Online Course Rubric

Developer Names: _____ Department: _____

Reviewer/Supervisor: _____ College: _____

Course Number: _____ Date: _____

The Online Course Observation Rubric is one of several data sources for evaluating the effectiveness of instruction of online courses – distance education, hybrid, and web-enhanced. It can be complemented with other sources of data such as on-campus observation forms, SEOI reports, syllabi, class handouts and projects, tests, etc.

Source: "Quality Matters: Inter-Institutional Quality Assurance in Online Learning" from Mary Wells, Quality Matters co-director and consultant for Maryland Online, 2006. The Quality Matters™ Rubric is owned by MarylandOnline and is sponsored in part by the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

I. COURSE OVERVIEW AND ORGANIZATION

General Review Standard: The overall design of the course, navigational information, as well as course, instructor, and student information are made transparent to the student at the beginning of the course.

	Yes/No	Comments
Navigational instructions make the organization of the course easy to understand. For example, the items on the Course Menu and the icons are in a logical, and easy-to-follow sequence. Also all the items and links "work."	☐ Yes ☐ No	
A statement introduces the student to the course and to the structure of the student learning.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
"Netiquette" expectations with regard to discussions and email communication are clearly stated; the instructor's "tone" is respectful.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Minimum technology requirements, minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline, are clearly stated.	☐ Yes ☐ No	

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES (COMPETENCIES)

General Review Standard: Learning objectives are clearly defined and explained. They assist the student to focus on learning activities.

	Yes/No	Comments
The learning objectives of the course describe outcomes that are measurable.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
The learning objectives address content mastery, critical thinking skills, and core learning skills.	☐ Yes ☐ No	

	Yes/No	Comments
The learning objectives of the course are clearly stated and understandable to the student.	☐Yes ☐No	
Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and easy to understand.	☐Yes ☐No	
The learning objectives of the course are articulated and specified on the module/unit level.	☐Yes ☐No	

III. ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT

General Review Standard: Assessment strategies use established ways to measure effective learning, assess student progress by reference to stated learning objectives, and are designed as essential to the learning process.

	Yes/No	Comments
The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources.	☐Yes ☐No	
The grading policy is transparent and easy to understand.	☐Yes ☐No	
Assessment and measurement strategies provide feedback to the student.	☐Yes ☐No	
The types of assessments selected and the methods used for submitting assessments are appropriate for the online environment.	☐Yes ☐No	
"Self-check" or practice types of assignments are provided for quick student feedback.	☐Yes ☐No	

IV. RESOURCES AND COURSE MATERIALS

General Review Standard: Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve announced objectives and learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. (Materials, other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by the instructor or other educators skilled in preparing materials for online learning.)

	Yes/No	Comments
The instructional materials support the stated learning objectives and have sufficient breadth and depth for the student to learn the subject.	☐Yes ☐No	
The instructional materials include instructor's notes in addition to links, the publisher's website, quizzes, etc. Instructional materials are presented in a format appropriate to the online environment, and are easily accessible to and usable by the student.	☐Yes ☐No	
The purpose of the course elements (content, instructional methods, technologies, and course materials) is evident. The instructional materials, including supporting materials (such as manuals, videos, CD ROMs, and computer software) are consistent in organization.	☐Yes ☐No	
All resources and materials used in the online course are appropriately cited. An image of the required materials is recommended.	☐Yes ☐No	

V. LEARNER INTERACTION

General Review Standard: The effective design of instructor-student interaction, meaningful student cooperation, and student-content interaction is essential to student motivation, intellectual commitment, and personal development.

	Yes/No	Comments
The learning activities promote the achievement of stated objectives and learning outcomes.	☐Yes ☐No	
Learning activities foster instructor-student interaction, content-student interaction, and, if appropriate to this course, student-student interaction.	☐Yes ☐No	
"Netiquette" expectations with regard to discussions and email communication are clearly stated; the instructor's "tone" is respectful.	☐Yes ☐No	
Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turn-around time for email, grades posted etc.). For example, the instructor should respond to WebCT mail and other questions within two business days.	☐Yes ☐No	
The requirements for course interaction are clearly articulated.	☐Yes ☐No	
The course design prompts the instructor to be present, active, and engaged with the students.	☐Yes ☐No	

VI. COURSE TECHNOLOGY

General Review Standard: To enhance student learning, course technology should enrich instruction and foster learner interactivity.

	Yes/No	Comments
The tools and media support the learning objectives of the course and are integrated with texts and lesson assignments.	☐Yes ☐No	
The tools and media enhance student interactivity and guide the student to become a more active learner.	☐Yes ☐No	
Technologies required for this course are either provided or easily downloadable.	☐Yes ☐No	
The tools and media are compatible with existing standards of delivery modes.	☐Yes ☐No	
Instructions on how to access online resources are sufficient and easy to understand.	☐Yes ☐No	
Course technologies take advantage of existing economies and efficiencies of delivery.	☐Yes ☐No	

VII. LEARNER SUPPORT

General Review Standard: Courses are effectively supported for students through fully accessible modes of delivery, resources, and student support.

	Yes/No	Comments
The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's academic support system can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student support services can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Course instructions articulate or link to tutorials and resources that answer basic questions related to research, writing, technology, etc.	☐ Yes ☐ No	

VIII. ACCESSIBILITY

General Review Standard: The course is accessible to all students.

	Yes/No	Comments
The course acknowledges the importance of ADA requirements.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Web pages provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Web pages have links that are self-describing and meaningful. All the images should be tagged.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
The course demonstrates sensitivity to readability issues. For example, avoid long scrolling text and red or other bright colors.	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Final comments about the course as a whole and its potential to promote student learning (add a page if necessary):

Approval: Yes ___ No ___   Reviewer's Signature: _____Date: _____