



UW-La Crosse Online Course Evaluation Guidelines

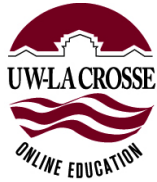
The *UWL Online Course Evaluation Guidelines* are intended to help instructors create and teach well-designed online courses. The *Guidelines* outline specific features of online courses and recommend ways to design, deliver, and improve courses. The *Guidelines* identify the key features of courses and gives suggestions on how to implement each one in a course. Not all *Guidelines* will apply in every course.

The *Guidelines* are divided into 5 categories (course overview/information and content, learning objectives and learning engagement, learner support and accessibility, interaction/presence, feedback and assessment).

The *Guidelines* may be used as a tool:

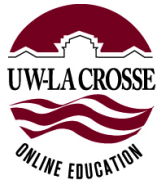
- for self-assessment by instructors during the design and development of their online courses.
- to provide constructive feedback to instructors on the design and delivery of their online courses.
- in the *UWL Online Course Development Funding* process to document that an online course has been fully developed.
- in the *UWL Online Instructor Training* to help participants identify the features of effective online course design.

| Course Overview / Information & Content | | Suggestions for the Category |
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| 1 | The Course begins with a welcome message that includes instructions on how to get started and information about being a successful online learner. | Include general information about the nature and purpose of the course, the course activities, grading structure, and where to find specific information on each. Consider different formats of delivery for your welcome message (audio, video, screencast, etc.) and including the Online Readiness Tutorial: https://www.uwlax.edu/info/online-readiness-tutorial/ |
| 2 | The Syllabus is current and comprehensive, describing course objectives and description, topics, policies, expectations, and provides a list of essential university resources. | This editable Syllabus Template is for you to use or import sections into your own syllabus. You will find a list of university resources with links that satisfy this guideline. |
| 3 | The Course and unit/module learning objectives are clearly stated, measurable, and are aligned to student learning activities and assessments. | When developing your course, begin with the end in mind. Consider the skills and abilities you want students to master by the end of the course. In a matrix (or similar organizer) outline the relationship/alignment between the objectives, activities, and assessments. |



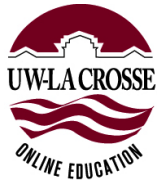
UW-La Crosse Online Course Evaluation Guidelines

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| 4 | The Course includes course task lists that detail what is expected each week/unit/module. | Consider adding a course schedule and week/unit/module checklist. |
| 5 | The Course content is clearly presented and structured in a logical, consistent, and uncluttered manner. | Provide consistency in the design of learning modules, assignments, and rubrics. Making the course easy to navigate includes a consistent color scheme and icon layout, related content organized together, and self-evident titles. |
| 6 | The Course content is chunked or grouped to help students learn the content. | To avoid cognitive overload, consider dividing course information into manageable “chunks” (i.e., short videos, smaller PPT’s, etc.). These self-contained segments can be used to assess learner mastery of the content before proceeding. Explain the purpose of the material where appropriate. |
| Learning Objectives & Learner Engagement | | Suggestions for the Category |
| 7 | The Course is designed to facilitate active and self-directed learning and includes authentic activities and real-life tasks that allow students to apply knowledge and skills where appropriate. | When choosing assignments, some of the best learning opportunities in an online course tend to be those that are interactive and include the instructor and other learners such as experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities. This helps build connections and understanding to real world applications and practice. |
| 8 | The Instructor interactively engages learners in a variety of instructional delivery methods. | Present course content using a combination of instructor-created and open resources such as written narratives, text-based presentations, videos, podcasts, websites, presentations with audio, tutorials, journal articles, readings, case studies, etc. |
| 9 | The Course provides opportunities for collaborative work. | Provide clear directions for each collaborative task. Provide clear and concise outcomes that are appropriate, reasonable, and achievable. |
| 10 | The Course contains clearly stated instructions to learners that clarify how assignments and assessments are to be completed. | With an online course, providing written instructions is the norm for communicating important information. A practice common in online courses is to include these instructions in the syllabus and/or within the course itself. |



