



Clovis Community College
Standards for the Design of Online Instruction
Comprehensive Reference
Updated 3/15/2019

The original version CCC Online Course Review Rubric was developed by the Dream Team and derived from the Quality Matters standards. This revision was developed by the Dream Team 2.0. Some standards have been aggregated, and some have been customized. CCC has applied its standard designation protocol and it will be used as the primary labeling and reference system. Due to the close ties with QM, the corresponding QM standard number is in parenthesis for convenience.

All three-point essential standards (51 points) and a total of 20/23 of the other standards must be met in order for the course to be considered an in-house QM quality course. The total must be 63/74 points.



Adapted version of the Quality Matters Rubric, Sixth edition, Quality Matters <http://www.qmprogram.org/> and the CCC Peer Review Rubric 1.1.

Adapted by Clovis Community College - Online Course Dream Team 2.0, 2019

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General Standard 1
Course Overview and Introduction

**The overall design of the course is made clear to the student
at the beginning of the course.**

Overview Statement:

The course overview and introduction set the tone for the course, let students know what to expect, and provide guidance to ensure students get off to a good start.

Standard 1a (1.1). 3 points.

Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.

Annotation:

Instructions provide a general course overview, present the schedule of activities, guide the student to explore the course site, and indicate what to do first, in addition to listing detailed navigational instructions for the whole course.

Instructors may choose to incorporate some of this information in the course syllabus. In this case, students should be directed to the syllabus at the beginning of the course. A useful feature is a "Read Me First" or "Start Here" button or icon on the course home page, linking students to start-up information.

Examples:

1. A course "tour"
2. Clear statements about how to get started in the course
3. A "scavenger hunt" or "syllabus quiz" assignment that leads students through an exploration of the different parts of the course
4. A table or diagram that depicts the relationship between the online and face-to-face portions of a blended course

Blended Courses: Instructions in the online classroom make it clear to students that the course is a blended course, with both online and face-to-face components and activities. Instructions specify the requirements for both the online and face-to-face portions of the course. The introductory information clearly states when and where students should participate each week, and a structured set of topics and a schedule are provided for each face-to-face meeting.

Standard 1b (1.2) 3 points.

Students are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.

Annotation:

Information is provided to help students understand the purpose of the course and how the learning process is structured and carried out, including course schedule, delivery modalities (online or blended), modes of communication, types of learning activities, and how learning will be assessed.

Such information may be provided or reinforced in the course syllabus or other course documents; or in areas with titles such as "Course Introduction," "Welcome from the Instructor," "Start Here," "Course Schedule," "Course Outline," "Course Map," "Course Calendar," etc.

Blended Courses: The purpose of both the online and face-to-face portions of the course is clearly explained to students to help them understand how and why both formats are important to the learning process. The course schedule or calendar fully covers both the online and face-to-face portions of the course and clearly specifies the dates, times, and locations of face-to-face class meetings.

Standard 1c—(1.3, 1.4, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, & 7.4) 3 points.

The syllabus is easily accessible and meets all elements required of the CCC Standardized Syllabus for Online Courses and references the Online Course Guidelines.

Annotation:

Students can easily access the course syllabus, which meets all elements of the required CCC Standardized Syllabus for Online Courses and references the Online Course Guidelines.

Standard 1c is MET under the following circumstances:

1. The syllabus is easily accessible to students.
2. The instructor uses all elements of the required CCC Standardized Syllabus for Online Courses.
3. The instructor references the Online Course Guidelines.

Examples of how to make the syllabus accessible to students:

1. The syllabus is a PDF-screen-readable format;
2. A link is provided on the home page for students to access the syllabus;

3. There is a link in a Getting Started module.

Click here to access the CCC Standardized Syllabus for Online Courses:

http://www.clovis.edu/fdc/course-design/standardized_syllabus_online.aspx

Standard 1d (1.5). 2 point.

Minimum technology requirements for the course are clearly stated, and information on how to obtain the technologies is provided.

Annotation:

Students are provided with detailed, clearly worded information regarding the technologies they will need throughout the course, including information on where they can be obtained. The word “technologies” covers a wide range, including hardware, software, subscriptions, plug-ins, and mobile applications (apps).

The hardware and peripherals necessary to complete all course activities are clearly listed. Students are provided guidance about which course activities may be completed with different types of hardware (mobile devices vs. desktop computers). Fully functional software may need to be used on desktop computers instead of on mobile devices.

Peripherals include webcams, microphones, etc. If specific peripheral devices are needed for course completion, instructions are provided to obtain the peripheral devices.

The software chosen for the course is easily obtainable via download and available on a variety of platforms (Windows, MacOS, Android, iOS, etc.) whenever possible. If software is available on only one platform, students are notified about the specific limitations and required use.

Examples of information to include in a technology requirement statement:

1. If speakers, microphone, or a headset are necessary, the need for such peripherals is clearly stated.
2. Links to all downloadable resources are provided. These resources include software and online tools, apps, plug-ins such as Acrobat Reader and Java, media players, MP3 play, wikis, social media, interactive multimedia apps, etc.
3. Instructions are provided for how to access materials available through subscription services, including online journals or databases. When available, links are also provided.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

4. If publisher materials are required, clearly stated instructions for how to obtain and use any required access codes are provided.

In determining whether this Specific Review Standard is met, confirm that minimum requirements are stated and clear instructions are provided for obtaining the technologies.

Standard 1e (1.6). 1 point.

Computer skills and digital information literacy skills expected of the student are clearly stated.

Annotation:

General as well as course-specific technical skills students must have to succeed in the course are specified.

Examples of technical skills might include:

1. Using the learning management system;
2. Using email with attachments;
3. Creating and submitting files in commonly used word processing program formats;
4. Downloading and installing software;
5. Using spreadsheet programs;
6. Using presentation and graphic programs;
7. Using apps in digital devices;
8. Using web conferencing tools and software.

Digital information literacy refers to the ability to locate, evaluate, apply, create, and communicate knowledge using technology.

Examples of digital information literacy skills might include:

1. Using online libraries and databases to locate and gather appropriate information;
2. Using computer networks to locate and store files or data;
3. Using online search tools for specific academic purposes, including the ability to use search criteria, keywords, and filters;
4. Properly citing information sources;
5. Preparing a presentation of research findings.

Standard 1f (1.7). 1 point.

Expectations for prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.

Annotation:

Information about prerequisite knowledge and/or competencies is found within the course, in documents linked to the course, or in supporting material provided to the students by another means. Look for a link to that information or a reminder of it for the student.

Discipline-specific knowledge prerequisites specify other courses that would enable the student to meet the requirements.

Standard 1g (1.8). 1 point.

