

ENGAGED ONLINE COURSE RUBRIC

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The Engaged Online Course Rubric (EOCR) contains a set of guidelines that represent research-based best practices in online course design and development. There are seven general standards which cover essential aspects of a quality online course at UTK. Each of the general standards is expanded upon to include specific details which can help determine whether the standard has been met, has not been met or is not applicable, due to the course content, curriculum, or discipline.

These guidelines and the accompanying criteria can be used by instructional faculty to self-assess the quality of their online courses, or by a peer reviewer to provide valuable feedback to a colleague.

For details on rubric development, please visit the [Engaged Online Course Initiative \(EOCI\)](#) page.

HOW THE EOCR SUPPORTS REGULAR AND SUBSTANTIVE INTERACTION (RSI)

The Department of Education (DOE) requires that online courses ensure regular and substantive interaction between student and instructor. RSI is one of the factors the DOE uses to distinguish online education from correspondence education, the latter of which is not eligible for federal financial aid.

Standards that support RSI are noted in the rubric with ().

These standards address specific communication and engagement practices that, when implemented in the design and delivery of an online course, support RSI. For more detailed information on RSI compliance, visit OLAP's [Regular and Substantive Interaction page](#) or download this [quick reference guide](#).

REFERENCES:

The State University of New York. (2021, October 17, 2021). The SUNY Online Course Quality Review Rubric – OSCQR. <https://oscqr.suny.edu/>

Quality Matters. (2021, September 29). Higher Ed Course Design Rubric. <https://www.qualitymatters.org/qa-resources/rubric-standards/higher-ed-rubric>



Course Name: _____

Instructor: _____



Peer Reviewer (if applicable): _____

Date Reviewed: _____

STANDARD 1

COURSE OVERVIEW & INFORMATION

Overview: The course overview and introduction set the tone for the course, inform students about what to expect, detail important information about technology requirements and course policies, set communication and engagement expectations, introduce course learning objectives or competencies, and provide guidance for student success.

1.1	Course includes “welcome” content and instructions on how to get started.	
1.2	An orientation is provided including and introducing the purpose and structure of the course, modality of the course, assignment schedule, assessment schedule, predictable feedback schedule which are all easily accessible.	
1.3	Course provides contact information for instructor, availability information, virtual office hours, communication preferences, and response time to messages.	
1.4	A self-introduction is provided by the instructor, is professional, and available online.	
1.5	Minimal technology requirements- including reliable internet access, required hardware, software, players, plug-ins, microphone, webcam, etc.- for the course are clearly stated and information on how to obtain the technologies is provided.	
1.6	Computer skills and digital information literacy skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.	
1.7	Course grading and institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated within the course, or a link to current policies is provided including consequences of late submissions.	
1.8	Communication expectations for online discussions, email, and other forms of interaction are clearly stated.	
1.9	Learners have an opportunity to introduce themselves at the beginning of the semester.	
1.10	Course objectives/outcomes, or competencies are clearly defined, measurable, and aligned to learning content, activities, technology, and assessments.	

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NO
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N/A
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STANDARD 2

ASSESSMENT/MEASUREMENT & FEEDBACK

Overview: Assessment and measurement are designed and implemented in alignment with the course learning objectives or competencies and not only allow the instructor to determine learners' mastery of content, but also allow learners to track their learning progress throughout the course.

2.1	Assessments (quizzes, assignments, capstone, etc.) measure the achievement of the stated course learning objectives or competencies.	
2.2	Course provides opportunities for learners to review their performance and assess their own learning throughout the course (i.e. pre-test, self-tests with feedback, reflective assignments, peer assessment, etc.).	
2.3	Learners have easy access to a well-designed and up-to-date gradebook.	
2.4	Schedule for providing regular and substantive feedback is shared in the syllabus or course instructions, and consistent with the assessment purpose.	

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STANDARD 3

COURSE CONTENT & ACTIVITIES

Statement: Learners benefit more from instructional activities that require engagement than from passively receiving content. . Active learning and engagement are often key components in facilitating student satisfaction and success in the online classroom.

