MISSION COLLEGE ONLINE COURSE CHECKLIST

This "checklist" was developed to assist faculty in evaluating each of their online course sections to ensure that the course adheres to what is required by law, meets accreditation standards for online instruction, and follows best practices to achieve regular and effective student contact and student success. It includes links to resources and best practices.

Course Information

Course number/name: ______________________________________________________
Semester/Year: ____________________________________________________________

Overall Organization and Presentation

☐ Course content is clearly organized so that the student can easily find the material.
☐ Students can easily find content in a reasonable number of clicks.
☐ Web links are valid and up-to-date.
☐ Instructions involving Websites, library material and other resources are valid and up-to-date.
☐ Software and programs used in the course are easy to navigate by students and “how to” instructions have been provided.
☐ Instructor photo and/or welcome video has been uploaded to the course or is available on the syllabus.
☐ Instructor contact information (office hours, phone number, email) is current and available.
☐ Material is posted on a pre-announced and consistent schedule with clear due dates displayed in the Calendar.

Best Practice Examples and Resources:

- 10 Principles of Effective Online Teaching: Best Practices in Distance Education (Faculty Focus from Magna Publications) – Refer #1: Show Up and Teach (pp. 5-6) and #9 Quality Counts (pp. 21-22).
- Best Practices in Designing Online Courses (Las Positas College) – Refer to section II. Course Organization and Design. Includes links to examples.
- Customizing Lesson Icons in ANGEL (Mission College) – Customized icons help identify the content and also highlight important information, such as material that needs to be submitted.
Course Syllabus

At a minimum, includes the following:

- The requirements for the course and resources available for students to succeed in an online course, including:
  - Required (and recommended, if applicable) course materials, including hardware/software requirements
  - Information (including phone numbers or links) about student services and helpful online resources.
  - Information about how to succeed in online courses.
    For example, “Best Practices for Student Success with ANGEL” at http://www.missioncollege.org/distlearn/student_support.html

- Examples of other kinds of online student responsibilities:
  - Weekly contact/email requirement (or more if you require).
  - ANGEL logon requirement (i.e., daily, weekly, bi-weekly)
  - Mandatory discussion boards

- A statement about online etiquette and expectations for respectful online communication with the instructor and fellow students.

- Clearly labeled Student Learning Outcomes that match the active course outline in CurricUNET.

- Grading policy (it is clear to students what they need to do to successfully complete the course).

- Time-frame information regarding instructor replies to e-mail, phone calls, etc. as well as the policy for the return of various graded assignments.

- Course schedule with weekly dates, including due dates for assignments and exams.

Best Practice Examples and Resources:

- Designing for Learning: Ten Best Practices for Teaching Online Quick Guide for New Online Faculty (J.V. Boettcher) – Refer to #3: Share a set of very clear expectations for your students and for yourself.

- Mission College Faculty Handbook: Instruction, Procedures & Information – Refer to Syllabi (pp. 39-40).

- Ensuring the Appropriate Use of Educational Technology: An Update for Local Academic Senates (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges) – Refer to Effective Practices for Support of Faculty and Students in Courses using Technology (p. 17).

- Online & Hybrid Course Syllabus Example (Pasadena City College)

Course Content

- For a 3-unit semester-length course, an average of 9 hours of instruction and student work per week has been planned. (Each unit of credit requires a total of 54 hours of student work.)

- A content-specific assignment is due before census date.

- There is substantive content that is equivalent to or surpasses the learning experience a student would receive in a face-to-face course.

- Learning outcomes are included for each learning module.

- Students are engaged in active learning, rather than just reading.

- Course content is delivered to address different learning styles and reinforced through various methods including:
  - Simulations
  - Discussion forums
  - Readings
  - Videos
  - Puzzles / games
  - Worksheets
  - Self-Assessments
  - Other: ________________

- When appropriate, specific descriptive criteria and/or rubrics for grading are provided.

Best Practice Examples and Resources:

- Mission College Curriculum Handbook and CurricUNET Users' Guide – Refer to Part 1: Regulations, Laws, and Policies: Units (pp. 16-17) and Distance Education (p. 20).

- Best Practices in Designing Online Courses (Las Positas College) – Refer to section III. Instructional Design. Includes links to examples.

- 10 Principles of Effective Online Teaching: Best Practices in Distance Education (Faculty Focus from Magna Publications) – Refer #3: Establish Patterns of Course Activities and #4 Plan for the Unplanned.

- 10 Things I’ve Learned About Teaching Online (Michelle Everson) – Refer to #Students Need Extrinsic Motivation.

- Best Practices in Online Course Design (UC Irvine) – A two page handout highlighting important design tips.

- Discover the Keys to Online Group Activities (Magna Publications News Release) – Includes an “online group work checklist” for creating and implementing online group projects.
Discussion Forums as Assignments

- Encourage critical and/or creative thinking.
- Are used when necessary or appropriate.
- Instructor participates in the discussion forum, responding to posts individually when appropriate.
- Students are required to respond to a specified number of posts.
- Minimum post length is stated.
- Grading criteria or rubric is available.
- Discussion is wrapped up either via the Announcements, Course Discussion forum, or a simple post.

