Online Class Quality Assurance Criteria

v1 01/03/2019

The following questions are provided to allow the course to be considered by Strathclyde Online Learning Committee. Where questions have a negative response, it is understood that there may be clear learning and teaching, or discipline-specific reasons for this. Responses are looked at in these contexts, and in discussion with the team developing the course.

Part 1: Learning and Teaching

A. Course Activities

1. Is there a logical sequence or learner journey established through activities? I.e. course material does not appear to be organised as a resource bank.
2. Are events signposted early to the student to allow them to make arrangements to attend? This might be face-to-face events, live online tutorials, assessment, group tasks, submissions (individual or group) or other time-sensitive events.
3. Are instructions provided up front and early for all activities?
4. Have supported references or resources of additional information been provided? If so, are they current and when were they last checked?
5. Is there an indication of how long students should spend on each activity?
6. Are there activities that provide data that can be subsequently analysed in order to determine student *engagement* as students progress through the course, providing the opportunity for early interventions with students who may require extra support?
7. Are there activities that provide data that can be subsequently analysed in order to determine student *attainment* as students progress through the course, providing the opportunity for early interventions with students who may require extra support?
8. Do the activities provide an opportunity for staff to identify any difficulties encountered in the curriculum and evaluate the course design at a cohort level?
9. Are details provided informing students how to contact teaching staff if required?

B. Assessment

10. Is the assessment appropriate for the mode of learning?
11. Are assessment criteria clearly outlined to students?
12. If there is work-based learning, is this appropriately integrated?

C. Feedback

13. Are details of feedback mechanisms and timescales clearly outlined to students?

14. Are any details provided of how student feedback has impacted course development?

Part 2: Presentational

C. Standards & Branding

15. Does video and audio content conform to production standards and branding? ([Appendix 1 - Online Class Presentation Standards](#))
16. Does branding exclude other uses?

Part 3: Accessibility & Flexibility

D. Accessibility

17. Do all aspects of the course confirm to legislative and instructional accessibility requirements? (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps). In particular,
    a. Are all videos accurately transcribed and captioned?
    b. Do all images, animations, on-screen text, simulations and infographics have text-only alternatives?
    c. Do any links open a browser window?

E. Flexibility

18. Does the class afford flexibility to students?
19. Does the class afford flexibility to staff?

Appendix 1: Online Class Presentation Standards
Minimum requirements

[v1 01.03.19]

Purpose of this document

University of Strathclyde is committed to high quality markers in the production of online courses. This document outlines guidance on minimum requirements for online class developments.

The standards outlined in this document have been agreed by representatives of the Faculties of Business, Humanities & Social Sciences, Science and Engineering.

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1. Digital interface

The learning experience, the quality perception of online classes, and the institution's reputation can be deduced from varying factors including the interface, presentation and structure of content. Well-presented online classes create meaningful impressions - key to this is visual impact and credibility. Learners judge their experience through a visual connection and the quality of meaningful content, interaction and engagement. Visuals retain interest, encourage motivation, participation and provide variety. Quality markers are outlined in the points below:

Requirements:

- **Brand styles**
  - Comply with faculty branding and comply with colours and University logos
  - Refer to [University's Brand Rules](#) for requirements

- **Site structure**
  Consider the following recommendations:

  Heading

  - Include a visually attractive and relevant banner header graphic (images must be copyright compliant).
  - Class title and code.

  Myplace site structure

  - Avoid long scrolling screens.
  - Consider Myplace *Collapsed Topics* setting for weekly/topics course structure.
  - Consider timed release, conditional formatting where required in course design.

  Information structure

  - Welcome to the class
    Include up to a 1 minute video briefly outlining the class, what to consider and extend a positive human connection.
  - Contact information
    Include key contacts, tutors, administrators, help and assistance etc.
  - Communication channels
    Include frequency and methods of student/tutor engagement, ie. Notices, Webinars, Forums, email management, conveying changes to content or on-campus activity
  - Class overview
    Include an outline of the module/programme with a statement of learning outcomes
  - Policy documentation
    Include important links/documentation ie Plagiarism, Discipline, Learning Analytics
  - Assessment and Feedback
    Include assessment criteria and weightings, assignment and exams times/deadlines.

