

Online Course Development Guide and Rubric

A document of the University of Southern Mississippi Learning Enhancement Center

Use of this rubric and self-assessment tool represents a developmental process for online course design and delivery and provides a means for an instructor to self assess course(s) based on the standards set forth by SACS, SREB, and the University of Southern Mississippi. The first portion of this tool is a checklist of items required by SREB for all online syllabi.

Syllabus Requirements	
<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor/Contact information	<input type="checkbox"/> Office Hours: Specify when you will be available online to conduct your office hours. This can involve using email, chat rooms, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Drop Date: Provide the date of the last day to drop the class without Academic Penalty.	<input type="checkbox"/> Prerequisites: List any prerequisites that students should have taken prior to enrolling in your class. If there are no prerequisites, state that.
<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Hours	<input type="checkbox"/> Course Description: Use the approved catalog description.
<input type="checkbox"/> Course Overview	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning Outcome(s): Provide a statement about the general goal of your course.
<input type="checkbox"/> Course Objectives: The objectives support the learning outcome. They are the small steps that the students will take to arrive at the learning outcome. This section lists the specific things that the students will be able to do at the completion of the class.	<input type="checkbox"/> Class Procedures and Requirements: This section summarizes how your class will proceed. In this section, you should indicate the kinds of activities that are required in your class. Essentially, you are listing the types of assessments that you will use in your class. Each assessment item that you require should match one or more of your course objectives. You should specify the starting day, ending day, and time of each unit. Make sure to specify how assignments should be submitted.
<input type="checkbox"/> Required Text(s) and Readings: This section lists the required text (s) and/or supplemental readings for the class.	<input type="checkbox"/> Grading Scale: Provide information on your grading scale. Will you use a 100-point scale, 1000-point scale or some other scale?
<input type="checkbox"/> Course Communication: The main purpose of this section is to provide information about how you will be communicating with the student, how the student will communicate with you, and how the student will communicate with other class members.	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology Requirements: List any technology requirements that students will need to complete the course. Will they need any special software (ex: Microsoft Word, Power Point, etc)? Will they need other hardware besides the computer (ex: digital camera, camcorder, etc)?
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation Criteria: In this section, be specific about your grading policy. This includes a percentage breakdown of the required assessments of the course.	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation Criteria: In this section, be specific about your grading policy. This includes a percentage breakdown of the required assessments of the course.
<input type="checkbox"/> Late Assignments or Projects: State your policy for late work. Will you accept it? What is the penalty if work is submitted late?	<input type="checkbox"/> Proctored Exams: Information on proctored exams can be found here: http://www.usm.edu/deal/onlinelearning/facresources/proctorpolicies.php
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic Honesty Policy and ADA Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>

Design of Instruction			
Design of Instruction refers to the fundamentals of instructional design. For the purpose of these guidelines and rubric, design of instruction refers to the presence and quality of learning outcomes, availability and presentation of content, additional student learning resources, and various viewing formats that target the diverse learning styles of students.			
1	2	3	Descriptive and/or Visual Evidence
Exemplary	Sufficient	Needs revision	(ex. see course material>module1>handout3)
Learning outcomes are clearly defined to students.	Learning outcomes are stated but not clearly defined.	Learning outcomes not stated.	
Course outcomes are stated in measurable terms.	Course outcomes are not measurable.	Course outcomes are not stated or measurable.	
Objectives are precisely stated for each module/unit/chapter.		Objectives are not stated for each module/unit/chapter.	
Content is made available to students in manageable segments or “chunks”.	Content is available to students but not “chunked” in manageable segments.	Content is not available to students.	
Appropriate supplemental resources are available for students that support learning outcomes.	Resources are available for students but may not necessarily support learning outcomes.	Supplemental resources not available.	
Appropriate visual and auditory tools are integrated within course to achieve learning objectives.	Visual and auditory tools are provided.	No visual or auditory tools provided.	
Content and requirements are equivalent to or surpass a face-to-face course.	Content and requirements are somewhat equivalent to a face-to-face course.	Content and requirements are not equivalent to a face-to-face course.	
A timeframe is stated for modules, activities, and assessment.		No timeframe stated for modules, activities, and assessment.	
Accessibility issues are addressed to include: color compliance, audio files for lecture notes, screen readability, appropriate use of tags, appropriate file names		Portions of the course are not accessible for persons with disabilities / are not compliant with ADA regulations.	

