

THE PROCESS FOR CERTIFYING ONLINE COURSES AT JSU



ONLINE COURSE CERTIFICATION GUIDE

A GUIDE FOR ADMINISTRATORS & FACULTY

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Online Course Certification: An Introduction

With new federal education guidelines going into effect, and the demand for online course options increasing, Jacksonville State University is taking steps to make the development of high-quality, engaging online courses and programs a priority to thrive in an increasingly competitive online environment.

Online@JSU, in cooperation with administrators at Jacksonville State University, has developed the Online Course Certification Program as a consistent, standardized process to create online courses and online programs. During this process, online courses and programs are certified through a comprehensive review process followed by relevant enhancement where needed, and a process of ongoing evaluation. The program is designed to achieve the following goals:

1. Provide a university-wide, standardized process of developing online courses that leads to course certification
2. Comply with federal guidelines
3. Provide a framework to encourage faculty to use best practices and strategies when engaging with and teaching students in online courses/programs.
4. Collaborate with JSU faculty as subject matter experts
5. Create an apparatus for continuous course review and evaluation of effectiveness
6. Improve student satisfaction with online courses and programs at JSU
7. Increase student retention in online courses and programs at JSU
8. Create student enrollment and recruitment opportunities

Review and enhancement of courses is based on several aspects, including:

- Best practices in course design
- Best practices in course build
- Best practices in teaching online courses
- Local JSU requirements at either the top level, school level, departmental level, or program level
- Federal guidelines

During this process, JSU faculty are provided with resources and support from Online@JSU to help them prepare their courses for a successful course review and certification. Department chairs play an instrumental role in encouraging faculty to complete the review process, as well as by assisting Online@JSU in scheduling and implementing a complete program review for 100% online programs at JSU. Other leaders will be involved where appropriate.

Developmental course shells within Canvas will be used to prepare courses for production, giving all stakeholders a chance to review and provide feedback before pushing to a production course before a term begins. Modifications to online courses, online teaching practices, or other aspects take place at that time. Course will be considered “certified” when all parties are satisfied with the condition of the course.

Criteria evaluated during this process include:

- Modern, functional home page
- Course learning outcomes and learning objectives

- Syllabus, policies, orientation materials
 - Learning modules/units workflow/organization
 - Up-to-date content/resources
 - Instructor engagement, regular and substantive interaction
 - Varied assessment
 - Direct instruction
 - Accessibility
 - Mobile compatibility
-

Online Course Certification: Characteristics of a Certified Course

At Jacksonville State University, completing a course review and certification process means that your online course has the following characteristics.

Course is:

- reviewed and certified using an adapted version of the Quality Matters Rubric and the OSCQR – SUNY Online Course Quality Review Rubric.

Course contains:

- all university, program, and course policies.
- a course syllabus that is available and prominently displayed that includes all required components.
- course orientation material to acclimate students to the online course.

Course content is:

- up to date, accessible, and mobile-friendly.
- varied, and does not rely solely on textbooks and written text alone.
- organized in a logical, coherent format that optimizes the student ability to locate course content quickly and efficiently.
- Course design and build align with distance education guidelines as specified by the U.S. Department of Education
-
- Course learning outcomes and learning objectives are in alignment
- All assessments are in alignment with course learning outcomes and learning objectives
- Course homepage is aesthetically appealing, contains important course information, and helps students successfully start the course
 - For online programs, a programmatic “course design style” can be customized to the fit the program’s needs
- Course technology, multimedia, and graphics are included where appropriate to enhance student learning
- External course publisher packages are activated correctly, include instructions and support information for students, and deploy content in a logical, coherent format to optimize the student ability to locate course content quickly and efficiently
- Canvas course Pages are aesthetically pleasing and well-organized
- Assignments and discussions have clear, coherent directions, are well-organized, and include rubrics
- Instructor is present and active in the online course
- Contact information, communication strategies, feedback policies, and communication tools are all prominently listed and organized to encourage the creation of an online course community
- Course activities and assignments encourage interaction between students, and between the student and the instructor
- Gradebook is organized, includes all assignments, and includes correctly weighted assignment groups (if weighted grading is used)

Part 1: What is “Distance Education?”

The U.S. Department of Education has provided the [following definition for “distance education.”](#)

1. Instruction is delivered by one or more types of technology
2. Types of technologies include:
 - a. The Internet
 - b. Various Wired and Wireless Media
 - c. Audio Conferences
3. These technologies “support ***regular and substantive interaction*** between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously” (Swartzwelder, 2020, p. 2).”

This new guidance from the U.S. Department of Education also provides clarity in defining the difference between “Correspondence Courses” and “Distance Education (Swartzwelder, 2020, p. 2).” Based upon this guidance, Online@JSU supports and endorses fully realized, engaging **distance education** courses at Jacksonville State University. **These new requirements took effect on July 1, 2021.**

What is “Regular and Substantive Interaction?”

Substantive Interaction

There is now increased flexibility to focus on learning over seat time when evaluating competency-based and distance education (NC-SARA, 2020).

“Substantive interaction” is defined as “engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion.” **It must include at least two of five components:**

1. “Providing direct instruction”;
2. “Assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework”;
3. Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency”;
4. “Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or”
5. “Other instructional activities approved by the institution’s or program’s accrediting agency (Swartzwelder, 2020, p. 2).”

Regular Interaction

“Regular interaction” requires an institution to ensure, “prior to the student’s completion of a course or competency,” that there is “the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency.” The institution also is responsible for “[m]onitoring the student’s academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student (Swartzwelder, 2020, p. 2-3).” “Academic engagement” can be fulfilled through virtual/augmented reality activities (NC-SARA, 2020).

Clock Hours and Credit Hours

Clock Hour (Contact Hours)

A “clock hour” or “contact hour” is defined as 50-60 minutes of instruction or other specified academic activity within a 60-minute period. Institutions can calculate clock hours (contact hours) both for synchronous instruction where

there is direct interaction between the students and the instructor and for an asynchronous academic engagement activity where the student interacts with technology that can monitor and document the amount of time the student participates in that activity (Swartzwelder, 2020, p. 3). In other words, “clock hour” now includes asynchronous as well as synchronous classes, lectures, or recitations with the opportunity for direct interaction between students and instructors (NC-SARA, 2020).

In all cases, the institution must be able to monitor the student’s attendance in at least 50 minutes in each 60-minute clock hour and, for distance education programs, to comply with all state approval and accrediting agency requirements.