The self-introduction by the instructor is professional and is available online.

Annotation:

The initial introduction creates a sense of connection between the instructor and the students. It presents the instructor as professional as well as approachable, and includes the essentials, such as the instructor's name, title, field of expertise, email address, phone number, and times when the instructor is typically online or may be reached by phone.

Expectations of the relationship and communication style between teacher and student are culturally influenced. Including information about the role of the instructor and how to address the instructor is helpful to students from all backgrounds.

The self-introduction helps students get to know the instructor and, in addition to the essentials mentioned above, could include:

1. Comments on teaching philosophy;
2. A summary of past experience with teaching online courses;
3. Personal information such as hobbies, family, travel experiences, etc.;
4. A photograph, audio message, or video (including alternative formats to ensure accessibility).

Blended Courses: The instructor's self-introduction is available electronically for students who missed early face-to-face meetings.

Standard 1h (1.9). 1 point.

Students are asked to introduce themselves to the class.

Annotation:

Student introductions at the beginning of the class help to create a welcoming learning environment and a sense of community. Students are asked to introduce themselves and given guidance on where and how they should do so.

In a few situations, such as when a class is very large, student introductions may not be feasible. Instructors are asked to indicate in the Course Worksheet if there is a reason for not providing an opportunity for student introductions.

Instructors may ask students to respond to specific questions (such as why they are taking the course, what are their strategies for success, what concerns they have, what they expect to learn, etc.) or may choose to let the student decide what to include. Instructors may provide an example of an introduction and/or start the process by introducing themselves. Instructors may give students the opportunity to represent themselves by text, audio, or visual means.

Blended Courses: The opportunity for introductions is available electronically for students who may have missed the opportunity during early face-to-face meetings. Ideally, student introductions are posted online, for future reference, even if students have introduced themselves in a face-to-face meeting.

General Standard 2

Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives (Competencies)

Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies describe what students will be able to do upon completion of the course.

Overview Statement:

Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies establish a foundation upon which the rest of the course is based.

Standard 2a (2.1). 3 points.

The course Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives, or course/program competencies, describe outcomes that are measurable.

Annotation:

Alignment: The concept of alignment is intended to convey the idea that critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes. Measurable course and module/unit Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies form the basis of alignment in a course. Other elements of the course, including those addressed in Specific Review Standards 2b, 3a, 4a, 5a, and 6a, contribute to the accomplishment of the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

All courses that are identified by CCC and the state of New Mexico to follow the statewide numbering system must use the state mandated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives and course descriptions for that course. The state-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives and course description may not vary from the state-mandated objectives or course description.

Measurable course Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies precisely and clearly describe what students will learn and be able to do if they successfully complete the course. Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies describe desired student mastery using terms that are specific and observable enough to be measured by the instructor. At some institutions, Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies may be called "learning outcomes."

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

Examples of measurable objectives or competencies: Upon completion of the course (module/unit), students will be able to

1. Select appropriate tax strategies for different financial and personal situations.
2. Develop a comprehensive, individualized wellness action program focused on overcoming a sedentary life-style.
3. Demonstrate correct use of personal protective equipment.
4. Articulate personal attitudes and values related to the use of medical marijuana.
5. Collaborate on a group project by completing designated tasks and offering feedback to team members on their tasks.

In addition to measurable objectives or competencies, a course may have objectives or competencies or desired outcomes that are not easily measured, such as increased awareness of, sensitivity to, or interest in certain issues or subjects, or ability to work as a team member on a group project. Such objectives or competencies cannot be substituted for measurable objectives or competencies when determining whether Standard 2.1 is met. In order for the Standard to be met, a majority (85%) of the course-level objectives or competencies must be measurable.

Special Situations: In some cases (check the Course Worksheet), the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are institutionally mandated, and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. If the institutionally mandated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are not measurable, make note of it in your recommendations. Write specific suggestions for improvement that can be used at the institution level to frame objectives or competencies in terms that are measurable. If the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are institutionally mandated, then the reviewer may need to consider Standard 2a in conjunction with instructor unit objectives, as follows:

Standard 2a is MET under the following circumstances:

1. The Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are measurable, whether set by the institution or by the instructor.
2. The institutionally mandated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are not measurable, but the faculty-written module/unit objectives or competencies are measurable and aligned with the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Standard 2a is NOT MET under the following circumstances:

1. The Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are not present in the course.
2. If the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives and course description do not use the state-mandated objectives and description verbatim.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

3. The Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies set by the instructor are not measurable.
4. The institutionally mandated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are not measurable, and the faculty-written module/unit objectives or competencies are either not measurable or not present.

NOTE: It is not possible to complete the course review if measurable Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are not present. In such a case, the review is suspended and the team chair consults the instructor to clarify whether or not the matter can be quickly addressed so the review can continue.

Standard 2b (2.2). 3 points.

The module/unit-level learning objectives or competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the student learning outcomes/course-level objectives or competencies.

Annotation:

Alignment: The concept of alignment is intended to convey the idea that critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes. Measurable module/unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies form the basis of alignment in a course because they are consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies (2a). Objectives or competencies explain how students will be assessed (3a). Instructional materials (4a), learning activities (5a), and tools used in the course (6a) contribute to the accomplishment of the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies at the module/unit-level align with and are more specific than Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies. The module/unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies describe student mastery in specific, observable terms and in smaller, discrete pieces. The objectives or competencies precisely describe the specific competencies, skills, and knowledge students are able to master and demonstrate at regular intervals throughout the course. The module/unit-level objectives or competencies may either implicitly or explicitly be aligned with the course-level objectives or competencies. If alignment is not clear, consult with Subject Matter Expert on the team to determine alignment.

Here is an example of a set of module/unit-level objectives of competencies that aligns with a course objective or competency:

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

Course-level Objective or competency	Module Objectives or Competencies
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to apply the rules of punctuation.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will write sentences that correctly use commas, semicolons, and periods. 2. Students will use apostrophes when, and only when needed. 3. Students will use double and single quotation marks correctly in quoted material.

Module or unit objectives or competencies may be written by the instructor or may come from one or more of the instructional materials. Regardless of origin, module or unit objectives or competencies must be measurable. At some institutions Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies may be referred to as “learning outcomes.”