UW-La Crosse Online Course Evaluation Guidelines

| Learner Support & Accessibility | | Suggestions for the Category |
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| 11 | The Instructor ensures course materials are accessible and provides maximum readability and meets ADA accessibility standards. | <p>Information about accessibility guidelines can be found on the Americans with Disabilities Act site.</p> <p><i>Most common accessibility items to be aware of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An accessible video includes captions, a transcript, and audio description and is delivered in an accessible media player. - Use a sans-serif font (Arial, Calibri, Tahoma) of at least 12 pt. - Limit type face to no more than 2. - Format text with titles, headings, and other styles to enhance readability and improve structure in the course. - Short, succinct alternative text is added to images providing readability for screen readers. - Don't use color as the only visual means of conveying information. Provide good color contrast. |
| 12 | The Course materials and/or media-based content contains hyperlinks that are descriptive. | <p>Define hyperlinks in writing. Be purposeful in describing links by providing learners with the context of where clicking the link will take them.</p> <p>Good Example: For more information, visit the Descriptive Links Accessibility website.</p> <p>Poor Example: Click here for more information on proper link text.</p> |
| Interaction / Presence | | Suggestions for the Category |
| 13 | The Instructor includes brief commentaries for each module/unit reflecting the instructor's personal insight, perspective, or experience related to course content. | <p>Create course items such as short videos, presentations with guiding questions, course announcements, or written lecture narratives that add your voice, perspective, impressions, examples, research, stories, etc. These course items can be used to further explain difficult course concepts.</p> <p>Including module/unit summaries and transitions in the News, Discussion, and/or Content area can also help explain course concepts.</p> |



UW-La Crosse Online Course Evaluation Guidelines

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| 14 | The Course contains a variety of resources or activities intended to build a sense of community, support communication, and establish trust. | Separate discussion forums for community building and introductions, peer review activities, and feedback are included. |
| 15 | The Instructor purposefully uses a variety of technological tools to foster engagement. | Consider course resources and tools that engage learners. Look for ways to increase participation and activity in an online course using technology. |
| Assessment and Feedback | | Suggestions for the Category |
| 16 | The Course contains detailed rubrics or instructions for all assessments. | Provide explicit guidelines for completing assignments, participating in discussions, and how activities are assessed. |
| 17 | The Course contains an organized grades area with individual gradable activities. | Have the grades area fully set up prior to the beginning of the course so students can see all the graded items up front. Review the FERPA website . |
| 18 | The Instructor clearly states information concerning grading, and includes grading scale, weights, and consequences of late submissions. | Clarify your grading requirements by posting them in the syllabus and in the course. |
| 19 | The Instructor provides a variety of assessments that measure stated learning objectives and are appropriate for the online learning environment. | Create a diversified assessment plan executed throughout the duration of the course. Use self-assessments, assignments, papers, projects, quizzes, exams, etc. to assess learning. |
| 20 | The Instructor provides opportunities for the learner to give descriptive feedback on course design, course content, facilitation, assessments, and activities to improve the course for the learners. | Design evaluative methods to gather learner feedback about the ease of navigation in the class, instructor involvement and quality, as well as course content and delivery. Consider formal and informal ways to gather mid-course and end-of-course feedback (i.e., survey, discussion, email invitation). |



UW-La Crosse Online Course Evaluation Guidelines

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| 21 | The Course assessments, activities, and evaluations are designed to uphold academic integrity and encourage academic honesty. | Incorporate a variety of pedagogical strategies and alternative assessments that deters learners from engaging in academic dishonesty such as Respondus Lockdown browser, timed exams, and turning large project in by sections. Application-type exams (problem-based learning, case-based learning) can also help. |
| Comments: | | |

Adapted from:

Chao, T., Saj, T., Tessier, F. (2006). *Establishing a Quality Review for Online Courses*. Educause Quarterly, 3.

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