Credit Hour

A “credit hour” represents a period of student work that is defined by the institution in compliance with the requirements of its state approval and accrediting agencies. It must reasonably approximate either one hour of direct instruction and two hours of out-of-class work each week or an equivalent amount of work in other academic activities such as laboratory work and internships. The Department also concluded that institutions can “take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels” when making credit calculation determinations. It bears noting, however, that many state approval and accrediting agencies maintain stricter or more prescriptive requirements for credit calculations (Swartzwelder, 2020, p. 3).

Contact Hours and Credit Hours at JSU

Jacksonville State University (JSU) defines a credit hour as 1 contact hour (60 minutes, direct instruction) and a minimum of two non-contact hours (out-of-class student work or study time) for a minimum of 3 hours of course activities per week for a typical semester of not less than 14 weeks. **Most classes at JSU are 3 credit hours per semester.** Therefore, the typical 14-week semester requires 42 contact hours and 84 non-contact hours per semester for a total of 126 hours per 3-hour class.

- Contact hours = direct instruction
- Non-contact hours = out-of-class-student work, study time, and homework

For classes offered in a shortened format, such as summer terms, the hours are prorated so that classes contain the same total number of contact hours and instructional activities as if the classes were scheduled for a full 14-week semester. See [Section 2.13 Credit Hours Awarded for Courses](#) in the Faculty Handbook for the full policy.

Table 1 shows the number of contact or direct instruction hours per week that are required based on the number of course credits and the length of the academic term.

Course Credits	Contact Hours	4-Week Term	6-Week Term	7-Week Term	14-Week Term
1	1	3.5	2.4	2.0	1.0
2	2	7.0	4.7	4.0	2.0
3	3	10.5	7.0	6.0	3.0
4	4	14.0	9.4	8.0	4.0

Table 1: Contact Hours per Week

Non-contact or out-of-class student work or study time per week is shown in Table 2.

Course Credits	Non-Contact Hours	4-Week Term	6-Week Term	7-Week Term	14-Week Term
1	2	7.0	4.8	4.0	2.0
2	4	14.0	9.4	8.0	4.0
3	6	21.0	14.0	12.0	6.0
4	8	28.0	18.8	16.0	8.0

Table 2: Non-Contact Hours per Week

Contact Hours

Contact hours quantify the amount of ***regular and substantive interaction between students and their instructor*** and are most traditionally associated with the number of hours that a class meets on campus. In some online formats (e.g., Synchronous class meetings using Teams), this can be interpreted as the number of hours of synchronous online instruction. However, in asynchronous online classes, which is the most common online delivery method at JSU, the general guideline is that an asynchronous online activity must (a) be required for all students, and (b) involve substantive and sustained interaction with the instructor to count as a functional equivalent of contact time.

Part 2: Applying the Definitions

In this section, the definitions outlined in Part 1 are applied to online teaching and online course design.

Standard 1: Substantive Interaction

Instructors **must** use at least two of the following five types of “substantive interaction”:

1. Provide direct instruction.
2. Assess or provide feedback on a student’s coursework.
3. Provide information or respond to questions about the content of a course or competency.
4. Facilitate a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency.
5. Other instructional activities approved by the institution’s or program’s accrediting agency.

1. Providing Direct Instruction

- A. **Direct Instruction Defined.** Direct instruction is a teacher-centered (teacher-directed) instructional method in which instructors present information and provide explicit, guided instructions to students. There are six steps:
- (1) Introduce Material: briefly recap/review content learned in the previous lesson and introduce the current lesson.
 - (2) Present New Content: content is presented to students (step-by-step learning guides are optional)
 - (3) Guided Instruction for Students: instructors conduct demonstrations or model concepts; students are allowed to practice at this time; instructors can correct students at that time or re-teach concepts as needed.
 - (4) Provide Feedback: instructors give immediate feedback to students during the activity to give students an indicator of their performance
 - (5) Independent Practice: students individually apply the skills or concepts they have learned on their own or with peers.
 - (6) Evaluation: students are formally evaluated on their learning.

Note that not all steps in the direct instruction process must be completed in one class meeting. Different steps may be completed over the course of several meetings.

- B. **Direct Instruction – Synchronous Class Meetings.** Direct instruction can be provided via scheduled, synchronous class meetings. If an instructor decides to schedule online, required class meetings, the following guidelines are **recommended**:
- (1) Use Microsoft Teams to conduct the meeting.
 - (2) Schedule the online meeting well in advance so that students can adjust their schedule accordingly.
 - (3) Create a process for students who cannot attend the meeting due to work obligations or unplanned schedule interruptions.
 - (4) Provide supplemental material to students in Canvas well in advance of the meeting.
 - (5) Plan meeting follow-up activities, readings, or assignments well in advance of the meeting and organize them in Canvas.

C. Direct Instruction – Asynchronous: Direct instruction can also be delivered asynchronously with well-organized learning units/modules in Canvas. If you use asynchronous direct instruction, the following guidelines are *recommended*:

- a. Synchronous, *required* virtual meetings *cannot* be a component of an asynchronous online course. Synchronous, virtual meetings can be included as a component of the course so long as students are not required to attend.
- b. Use Canvas to organize learning units/modules
- c. Organize content, activities, resources, and assignments using a logical, student-friendly format.
- d. Use lecture capture software to record video lectures and tutorials
- e. Upload all videos into Kaltura My Media in your Canvas course and publish the videos in your course where appropriate.
 - i. Uploading videos into OneDrive or Stream and sharing the video into Canvas is also an option
 - ii. Uploading videos into YouTube and sharing the video into Canvas is also an option
 - iii. Other options include Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.
- f. Communicate with students regularly.

It is important to remember that any type of interaction must be measurable according to the U.S. Department of Education.

D. Direct Instruction – Synchronous Class Meetings - Monitoring: Interaction can be measured or monitored in Microsoft Teams via the following:

- (1) Direct observation of student participation, and/or
- (2) Downloading the student attendance, and/or
- (3) Recording the session, and/or
- (4) Embedding polls, quizzes, or other interactive activities throughout a session, etc.