Specific Review Standard 2a is MET under either of the following circumstances:

1. The module or unit-level objectives or competencies are measurable and aligned with the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.
2. The institutionally mandated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are not measurable, but the instructor-written module/unit-level objectives or competencies are measurable and aligned with the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Specific Review Standard 2a is NOT MET under any of the following circumstances:

1. The instructor does not have module or unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives.
2. The module or unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies set by the instructor are not measurable.
3. The institutionally mandated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are not measurable, and the instructor-written module/unit-level objectives or competencies are measurable by do not align with the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

If Specific Review Standard 2a is NOT MET, it is not possible to complete the course review. If you determine this Specific Review Standard is “Not Met,” consult with the Team Chair before proceeding with your review. In such a case, the review is suspended and the Team Chair

consults the Course Representative to clarify whether or not the matter can be quickly addressed so the review can continue.

Standard 2c (2.3 & 2.5). 3 points.

Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are stated clearly, are written from the student's perspective, are suited to the level of the course, and are prominently located in the course.

Annotation:

The course and module/unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are stated clearly and prominently in the online classroom. The Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are written in a way that allows students, including non-native speakers, to easily grasp their meaning and the learning outcomes expected. The use of educational or discipline jargon, unexplained terminology, and unnecessarily complex language is avoided.

Expected content mastery is appropriate to the type and level of the course. Taxonomies that describe levels of learning can be helpful to reviewers in determining whether the objectives or competencies correspond to the level of the course.

For example, while the course may start with objectives or competencies that are lower in the cognitive realm, as the course proceeds they progress to a higher level that is suited to the level of the course (introductory, intermediate, or advanced) for that topic.

In addition to content-specific objectives or competencies, introductory courses may address core learning skills. Core learning skills, including critical thinking, information literacy, and technology skills, are typically those that transcend an individual course and are integrated across the curriculum. Core learning skills are sometimes called "core competencies."

The course-level objectives or competencies are typically articulated in the course introduction or syllabus. Module/unit-level objectives or competencies are prominently stated in the corresponding module or unit so they are available to the student from within the online classroom.

Reviewers, examine the course and module or unit Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies for the course as a whole to ensure they describe knowledge and skills that correspond to the level of the course.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

It is important to note that lower-division courses will not exclusively include taxonomies from the lowest cognitive levels, and upper-division courses will not exclusively use taxonomies from the highest cognitive levels. For example, a Speech 101 course might start with a lower-level learning objective like “Distinguish between a persuasive and informative speech” and progress to a higher-level learning objective such as “Deliver a persuasive speech” within the same course.

Learning objective located clearly in Syllabus/Course Introduction	
Lower-level learning objective. Module 1: Types of Speeches	Distinguish between a persuasive and informative speech.
Higher-level learning objective. Module 10: Delivery of Specific Speeches	Deliver a persuasive speech.

Evaluating content mastery expectations may be difficult for reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Reviewers should apply professional judgment, experience, and their understanding of taxonomies of learning to determine if the stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are suited to the course level. Reviewers with questions about the alignment of Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies with the level of the course should consult with the Subject Matter Expert on the team.

Confirm all four parts of the Specific Review Standard are met.

Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies

1. are stated clearly,
2. are written from the student’s perspective,
3. are suited to the level of the course, and
4. are prominently located in the course.

If only one part of the Specific Review Standard is met, the Specific Review Standard is not met.

Blended Courses: In addition to being provided in the face-to-face classroom, the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are stated in the online classroom.

General Standard 3

Assessment and Measurement

Assessments are integral to the learning process and are designed to evaluate student progress in achieving the stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or mastering the competencies.

Overview Statement:

Assessment is implemented in a manner that corresponds to the course Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies and not only allows the instructor a broad perspective on the students' mastery of content but also allows students to track their learning progress throughout the course.

Standard 3a (3.1.). 3 points.

The assessments measure the achievement of the stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Annotation:

Alignment: Course assessments (ways of confirming student progress and mastery) are consistent with the course and module/unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies (2a and 2b) by measuring the accomplishment of those objectives or competencies. Instructional materials (4a), learning activities (5a), and course tools (6a) support the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies and enable students to be successful on the assessments.

From the types of assessments chosen, it is clear that students can successfully complete the assessments if they have met the objectives or competencies stated in the course materials and learning activities.

Reviewers, examine both the course and module or unit objectives or competencies in your review of assessments. The review team is expected to review all assessments in the course. For example, reviewers should look at quiz and exam questions, discussion prompts, etc. Ensure that the assessments measure the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Examples of alignment between a learning objective or competency and an assessment:

1. An essay or discussion shows students can "explain" or "describe" something.
2. A multiple-choice quiz verifies that students can "define" or "identify" vocabulary.
3. A writing assignment shows that students can "write" or "compose" a composition.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

4. A video of a student presentation in a foreign language shows that students can “speak” or “translate” a foreign language.
5. Participation in a game reveals students can “analyze” and “evaluate” complex factors and “make good decisions” that allow progress through the game.

Examples of lack of alignment between a learning objective or competency and an assessment:

1. The objective or competency is to “write a persuasive essay,” but the assessment is a multiple-choice test.
2. The objective or competency is to “create a body of work that illustrates your photographic vision,” but the assessment is a 25-page thesis about contemporary photographers.

Some assessments may be geared toward meeting outcomes other than those stated in the course; for example, a course may have a writing component as part of an institution-wide writing-across-the-curriculum requirement. In that case, the reviewer suggests including in the course the objectives or competencies that reflect the institution-wide requirement, if those objectives or competencies are not already included.

Special Situations: In some cases (check the Course Worksheet), the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are institutionally mandated, and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, consider the module/unit-level objectives or competencies to assess whether the course meets Specific Review Standard 3a.

Standard 3b (3.2). 3 points.

The course grading policy is stated clearly at the beginning of the course.

Annotation:

A clear, written statement at the beginning of the course fully explains to the student how the course grades are calculated. The points, percentages, and weights for each component of the course grade are clearly stated. The relationship(s) between points, percentages, weights, and letter grades are explained. If grades are reduced because of late submission, the instructor’s policy on late submission clearly states the amount of the reduction.

Review the clarity of the explanation and presentation to the student, not the simplicity or complexity of a given grading system itself. Even a relatively complex grading system can be made easy to understand. Look for a clearly explained grading policy in the syllabus, Start Here folder, or another place that is open to students at the start of the course.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

Examples of what to look for:

1. A list of all activities, tests, etc., that will determine the final grade, along with their weights or points;
2. An explanation of the relationship between the final course letter grade and the student's accumulated points or percentages;
3. An explanation of the relationship between points and percentages, if both are used;
4. A clear statement about how late submissions will be graded, including information on any point deductions for assignments submitted late.

Standard 3c (3.3). 3 points.

Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students' work, and their connection to the course grading policy is clearly explained.

