**Checklist for an Exemplary Virtual Course**

This document has been compiled from several sources including the author’s personal virtual classroom experience, the Blackboard Exceptional Course Program Rubric[[1]](#footnote-1) and the Quality Matters Rubric[[2]](#footnote-2)

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# Course Design

## Goals and objectives

* Goals and objectives are clearly explained at the appropri­ate level and reflect desired outcomes
* Goals and objectives express measureable outcomes (students know what they are expected to be able to do)

## Instructional Materials

* The instructional materials contribute to achieving the stated course and module learning objectives or competencies.
* Both the purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained. 
* All resources and materials used in the course are appropriately cited.
* The instructional materials are appropriately current.
* A variety of instructional materials is used in the course.

## Content Presentation

* Content is “chunked” in manageable segments (i.e., presented in distinct learning units or modules)
* Content flows in a logical progression
* Content is presented using a variety of appropri­ate mechanisms
* Content is enhanced with visual and auditory elements

## Learner Engagement

* It is clear how the instructional strategies will enable students to reach course goals and objectives
* Higher order thinking (e.g., analysis, problem solving, or critical reflection) is expected of learners and explained with examples or models as appropriate for content
* Individualized instruction, remedial activities, or resources for advanced learning activities, such as integrated publisher resources, are provided

## Technology Use

* Tools available within the synchronous platform are used to facilitate learning by engaging students with course content
* Technologies are used cre­atively in ways that transcend traditional, teacher-centered instruction
* A variety of media are incorporated into the course

# Interaction and Collaboration

## Communication Strategies

* There are adequate opportuni­ties for synchronous interaction, as appropriate to the content
* Synchronous communication activities benefit from real-time interactions and facilitate “rapid response” communication (e.g., students gain practice discussing course content extemporane­ously without looking up basic, declarative information)

## Development of Learning Community

* Activities are designed to help build a sense of community among learners
  + The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate.
  + Students are asked to introduce themselves to the class.
* Student-to-student interactions are required
* Students are encouraged to initiate communication with the instructor
* Collaboration activities reinforce course content and learning objectives, while building skills such as teamwork, cooperation, negotiation and consensus-building

## Interaction Logistics

* Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are stated clearly.
* Guidelines explaining required levels of participation (e.g., quantity of interactions) are provided
* Expectations regarding the quality of communications (e.g., what constitutes a “good” answer) are clearly defined
* A rubric or equivalent grading document is available to explain how participation and other course elements will be evaluated

# Learner Support

## Orientation to Course

* Brief introductory tutorial that explains how to use the relevant synchronous platform tools

## Supporting Technologies

* Clear explanation of any additional required technology is provided within the session

## Instructor Role Information

* Contact information for the instructor is provided and includes multiple forms of communication (for example, e-mail, phone, chat, etc.)
* Expected response time for e-mail replies is explained
* The instructor’s role within the course is explained (for example, whether he/she will respond to “tech support” type questions)

## Technical Accessibility Issues (Downloadable Files)

* Downloadable course materials use standard formats to ensure accessibility
* If specific technology is required to which some learners may not have access, alternative file types are provided
* Large files are identified to help learners consider download times
* Alternative (smaller) files are provided where appropriate

**Feedback**

* Learners have the opportunity to give feedback to the instructor regarding course design and course content both during course delivery and after course completion
* Feedback mechanisms allow students to participate anonymously in course evaluation

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2. Details are available at <https://www.qualitymatters.org/rubric> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)