E. Direct Instruction – Asynchronous - Monitoring: Interaction can be measured or monitored in the following ways:

- (1) Kaltura Media Platform Video Analytics. (Each video tracks the number of times students view a video and the length of time the student watched a video.)
- (2) Kaltura Quizzes can also be embedded within videos to check student understanding of the content.
- (3) Canvas log-in (on the People page, instructors can determine the most recent instance of a student logging into Canvas)
- (4) Canvas Course Analytics
- (5) Assignment Submissions
- (6) Quizzes/Tests Completed
- (7) Discussion Participation
- (8) Assignment Feedback

2. Assess or Provide Student Feedback – Required Elements

It is *recommended* that instructors perform the following actions and activities:

- (1) Attach a Canvas Rubric to each assignment. *(You may also use a rubric in Word or PDF format.)*
- (2) Use the Canvas Rubric to guide grading and provide feedback.
- (3) Return feedback on assignments within 48 to 72 hours after the scheduled due date (unless the assignment is a major assignment such as multimedia projects, research papers, final semester projects, etc.). In such cases, allow for a two-week turnaround time for grading and feedback.
- (4) Provide feedback/comments to students via Canvas SpeedGrader, text, audio, video, and/or other relevant tools.

3. Provide Information or Respond to Questions about the Content of a Course or Competency – Required Elements

It is ***recommended*** that instructors do the following:

- (1) Respond to student questions about coursework or assignments/student email within 24 business hours, preferably sooner. (Exceptions can be made for holidays, weekends, and conferences.)
- (2) Use GEM 365 email, Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Flip (formerly FlipGrid, Canvas Discussion Boards, or Microsoft Teams to answer and respond to student questions.
 - i. This list is not intended to be comprehensive.
- (3) Create and cultivate avenues for students to ask instructors questions.

4. Facilitate a Group Discussion Regarding the Content of a Course or Competency – Required Elements

It is ***recommended*** that instructors do the following:

- a. Provide group discussion opportunities in planned, organized activities
 - i. Facilitating group discussions can be done synchronously by using web-conferencing software/apps (Microsoft Teams) or Canvas Discussions or other tools
 - ii. Facilitating group discussions can be done asynchronously by using Canvas Discussions, Flip, or another useful tool
- b. Keep track of student attendance (interaction); this can also be addressed using direct observation.
- c. Keep track of student participation by posts made or recordings submitted, etc.

5. Other Instructional Activities Approved by the Institution's or Program's Accrediting Agency – Required Elements

Other activities and experiences may be included and required. These experiences include, but are not limited to the following:

- Recitals
- Plays/Theatre
- Concerts
- Community Service
- University Sanctioned Events
- Student Organizations
- Professional Organizations
- Clinical Experiences
- Internships
- Other

Standard 2: Regular Interaction

The U.S. Department of Education has two requirements for determining regular interaction:

1. There is “the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency.”
2. The institution also is responsible for “[m]onitoring the student’s academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.”

Predictable and Scheduled

It is **recommended** that instructors do the following:

- Synchronous class meetings via web-conferencing software/apps should:
 - Be scheduled well in advance.
 - Be intentional and planned as a normal part of the course
 - Be recorded and archived. (*If the meeting is a lecture-style meeting.*)
- Include meeting schedule in syllabus and course calendar.
- Record attendance. (*If the meeting is a lecture-style meeting.*)

Scheduled asynchronous class meeting duration should be commensurate with face-to-face class meeting duration.
(Per meeting)

- Asynchronous class activities and delivery can be created and scheduled in advance using Modules within Canvas.
- Module/Topic dates and assignment due dates should be included in the course syllabus and course schedule/calendar
- Assignment due dates should be included in the assignment settings. (*Instructor’s choice.*)
- Discussion due dates should be included in the discussion settings. (*Instructor’s choice.*)
- Quiz due dates should be included in the quiz settings. (*Instructor’s choice.*)

Standard 3: Monitor Student Academic Engagement and Success

It is **recommended** that instructors do the following:

- Proactively engage with students on an individual basis, where appropriate, to encourage students, provide feedback, provide instructional support, and solicit feedback and questions.
- Use Canvas course analytics to assess student activity/engagement in a course.
- Use the Canvas People page to determine that last time a student entered a course.
- Provide opportunities for groups of students to ask questions and provide feedback.
- Monitor student assignment submission dates – are assignments submitted by the due date or not
- Monitor discussion board participation by students
- Monitor quiz completion by students
- Be open and available to students via email and office phone number
 - It is recommended that instructors be available via Microsoft Teams
 - It is recommended that instructors schedule virtual office hours
 - Providing students with your cell phone is optional

**** This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of tools or strategies.***

Part 3: Course Design Workbook & Professional Development

Course Design Workbook

Online@JSU has developed a course design workbook to assist faculty in preparing their online course(s) for a successful course review.

Access the [JSU Online Course Certification Program page](#) to access and download the Course Design Workbook.

Components of the Course Design Workbook:

1. Step 1 – Learning Objectives
2. Step 2 – Assessments & Learning Activities
3. Step 3 – Regular & Substantive Interaction (RSI)
4. Step 4 – Creating a Course Map
5. Step 5 – Course Development & Review Options
6. Appendix –
 - a. Worksheets
 - b. Worksheet Samples
 - c. Course Review Rubric
 - d. More Resources

Workshops

Professional development workshops are provided by Faculty Commons and Online@JSU each Fall and Spring semester. As part of the workshop schedule, some workshops specifically designated and designed to support faculty in preparing online courses for course certification review will be scheduled each Fall and Spring semester. These workshops will primarily occur online through Microsoft Teams.

Workshops will include topics such as:

1. Writing course and module/unit learning objectives
2. Aligning assessments and activities
3. Infusing online courses with opportunities for regular and substantive interaction
4. Mapping or outlining a course
5. Best practices in course design
6. Best practices in teaching online
7. Building in Canvas
8. Leveraging apps and tools to teach online
9. Media in online courses
10. Accessibility

[Access Online@JSU's Workshop Schedule](#)

[Access Faculty Common's Workshop Schedule](#)

JSU Certified Online Instructor Course (COI)

The Certified Online Instructor Course (COI) is offered once every Fall, Spring, and Summer semester. Faculty and staff are welcome to register and complete the COI at a time that is convenient for the instructor.

The COI is comprised of three parts:

1. Teaching Online
2. Course Design
3. Course Building

Components from the Course Design Workbook are incorporated into the COI. To pass the COI, instructors must submit an online course for review and successfully pass the online course review.

JSU Online Course Review Rubric

The [JSU Online Course Review Rubric](#) is used to assess course submissions. This instrument has been derived from the [Quality Matters \(QM\) Higher Education Rubric](#) and the [SUNY Online Course Quality Review Rubric \(OSCQR\)](#).