Annotation:

Students are provided with a clear and complete description of the criteria that will be used to evaluate their work in the course. Evaluation criteria are provided to students prior to beginning a particular assessment. The description or statement of criteria provides students with clear guidance on the instructor's expectations and on the required components of coursework and participation. The criteria give students the information they need to understand how a grade on an assignment or activity is calculated.

Reviewers, confirm that the criteria used to evaluate students' performance are both specific and connected to the grading policy. Note, however, that you are not asked to look for and evaluate the instructor's specific feedback to students in Specific Review Standard 3c. Your focus is the design of the course, not the delivery of the course.

Examples of what to look for:

1. Evidence that the instructor has stated the evaluation criteria for all graded work. Criteria may be in the form of a detailed checklist, rubric, or other evaluation instrument.
2. A description of how students' participation in discussions will be graded, including the number of required postings per week; the criteria for evaluating the originality and quality of students' comments and their responsiveness to classmates' comments; and the grade or credit students can expect for varying levels of performance.
3. Clearly stated point values for each question in quizzes and exams, including information about partial credit.
4. For group or team projects, an explanation of the criteria used to evaluate individual or team performance and whether scores or grades will be assigned by individual or by team.

Reviewers, determine that both conditions of the Specific Review Standard are met. If only one part of the Specific Review Standard is met, the Specific Review Standard is not met.

Standard 3d (3.4). 2 points.

The assessments used are sequenced, varied, and suited to the level of the course.

Annotation:

Multiple assessment strategies are used that require students to apply what they learn and to think critically. In reviewing this Specific Review Standard, consider multiple factors, such as the discipline, type, and level of the course, and consult the team Subject Matter Expert when needed. Look at the course as a whole to determine if the Specific Review Standard is met, since individual modules may not include sequenced or varied assessments.

The assessments are sequenced so as to promote the learning process and to build on previously mastered knowledge and skills gained in this course and prerequisite courses. Assessments are paced to give students adequate time to achieve mastery and complete the work in a thoughtful manner.

Assessments are varied in order to provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate progress and mastery, and to accommodate diverse students. Examples of various assessment types include exams, essays, discussions, reflective journals, group projects, portfolios, written papers, presentations, multimedia projects, and interviews.

To determine whether the assessments are suited to the level of the course, refer to Specific Review Standard 2c, as the cognitive level of an action verb used in a learning objective or competency is determined by the type of assessment that is aligned with it. "Choose," for example, could be used in a learning objective or competency for a low-level or a high-level assessment. Assessments may reflect varying levels of cognitive engagement, but assessments in upper-level courses, for example, should include some assessments that are at the application level or above.

Examples of assessments that meet the Specific Review Standard:

1. A series of assessments progress from the definition of terms, to a short paper explaining the relationship between various theoretical constructs, to a term paper that includes the application of theoretical constructs and critical analysis of a journal article.
2. Assessments in a public speaking course include first submitting an outline of a speech and next a draft of the speech; and, finally, delivering the speech.
3. An upper-level course in world history has multiple-choice quizzes and discussions, and it also includes a term paper and final presentation that ask students to analyze and evaluate the various events leading up to World War II.

Examples of assessments that may not meet the Specific Review Standard:

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

1. The assessments consist of only multiple-choice tests.
2. In a course in which students are assumed to not know how to find research materials, the first assessment requires students to locate research materials, while library research skills and methods are not covered until later in the course.
3. No assessments are administered during the first 12 weeks of the semester, and an essay, term paper, and final exam are due during the 13th, 14th, and 15th weeks, respectively.
4. Assessments in an introductory course consist of only answering the questions at the conclusion of each textbook chapter.
5. Assessments in a graduate-level course include only lower-level assessments, such as multiple-choice, “knowledge-check” types of quizzes and short essays asking students to define terms.

Circumstances affecting some graduate courses: The grade may be entirely based on a major assignment due at the end of the term. In this case, benchmarks for progress are provided during the term, with feedback from the instructor or peers.

Examples of benchmark assignments might include submission of:

1. An outline or project plan;
2. A bibliography;
3. A précis of the paper or project;
4. One or more preliminary drafts.

If any one of the three parts of Specific Review Standard 3d is not met, the Specific Review Standard should be marked “Not Met.”

Standard 3e (3.5). 2 points.

The course provides students with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress with timely feedback.

Annotation:

Learning is more effective if students receive frequent, substantive, and timely feedback. The feedback may come from the instructor directly, from assignments and assessments that have feedback built into them, or from other students.

Look at the course schedule or list of due dates in conjunction with the turnaround time specified for feedback in order to determine if timely feedback is incorporated into the course design (refer to Specific Review Standard 5c for the instructor’s plan for feedback). Look for

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

examples of assignments that provide feedback automatically upon completion or allow for multiple attempts.

Examples that meet this Specific Review Standard:

1. Writing assignments that allow for the submission of a preliminary draft for instructor comment and suggestions for improvement;
2. Self-mastery tests that include informative feedback with each answer choice;
3. Interactive games and simulations that have feedback built in;
4. Self-scoring practice quizzes;
5. Practice written assignments that receive feedback, such as journals, reflection papers, or portfolios;
6. Peer reviews and critiques;
7. The opportunity for students to compare their work to model papers or essays, sample answers, or answer keys prior to completing an assessment, thereby encouraging reflection and improvement.

Examples that may not meet this Specific Review Standard:

1. Feedback on automatically scored or instructor-graded quizzes provides students with a grade, but does not tell them which questions they got wrong, or provide any additional information that helps them track their learning.
2. A preliminary draft of a major paper is due, and three days later the final draft is due.
3. The student receives credit for submitting a preliminary draft of an assignment, but no feedback on the draft is given.

Assignments (e.g., discussions, brief reflections) are graded as “complete” or “not complete,” and course information indicates that students will get credit for participating in the assignment but will not receive feedback.

General Standard 4 **Instructional Materials**

Instructional materials enable students to achieve stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Overview Statement:

The focus of this Standard is on supporting the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives and competencies, rather than on qualitative judgments about the instructional materials.

Standard 4a (4.1). 3 points.

The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Annotation:

Alignment: The instructional materials used in the course align with the course and module/unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies (2a and 2b) by contributing to the achievement of those objectives or competencies and by integrating effectively with the tools (6a), assessments (3a), and learning activities (5a) selected for the course.

Instructional Materials Examples (must align with Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies)

1. Textbooks
2. Open Educational Resources
3. Publisher- or instructor-created materials
4. Slide presentations and interactive content (such as simulations)
5. Expert lectures
6. Videos
7. Images
8. Diagrams
9. Websites

The materials align with the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies in order to provide the information and resources students need to achieve the stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies. Reviewers, consider both the course and module/unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies in your review. Look for a clear and direct way in which instructional materials are aligned with Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

Decisions on this Specific Review Standard may be difficult for reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Consult with the team Subject Matter Expert and use professional judgment to determine if the instructional materials support the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Reviewers are encouraged to consult a digital version of the textbook, if available, as many publishers provide electronic access. In reviewing the course against this Specific Review Standard, reviewers will work closely with the Subject Matter Expert on the team.