- Recommended reading / study resources
  Include links to reading resources, ISBN and titles for texts, Library and study skills support, IT/Software support and resources.

<u>Weekly/topic content structure</u>

- Welcome to the week / topic
  Default option should include (up to) a 1 minute video briefly outlining the class/current week, what to consider and extending a positive message. However, where the course design establishes human presence and a consistent voice, this option may be considered unnecessary.

- Clear labelling and subheadings
  Avoid a scrolling list of files and links. Break up content for aesthetics and guidance.

- Numbered steps / items
  Apply an identifier to every item in every section to allow ease of reference.
  For example: 1.1, 1.2; 2.1, 2.2 etc.

- Explicit instructions and descriptions
  Include clear information and directions and what is required of the student.
  For example: Read the chapter from page 8-12; complete all the answers in this quiz - one attempt is allowed, submit your assignment by Monday 14th November at 12 noon.

- Show file type, size and duration in minutes where using video
  For example: PDF 1.2mb, 01:25 mins

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- Structure content appropriately and chronologically where required
- Accurate spelling and explicit use Plain English.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms.

- **Navigation**
  - Include horizontal navigation menu linking to sections / weeks / topics.
  - Break up content structure and include labels and sub headings.
  - Ensure content pathway is clear.

- **Design for devices**
  - Consider the student experience and visibility of content when using tablets, smartphones and laptops.

2. Content

Learning content is hosted on Myplace which is not public facing marketing material and is therefore not covered by the University's digital brand guides.

Recorded video which requires engaging on-screen visuals may have such visuals comprise the majority of what is on-screen eg annotated diagrams, calculation, illustrative drawings to ensure clarity of visual presentation of the principle subject. Any audio must be clear and easily understood at reasonable volume levels.

Requirements:

- **All Learning Objects and Content**
  All learning objects that are produced and made accessible to students must be of a professional standard. The range and style of learning objects used will be dependent upon the nature of the course and context of the learning activity but essential standards of presentation and accessibility are:

- **Video**

  Duration

  - The recommended maximum duration of learning video content is 10 minutes. Video longer than 10 minutes may be appropriate as part of the course design. However, designers should be aware of implications of larger video streaming/download times and user experience.

  Production Quality

  - Video must be clear in composition, appropriately framed and set in terms brightness and contrast that clearly show the intended subject on screen.
  - Videos should be produced to professional standards and formats. Videos should be presented in the following universally accessible formats eg as H.264 .mp4 files.

  Graphics

  - University idents required at the beginning and at the end of each learning content video.
  - University idents required at end only for Welcome videos.
  - Ident duration: 3.5 secs.
  - Title graphics: solid block navy banner with white text, or white text applied directly against the background. Positioning at the discretion of the video producer.
  - Titles block colour:
    Pantone 289
    CMYK 100, 64, 0, 60
    RGB 0, 43, 92

#002b5c

<u>Titles font</u>

- Video title font: Meta Thin
- Course title font size is 32pt
- Topic title font size is 24pt

<u>Titles naming convention</u>

LEARNING VIDEO CONTENT

- do not include course or class name, or class code
- include topic title.
- include professional title and name.
- naming convention is Dr or Prof for professional titles.
- do not use Mr, Ms, Miss, Mrs, Mx.

WELCOME VIDEO CONTENT

- include professional title and name.
- naming convention is Dr or Prof for professional titles.
- do not use Mr, Ms, Miss, Mrs, Mx.
- include department.

<u>Music</u>

- Welcome videos: licensed music may be used at the beginning and end
- Learning content videos: no music should be used

- **Slides**
  - University faculty's 16:9 widescreen templates only.
  - University-branded (ie blue logo) templates or Faculty-specific templates should be used. Departmental sub-branding is not permitted. Use of additional logos such as those of external partners is acceptable. Course teams should consult with Marketing and Communications and/or Research & Knowledge Exchange Services to confirm the correct hierarchy and placement of such logos.
  - Slides font: Arial.
  - Avoid transitions between slides (for video).
  - Limit animated text, graphics and steps (for video).
  - Minimum font size is 12-14pt for body text.
  - Avoid light colours and ensure no use of yellow.