Part 4: The Course Review Process

The course review process is outlined for the purposes of clarity and transparency. Each course and program review is tailored to the needs of faculty and the online courses. There are two review processes for online courses at JSU.

1. Single Online Course Reviews
 - a. (for online courses not part of a 100% online program)
2. 100% Online Program Reviews

Single Online Course Reviews

Initiating a Course Review for Single Online Courses

As an instructor at Jacksonville State University, there are two online course certification options available for courses that are not part of a 100%-online program.

Select the option that is best for you.

1. **Option 1: Submit an Online Course for Immediate Review for Certification** - By selecting this option, an instructor is opting to do the following **BEFORE** submitting a course for review:
 - a. Review the Course Design Workbook & Certification Rubric.
 - b. Make all reasonable efforts to prepare the course for review prior to submission.
 - c. By selecting this option, an instructor may use the Course Design Workbook & Certification Rubric during these activities:
 - i. Work alone to prepare an online course for review and certification
 - ii. Work with a partner or small group to prepare an online course for review and certification
 - iii. Attend optional workshops provided by Online@JSU and Faculty Commons to prepare an online course for review and certification
 - iv. Consult with instructional designers from Online@JSU to answer any questions
 - d. ***Note: Please address all areas outlined in the certification rubric prior to submission for review.***
2. **Option 2: Online Course Development & Review for Certification** – By selecting this option, one of the three situations is present:
 - a. An instructor is interested in redesigning an existing online course, or
 - b. An instructor expects a significant amount of redesigning and rebuilding of an existing online course, or
 - c. An instructor is creating a new online course.
 - i. This option also includes completion of the newly redesigned Certified Online Instructor Course (COI). Completing the COI is not a mandatory part of the process – it is merely an option available to instructors.

Select a Course Review Option for a Single Course

Choose the option of your choice by completing and submitting this form to initiate the process:

<https://forms.office.com/r/pAqwdZqWvi>

You may also scan this QR code to access the form.



The Review Process for Single Online Courses: An Overview

Selecting Option 1: After selecting option one, an instructor takes all reasonable steps to prepare an online course to pass a certification review successfully. All faculty have access to the [JSU Online Course Review Rubric](#). The rubric is linked within the Course Design Workbook and can also be found at jsu.edu/online. Faculty will use the rubric to assist them in preparing their online course, and instructional designers will use this instrument to determine whether a course is certified.

Overview of the Process

1. **Contact:** After an instructor selects option 1, an instructional designer from Online@JSU will contact the instructor to discuss the process.
2. **ReadyGO:** ReadyGO is course development organizational tool that integrates with Canvas. Once a review process begins, the instructor's course(s) will be uploaded into ReadyGo. Using ReadyGO, the instructional designer will send several checklists to the instructor so that they may perform course self-checks before they submit a course for final review.
3. **ReadyGO Instructor View:** Once a course is added to ReadyGO, the instructor will see a navigation menu link in their Canvas course called "ReadyGO View."
 - a. During the review, communication between instructor and instructional designer takes place within the ReadyGO view panel.
4. Instructors will be able to access all review checklists in the ReadyGO panel. Instructors will also be able to leave comments for instructional designers and vice versa.
5. Instructional designers will use the course review rubric to assess the online course submission and provided feedback.
6. Instructors will be asked to respond to the feedback and make any necessary adjustments requested by instructional designers.
 - a. If significant changes to a course are needed, instructional designers will create a course development Canvas shell and all changes and updates will occur within the development shell.
7. A course must meet all objectives as outlined in the course review rubric to pass a review.

Selecting Option 2: The review process for option 2 differs from option 1 in that there is more time dedicated to collaboratively designing and building an online course. Again the [JSU Online Course Review Rubric](#) is used to determine whether an online course is certified.

Overview of the Process

1. **Contact:** After an instructor selects option 2, an instructional designer contacts the instructor and then meets with the instructor.
2. **Initial Meeting:** At the initial meeting, the instructor and the instructional designer discuss the course, the course learning objectives and course goals and discuss what the instructor wants to achieve. Based on this discussion, a project completion timeline is created. The timeline will include benchmarks to complete specific parts of the process.
3. **ReadyGo and ReadyGO Instructor View:** As in option 1, ReadyGo will be used to facilitate the course development and review process.

4. **Course Development:** Development of the new course will take place within a course development shell in Canvas.
5. **Subject Matter Expert (SME):** During the process, instructors will serve as subject matter experts. The SME and the instructional designer will partner to develop the course until all objectives in the course review rubric are met.
6. **Once complete, the course is certified.**

100% Online Program Reviews

100%, fully online programs at Jacksonville State University live on a rotating course review and certification schedule. During a program's review period, the program and instructional designers agree upon a course review schedule/timeline and instructional designers (IDs) review each online course within the program and work with instructors to revise courses if needed. At that time, IDs also offer services such as course building, template building, and more assistance as needed. *(Instructors cannot sign up for this option. This process begins at the department level.)*

[Start an Online Program Review](#)

You may also scan the QR code to start an online program review.



Part 5: Evaluation & Surveys

Students in online courses that have been reviewed course will receive anonymous surveys to complete during the academic year following the course review. The surveys will be delivered to students via Watermark Course Surveys & Evaluations (formerly EvaluationKIT).

There are two surveys:

1. Mid-Term Survey
2. End of Term Survey

The Mid-Term Survey

The mid-term survey is intended to touch base with students to understand how they are feeling about the course and what they are thinking. At that time, students can give their opinion about course assignments, course design, teaching, etc. With this information, instructors can begin to make adjustments during the course and instructional designers can begin to map out course design changes for future offerings of the course.

There are four open-ended survey questions:

1. What is going well in this course?
2. What could be going better in this course?
3. What can students do to improve the course?
4. What can the instructor do to improve the course?

The End of Term Survey

The end of term survey is intended to measure student opinion about two areas of interest:

1. Part 1: Teaching and Interaction
2. Part 2: Course Design

Part 1: Teaching and Interaction

In Teaching and Interaction, there are thirteen Likert-type questions and one open-ended question. The Likert-type questions ask students their opinion about specific information related to teaching practices, teaching strategies, and instructor presence.