If the instructional materials are from publishers, review team members must be provided with access to all digital publisher materials to determine whether Specific Review Standard 4a is met.

Reviewers, focus on the alignment of the instructional materials with the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies and assessments rather than attempt to evaluate the content. Confirming this alignment also ensures the instructional materials are suited to the level of the course, if the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives have been determined to be suited to the level of the course (Specific Review Standard 2c).

Special Situations: In some cases (check the Course Worksheet), the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are institutionally mandated, and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, consider instead the module/unit-level objectives or competencies in determining whether the course meets Specific Review Standard 4a.

Standard 4b (4.2). 3 points.

The relationship between the use of instructional materials in the course and completing learning activities is clearly explained.

Annotation:

Students are provided with an explanation of how the instructional materials and learning activities are used in the course, and how each will help them achieve the stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or help them prepare to demonstrate course competencies. If optional instructional materials are provided and their use is recommended in the course, the materials are labeled as optional and their relevance to learning activities is explained.

Reviewers, confirm that instructional materials are provided in such a way as to be useful to the student in completing learning activities. An example would be a course that requires students to use the following materials: a textbook divided into chapters, video segments

ordered by topics, a website or simulation activities organized around specific skills, and an internal or external website that has an opening menu consisting of “practice quizzes,” “images,” and “audio examples.” In such a course, consider whether the order in which students should use these materials is clearly indicated, as well as how each is related to the learning activities and how the materials are related to one another.

In courses in which students are expected to find their own learning materials, the instructor posts guidelines that assist the student in identifying relevant materials and in distinguishing between core and supplementary materials and between scholarly and non-scholarly sources for academic writing.

Examples that explain the relationship between instructional materials and learning activities:

1. A schedule of assigned readings is accompanied by an explanation of how the readings will be used in online discussion forum posting.
2. Links to external websites include a description of the site and an explanation of how the information at the site is to be used in the learning activities.
3. The purpose of instructional materials such as interactive games, simulations, interactive media, and exercises is clearly explained as well as how the materials are to be used in specific learning activities.
4. An explanation is provided for how required or optional publisher materials, including presentation slides, practice quizzes, videos, and other content, are to be used in the learning activities.

Blended Courses: Instructions make clear which materials are to be used in the face-to-face classroom and which are specific to the online portion of the course. **Competency-Based Courses:** In competency-based courses, all materials may be optional. The introduction specifies which materials and activities are required, supplemental, or optional.

Standard 4c (4.3). 2 points.

The course models the academic integrity expected of students by providing both source references and permissions for use of instructional materials.

Annotation:

Instructional materials include source references, and permission has been obtained to utilize the materials in the course.

Sources for materials used in the course are clearly identified with references. This requirement applies to previously published, instructor-created materials, journal articles, publisher materials, textbooks, images, graphic materials, tables, videos, audio recordings, websites, slides, and other forms of multimedia.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

Examples of instructional materials for which references are provided:

1. Images that appear in a module;
2. Videos that are linked from a video repository tool;
3. Journal articles that are linked from a library portal for download.

The format of references in instructional materials follows the style prescribed in a recognized guide, such as APA, MLA, or Chicago. At minimum, a reference includes the author or owner name; date of publication; resource title, if supplied; and URL or source, such as a publisher.

When an extensive body of material comes from a single source (e.g., instructional materials from a publisher), a single reference suffices. Reviewers might look for reference information in a list of materials, in the course syllabus, or in another course document. For example, under “Instructional Materials” in a syllabus, the instructor may have included “All PowerPoint Files” and then listed an appropriately formatted reference, rather than individually citing each PowerPoint slide set in each module. A course might include a single document that lists the sources of all materials. Reviewers, examine the course to determine whether materials are referenced.

If permission to copy or download and post digital materials has been received, the permission to use those materials is posted in the course alongside or beneath the material, or in a single location such as a “Permissions” section in the syllabus. In such a case, students are able to see that the use of the intellectual property in this manner was permitted by the property owner (author, publisher, etc.).

Examples of how permissions for different types of materials may appear in the course:

1. Students are directed to acquire instructional materials from sources that provide permission for use, such as publishers or book rental organizations for textbooks.
2. Permission for use of scholarly journal articles or other materials is provided within the access rights to a library’s databases or sites that host original videos.
3. Instructional materials that are open-source include links to the original materials, or a link to a statement designating the materials open-source appears with the materials.

Examples of instructional materials that require permission for use:

1. A PDF of a scholarly journal article downloaded from a library database and posted in the course site;
2. A chapter from a textbook converted to PDF (or other e-reader format) and posted in the course;
3. A video downloaded from an online source (e.g., YouTube, a publisher’s website) and posted in the course site;
4. A PDF of an article the instructor has published in a scholarly journal.

Standard 4d (4.4 & 4.5). 2 point.

A variety of instructional materials types that represent up-to-date theory and practice in the discipline.

Annotation:

The instructional materials are current. For example, an introductory computer course might include information on recent trends in data storage; an English writing course might discuss the purpose of Internet research; a chemistry course might include computerized models to demonstrate chemical operations.

Decisions on whether the course meets this Specific Review Standard may be difficult for reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Consult with the team Subject Matter Expert and use professional judgment to determine if the materials are current.

Older works considered “seminal” may meet Specific Review Standard 4d. The Subject Matter Expert on the team verifies that a work is seminal in the discipline.

In considering whether or not this Specific Review Standard is met, reviewers examine the Course Worksheet for additional information regarding the currency and selection of instructional materials.

The course presents a variety of relevant instructional materials that may include textbooks and other publications, instructor-created resources, websites, and multimedia. Variety may take the form of different types of media used to deliver content.

Examples of variety in instructional materials that may meet this Specific Review Standard:

1. A text from a single author, multiple videos, and a selection of websites;
2. Several scholarly journal articles as readings, multiple videos, and a few audio podcasts created by the instructor;
3. A series of topical videos and a textbook.

Examples that may not meet this Specific Review Standard:

1. A single textbook;
2. Weekly video lectures with no other instructional materials.

In reviewing instructional materials, look for evidence that students have options for how they consume content, e.g., reading an article or text, viewing a video, listening to a podcast.

