UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-DOWNTOWN ONLINE INSTRUCTION RUBRIC

Category	Subcategories	Basic	Effective (In addition to the Standard guidelines)	Exemplary (In addition to the Effective guidelines)
Course Entry (Course entry point or the first screen students see when accessing an online course for the first time)	1. Course and Instructor Information	☐ Course and instructor information are provided and include details such as course title, section, instructor's name, contact information.	☐ Course information includes a short description of the course ☐ List of technical requirements and expected skills is provided ☐ Explanation is provided on course delivery methods, informing students how to proceed in the course.	☐ Text format (font, style, and size) and position of the information on the page make it the center of attention. ☐ Instructor's information includes virtual office hours including specifics on when and how a student can contact the instructor or for asynchronous and/or synchronous meetings. ☐ Web links are provided for any necessary technical downloads.
	2. Instructor's Welcome Message	☐ Welcome message is provided introducing students to the course and instructor.	☐ Message is transformed into an engaging format (i.e. PPT, graphic, wiki, animation, etc.). ☐ Message includes a picture and/or audio of instructor. ☐ Message is brief (2-3 min.).	☐ Message is in video format. ☐ Message includes an instructor biography and appropriate self-introduction which presents instructor as approachable and engaged.
	3. Syllabus* (We recognize some of this information may be provided through other means and doesn't need to be duplicated in the syllabus.)	☐ Syllabus is linked on course entry page and is easily accessed. ☐ Syllabus is clear and direct in verbiage. ☐ Syllabus includes policies listed in UHD Policy Statement 03.A.29	☐ Syllabus additionally includes: -Statement informing students from other institutions that they are bound by UHD policies in this course. -Prerequisites for the course. -Course and Institutional Policies (adapted for online delivery). -Clear expectations for the time students will be required to invest in the class through studying, student interaction, logging into the LMS, etc.	☐ Syllabus additionally includes: -Statement addressing netiquette. -Communication plan for when and how students can expect the instructor to communicate with them as well as a time-frame for responses to questions. -Computer Emergency Plan which instructs students on how to prepare for when their computer crashes and an assignment is due.
	4. Learner/Student Support	☐ Links are provided for students to access support when they need it in areas such as LMS Tutorials and LMS technical support. ☐ Link is provided for students to access technical support	☐ Instructions are provided that explain how UHD's academic support services and resources foster a successful learning experience.	☐ Introductory activities are provided for students to practice the tools to be used in the course. ☐ LMS technical support and other relevant student resources webpage(s) are visible from any page in the LMS.

		☐ from UHD's IT Help Desk. ☐ Link to relevant UHD Student Resources webpage(s) is provided.		
Instructional Design (Methodologies used for course delivery)	5. Module/Unit/Lesson Objectives	☐ Objectives are defined at the beginning of each module. ☐ Objectives are easily located and clearly stated.	☐ Objectives are written from student's perspective. ☐ Objectives are measureable. ☐ Module objectives align with course objectives and are appropriate for course level.	☐ Objectives are referenced in each module. ☐ Objectives incorporate higher order thinking skills.
	6. Content/Instructional Material (Material should support student learning)	☐ Content and curriculum contribute to and align with course objectives. ☐ Introductory or explanatory statements are provided for all content. ☐ Content and curriculum are complete as possible with the understanding that content may evolve throughout the semester.	☐ Purpose of content and how it relates to the objectives is explained. ☐ Optional and/or supplemental content is clearly labeled and differentiated from required content. ☐ Supporting material is appropriate to the course level and challenges students to achieve objectives.	☐ Varied content or media are used to address different learning styles (kinesthetic, visual, textual, and/or auditory). ☐ Students are provided with opportunities to be actively engaged. ☐ Modules have assignments or activities involving higher order thinking.
	7. Inclusive Learning Environment	☐ Content is designed to be inclusive and accommodate people with a broad range of abilities, disabilities, and other characteristics (i.e. age, reading abilities, learning styles, languages, cultures, etc.).	☐ Instructional statements, supporting material, case examples, and course content are neutral and free of stereotypes.	☐ Instructions are provided for taking advantage of course components designed to be universally accessible.
	8. Organization	☐ Navigation is clear. ☐ Course content is logically organized ☐ Links are clearly defined and relevant to their destination.	☐ Icons are purposefully and consistently used. ☐ Quizzes, exams, discussions, etc. are appropriately identified and referred to in a consistent manner throughout the course.	☐ Essential information (syllabi, assignments, etc.) is accessible from the homepage within 1-3 clicks.
	9. Deadlines	☐ Expectations are clearly stated. ☐ Calendar, syllabus, and other information used in past semesters are updated with current dates and policies.	☐ Schedule and/or calendar are easily accessible. ☐ Dates are posted on quizzes, exams, discussions, etc.	☐ Modules give further instructions of subsequent tasks.
	10. Technology (LMS, software,	☐ Technology is easily accessible to students.	☐ Technology is current and performs well.	☐ Support resources are provided for any technology used.