The Likert Scale

5	=	All the time
4	=	A majority of the time
3	=	About half the time
2	=	Sometimes
1	=	Never
0	=	Not Applicable

Teaching and Interaction Likert-type Questions

1. My instructor(s) responded to email within a reasonable amount of time.

2. My instructor(s) answered student questions about content and assignments within a reasonable amount of time.
3. My instructor(s) graded assignments and provided feedback on assignments within a reasonable amount of time.
4. My instructor(s) was friendly and professional when communicating with me and my classmates.
5. My instructor(s) provided opportunities for communication and/or collaboration between students.
6. My instructor(s) used a variety of course materials to support teaching and learning. (Examples may include lecture videos, tutorial videos, guest speakers, texts, articles, websites, PowerPoint presentations, handbooks, manuals, games, etc.)
7. My instructor(s) used asynchronous teaching strategies effectively in my course. (For example, the course was organized in modules, and all content, resources, and assignments were available to you as you progressed in the course.)
8. My instructor(s) used synchronous teaching strategies effectively in my course. (For example, synchronous class meetings, question and answer sessions, group discussions, etc. were required and used effectively via Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or another video conferencing tool.)
9. My instructor(s) displayed mastery of the content being taught and was always prepared.
10. My instructor(s) held consistent office hours and was always available during those stated times.
11. I believe that my instructor(s) was interested in my success in the course and held high expectations for my success.
12. Synchronous class meetings were scheduled in advance and included in the course calendar/schedule.
13. Assignments, discussions, and quizzes/tests had due dates attached to them.

Teaching and Interaction Open-Ended Question

1. Do you have any professional or constructive comments about the teaching and learner interaction in this course? (If none, type "N/A".)

Part 2: Course Design

In Course Design, there are thirteen Likert-type questions and one open-ended question. The Likert-type questions ask students their opinions about the course organization and the course design.

The Likert Scale

5	=	All the time
4	=	A majority of the time
3	=	About half the time
2	=	Sometimes
1	=	Never
0	=	Not Applicable

Course Design Liker-type Questions

1. Directions about how the course is organized and how to navigate the course were available.
2. Policies about when to expect assignment feedback and a grade, how to participate in online discussions, and netiquette were available and easy to locate.
3. An introduction from the instructor that welcomed me to the course was present in the course.

4. Course learning outcomes and module learning objectives were listed in the course.
5. Grading guidelines and/or rubrics were included for all assignments, discussions, projects, and quizzes/tests, and I knew exactly how my work was being assessed.
6. At any point in the course, I either knew how to access my grade average or I knew how to calculate my grade average.
7. The relationship between instructional materials (textbooks, articles, ppts, lecture videos, etc) and assignments (assignments, discussions, tests, quizzes) made sense to me.
8. The course provided opportunities for regular interaction between the instructor and students.
9. The course assignments and activities allowed me to use higher order thinking skills, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills.
10. The course layout was consistent and easy to navigate.
11. The course was free of grammatical and spelling errors.
12. Course technology was easy to use. (For example, Canvas, Kaltura, Turnitin, Teams, Honorlock, FlipGrid, etc.)
13. The course content was mobile compatible. (For example, you could easily see content and assignments on your mobile devices.)

Course Design Open-Ended Question

1. Do you have any professional or constructive comments about the design of the course? (If none, type "N/A").

Survey Results

All survey feedback derived from the end of term survey will be used by instructors, department chairs, and instructional designers to adjust or improve course instruction or course design. Survey responses will only be available to those instructors who have been assessed by the survey, the associated department chair, and instructional designers with Online@JSU.

Department chairs, in consultation with faculty, may also share survey responses with school deans. Instructional designers with Online@JSU will not play a role in this decision and they will not share the data with any outside parties.

Survey responses will be stored in Watermark Course Evaluations & Surveys. Instructors can retrieve their results as soon as they become available. Department chairs will also be able to access all survey results for all faculty within their department.

Please note that survey results received from students are intended to be leveraged as a tool to assist in the continuous course improvement process.

Part 6: Course Certification

Course certification is a continuous process, or cycle, with a singular goal of continuous improvement.

Course Review

During the course review, instructional designers will review the course using the [JSU Online Course Review Rubric](#).

The JSU Online Course Review Rubric consists of the following evaluation sections:

1. Course Overview and Introduction
2. Learning Objectives
3. Assessment and Measurement
4. Instructional Materials
5. Learning Activities and Learner Interaction
6. Design and Layout
7. Course Technology
8. Accessibility and Mobile Compatibility

During the review process, objectives within each section will be evaluated for level of completeness. The following scale will be applied to each objective within each section:

- Sufficiently Present = 3 points
- Minor Revision = 2 points
- Moderate Revision = 1 point
- Major Revision = 0 points
- Not Applicable = 3 points

Certification

To pass a review and earn certification, an online course must earn a level of “sufficiently present” for almost all objectives. A total of 134/168 points must be earned. Table 3 provides the points possible per section and the total possible points earned.

Section	Points Possible	Points Earned
1. Course Overview and Introduction	33	/33
2. Learning Objectives	15	/15
3. Assessment and Measurement	18	/18
4. Instructional Materials	18	/18
5. Learning Activities and Learner Interaction	24	/24
6. Design and Layout	24	/24
7. Course Technology	9	/9
8. Accessibility and Mobile Compatibility	27	/27
TOTAL	168	/168

Table 3: Course Certification - Points Available per Section

Certification Rating Scale

- Certified “Exemplary” = 151 to 168 points earned (90 to 100%)
- Certified “Accomplished” = 134 to 150 points earned (80 to 89%)
- Making Progress = 117 to 133 points earned (70 to 79%)
- Incomplete = 0 to 116 points earned (0 to 69%)

Certified Exemplary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical course components work together and are aligned with <i>all (or almost all)</i> specific review standards to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes; • Demonstrates a <i>sophisticated understanding</i> of instructional pedagogies that are appropriate for the online environment and <i>incorporates effective</i> teaching strategies in course designs to meet the multiple learning needs of students; • <i>Effectively uses and manages</i> appropriate educational technologies to integrate with learning activity designs and go even further to enhance student engagement in the online learning environment.
Certified Accomplished	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical course components work together and are aligned with <i>most</i> of the specific review standards to support student success in online learning; • Demonstrates <i>adequate understanding</i> of instructional pedagogies that are appropriate for the online environment and <i>incorporates some</i> of the teaching strategies in course designs that align with students preferred individualized learning style; • <i>Uses adequate</i> educational technologies to integrate with learning activity designs that facilitate students learning.
Making Promise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Many</i> critical course components are <i>missing</i> or present to a degree that does not adequately support student learning in the online context; some of the specific review standards are met; • Demonstrates <i>partial understanding</i> of instructional pedagogies that are appropriate for the online environment and incorporates some of the teaching strategies in course designs; • <i>Uses limited</i> educational technologies to integrate with learning activity designs that facilitate students learning.
Incomplete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Most</i> of the critical course components are <i>missing</i> or present to a degree that students cannot make decision and are not in control of their learning; only a few of the specific review standards are met; • Shows <i>minimal</i> awareness of instructional pedagogies that are important for online learning environment and incorporates limited teaching strategies in course designs; • <i>No educational technology is used</i> to integrate with learning activity designs and students have no opportunity to interact with multimedia content and peers.

