MUS Principles of Quality with Alignments and Strategies

The University of Montana, along with the other Montana University System campuses, subscribes to the MUS Principles of Quality Online Course Design to guide course development and delivery (both eLearning and other modes). The UMOnline Instruction Design team is available to assist faculty in developing courses where the student experiences meet these 5 core principles:

1. Course Design and Introduction
2. Learning Outcomes
3. Assessment and Measurement
4. Instructional Materials and Resources
5. Learner Engagement and Support

1. Course Design and Introduction

The course design, navigation, and content, as well as instructor and student expectations are made clear to students from day one and throughout the course. The course materials, interactions, and policies are universally designed to accommodate all students.

1.1	Teacher presence is visible through the design and the facilitation of the course. **Looks like:** • Welcome message • Topic overview • Instructor engagement in content & discussions • Instructor provided feedback	OSCQR Standards 1-10 OSCQR Standards 38-43	**Profile**: Personalize your Canvas profile for students to find basic information about you as the instructor and your contact information. **Announcements**: Post relevant and value-added course topics. **Upload/Record Media**: Record yourself welcoming students to the course and providing a few interesting facts about yourself. **Feedback Comments**: Provide timely and personalized comments via text, audio, or video on student work. **Discussions**: Get the most out of online discussions by replying to and promoting student thinking. **Canvas Inbox**: Use the Canvas Inbox to communicate with students individually or as small groups regarding course specifics. **Conferences:** Setup virtual office hours or check-ins; allowing student to self-signup for slots.
1.2	Course has an identified starting place, the organizational system of the course is explained, and uses responsive design. **Looks like:**	OSCQR Standards 11-15	**UM Template**: Course leverages the UM Template. The UM Templates have been carefully designed, branded, and tested to utilize instructional design principles and to test for accessibility responsiveness. Students ask for consistency in online course environments to help them focus on content learning verses navigation.

	• Text or video orientation to the course • Objectives align with content • Guidelines for success • Printable syllabus • Technology requirements identified		Syllabus: Syllabus link is in the course navigation and follows the UM template guidelines (including printable option). Goals, Objectives, and requirements are aligned with the course design, Canvas Assignments and Canvas gradebook. Course Card: Add a relevant visual representation of the course subject.
1.3	The navigation of the course is logical, consistent, and accessible (for example, heading structure, descriptive links, alternative text, appropriate use of color, etc.). **Looks like:** • Consistent navigation • Manageable sections of content • Accessible materials	OSCQR Standards 16-28	Course Navigation: Only relevant Course Navigation links are shown to students (e.g. SHOW Announcements, Syllabus, Modules and Grades but HIDE Files, Pages, Discussions and unused items). Accessibility Checklist: Content meets accessibility standards.

2. Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes and objectives describe what learners will be able to do upon completion of the course. They establish a foundation upon which the rest of the course is based.

2.1	Course learning outcomes are clearly defined, measurable, and visible to students. **Looks like:** • Clearly stated outcomes… what students will know and be able to do.	OSCQR Standard #9	Syllabus: Overall course outcomes/goals are clearly communicated in the syllabus and course introduction resources. The syllabus outlines class expectations such as participation rules, etiquette expectations, code of conduct; policies for grading, late work, and make-up work; supplemental textbooks, reading lists, and technology requirements.
2.2	Module/unit objectives are measurable and aligned with course-level outcomes. **Looks like:**	Blooms Taxonomy	Modules: Each Module starts by specifying the learning objectives that are clear and measurable. Assignments: Assignments, discussions, and quizzes align with the stated objectives. Bloom's Taxonomy: Objectives are scaffolded and measurable.

		• Module by module objectives chunked to meet full course outcomes.		

2.3	Students build mastery of learning outcomes through engagement with the content (such as through activities and assessments), engagement with peers, and engagement with the instructor.
	Looks like:
	• Active learning and interaction with content
	• Peer collaboration and community
	• Regular and substantive interaction with instructor
		OSCQR Standards 29-31	**Instructor Designed Content:**
			• **Content Presentation:** Pages and other content display options utilize the formatting and integration options from the Rich Content Editor.
			• **Content Types:** A variety of methods are used within each Module including Pages, External Links, Quizzes, and Discussions.
			
			Student Engagement:
			• **Learning Evidence:** There are a variety of ways for student to present learning evidence including Assignments, Discussions, and Quizzes,
			• **Student Groups and Collaborations:**
			    • Groups
			    • Collaborations
			
			Guideline 1.1: Review for Instructor engagement tools and indicators.	

3. Assessment and Measurement

Assessments use established strategies to measure effective learning, are aligned to the learning objectives, and are designed as essential to the learning process.

3.1	The grading policy includes clearly stated criteria for how work and participation will be evaluated. **Looks like:** • Grading policy/criteria outlined in the syllabus • Rubrics provided • Gradebook matches criteria	OSCQR Standards 44-50	Syllabus: Grading policy/criteria are clearly defined in the syllabus. Rubrics: Rubrics are used to communicate expectations of quality.
3.2	Assessment uses a combination of formative and summative assessment techniques that follow universal design (UDL) principles by involving students in their learning progress, supporting	OSCQR Standards 44-50 UDL Guidelines	**Variability:** students are given the opportunity to provide learning evidence in a variety of formats (written, audio, video, slide presentations, etc.). **Formative & Summative:** Graded and Ungraded quizzes and surveys provide a continuum of learning checks.