Course Structure and Organization

Course Structure and Organization refers to the overall appearance and navigation of the course. For the purpose of these guidelines and rubric, course structure and organization refers to the appearance and navigation of the course materials and necessary course information for students.

1	2	3	Descriptive and/or Visual Evidence
Exemplary	Sufficient	Needs revision	
Content is presented in a logical progression.	Content is available but does not follow a logical progression.	Content is not available to students.	
Course is clearly organized and easily navigated.	Course is organized and navigable.	Content navigation is hard to follow.	
Course materials are visually consistent throughout course.	Most course materials are visually consistent throughout course.	Course materials are inconsistent in a visual aspect.	
Course materials are functionally consistent throughout course.	Most course materials are functionally consistent throughout course.	Course materials are inconsistent in a functional aspect.	
Course syllabus is easily located and provides clear expectations for the online course.	Course syllabus is available and provides some student expectations.	Course syllabus is hard to locate and is unclear about student expectations.	
Only links that are used are enabled.	2-3 unused links are enabled.	More than 3 unused links are enabled.	
Color and texture are used consistently to enhance content and do not overpower the course information.	Color and texture are used appropriately throughout the course and do not interfere with information.	Loud colors/textures/and unnecessary use of graphics or animations overpower presentation of content.	
Course starting point is clearly visible with a welcome, start here, or getting started link.		Course lacks a clear starting point and direction.	

Learner Support and Resources

Learning Support and Resources refers to the resources that are available to support the learning experiences of students. For the purpose of these guidelines and rubric, learning support and resources refers to the media players and plug-ins, and other tools, links, and directions that are necessary to view and use required course materials.

1	2	3	Descriptive and/or Visual Evidence
Exemplary	Sufficient	Needs revision	(supporting articles and websites are provided each week and are located under student resources)
Extensive resources to facilitate online learning such as email directions, browser settings and other required applications (Word, PowerPoint, Acrobat Reader) are available.	Resources to facilitate online learning are available but clear instructions for use are not provided.	Resources are not available to facilitate online learning.	

Tools and instructions for viewing course content (RealPlayer, Adobe Reader, etc.) are provided	Tools for viewing course content are difficult to locate and instructions for use are not well defined.	Tools for viewing course content not provided.	
Extensive resources that support course content and learning objectives are provided.	Few resources supporting course content and learning objectives provided.	Supplemental resources not provided.	
Netiquette standards are clearly stated in course.	Netiquette standards are unclear.	Netiquette standards are not included in the course.	

Learner Interaction and Collaboration			
Learner Interaction and Collaboration refers to the degree and scope in which the instructor and students communicate in the online environment. Effective uses of interaction and collaboration tools in the online course build successful learning communities. For the purpose and guidelines of this rubric, learner interaction and collaboration refers to the quality and quantity of asynchronous and synchronous modes of communication between the student and instructor and between peer groups.			
1	2	3	Descriptive and/or Visual Evidence
Exemplary	Sufficient	Needs revision	
Expectations of minimal student participation clearly defined.	Expectations of student participation stated but not clearly defined.	Expectations of student participation not stated.	
Instructor response time clearly stated.	Instructor response time stated.	Instructor response time not stated.	
Deliberate attempt to create a learning community using strategies such as group projects/assignments, activities when appropriate.	Group activities/assignments available.	Attempt to create a learning community not evident.	
The degree to which students interact with each other and the instructor about course content clearly defined.	Student interaction somewhat defined.	Student interaction not defined.	
Asynchronous (discussion/email)			
Synchronous (chat/whiteboard)			
Instructor feedback strategy clearly addressed.	Instructor feedback identified.	No instructor feedback strategy addressed.	
Communication/collaboration tools used in the course. (Use the checklist to select all that apply.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion board <input type="checkbox"/> Whiteboard <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Student home pages <input type="checkbox"/> Student presentations <input type="checkbox"/> Chat room <input type="checkbox"/> Other		