Table 4: Interpreting the Rating Scale

Certification Lifespan

A course certification is active for three (3) full academic years following successful review and certification. A number of factors, however, could cause a course review and certification process to occur prior to the end of the three-year lifespan. Among these factors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Upcoming program accreditation
- Upcoming SACSCOC accreditation
- New online program development
- Full online program review request
- New online course instructor
- Influx of new online faculty throughout an online program

A dean, department chair, or instructor may request an online course review at any time.

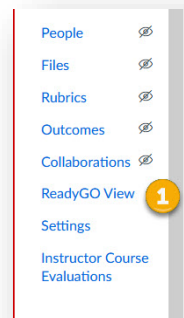
Appendix

ReadyGO

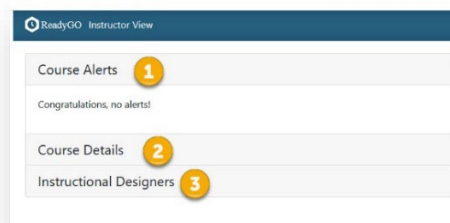
ReadyGO is a course development organizational tool designed to assist instructional designers in tacking a course's development and review process. ReadyGO integrates with Canvas.

An Instructor's View of ReadyGO

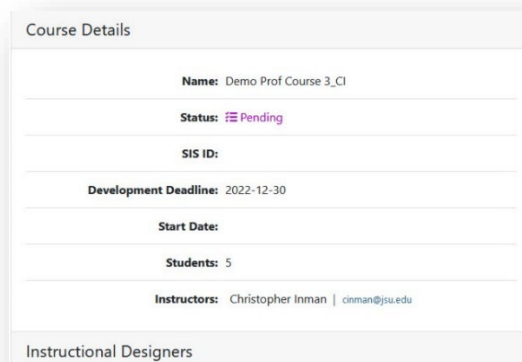
1. When a course development or review process begins, the Canvas course is imported into ReadyGO. Once this import occurs, the instructor will see the "ReadyGO View" link in the course navigation menu [1].



2. Clicking on the "ReadyGO View" link will load the instructor view page. On the left side of the page, instructors will see course alerts [1], course details [2], and instructional designers [3].



3. The course alerts area indicates actions that are currently open for instructors to complete. The course details area includes information such as the course name, the status of the development or review process, and more. [See the image to the right.] The instructional designer's area lists the instructional designer assigned to the



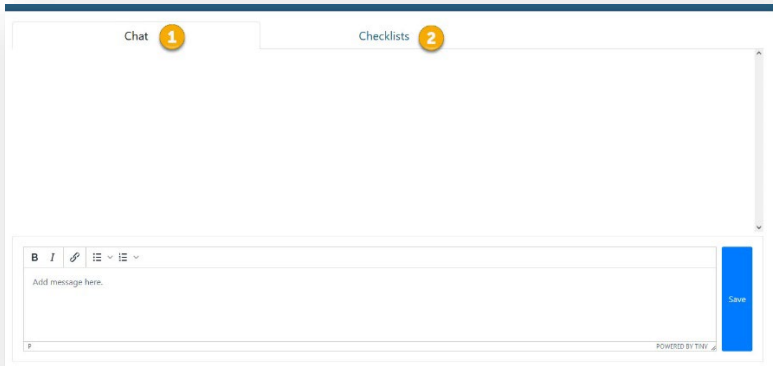
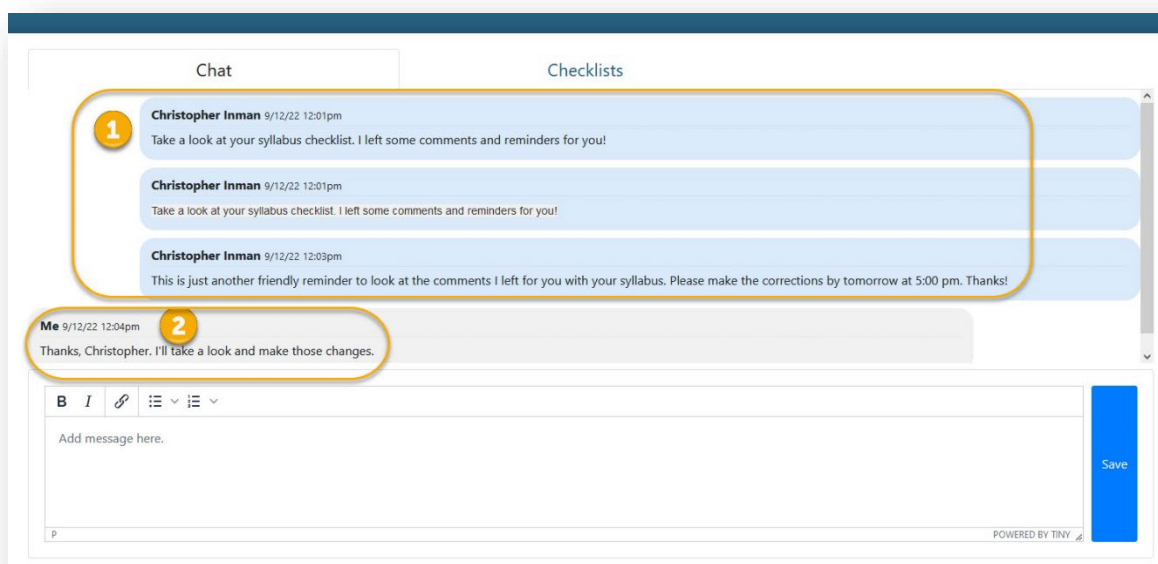
review or development process.	
4. On the right side of the page, the instructor will see the “Chat” [1] area and the “Checklists” area [2]. All communication between the instructional designer and instructor occurs in the chat box. Checklists will provide a list of checklists in which instructors are expected to complete.	