	learner variability through flexible assessments, and eliminating unnecessary barriers. **Looks like:** • Variety of assessment checks ranging from knowledge to application. • Low and high-stake assessments in different formats such as written, audio, video • Feedback and reflection		**Ongoing Assessment:** Design offers regular opportunities for students to submit work and (assignments, discussions, quizzes, etc.) receive feedback avoiding a surprise about their grade as the course wraps up (student grades view). **Alignment to Objectives:** Assessments are designed to measure the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the course. **Accommodations:** Time and submission attempts are just two adjustments that can be made to accommodate student needs.
3.3	Students can clearly see how they are building mastery of learning outcomes and objectives through timely feedback and a gradebook aligned with the syllabus. **Looks like:** • Activities & assignments directly support course outcomes • Rubrics aligned • Gradebook aligned • Continuous instructor feedback	OSCQR Standards 44-50	Gradebook: The gradebook must reflect the outcomes from the syllabus. Opportunities for students to see their course status in the form of a grade should be continuous throughout the course. SpeedGrader: Design for and use SpeedGrader for prompt and high-quality feedback. Assignment Groups and Weighting: Assignment groups and weights should be set up at the start of the course and align with the syllabus. Feedback Comments: Provide timely and personalized comments via text, audio, or video on student work. Discussions: Get the most out of online discussions by replying to and promoting student thinking.

4. Instructional Materials and Resources

Instructional materials, including supporting technology, have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency to enable students to achieve course objectives and learning outcomes.

4.1	Instructional materials and technology used in the course enrich instruction and foster learner interactivity. **Looks like:** • Materials and technology serve a specific purpose • OER is promoted	OSCQR Standards 38-43	**Course Card**: Add a relevant visual representation of the course subject. **Multiple Options for Learning Content:** Content is presented in a variety of ways including text, video, presentations, online lecture, etc. **Open Education Resources (OER)**: Consider integrating OER materials and resources.
4.2	Instructional materials and technology are universally designed for learning (UDL). **Looks like:** • Alt tags, captions, color contrast, descriptive hyperlinks • Student choice	OSCQR Standards 29-37 UDL Guidelines	**UDL Design** minimizes barriers for student learning by providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action & expression. **Accessibility Checklist**: Content meets accessibility standards (content scaffolding, alt tags, captions, hyperlink methods, etc.). **Consistency:** Content scaffolding is predictable from module to module and aligned with course goals.
4.3	The instructor uses a variety of instructional materials in the course (such as textbooks and other publications, instructor-created resources, websites, and multimedia) to support and enrich student learning. **Looks like:** • Textbooks, libguides, journal articles, trade publications, current events/news, original & online videos, podcasts • Current & relevant materials	OSCQR Standards 29-31	**Instructional Materials:** Utilize multiple valid sources of content and content that is represented within textbooks, journals, podcasts, blogs, videos, etc. **Leverage Canvas Accessibility**: When possible use Canvas Pages to present content, instead of linking to external URLs or files. **Copyright**: Copyright, Fair Use Guidelines and Creative Commons licensing regulations are followed.

5. Learner Engagement and Support

The course design and delivery includes meaningful engagement designed to enhance student's motivation, intellectual commitment, and personal development. Such engagement should include substantial instructor-to-student, student-to-student, and student-to-content interaction.

5.1	Instructors regularly and substantively interact with students through social presence, teaching presence, and cognitive presence to support learning throughout the course. **Looks like:** Instructor involvement & presence in feedback, discussions, information, Q&A, and student achievement monitoring	OSCQR Standard 29 UM's RSI Tipsheet	Guideline 1.1: Review for Instructor engagement tools and indicators. Regular and Substantiative Interaction: Predicable and scheduled interactions that are learning focused and initiated by you as the instructor. - Routine announcement posts. - Active facilitation of online discussions. - Scheduled online review session. - Personalize comments/feedback on student assignments. - Timely responses to student questions or concerns about student performance.
5.2	The design and facilitation of student interaction is responsive to the variety of cultures and communication styles in the learning community. **Looks like:** - Course welcome communications commitment to inclusivity &safe learning space - Clear guidelines for conduct and discourse - Modeled and monitored by instructor		Inclusive Language: Course language is respectful of student identity, experience, and background (e.g. heritage, family, socioeconomic). Course Feedback: Continuous feedback is sought and used to meet learning needs. Welcome Discussion: There is a discussion designed to build a sense of community. **Learning Evidence:** There are a variety of ways for student to present learning evidence (papers, presentations, quizzes, discussions, video, audiocasts, etc.)
5.3	The course is effectively supported for the students through fully accessible modes of	OSCQR Standards 16-28	Leverage Canvas Accessibility: When possible, Canvas Pages are used to present content instead of linking to external URLs or files. Link Validation: All links, files, videos, and external URLs are active and working.

	delivery, resources, and institutional support services essential to learner success. **Looks like:** • Implements best practices for accessibility and Universal Design		Accessibility Checker: Use build in Canvas Accessibility Checker as well as UM provided tools to ensure compliance. **UM Accessible Technology Services (ATS)**: Put in a ticket to ATS for Audio and Video Captioning, Text Formatting Services, and Document and Website Reviews. Student View: Navigate your course as a test student to verify the quality and functionality of the student experience.
5.4	The instructor employs evidence-based pedagogical practices to deepen student engagement and enhance learning. Looks like: • Community, communication, interaction, networking	OSCQR Standards 38-43 OSCQR Standard 29	Consult with your college and department on specific pedagogical strategies and goals. Access resources from UMOnline and UM Office of Organizational Learning and Development.

Adapted from: Principles of Quality for Online Courses in the Montana University System & Instructure Course Evaluation Checklist