



# ONLINE COURSE QUALITY DELIVERY STANDARDS

## Resources

The following resources were used to compile this list of standards. These standards are based upon current best practices in online education and learning and Helena College student feedback.

- University of Montana - MUS Principles of Quality Online Course Design (2012)
- Montana University System – Core Principles of Quality for Online Courses in the Montana University System (2008)
- BOR Policy 309.1 (1994)
- University of Colorado Denver – The CU Online Handbook (2011)
- Helena College – Online Student Survey Results (Spring 2013)
- Maryland Online – Quality Matters Rubric for Higher Education (2011-2013)
- CAST - National Center on Universal Design for Learning (2011)
- J.V. Boettcher, Ph.D. – Designing for Learning (2011)
- Great Falls College – Online Course Design Guidelines (n.d.)
- EL Camino College – Regular Effective Contact Policy (2013)

## Guidelines

1. Establish instructor presence.
2. Create community.
3. Set and communicate expectations.
4. Provide varied experiences: student-student, student-instructor, student-content.
5. Provide different delivery formats.
6. Solicit feedback and address needs.

## Online Course Quality - Delivery Standards

MUS Principle	HC Standard	R	D
<b>Course Overview and Introduction:</b> <i>The overall design of the course, navigational information, as well as course, instructor and student information are made clear to the student at the beginning of the course.</i>	1.1 The course includes student introductions facilitated by the instructor.	X	
	1.2 The course includes an instructor introduction including a visual (e.g. video or picture) of the instructor.	X	
	1.3 During the first two weeks of class, the instructor emails and/or calls students who are not regularly checking into or engaging in the class.	X	
	1.4 Require students to meet with you 'live'.		X
	1.5 Maintain an active presence.	X	
	1.6 Establish an active forum for students to ask questions the whole class would benefit from.	X	
	1.7 Actively work to build a relationship with each student.	X	
<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> <i>Learning outcomes are clearly defined and help the student focus on learning activities.</i>	2.1 Reference the learning outcomes in modules, units or at the assignment level.	X	
<b>Assessment:</b> <i>Assessment strategies measure and promote learning, are aligned to the learning outcomes, and are designed as essential to the learning and course revision process.</i>	3.1 Regularly solicit feedback from students about the course and make course revisions, as needed.	X	
	3.2 Use assessment results to drive instruction.	X	
	3.3 Grade assignments within 7 days of assignment submission.	X	
	3.4 Ensure formative work is graded and returned prior to major assessments given.	X	
	3.5 Use available tools and resources to help preserve academic integrity.		X
<b>Resources and Materials:</b> <i>Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve course objectives and learning outcomes.</i>	4.1 Each week, have varied activities or resources that allow the student to see and/or hear the instructor (e.g. live chats, recorded lectures or videos, podcasts, etc.).		X
<b>Learner Interaction:</b> <i>The effective incorporation of instructor-student interaction, meaningful student cooperation, and student-content interaction is essential to student motivation, intellectual commitment, and personal development.</i>	5.1 Frequently communicate and provide substantive feedback throughout the course.	X	
	5.2 Maintain an active presence in the class through a minimum of 15 contact hours of instructional time per credit (approximately 1 hour per week, per credit) and a separate 30 hours of homework per credit as defined by the BOR policy 309.1.	X	
<b>Course Technology:</b> <i>Technology used in the course should enrich instruction and foster learning.</i>	6.1 Provide students with instructions (or links to detailed instructions) on using the features used in the LMS or third party software.	X	
	6.2 Include an introductory module with a link to the Online Student Fundamentals course and to Moodle Essentials for Students.	X	
	6.3 Direct students to necessary resources so that technology does not hinder the learning process.	X	
<b>Learner Support:</b> <i>The learner is effectively supported through fully accessible modes of delivery, resources, and student support services.</i>			
<b>Accessibility:</b> <i>The course materials, interactions, and policies are intended to accommodate all students.</i>			

R=Required D=Desired

## Online Course Quality - Delivery Standards Defined

### Principle 1: Course Overview and Introduction

*The overall design of the course, navigational information, as well as course, instructor, and student information are made clear to the student.*

*(1.1) The course includes student introductions facilitated by the instructor.*

To meet this standard the instructor should reply to each student's introduction and personalize the response. For example:

- "Hi, Breeanne, welcome to class!"
- "Great introduction, John! I used to live in Missoula too. Go Griz!"
- "Assignment: Introduce yourself to the class by telling us your favorite appropriate joke. You can type out the joke or submit an audio or video of you telling the joke."