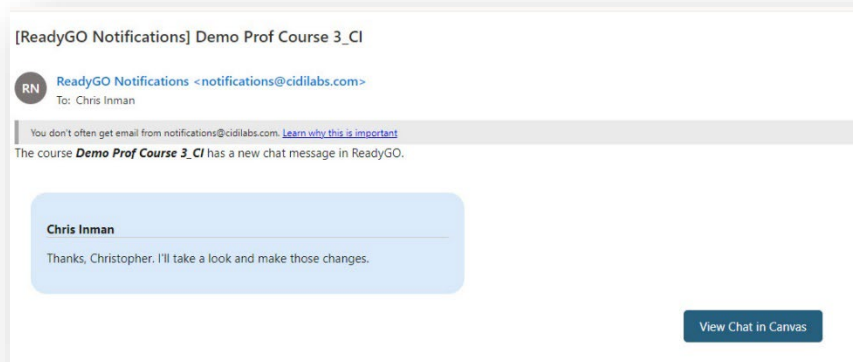
Table 5: An Instructor's View of ReadyGO

Communication in ReadyGO

Messages from an instructional designer will appear in blue in the Chat area [1]. Responses from the instructor will appear in grey in the Chat area [2].

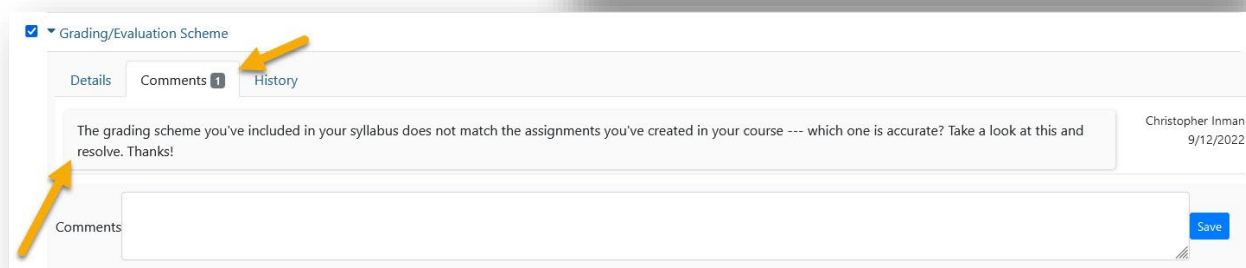
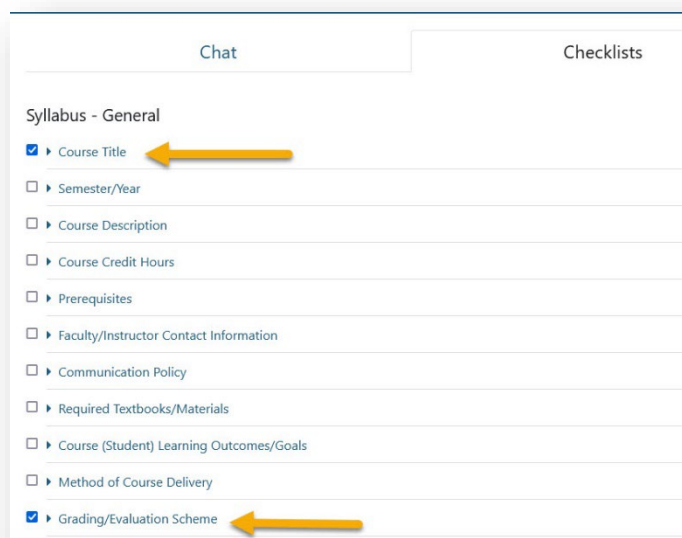


When instructors send a message to instructional designer in ReadyGO, the instructional designer will receive the message in their GEM Office 365 email inbox. (See next image.)



Commenting on Checklists

1. Instructional designers will leave comments and feedback on the checklists in ReadyGo. When this occurs, the checklist item's checkbox will be highlighted in blue, and the box will be checked with a checkmark. (See image to the right.)
2. Instructors can view comments left by the instructional designer by clicking on the checklist item's name, and then by clicking on the "Comments" tab. (See image below.)



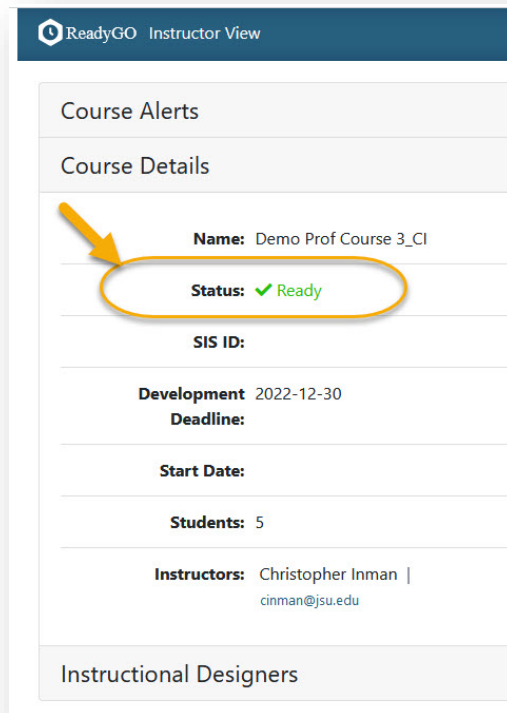
3. Instructors should make any recommended changes and then leave a comment in the comment box. The instructional designer will receive the comment and uncheck the item in the admin panel.
4. The next time an instructor goes to the Checklist area in ReadyGo, the completed item will no longer be checked.

Completing a Review in ReadyGO

Once a review is complete and the course has successfully passed the review, the course has earned certification. In ReadyGO, the instructional designer will mark the course as “Ready.”

The instructor will see that the course is “Ready” by taking the following steps:

1. Click on “ReadyGO View” in the course navigation menu in their Canvas course.
2. Click on “Course Details.”
3. The instructor will see “Ready” in green text along with a checkmark beside it next to “Status.” (See next image).