Best Practice Examples and Resources:

- **Best Practices: The Discussion Board** (Cuyahoga Community College Office of eLearning & Innovation) – This short document does a great job of providing succinct practical tips for designing and using discussion forums.
- **Generating and Facilitating Engaging and Effective Online Discussions** (University of Oregon Teaching Effectiveness Program) – Includes the chart “Writing Good Discussion Questions” (p. 5).
- **Mastering Online Discussion Board Facilitation Resource Guide** (TeacherSTream, LLC 2009) – A number of topics have been addressed, including: facilitation tips, content area suggestions, time management strategies and much more.
- **Designing for Learning: Ten Best Practices for Teaching Online Quick Guide for New Online Faculty** (J.V. Boettcher) – Refer to #7-Prepare discussion posts that invite questions, discussions, reflection and responses.
- **Characteristics of Quality Discussion Board Posts** (Nancy Rubin)
- **Discussion Board: Online Discussion for Blended Learning** (California State University, Sacramento) – This was written for a hybrid classroom instructors, but is still very applicable to online as it covers best practices, plus cognitive, social, and teaching presence. Provides examples.
- **Discussion Rubrics** (Teaching Online: Pedagogical Repository) – Includes examples.
- **Rubric Samples for Grading Discussions** (Cleveland State University)
Faculty-Initiated & Student-to-Student Interactions

- Welcome message is sent prior to the first day of class, with the following information:
  - Information on start date of the class
  - ANGEL login information - provide link to [http://www.missioncollege.edu/distlearn/students_new.html](http://www.missioncollege.edu/distlearn/students_new.html)
  - How to locate the course syllabus in ANGEL

- A general course discussion forum is available throughout the course in which students can ask questions of the instructor and/or classmates.

- An “Introduction” forum allows the students to “meet” one another, and an instructor bio is posted to get it started.

- Class Announcements are posted at least weekly.

- Feedback on assignments, quizzes, and exams is meaningful and individualized.

- Interactions with students take place via the following:
  - E-mail
  - Assignment feedback
  - Virtual office hours
  - Quiz / exam feedback
  - Discussion forums
  - Other: _______________

- Students are able to interact with one another via the following:
  - E-mail
  - Discussion forums
  - Other: _______________

- Students interact with course materials via the following:
  - Discussion forums
  - Course readings
  - Weekly announcements
  - Prepared instructional material
  - Quizzes / exams
  - Assignments
  - Videos
  - Other: _______________

- Assignments, quizzes, and exams are graded within the time frame indicated on the syllabus.

- Students’ questions and queries are responded to within 24 hours (except on weekends and holidays).
Best Practice Examples and Resources:

- **Mission College Guidelines for Distance Learning Instructors** – Refer to Regular Effective Contact Guidelines (p. 5-7).

- **Online Course Interaction** (Oklahoma State University) – Provides guidelines and examples for instructor-student interaction, student-content interaction, and student-student interaction.

- **Ensuring the Appropriate Use of Educational Technology: An Update for Local Academic Senates** (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges) – Refer to “Effective Practices for Instructor-Student Contact and Interactivity” (p. 21-22).

- **Strategies for Managing the Online Workload** (Penn State) – A collection of 56 short podcasts (less than one minute) of tips, techniques, and methods to help online instructors manage their time more effectively.

- **10 Principles of Effective Online Teaching: Best Practices in Distance Education** (Faculty Focus from Magna Publications) – Refer #2: Practice Proactive Course Management, #5 Responses Requested and Expected, #6: Think Before You Write, #7: Help Maintain Forward Progress, and #8: Safe and Secure.

- **Designing for Learning: Ten Best Practices for Teaching Online Quick Guide for New Online Faculty** (J.V. Boettcher) – Refer to #1: Be present in the course site, and #2: Create a supportive online course community.

- **Managing Your Online Class** (Penn State) – This page assigns a timeline to “contact” activities.
## Accessibility

Reasonable accommodations have been made so that all materials are accessible and compliant with Rehabilitation Act Section 508:

- Alternative text descriptions (alt tags) have been provided for images.
- Word docs, PDFs, EXCEL spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations slides have been checked for accessibility using the checker provided by the software.
- Publisher provided material is ADA compliant (Check with your publisher’s representative on this!)
- All videos are captioned, including YouTube-type videos.
- All podcasts have transcripts.
- All course content has been made accessible to those who cannot otherwise see or hear, prior to the first day of class.

### Resources:

- [Accessibly in Common Tools: ANGEL](#) (Penn State) – Provides instructions on how to use the HTML editor to format text and images for accessibility and tips for designing accessible assessments.
- [ANGEL Accessibility User Overview](#) (ANGEL) – Provides an overview of ANGEL accessibility features and serves as a roadmap for the user interface for users that may access ANGEL with screen reader software.
- [Mission College Organizational and Professional Development Resources: Accessibility](#) - Includes links to instructions on how to make Word docs, PDFs, EXCEL spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations slides accessible, as well as how to use the different accessibility checkers.
- [Mission College Disability Support Programs and Services (DSPS)](#) - If you have questions about your course accessible, contact Mike Denne in DSPS x5384.
- [Best Practices in Online Course Design and Delivery](#) (Southern Oregon University) – Refer to Accessibility (pp 11-12) for a list of common obstacles and their solutions.
- [Jim Thatcher Web Accessibility Tutorial](#) – Teaches the basics guidelines of Section 508 and the American Disabilities Act. This tutorial explains how to design a web page, or online course, so that it meets Priority One guidelines of the WAI (Web Accessibility Initiative).

Created Oct. 2014