is available. Informing students about instructor response and availability times prevents unreasonable expectations from developing.</p> <p>Look for clear standards for instructor response time for key events and interactions, including email turnaround time, time required for grade postings,</p>

		discussion postings, etc. Also look for clear standards for instructor availability including degree of participation in discussions, email response time, and availability via other media (phone, in-person) if applicable.
V.4 The course design provides a variety of opportunities for interaction between instructor and learner.	2	Students need to feel that the instructor is close at hand, but the opportunities for interaction will vary with the discipline of the course. Look for examples such as: <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. • An invitation for the class to email the instructor with individual concerns.
V.5 Directions for contacting the instructor and student mentor (if utilized) are clear and specific.	2	Are directions for contacting the instructor found easily within the course (preferably in more than one place)? Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • syllabus • course homepage • course overview • introduction

VI. 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?
VI.1 The selection and use of tools and media supports the course outcomes and is integrated with texts and lesson assignments.	3	Look for evidence that tools and media used in the course support related course outcomes, and are integrated with texts and lesson assignments. Students should know how the tools and media fit into the assignments and how they relate to the course outcomes. Make sure that the 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 whether some of the video materials illustrate or support any course outcome.
VI.2 The selection and use of tools and media enhances learner interactivity and guides the student to become a more active learner.	2	Look for tools and media in the course that help students actively engage in the learning process, rather than passively “absorbing” information. Examples: automated “self-check” exercises requiring learner response; animations, simulations, and games that require student input; use of discussions
VI.3 The course contains links to any additional requirements such as browser plug-ins, media	2	Look for clear instructions on how students can obtain needed plug-ins and software packages.

players or additional software.		
VI.4 The course technologies are economical and efficient.	2	Technology is not used for technology's sake but as an economical, efficient learning tool. Technology used is user-friendly, practical and not overly complex.
VI.5 Instructions for accessing course-required resources at a distance (LSC Library, websites, etc.) are clear and easy to follow.	1	Online students 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.

VII. LEARNER SUPPORT

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

Specific Review Standard	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
VII.1 The course homepage includes the official Virtual Campus Student Support Widget.	3	This widget must be in place and should not be changed by the instructor.

VIII. ADA AND COPYRIGHT 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?
VIII.1 There is evidence of effort to recognize the importance of ADA requirements (such as equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content, Web page links that are self-describing and meaningful, and information conveyed on Web pages in color is also available without color.	3	<p>Look for a statement in the syllabus that tells learners how to gain access to disability services.</p> <p>Alternative means of access to course information should be provided for students who are hearing or visually impaired. 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 those who are visually impaired) can read text.</p> <p>All file names and web hyperlinks should have meaningful names. For instance, the link to take a quiz should say "Take Quiz 1", not "click here".</p> <p>Icons used as links should also have HTML tags or an accompanying text link.</p> <p>To accommodate students who are color blind, color text should also be identifiable by other methods (such as bold, italics, etc.)</p>
VIII.2 No apparent violations of copyright law exist within the course content or related materials.	3	Self-explanatory