Decisions on this Specific Review Standard may be difficult for reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. In some disciplines, it may be appropriate for all materials to be from a single author. Consult with the team Subject Matter Expert and use professional judgment to determine whether a sufficient variety of materials is used.

General Standard 5
Course Activities and Student Interaction

Course activities facilitate and support student interaction and engagement.

Overview Statement:
Course components that promote active learning contribute to the learning process
and to student persistence.

Standard 5a (5.1 & 2.4) – 3 points.

The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies and the relationship is clearly stated.

Annotation:

Alignment: The purpose of learning activities is to facilitate the student’s achievement of the stated objectives or competencies. Learning activities align with the course and module/unit-level objectives or competencies, (2a and 2b), as well as with the assessments (3a), instructional materials (4a), and course tools (6a), by engaging students in activities that promote mastery of the stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Learning activities are designed to align with course and module objectives. Learning activities incorporate interaction, which promotes student achievement of the stated objectives or competencies by actively engaging the student with the course content. Learning activities are varied in order to provide reinforcement and mastery in multiple ways. Activities may include class discussions, simulation exercises, practice quizzes, tests, case studies, role-playing, student presentations, or labs.

The review team is expected to review all learning activities in the course. A strategy for accomplishing the review is to divide the activities among the review team members and reconvene to share findings. Ensure that the activities support the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies and assessments.

Examples of alignment between activities and objectives or competencies:

1. The objective or competency requires that students deliver a persuasive speech. Activities include choosing an appropriate topic for the speech, creating an outline, and recording a practice of the speech delivery.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

2. The objective or competency is “Prepare each budget within a master budget and explain the importance of each in the overall budgeting process.” The students review information about this objective or competency in their texts, watch videos of case studies in which the different budgets are used, review informational web resources on creating the different budgets, construct the different budgets as practice activities, and develop a case study for a fictitious company, explaining what would happen if each budget is not included in the master budget.

Examples of a mismatch between activities and objectives or competencies:

1. The objective or competency requires students to deliver a persuasive speech, but the activities in the course do not include practice of that skill.
2. The objective or competency is “Prepare each budget within a master budget and explain the importance of each in the overall budgeting process.” The students review information about this objective or competency in their texts and observe budgets worked out by the instructor, but they themselves produce only one of the several budgets.

Confirm that the connection between the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives and assigned learning activities is clearly explained. Making explicit the relationship between Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies and learning activities enables students to understand that achieving the stated Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies is the reason they are being asked to complete the required learning activities. The learning activities should not be seen as arbitrary or unconnected; their purpose in the course is explained in terms of the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Examples of course components that clarify the relationship:

1. A course map shows how the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies connect to the learning activities.
2. A module or unit introductory page is provided with a summary or overview of module- or unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies, related course-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies, and course activities (learning activities, assessments, and use of the instructional materials.)
3. An explanation is provided for how the course-level and module- or unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are met through each learning activity.
4. A numbering system demonstrates the relationship between course-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies module- or unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies, and learning activities.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

A course map or numbering system is not required for this Specific Review Standard to be met. However, if a course map or numbering system is used in the course, the review team verifies that the course design reflects the mapping or numbering system accurately for the entirety of the course.

Reviewers, consider both the course and module or unit Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies in your review of this Specific Review Standard. Look for information indicating which learning activities, instructional materials, assignments, and assessment support specific Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies. Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are usually reiterated throughout the course with their corresponding learning activities.

“Learning activities” are those activities that help students meet the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives. All “learning activities” are “course activities”; however, not all “course activities” are “learning activities.” Some activities, like downloading software or creating presence through introductions, would be “course activities” that are not necessarily “learning activities.”

Special Situations: In some cases (check the Course Worksheet), the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies may be institutionally mandated and not measurable, and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. In this case, assess whether the learning activities promote the achievement of the module/unit-level Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies to determine if Specific Review Standard 5a is met.

Standard 5b (5.2) 3 points.

Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.

Annotation:

Interactive learning activities promote active learning and engagement through three available types of interaction: student-content, student-instructor, and/or student-student. (Refer to the Course Worksheet to determine whether student-to-student interaction is suitable for the course.) Meaningful interactions that promote students’ development of skills are designed as activities to support the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies and may vary with the subject matter, purpose, and level of the course. Look for the purpose of the interactions and not just the number of opportunities for interaction.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

Active learning involves students engaging by "doing" something, such as discovering, processing, or applying concepts and information. Active learning entails guiding students to increasing levels of responsibility for their own learning.

Active Learning Examples	
Student-Instructor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. assignment or project submitted for instructor feedback 2. student-instructor discussion in a synchronous session or an asynchronous discussion board exchange 3. frequently-asked-questions (FAQ) discussion forum moderated by the instructor
Student-Content	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. assigned reading from a textbook, article, or online resource 2. assigned completion of a workbook or online exercise 3. learning-how-to-learn activity
Student-Student (if appropriate to the course)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. assigned collaborative activities such as group discussions 2. small-group projects 3. group problem-solving assignments 4. peer critiques

Look for opportunities for student-instructor interaction, student-content interaction, and, if appropriate to the course, student-student interaction.

Examples of interaction opportunities that promote active learning and engagement:

1. Students are asked to watch examples of effective persuasive speech delivery and identify components of effective delivery, and then receive feedback from the instructor on that assignment.
2. Students are asked to interact with peers by recording a practice of the speech delivery and posting it for peer feedback.

Reviewers, review the types of interactions designed into the activities based on the nature of the course and not on personal preferences. Determine if opportunities for student-instructor and student-content interaction are present in the course. If student-student interaction is appropriate to the course (check the Course Worksheet), it is also included in the course. When reviewing opportunities for student interaction, keep in mind that learning environments

usually are broader than a single course and may include informal networks that are beyond the scope of a QM review.

Blended Courses: In courses that use both online and face-to-face settings, the learning activities that occur in these two settings are connected by a common thread or theme and are mutually reinforcing. The connection and reinforcement are made clear to students. For example, the different parts of a particular activity might be sequenced in an alternating way in online and face-to-face meetings of the course.

Standard 5c (5.3). 3 points.

The instructor’s plan for classroom response time and feedback on assignments is clearly stated.

Annotation:

A clear plan for instructor-student interaction, including when students can expect the instructor’s responses to discussion posts and feedback on assignments, helps ensure substantive interaction between instructors and students during the course.

Frequent feedback from the instructor increases students' sense of engagement in a course. Students are better able to manage their learning activities when they know upfront when to expect feedback from the instructor. Clear information is provided about when students will receive instructor responses to emails and discussion postings, feedback on assignments, and grades. This type of interaction is particularly important for course that heavily rely on third-part software/sites.