3. Compliance

Copyright protects literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works as well as films, sound recordings and broadcasts. Where copyright protected work is required, the class owner is **required to obtain permission from the copyright owner or rely on a licence or statutory copyright exception.**

Non-compliant material cannot be hosted on Myplace.

Class sites may be subject to an audit and where non-compliant material is present, there may be financial penalties or license revocation. Detailed guidance on [Information Governance and Compliance](#) is available on the University website.

Requirements:

- Use the Library [Scanning Service](#) for scanned items from a library sources.

- Class owner assumes responsibility to obtain appropriate permissions and to ensure teaching materials do not breach copyright.

- Citing the source of copyrighted material does not create an exemption from copyright obligations unless the source is explicitly free to use and clearly states this (ie Creative Commons use).

- Class owners **must obtain explicit written permission** from the content creator/publisher and be able to provide evidence of permission if requested.

- Class owners should not download video files from the internet for subsequent uploading and use in Myplace. Links to the original copy of the videos should be posted instead (ie. YouTube, TEDTalks).

- Where you wish to use articles or case studies, for example, *Harvard Business Review* or online sources, please post links where possible. Do not download article files from the internet.

4. Accessibility

Class providers have a duty to ensure online courses are accessible.

Requirements:

Class elements

- Ensure consistency in layout and information pathways.
- Use clear labelling, correct spelling and instructions.
- Explain what is held in folders using clear labelling.

- Set links to external site to open in a new window and ensure this is clearly stated.

Graphic content

- Avoid presenting text-based information as an image.
- Avoid low contrast colours and text.
- Enter a description in Image Properties fields.
- Avoid moving, flashing or scrolling text.

Video learning content

- Videos captions/subtitles: essential.
- Transcription: essential.
- Provide clear links to transcripts alongside video and collectively where multiple video files are provided.

5. Preparation requirements

Development and running of high-quality online classes require different resources and mechanisms for maintaining quality to those required for traditional face-to-face classes. Development of online classes requires significant resource to develop, often involving a wide range of professional support. This includes project management, media production, planning, administration and the management/support of online activities. Key areas of preparation are:

Requirements:

- **Course planning**
  - Online course proposal has been through the SOL course creation cycle and course approval process.
  - Create or re-design classes using storyboarding or weekly planners, outlining all details of course activity.
  - Prepare class content compliantly, in time, and to required quality standards.

- **Resource planning**
  - Identify teaching skills required to deliver an online course.
    For example, does sufficient knowledge/training/experience of how to teach online exist?
  - Identify technical skills required to deliver an online course.
    For example, do sufficient Myplace skills exist to run an online course?
  - Identify teaching load requirements and additional teaching support needs
    For example, students working in groups of 15-20 may require 1 facilitator per group for supporting online activities, managing forums and monitoring engagement.
  - Identify production resources, particularly where video is required.

- Identify academic support services, ie. the Library, Study Skills staff.

- **Project approach**
  - Establish and have approved business case before development commences.
  - Multi-skilled team required to produce and run an online course: *Project Manager/Learning Technologist, Video/Media/Content producers, Programme Management/Administrators, Teaching Staff, IT support, Faculty Librarian.*
  - Identify and agree roles and responsibilities.
  - Establish timelines and milestones and professionally commit to development.
  - Identify and plan risk management strategy.
  - Manage issues and ensure project governance structure is in place.
  - Adhere to project development scope.
  - Identify communications strategy.
  - Identify change management strategy.
  - Observe institutional quality criteria and establish subject-based quality criteria.

- **Online teaching skills**

  Where knowledge/experience does not exist, recommended courses should be considered:

  - [Demystification of Online Learning Workshop](#)
  - [Teaching and Learning Online (TALON)](#)
  - [PG(Cert) Learning and Teaching in Higher Education](#)
  - [STEP *How To…* sessions](#)
  - [*Quick STEP Myplace* lunchtime sessions](#)
  - [Getting Started with Myplace](#)

- **Media skills**
  - Prepare for video production and consider professional and practical training to gain sufficient skills for presenting to camera.

- **Class management**
  - Establish course governance structure.
  - Identify programme management and administration resources and processes.
  - Ensure student registration and site access complies with University systems and processes.
  - Understand relationships between PEGASUS and Myplace and student accounts.