*(1.2) The course includes an instructor introduction including a visual (e.g. video or professional picture) of the instructor.*

To meet this standard the instructor should include a warm introduction to the course. For example:

- Welcome the students to the class.
- Upload a video introduction to Moodle.
- Include your background and qualifications for teaching the course.
- Share the best way to contact you.
- Be personable.

*(1.3) During the first two weeks of class, the instructor emails and/or calls students who are not regularly checking into or engaging in the class.*

To meet this standard the instructor should review the course activity logs a few days prior to the end of week 1 and week 2. Ensure the student is logging in at least 3 times each week and checking all pertinent pages. The instructor should contact any students not meeting this requirement, preferably over phone or Skype. For example:

- "Hi, Breeanne. I noticed you are not logging into the course very often and for very long. Is there something I can help you with?"
- Determine if there is a technology issue.
- Provide advice that it is important for their success that they check in three times or so a week so they can keep up with the pace of the class.
- Offer assistance and direction to assistance as needed.

*(1.4) Require students to meet with you 'live' either by phone or virtually.*

To meet this standard the instructor should have students schedule a specific time to meet with you 'live' during the first two weeks of class. This can be conducted one on one (preferable), or as a small group meeting. This meeting must be conducted 'live' where the student can hear and preferably see the instructor. This can be done via phone call, Skype, web conferencing, etc. It is important that the student make the contact to help them 'break the ice' with contacting the instructor. During this call, the instructor is to:

- Build personal rapport.
- Ask the student about needs or potential accommodations and direct them for that assistance.
- Review some of your basic expectations to best prepare for the course (e.g. late work, log ins, etc.)

*(1.5) Maintain an active presence.*

Login to the course (e.g. Moodle, StarFish, Course Software) at least two times per calendar week. For example:

- Check in and actively respond to student postings, emails, etc.

- *Attempt to make contact with each student each week in some format.*
- *Send an email to students with course announcements.*
- *Provide detailed feedback on work/assignments.*

*(1.6) Establish an active forum for students to ask questions the whole class would benefit from.*

To meet this standard the instructor should include a question forum for students to post questions relevant to the course and direct students to post those types of questions to the public forum rather than through email. This will prevent the instructor from having to answer the same question multiple times. For future courses, this forum can be used to develop an FAQ section.

*(1.7) Actively work to build a relationship with each student.*

To meet this standard the instructor should work to keep students engaged and invest time in their success. For example:

- *Send an email to students to provide them individualized feedback, or ask them a question.*
- *Keep a spreadsheet on each student with items that includes information such as their interests or experiences they have shared so that you can draw on them for future activities or assignments.*
- *Use details or quotes from students' previous assignments.*
- *Use Moodle and/or StarFish to provide feedback and communicate this to students.*

## Principle 2: Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are clearly defined and help the student focus on learning activities.

*(2.1) Reference the learning outcomes in modules, units or at the assignment level.*

To meet this standard the instructor should discuss the learning outcomes so that students are aware of the purpose behind the assignments or group work. Remember to include the other learning skills such as collaboration, project management, integration of technology, etc. For example:

- *Create a Lesson in Moodle where students 'quiz' on the objectives and instructions for the week/unit/chapter/etc. as they are being introduced. Try to make it engaging.*
- *Post the unit or week's objectives in the topic area.*

### Principle 3: Assessment

***Assessment strategies measure and promote learning, are aligned to the learning outcomes, and are designed as essential to the learning and course revision process.***

***(3.1) Solicit feedback from students about the course and make the course revisions, as needed.***

To meet this standard the instructor should check in with students at the end of week 2 (minimum) about their experiences with the course. For example:

- *Create an anonymous survey using the Feedback tool in Moodle or Survey Monkey.*
- *Start a 'check-in' forum to see how the course is progressing from the students' perspective.*