- 3.1** Course content and activities directly support mastering the learning objectives and/or competencies.
- 3.2** Course offers access to multiple engaging resources for presenting content and supporting learning (e.g., additional resources not limited to text based content).
- 3.3** Examples, resources, and media across the course reflect the diversity of student identities, experiences, and cultures.
- 3.4** Instructional activities promote engagement through the use of active learning (e.g., experiential learning, project-based learning, case studies, role playing, etc.).
- 3.5** Course content and activities represent current theory or practice and when applicable, shared in the context of current events in the discipline.
- 3.6** Course materials and resources provide source references and permissions for use, copyright and licensing status, or permissions to share where applicable.





YES NO N/A

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STANDARD 4

LEARNER INTERACTION

Statement: Rich learning experiences include environments where learners can interact with the instructor resulting in a community of inquiry. Providing authentic environments for learner interaction creates deep and meaningful (collaborative-constructivist) learner-to-learner and learner-to-instructor experiences.

- 4.1** The instructor’s plan for interacting with students during the course is clearly stated and is easily accessible. 
- 4.2** The requirements for learner interaction and participation are stated and easily accessible. (student to student and student to instructor). 
- 4.3** Learner interactions intend to build a community of inquiry and promote collaboration to facilitate learning and engagement (e.g., ice-breaking activities, bulletin boards, dedicated discussion forums). 
- 4.4** Learner is provided regular engagement opportunities with the instructor throughout the length of the course. (e.g., prompted discussion boards, emails, office hours). 

YES NO N/A

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STANDARD 5

LEARNER SUPPORT & WELLNESS

Overview: Ensure online learners know they have access to and are encouraged to use the institution, program, and department level support services. In the Learner Support and Wellness Standard, five different kinds of support services are addressed: academic support, accessibility, mental support, technical support, and program/department level support.

- 5.1** Course instructions articulate or link to UTK’s academic support services and resources that help online learners succeed in the course.
- 5.2** Course instructions articulate or link to UTK’s accessibility, mental health, and wellness and support services.
- 5.3** Course instructions articulate or link to information about UTK’s technical support provided through OIT and how to obtain assistance.
- 5.4** Department and program level support services are made available and easily accessible within the course introduction and/or syllabus.

YES NO N/A

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STANDARD 6

COURSE TECHNOLOGY & TOOLS

Overview: The technologies and tools used in the course facilitate rather than impede the learning process, are easily accessible, and align with course learning outcomes.

YES NO N/A
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|-----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 6.1 | The tools used in the course support the learning objectives, competencies, or course outcomes. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.2 | The tools used in the course promote learner engagement. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.3 | Frequently used technology and tools are prominent and easily accessible, and unused tools are hidden from the main menu. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.4 | Requisite skills for using technology tools (e.g., websites, software, and hardware) are clearly stated and supported with resources. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.5 | Students master required technical skills through orientation, practice, and application, where appropriate. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.6 | Course provides learners with information on protecting their data and privacy. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6.7 | Institutionally supported technology and 3rd party tools provide a link or reference to an accessibility policy statement. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

STANDARD 7

ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL COURSE DESIGN

Overview: The course design utilizes the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and reflects a commitment to accessibility, ensuring all learners can access all course content and activities, and to usability, ensuring all learners can easily navigate and interact with course components.

YES NO N/A
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| 7.1 | The course provides alternative means of access to multimedia content in multiple formats (e.g., text and audio) that meet the needs of diverse learners. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.2 | An organized layout (e.g., logical, consistent, uncluttered) is established for easy navigation on the Canvas (LMS) pages. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.3 | Content provided is based on accessibility standards, including text, font usage, and tables. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.4 | 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. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.5 | For every image a text equivalent ("alt" tag) is provided. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.6 | For video-only a text equivalent caption or transcript is provided. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7.7 | Text, images, or objects, which contain working hyperlinks, provides a description and makes sense out of context. Descriptions are easily read by assistive technology (avoid using "click here"). | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



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