For example, instructors might state that they will reply to emails within 24 hours, and feedback for assignments will be posted within a week after the due date. This information typically appears in the course syllabus or in a “Start Here” folder. If it is necessary to alter the response-time plan during the course, the adjustment is clearly communicated to students.

Additional examples that might be included in the instructor's plan for interaction:

- A statement that students will receive regular (weekly, daily) announcements that include reminders and information pertinent to the course

- A statement that some assignments will receive summary feedback directed to all students

- Clear information on any additional feedback or guidance that will be provided by the instructor for auto-graded items

Reviewers may find this information in the syllabus or associated with particular assignments. The purpose of the review is not to evaluate the instructor’s plan but rather to ensure the

instructor has provided a plan. Suggestions for how to improve the plan can be included in the recommendations; but the inclusion of suggestions does not determine whether Specific Review Standard 5c is met.

Standard 5d (5.4). 2 points.

The requirements for student interaction are clearly stated.

Annotation:

A clear explanation of the requirements for student interaction helps students plan and manage their class participation and is important for promoting students' active involvement in the course. The statement of requirements also provides a basis for the instructor to evaluate student participation. The more specifically the expectations are explained, the easier it is for the student to meet the expectations. Reviewers, look for a clear statement of expectations for student interaction in the syllabus or in the assignment directions.

Policies or expectations for students interacting with their instructor are stated clearly, including if student responses to instructor-initiated interaction are required. Reviewers might look for information that outlines a communication policy or guidelines for contacting the instructor, including communication channels and how the instructor prefers to be addressed. Clearly explaining the role of the instructor and expectations for interactions with the instructor and with other students is especially helpful to students from cultures in which deference to the instructor is customary and who may need encouragement to "speak up."

Look for a clear, prominently placed statement of the instructor's expectations for student participation in required course interactions (frequency, length, timeliness, etc.), including student-student interactions, if relevant. (Check the Course Worksheet to determine if student-student interaction is appropriate in this course.)

Typically, expectations for student participation are stated in the course information page or syllabus. These requirements may specify the nature of the required participation and expectations for frequency and quality of the student's interactions.

An example of a frequency expectation is the stated requirement that in order to receive full credit for class participation, the student must initiate a discussion or respond substantively to classmates' discussion forum comments in a minimum of one post on four different days each week. An example of a quality expectation is "A discussion forum post is considered substantive if it is at least 250 words in length and presents your original analysis and evaluation, rather than simply a summary, of scholarly perspectives on the discussion topic."

More specific, task-related performance expectations may be included in the individual task description. For example, a group project assignment might include expectations for individual participation. The instructor may include a policy on reading and responding to the instructor's and classmates' posts or provide rubrics detailing how student interactions are evaluated. (See also Specific Review Standard 3c.)

General Standard 6 **Course Technology**

Course technologies support students' achievement of Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Overview Statement:

The technologies enabling the various course components facilitate rather than impede the learning process.

Standard 6a (6.1). 3 points.

The tools used in the course support the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies.

Annotation:

Alignment: The tools selected for the course align with the course and module/unit-level objectives or competencies (2a and 2b) by effectively supporting the course's assessments (3a), instructional materials (4a), and learning activities (5a).

Reviewers, examine both the course and module/unit-level objectives or competencies in your review of tools.

Tools are types of software and applications that enable student interaction and may be used for content delivery or providing feedback in the course; they may be included in or external to the learning management system (LMS).

Examples of tools include, but are not limited to, discussion boards, chat rooms, gradebooks, social media, games, whiteboards, wikis, blogs, virtual classrooms, web conferencing, announcements, assignment and quiz tools, plagiarism detection tools, video repositories, online proctoring tools, and collaboration tools.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

Clear information and instructions are provided regarding how the tools support the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies. For example, a course that requires posting to a discussion forum makes it clear how the discussions support a learning objective or competency. Tools are not used simply for their own sake.

Examples of alignment between tools and objectives or competencies:

1. A course objective requires students to compare and contrast two different periods in U.S. history. The LMS assignment tool is used for students to submit a short essay comparing and contrasting the two periods.
2. A module-level objective is that students be able to demonstrate the steps of performing CPR. Students use a simulation tool to demonstrate the steps on a virtual patient.

Special Situations: In some cases (check the Course Worksheet), the Student Learning Outcomes/Learning Objectives or competencies are mandated by the institution, and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, consider instead the module/unit-level objectives or competencies to assess whether Specific Review Standard 6a is met.

Standard 6b (6.2). 3 points.

Course tools promote student engagement and active learning.

Annotation:

Tools used in the course help students actively engage in the learning process rather than passively absorb information. The selected course tools help the student actively engage in the course by facilitating ongoing interactions with the instructor, course materials, and, as appropriate, other students.

While specific tools are not required for this Specific Review Standard to be met, look for tools that support student engagement and active learning, such as social media, mobile technologies, games, simulations, wikis, blogs, podcasts, and virtual worlds.

In some courses, students cannot access tools that require high bandwidth. Check the Course Worksheet to determine whether the course has such limitations.

Examples of tools that support engagement and active learning:

1. Software that facilitates interaction in real-time (synchronous), such as collaborative tools, webinars, and virtual worlds;
2. Software that facilitates asynchronous interaction, such as shared documents or wikis

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

3. Animations, simulations, and games that require student input and allow for faculty feedback (automated or instructor-initiated);
4. Discussion tools with automatic notification of new posts;
5. Automated self-check exercises.

Standard 6c (6.3). 2 points.

A variety of available tools and/or technology is used in the course.

Annotation:

The course uses a variety of tools and/or technologies, such as videos, discussions, social media, mobile technologies, games, simulations, wikis, blogs, podcasts, and virtual worlds.

Look for evidence of the use of tools and/or technologies to ensure the course is not text-based only and evidence that a variety of technology is used.

Technology includes a wide array of different hardware, software, subscriptions, and plug-ins.

Examples that illustrate the variety of available technology include:

1. Instructor-created videos;
2. Synchronous web conferencing tools used for orientation, group projects, tutoring, test reviews, etc.;
3. A mobile application that students use to identify plants in a botany course;
4. A wiki used for group collaboration;
5. Blogs used for student journals;
6. An animation that demonstrates something not feasible to demonstrate in the physical world, such as a process or procedure that takes place inside a hazardous or inaccessible place;
7. A simulation replicating laboratory activities that allows manipulations of objects on the screen similar to hands-on lab experiences;
8. Web-based voice tools used by language instructors and students to practice pronunciation, vocabulary, etc.

Standard 6d (6.4). 1 points.

The course provides students with information on protecting their data and privacy.