Section 1: Course Overview and Introduction

Obj.	Standard	Condition	Notes/Comments	Score
1	Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components. (Orientation/Get Started/Start Here content is available.)	Choose an item.		
2	Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.	Choose an item.		
3	Communication expectations for online discussions, email, and other forms of interaction are clearly stated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantive Interaction: Assess or provide feedback on student's coursework Regular Interaction 	Choose an item.		
4	Course 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.	Choose an item.	Available in Orientation & Student Support Module	
5	Minimum technology requirements for the course are clearly stated, and information on how to obtain the technologies is provided.	Choose an item.	Available in Orientation & Student Support Module	
6	Expectations for prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.	Choose an item.		
7	The self-introduction by the instructor is professional and is available online.	Choose an item.		
8	Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.	Choose an item.		
9	A printable syllabus and course calendar is available.	Choose an item.		
10	Course information states the course delivery format: face-to-face, hybrid, online-synchronous, or online-asynchronous.	Choose an item.		
11	Information or links to learner support services are available. (Tutoring, student services, academic services, writing center, etc.	Choose an item.	Available in Orientation & Student Support Module	
Total Score for Section 1: Course Overview and Introduction				/33

Table 6: Section 1 - Course Overview and Introduction

Section 2: Learning Objectives

Obj.	Standard	Condition	Notes/Comments	Score
1	The course learning objectives, or course/program competencies, describe measurable outcomes.	Choose an item.		
2	The module/unit-level learning objectives or competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies.	Choose an item.		
3	Learning objectives or competencies are stated clearly, are written from the learner's perspective, and are prominently located in the course.	Choose an item.		
4	The relationship between learning objectives or competencies and learning activities is clearly stated.	Choose an item.		
5	The learning objectives or competencies are suited to the level of the course.	Choose an item.		
Total Score for Section 2: Learning Objectives				/15

Table 7 - Section 2: Learning Objectives

Section 3: Assessment and Measurement

Obj.	Standard	Condition	Notes/Comments	Score
1	The assessments measure the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	Choose an item.		
2	The course grading policy is stated clearly at the beginning of the course.	Choose an item.		
3	Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners' work, and their connection to the course grading policy is clearly explained. (Rubrics, grading schema, and exemplary work samples are provided where appropriate.)	Choose an item.		
4	The assessments used are sequenced, varied, and suited to the level of the course	Choose an item.		
5	The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress with timely feedback.	Choose an item.		
6	Learners have easy access to a well-designed and up-to-date gradebook.	Choose an item.		
Total Score for Section 3: Assessment and Measurement				/18

Table 8 - Section 3: Assessment and Measurement

Section 4: Instructional Materials

Obj.	Standard	Condition	Notes/Comments	Score
1	The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	Choose an item.		
2	The relationship between the use of instructional materials in the course and completing learning activities is clearly explained.	Choose an item.		
3	The course models the academic integrity expected of learners by providing both source references and permissions for use of instructional materials	Choose an item.		
4	The instructional materials represent up-to-date theory and practice in the discipline.	Choose an item.		
5	Course offers access to a variety of engaging resources that facilitate communication and collaboration, deliver content, and support learning and engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Substantive Interaction: Facilitate a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency.</i> 	Choose an item.		
6	Course materials and resources include copyright and licensing status where applicable	Choose an item.		
Total Score for Section 4: Instructional Materials				/18

Table 9 - Section 4: Instructional Materials

Section 5: Learning Activities and Learner Interaction

Obj.	Standard	Condition	Notes/Comments	Score
1	The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	Choose an item.		
2	Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantive Interaction: Provide direct instruction 	Choose an item.		
3	Course offers opportunities for learner-to-learner interaction and constructive collaboration.	Choose an item.		
4	The instructor's plan for interacting with learners during the course is clearly stated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantive Interaction: Provide information or respond to questions about the content of a course or competency. 	Choose an item.		
5	Learners have an opportunity to get to know the instructor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Interaction 	Choose an item.		
6	The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.	Choose an item.		
7	Course provides activities for learners to develop higher order thinking and problem-solving skills, such as critical reflection and analysis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantive Interaction: Provide direct instruction Regular Interaction 	Choose an item.		
8	Course provides activities that emulate real world applications of the discipline, such as experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantive Interaction: Provide direct instruction Regular Interaction 	Choose an item.		
Total Score for Section 5: Learner Activities and Learner Interaction				/24

Table 10 - Section 5: Learning Activities and Learner Interaction

Section 6: Design and Layout

Obj.	Standard	Condition	Notes/Comments	Score
1	The course homepage is functional and well-organized.	Choose an item.		
2	Large blocks of information are divided into manageable sections with ample white space around and between the blocks.	Choose an item.		
3	There is enough contrast between text and background for the content to be easily viewed.	Choose an item.		
4	Instructions are provided and well written.	Choose an item.		
5	Text is formatted with titles, headings, and other styles to enhance readability and improve the structure of the document.	Choose an item.		
6	Font size is consistent within each page and across pages.	Choose an item.		
7	Canvas Pages are used where appropriate rather than direct uploads of files (PDFs, WORD documents, PPT, etc.)	Choose an item.		
8	Video and audio material are chunked into easily digestible chunks no longer than 15 to 20 minutes in length.	Choose an item.		
Total Score for Section 6: Design and Layout				/24

Table 11 - Section 6: Design and Layout

Section 7: Course Technology

Obj.	Standard	Condition	Notes/Comments	Score
1	The tools used in the course support the learning objectives or competencies.	Choose an item.		
2	Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.	Choose an item.		
3	The course provides learners with information on protecting their data and privacy.	Choose an item.	Available in Orientation & Student Support Module	
Total Score for Section 7: Course Technology				/9

Table 12 - Section 7: Course Technology

Section 8: Accessibility and Mobile Compatibility

Obj.	Standard	Condition	Notes/Comments	Score
1	Course navigation facilitates ease of use.	Choose an item.		
2	The course design facilitates readability.	Choose an item.		
3	The course provides alternative means of access to multimedia content in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.	Choose an item.		
4	Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.	Choose an item.		
5	Hyperlink text is descriptive and makes sense when out of context (avoid using "click here").	Choose an item.		
6	The use of blue text or underlined text to signify importance of textual content is avoided.	Choose an item.		
7	All content is mobile compatible.	Choose an item.		
8	Videos are captioned.	Choose an item.		
9	Images are given proper alt-text or designated as "decorative"	Choose an item.		
Total Score for Section 8: Accessibility and Mobile Compatibility				/27

Table 13 - Section 8: Accessibility and Mobile Compatibility

Totals Table

Section 1	/33
Section 2	/15
Section 3	/18
Section 4	/18
Section 5	/24
Section 6	/24
Section 7	/9
Section 8	/27
Total	/168

Table 14 - Totals Table

Rating Scale

- 151 – 168 = Certified “Exemplary”
- 134 – 150 = Certified “Accomplished”
- 117 – 133 = Making Progress
- 0 – 116 = Incomplete

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