Effective Use of Course Technology			
Effective Use of Course Technology refers to the successful integration of technology into the online course. For the purpose and guidelines of this rubric, effective use of course technology refers to using technology in a variety of formats that help students to achieve course goals and objectives.			
1	2	3	Descriptive and/or Visual Evidence Explanation
Exemplary	Sufficient	Needs revision	
Course makes appropriate use of online instructional tools to encourage critical reflection and analysis of content.	Course makes use of some online instructional tools to encourage critical reflection and analysis of content.	Course used limited or no online instructional tools to encourage critical reflection and analysis of content.	
Activities/assignments that require the use of technology clearly state how the student is to use technology to complete assignments and activities.	Activities/assignments use technology but may not necessarily be the most appropriate technology to support those activities.	Activities/assignments do not require the use of technology.	
Course uses appropriate variety of formats for course materials throughout course. (PDF, PPT, wav)	Course uses a variety of formats for course materials.	Course uses limited formats for course materials.	
(If Applicable) Internet effectively used as an educational tool and resource throughout the course.	Limited use of internet is used as an educational tool.	Internet is not used in the course or is used and does not support critical components of the course.	
What tools are used in the course? (Use the checklist to select all that apply.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Chat <input type="checkbox"/> Home pages <input type="checkbox"/> Whiteboard <input type="checkbox"/> Student presentations <input type="checkbox"/> Quiz tool <input type="checkbox"/> Self test <input type="checkbox"/> Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Glossary <input type="checkbox"/> Compile <input type="checkbox"/> Tips	<input type="checkbox"/> Search <input type="checkbox"/> My grades (Gradebook) <input type="checkbox"/> Calendar <input type="checkbox"/> Video <input type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Animations <input type="checkbox"/> Graphics/Images <input type="checkbox"/> Image Database <input type="checkbox"/> CD-ROM tool <input type="checkbox"/> My progress	
Other technologies used to facilitate learning.			

Assessment and Evaluation			
Assessment and Evaluation refers to assignments, quizzes, surveys, and other assessment strategies that the instructor might use to assess students, for student self-assessment, or for peer feedback.			
1	2	3	Descriptive and/or Visual Evidence
Exemplary	Sufficient	Needs revision	
Assignments encourage student to use critical thinking strategies.	Course uses basic assignment/assessment activities.	Course has limited assignment/assessment activities.	

Assignments and learning outcomes closely aligned and available to student.	Learning outcomes are identified and assignments are available but not closely aligned to learning outcomes.	Assignments and learning outcomes not closely aligned or not available.	
Assignments provide students with ample opportunities to practice and apply concepts and skills in realistic and relevant ways that enforce learning outcomes.	Assignments provide students with opportunities to practice and apply concepts and skills but may not be aligned with learning outcomes.	Limited opportunities to practice and apply concepts and skills to realistic and relevant ways.	
Assignment expectations are explicitly communicated, including deliverables, guidelines, and submission dates.	Assignment expectations are communicated.	Assignment expectations not clearly defined.	
(If Applicable) Clearly state how the Web may be used in completing assignments and provide links to those web resources.	State that the Web may be used in assignments.	Web not used in assignments.	
Ample opportunities for self-assessment and/or peer feedback throughout course are provided along with explanation as to importance of self-assessment and peer feedback.	Self-assessment and/or peer feedback is provided but not explained.	Self assessment or peer feedback opportunities not provided	
Quizzes are clearly tied to course objectives and learning outcomes.	Quizzes are somewhat aligned with course objectives and learning outcomes.	Quizzes not aligned to course objectives and learning outcomes	
Multiple and diverse assessment strategies to measure knowledge, skills, and attitude utilized.	Assessment strategies to measure knowledge, skills and attitude utilized.	Limited assessment strategies utilized.	

Resources for development

WebCT Exemplary Course Nomination Form
Rubric for Online Instruction, CSU, Chico
 Blackboard Quality Standards – revisions 2009