

Suggestions for Unit Evaluation of Online Teaching

When evaluating online teaching:

• Remember that the online teaching environment is new for many of your faculty members and for the students in their classes.

• The class observation and evaluation should therefore focus more on the elements of instruction than on the ideal use of technology. Focus on how the instructor’s work aligns with their goals and the learning objectives of the course.

• We recommend asking the faculty member to provide the observer, in advance of the evaluation, with a short description of the faculty member’s goals for the class session.

• We recommend using some set of standards or a rubric for evaluating courses.

• For example, the ATLAS office of Teaching and Learning with Technology recommends using a rubric for evaluating an online course. That sample rubric is given below. You will likely want to modify it for your unit’s purposes. The interpretation of any assessment rubric should be made in the context of the pandemic and the urgency it placed on the swift development of online courses.

• Feel free to develop your own rubric that corresponds to the pedagogical goals and methods of the course and your discipline.

When observing online teaching:

• Class observers should recognize and discount the effects of extraneous features of live or recorded content (e.g., lighting, backgrounds, etc.)

• If the faculty member is leading a synchronous (e.g., Zoom) course, an observer can visit the class OR ask whether the faculty member prefers that the observer watch a recorded online class session of the faculty member's choosing. In either case:

- Consult with the faculty member to determine an appropriate time to join a Zoom session, or find out where and how to view a recorded session;

- Ask the faculty member to notify students about the observer’s visit or that the session is being recorded for observational purposes;

- Remember that the observer should take appropriate actions to minimize disruptions to the class when observing a session live; this might include not turning on video or turning on video, whichever is better for the class. Again, check with the faculty member in advance.

• If the faculty member is leading an asynchronous class with recorded lectures or other instructional sessions, the observer can ask the faculty member to choose some representative recordings to watch.

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| Course Number and Name: |  | Instructor: |
| Reviewer: |  | Review Date: |

| Criteria | Check |
| --- | --- |
| A. Overview and Orientation (Syllabus) |  |
| **A1.** Is there an introduction that tells students how the course will work, how to navigate the course, and how to get started with the course? |  |
| **A2.** Is there a self-introduction by the instructor? |  |
| **A3.** Is there a course syllabus (or syllabus module) that includes the following: |  |
| **A3.1** Instructor contact information and expectations |  |
| **A3.2** Expectations for student participation in the course |  |
| **A3.3** Student-centered learning outcomes |  |
| **A3.4** A list of required materials |  |
| **A3.5** The course grading policy |  |
| **A3.6** The accommodation policy |  |
| **A3.7** The academic integrity policy |  |
| B. Organization and Navigation |  |
| **B1.** Is there an overall course schedule that shows main activities and deliverables? |  |
| **B2.** Are there clear instructions describing what learners should do each week/module? |  |
| **B3**. Are content and activities organized logically (by topic, module, week, or type)? |  |
| **B4.** Does each module state which course learning outcomes it addresses? |  |
| **B5.** Are there clear instructions for every learning activity or assignment? |  |
| C. Assessment and Feedback |  |
| **C1.** Does each module include at least one timely and authentic formative assessment (whether graded or ungraded) that allows students to track their own learning progress? |  |
| **C2.** Does the course include summative assessments? |  |
| **C3.** Are rubrics provided to define assessment criteria, if applicable? |  |
| **C4.** Does the gradebook reflect the expectations in the syllabus, and is the gradebook accessible to students? |  |
| D. Communication and Interaction |  |
| **D1.** Does the course include a way to communicate class news and answer questions? |  |
| **D2.** Does each module have at least one opportunity for student/instructor interaction? |  |
| **D3.** Does each module have at least one opportunity for student/student interaction? |  |
| **D4.** Are social expectations for online discussions and other forms of communication clearly stated? |  |
| E. Content |  |
| **E1.** Are academically rigorous and appropriate content sources used? |  |
| **E2.** Is there adequate instructor guidance in the learning materials? |  |
| **E3.** Is the instructional content well-aligned with the assessments and the stated learning outcomes? |  |
| **E4.** If instructor-created video or audio is used, is the production quality sufficiently high? |  |
| **E5.** If instructor-created video or audio is used, does the instructor employ good presentation and engagement skills? |  |
| **E6.** If the course includes synchronous sessions, is the instructor able to use the technology and have clear video and/or audio communication? |  |
| **E7.** Are there appropriate copyright permissions and attributions/citations in place for all third-party content utilized in the course? |  |
| F. Accessibility and Usability |  |
| **F1.** Are a variety of instructional materials and assignments used in the course, reflecting Universal Design for Learning principles? |  |
| **F2.** Are all video/audio files captioned? |  |
| **F3.** Do images have tags and/or descriptions, with the exception of decorative images? |  |
| **F4.** Are all documents (PDF, Word, PPT) ADA compliant and accessible via screen readers? This includes tables, graphs and math symbols. |  |
| **F5.** Is the content easy to comprehend (modules and topics are named appropriately and informatively, text pages follow a header structure, etc.)? |  |
| G. Student Support |  |
| **G1.** Is information about technical support clearly stated? |  |
| **G2.** Are there regular instructor office hours and clear instructions for how to attend? |  |
| **G3.** Is an explanation of the benefits of academic support services and a description of how students can access them clearly stated? |  |
| H. Accreditation Requirements |  |
| **H1.** Does the course include sufficient instructional materials, student engagement and assignments to meet the federal credit hour definition? (One credit hour is defined to be 3 hrs of instruction, activity and work per week for 15 weeks. A 3-credit course should require approximately 135hrs of total effort. A 4-credit course should require approximately 180hrs of total effort.) |  |
| **H2.** Does the course include student identity verification? |  |
| I. Educational Technologies |  |
| **I1.** Are all the third-party tools utilized in the course university vetted and contracted? |  |