***(3.2) Use assessment results to drive instruction.***

To meet this standard the instructor should review assessments for trends or gaps in teaching and reteach, provide additional resources, redesign the class or a portion of the class, etc. Work with the specific department and/or the Office of Online Learning. For example:

- *Provide a 'Most Commonly Missed Question' document after a quiz. This could be part of the introductory lesson and students can 're-quiz' on it in the Lesson.*

***(3.3) Grade assignments within 7 days of assignment submission.***

To meet this standard the instructor will grade all assignments within 7 calendar days of assignment submission. This provides timely feedback to students in order to make adjustments or ask questions, as needed. It is also advisable to have big assignments due a minimum of two days before grades are due in order to allow students to prepare for the exam.

***(3.4) Ensure formative work is graded and returned prior to major assessments given.***

To meet this standard the instructor should grade assignments a minimum of 2 calendar days prior to any major assessment given over the same content. For example:

- *You have homework to grade on the Quadratic Equation. The quiz on this skill is on Friday. Have the grades returned to students by Wednesday morning and have office hours Wednesday or Thursday to answer questions.*
- *You have an assignment for students to create the Executive Summary for a business plan. You have a quiz on Friday but none of the questions are related to writing the Executive Summary. This assignment does not have to be graded prior to the quiz. It is not a directly related skill to those assessed in the quiz.*
- *When using automatic grading resources in Moodle or a third party, encourage students to complete these assignments at least 2 days prior to the quiz or project due.*

***(3.5) Use available tools and resources to help preserve academic integrity.***

To meet this standard the instructor could use:

- Turn It In for written assignments as an anti-plagiarism software (inside Moodle)
- Create timed-tests.
- Use security functions to lock students from browsing, copy, and pasting in other windows.
- Password protect tests. This shows intention from the student to take the quiz.

**Principle 4: Resources and Materials**

***Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve course objectives and learning outcomes.***

*(4.1) Each week have varied activities or resources that allow the student to see and/or hear the instructor.*

To meet this standard the instructor should include some sort of audio and/or video of themselves. Have a different element each week and provide both an audio and a video/picture element each week. For example:

- *Host live chats every other week.*
- *Provide a video demonstration.*
- *Record lectures as a podcast or video weekly.*
- *Reply to discussion board responses with your profile picture displayed.*
- *Record feedback.*
- *Host a live lecture.*

## Principle 5: Learner Interaction

***The effective incorporation of instructor-student interaction, meaningful student cooperation, and student-content interaction is essential to student motivation, intellectual commitment, and personal development.***

### ***(5.1) Frequently communicate and provide substantive feedback throughout the course.***

To meet this standard the instructor will look for ways to provide timely feedback in courses.

- Answer student questions (e.g. via email, voicemails, forum posts, etc.) within 48 hours or within the first business day following a weekend.
- Maintain scheduled office hours at two varied times per week.
- Notify students of the instructor's prolonged absence with details about when the instructor responses will resume.
- Comment on projects/papers/grades.

Other examples

- *Participate in discussion activities with students by using open-ended questioning and responding regularly to student postings.*
- *Provide regular reminders to students on important dates throughout the course.*

### ***(5.2) Maintain an active presence in the class through a minimum of 15 contact hours of instructional time per credit (approximately 1 hour per week per credit) and a separate 30 hours of homework per credit as defined by the BOR policy 309.1.***

To meet this standard the instructor plans for 15 contact hours per credit (30 hours for labs, and 45 hours for shop instruction or clinicals) and a separate 30 hours of homework per credit.

**Remember, the time is not how long it takes to create the interaction; it is how long it takes a student to review it.**

For example:

<b>Interaction (all non-homework)</b>	<b>Time Estimate</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Video	Number of minutes	Instructor intro, demonstration, YouTube
Lecture Capture	Number of minutes	Classroom lecture capture
Pod Casts	Number of minutes	
Audio lecture	Number of minutes	
Live chats	Number of scheduled minutes	Chat sessions, webinars
Reading - Textbook	3 minutes per page	
Reading - online	1-3 minutes per page	Power Points, Announcements, Book Resource
Discussion Forum	15 minutes to post, review comments and post comments	Forums and advanced forums.
Quizzes	20 minutes per quiz	
Exams	1 hour per exam	
Practice problems (not hw)	20 minutes per problem	
Peer Reviews/ Assessments	30 minutes to 1 hour	Workshop module, Turn it In
Create a blog post	3 minutes per page	
Send an email	3 minutes	Quickmail, StarFish
Provide feedback for students	3 minutes	
Host a webinar	Length of webinar	
Post news announcements	3 minutes	News Forum