	simulations, apps, wikis, blogs, etc.)	☐ Technology supports course and module objectives.		
	11. Web design (best practices for displaying content)	☐ Links are fully functional. ☐ Graphics and animations are purposeful and effective (i.e. depict ideas, theories, concepts, and are not merely for decoration or space holding).	☐ Text formatting is purposeful and effective in providing structure for content (font, color, style, etc.). ☐ Graphics and animations load quickly and are of high quality ☐ Links to external websites open in new windows.	☐ Aesthetic design (background, images, etc.) present information clearly.
Evaluation/Assessment (Course Evaluation, Activities, Assignments, and/or Exams used to assess student's progress)	12. Student feedback	☐ Students are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the course through discussion boards or other informal formats	☐ Course includes a formal opportunity for students to provide feedback regarding course quality at the end of the course. ☐ Feedback is designed to be anonymous	☐ Course includes an opportunity for students to provide mid-course feedback regarding course quality.
	13. Student Assessment	☐ Instructions for assignments are explicit and clear ☐ Assessment methods encourage academic integrity	☐ Multiple opportunities are available for students to assess their own progress. ☐ Assessment methods are appropriate for online delivery	☐ Assessments encourage critical thinking.
	14. Grading	☐ Turn-around time for grading is addressed.	☐ Grading expectations and percentages are well defined and outlined.	☐ Evaluation criteria are provided and clearly described for all assignments, activities, or assessments.
	15. Alignment of assessments with module and course objectives.	☐ Assessments measure the stated course and module objectives.	☐ Assessments align with the stated objectives.	☐ Various types of assessments are used to provide alignment between content and course objectives.
Interaction, Engagement, and Communication (Methodologies used for communication)	16. Student interaction with: content, instructor, and other students.	☐ Students are asked to complete course activities and assignments. (Student Content Interaction). ☐ Student activities encourage interaction between students. (Student-Student Interaction) ☐ Students are encouraged to	☐ Students are provided with a venue to ask questions regarding the course as a whole. (Student-Instructor-Student Interaction) ☐ Students are provided with an opportunity to engage with others. (Student-Student Interaction).	☐ Instructions provide guidance on strategies for collaboration and problem solving with peers (Student-Student Interaction). ☐ Discussion topics require student cooperation and participation (Student-Student Interaction) ☐ Supplemental content provides additional opportunities for

			contact the instructor via multiple types of communication. (Student-Instructor Interaction)	☐	Opportunities for instructor-student interaction are provided (Instructor-Student Interaction)	exploration, research, discussion, etc. (Student-Content Interaction)
Accessibility	17. All files	☐	Documents and files are provided in an easily accessible manner and scanned documents are scanned using optical character recognition (OCR).	☐ ☐	Guidance is provided on how to obtain further accommodations for files that are somehow inaccessible. Large files are identified so that students are able to anticipate extended download time.	☐ ☐	Larger presentations are broken up into multiple files. Alternative file formats are provided for files and software that are not accessible to all students.
	18. Graphics, Video, and Technology	☐ ☐	Graphics and images contain alt tags where appropriate, enabling a screen reader to audibly describe the image to students with a visual impairment. Video, audio, and animations are transcribed.	☐ ☐	Videos have synchronized Closed Captioning. Information overload is addressed and visual distractions are kept to a minimum	☐	Alternative options are provided for any content that is not universally accessible
	19. Color	☐	Color is not exclusively used to emphasize a point or identify an item.	☐	Color variations are kept to a minimum (3 max.).	☐	Contrast is considered for colored text on colored backgrounds.
Copyright	20. General	☐	Credit is given to authors of published or copyrighted material.	☐ ☐	Copyright statements are found throughout the course and inform students that materials supplied are protected by copyright laws and are not to be re-distributed. Materials in the course have not been obtained from e-Reserves.	☐ ☐ ☐	Written permission for all published materials (including those that fall under Fair Use) is provided. Local copies of copyrighted material do not exist in the course. Published materials are linked to the course via links directing the student to a host website or database which has proper copyright permission to post the material online.
	21. Video	☐	Video clips and not full-length movies are used.	☐	Online videos (i.e. YouTube) are embedded or linked rather than appearing as downloadable files within the LMS.	☐	Full-length video/movies have official letters granting permission to be viewed online.

Glossary

LMS: Learning Management System (i.e. Blackboard, Moodle, e-Learning, etc.)

ID: Instructional Design

References

Texas Tech University (TTU) Worldwide eLearning (The above rubric was adapted from the TTU rubric accessible at the following link: http://www.depts.ttu.edu/tlpdc/Online_Course_Development/Quality_Online_Courses/guides/Rubric.pdf)

5-Star Online Course Review University of West Georgia: Distance & Distributed Education

Blackboard Exemplary Course Program Rubric Blackboard (2012)

QOCI Rubric & Checklist University of Illinois: Illinois Online Network

Quality Checklist Northern Arizona University: e-Learning Center

Quality Matters Rubric Standards 2011-2013 edition MarylandOnline, Inc. (2011)

Rubric for Online Instruction, California State University, Chico (2003)

Rubric for Statements of Teaching Philosophy developed by Matt Kaplan, Chris O'Neal, Debbie Meizlish, Rosario Carillo, and Diana Kardia

(2005)