## Principle 6: Course Technology

***Technology used in the course should enrich instruction and foster learning.***

*(6.1) Provide students with instructions or links to detailed instructions on using the features used in the LMS or third party software.*

To meet this standard the instructor ensures links and/or instructions to how to use different features in the online classroom are easy and intuitive to locate and access. For example, include a video, step-by-step tutorial, *link to instructions*, or detailed outline to answer the following questions:

- *How do I submit an assignment in Moodle?*
- *How do I find my assignments in SAM?*
- *Where do I start?*
- *What if I need technical help?*

*(6.2) Include an introductory module with a link to the Online Student Fundamentals course and to Moodle Essentials for Students.*

To meet this standard the instructor makes sure the students are required to complete both the Online Student Fundamentals course and Moodle Essentials for Students as one of the first assignments and submits the certificates of completion as evidence. Also make these assignments easy to find within the course.

*(6.3) Direct students to necessary resources so that technology does not hinder the learning process.*

To meet this standard the instructor stays attuned to students' interactions and intervenes as needed. For example:

- *Direct to Moodle Essentials or IT for Moodle or technical issues.*
- *Direct students to the third party software if issues arise with this software.*

**Principle 7: Learner Support**

*The learner is effectively supported through fully accessible modes of delivery, resources, and student support services.*

**Principle 8: Accessibility**

*The course materials, interactions, and policies are intended to accommodate all students.*

**Appendix**

Blooms Taxonomy

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BOR Policy 309.1

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NWCCU Accreditation Policy

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## Bloom's Taxonomy



<b>Remembering:</b> can the student recall or remember the information?	define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, reproduce state
<b>Understanding:</b> can the student explain ideas or concepts?	classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase
<b>Applying:</b> can the student use the information in a new way?	choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write.
<b>Analyzing:</b> can the student distinguish between the different parts?	appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test.
<b>Evaluating:</b> can the student justify a stand or decision?	appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, evaluate
<b>Creating:</b> can the student create new product or point of view?	assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write.

Adapted from:

Overbaugh, R.C. and Schultz, L. (n.d.) Bloom's Taxonomy. *Old Dominion University*. Retrieved June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013, from [http://ww2.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms\\_taxonomy.htm](http://ww2.odu.edu/educ/roverbau/Bloom/blooms_taxonomy.htm).

## BOR Policy 309.1

### MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION Policy and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Policy 309.1 – Course Credits: Short Courses and Workshops

Effective: September 30, 1977; Issued: September 28, 1994

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#### I. Administrative policy

A. The method for awarding credit for short courses and workshops should be consistent with the method used in the regular academic program.

#### II. Procedures:

- A. The credit awarded for short courses and workshops should be adjusted so that a full-time student normally earns credit at the rate of 1-1/2 credits per week, with a maximum of two credits per week.
- B. If pre-or post-session work is required of students, the amount of credit awarded may be adjusted accordingly. Any such requirements should be clearly set forth in publicity and brochures.
- C. If pre-session work is required, and a student arrives who has not done the work, he should be refused entrance to the workshop or short course.

#### III. Rationale:

Credit recommendations are expressed in semester credit hours. In determining semester hour recommendations, evaluators use the following guidelines:

- A. One semester credit hour for each 15 hours of classroom contact plus 30 hours of outside preparation or the equivalent; or
- B. One semester credit hour for each 30 hours of laboratory work plus necessary outside preparation or its equivalent, normally expected to be 15 hours; or
- C. One semester credit hour for not less than 45 hours of shop instruction (contact hours) or the equivalent.

## NWCCU Accreditation Standards

<http://www.nwccu.org/Standards%20and%20Policies/Policy%20on%20Credit%20Hour%20November%2012.pdf>