Annotation:

Course design, tool usage, and settings can enhance student privacy. Steps students can take to protect their privacy with course activities, tool usage, and interactions with others are provided. Tools used in the course (both faculty-selected and institutionally integrated) include links to the privacy policies provided by the creators of the tools.

A single statement about institutionally provided tools can identify all of the tools the institution has vetted as compliant with the institution's policy on student data privacy. For tools not vetted by the institution but chosen by the instructor, links to privacy policies are provided in the course.

Reviewers, look for links to privacy policies and measures taken to protect student data.

Consider the distinction between tool-enabled learning activities that require privacy policies and those that do not. For example, a course includes links to videos on YouTube for students to watch. In this case, a privacy policy is not necessary because students are watching videos and do not have to log in to do so. In a course that requires students to create and post videos, students must create accounts on a video-hosting site (e.g., YouTube or Vimeo), and a link to the privacy policies of the video-hosting sites is provided.

Examples of privacy provisions reviewers may look for in the course:

1. Privacy policies for publisher resources and integrations;
2. Links to the privacy policies of social media and third-party websites being used;
3. Links to the privacy policies of external tools integrated into the LMS, such as plagiarism detection tools, messaging tools, collaboration tools, and assistive technology;
4. Statements noting that a privacy policy does not exist for the tool;
5. Provisions for the creation and use of a closed group on social media sites;
6. Permission for students to use pseudonyms instead of real names with any public tools outside the LMS;
7. Use of texting tool settings that do not allow students to see one another's phone numbers.

General Standard 7

Accessibility and Usability

The course design reflects a commitment to accessibility and usability for all students.

Overview Statement:

The course design reflects a commitment to accessibility, so that all students can access all course content and activities, and to usability, so that all students can easily navigate and interact with course components.

NOTE: CCC weighs each course individually in Standard 8 on an as-needed basis. The instructor is required to accommodate a student within two weeks of request.

Standard 7a (8.1 & 8.2). 3 points.

Course navigation facilitates ease of use and readability.

Annotation:

Navigation refers to the process of planning, controlling, and recording the movement of a student from one place to another in the online course. Navigation throughout the course is consistent, logical, and efficient. Confirm that the course's navigation strategies facilitate ease of movement through the course and course activities.

Reviewers, also consider the ownership of the design of course navigation features. Some navigation devices—"next" and "previous" links, for example—are in the learning management system and cannot be modified. The Course Worksheet provides information about navigation features that cannot be changed. Other navigation devices—hypertext links, icons, and window functions, for example—may be within the control of the instructor.

Examples of strategies that facilitate ease of use:

1. Consistent layout and design are employed throughout, making content, instructional materials, tools, and media easy to locate from anywhere in the course. Design elements are used repetitively, increasing predictability and intuitiveness.
2. Course pages have links, files, and icons that are labeled with easy-to-understand, self-describing, and meaningful names; for example, the text "Quality Matters website" is the hyperlink rather than www.qualitymatters.org. Icons used as links also have HTML tags or an accompanying text link.
3. All links within the course, external and internal, are working properly; there are no broken links.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

4. The course design enables students to easily locate where they are within the course and to easily return to the home page from any location.
5. Tables are used to organize data and have appropriate table headers. Data cells are associated with their appropriate headers, enabling students to navigate and understand the data.
6. The hierarchy of material in a page or document is clearly indicated through heading styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.). A table of contents can be included that allows students to move easily throughout documents.

Course design elements maximize usability by facilitating readability and minimizing distractions.

For this Specific Review Standard to be met, course content is clearly organized and presented so that students can easily read and interpret it. Reviewers, determine if the course can be easily read.

In course materials, editing and proofreading errors (spelling, grammar, punctuation, word choice, syntax) are minimal.

Examples of strategies that facilitate readability and minimize distraction:

Layout:

1. Content is formatted to serve specific instructional purposes. For example, format and text color are used purposely to communicate key points, group like items, and emphasize relevant relationships. Color alone is not used to convey meaning.
2. Similar content is grouped together; headings are used to indicate change of topic.
3. White space or negative space is used around content to help increase comprehension and reduce eye fatigue that occurs with large blocks of text or use of many images.

Text:

1. Heading and body styles are consistent throughout the course.
2. Font style and size are selected to maximize on-screen legibility; simpler fonts are chosen over more ornate fonts, and the number of font families is limited to one or two.
3. Text is in a contrasting color that makes it clearly distinguishable from the background.
4. Color coding, e.g., text or highlighting, is used to serve specific instructional purposes. Color alone is not used to convey meaning.

Examples of when this Specific Review Standard may not be met:

1. Colors are used arbitrarily, creating distraction and a lack of readability.
2. Grammar and syntax errors are numerous and create distraction.
3. Content is composed of large blocks of text without white space or negative space to help differentiate various components of the content.

Standard 7b (8.4 & 8.5). 2 points.

The course provides alternative means of access to multimedia content in formats, based on the resources available at CCC, that facilitate ease of use and meet the needs of diverse students.

Annotations:

Multimedia, such as audio and video, are accessible to all students. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines regarding multimedia address reducing barriers to access so all students can interact with course content. The international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) provide additional guidance for achieving accessibility in multimedia.

The Specific Review Standard is met if equivalent textual representations of multimedia content are located or linked within the course. In instances of alternative formats being provided, verify the accuracy of the alternate content. Verification is important because not all attempts to provide alternate formats meet the goal of providing equivalent access for diverse students.

Video and animations are captioned, or text transcripts are readily available. Consider the abilities of all students when reviewing the course. For example, if the student had no vision or no hearing, would the student have access to all meaning and the ability to complete all activities in the course?

Reviewers are expected to review all multimedia content in the course. A strategy for accomplishing the review is to divide the multimedia content among the review team members.

Examples of alternative means of access for different types of multimedia content:

1. If the audio content corresponds with the visual content in a way that conveys meaning (e.g., a video demonstrating how to operate a Bunsen burner in a chemistry lab), captions provide an equivalent experience. Reviewers review the captions to confirm the captions correctly represent the audio content, the speaker, and non-speech information conveyed through sound, such as meaningful sound effects.
2. If the audio content does not correspond with visual content (e.g., a visual of an instructor providing a lecture without visual aids), then a text transcript is sufficient.
3. Visual information that is critical to meaning is conveyed through audio description.

Multimedia used as a vehicle for content or feedback (e.g., images, audio, animation, video, and interactive components) are easy to use, intelligible, and interoperable across devices.

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

For this Specific Review Standard to be met, course multimedia are easy to view, operate, and interpret.

Examples of strategies that ensure the usability of multimedia:

1. Graphics and animations are used to enhance instructional materials and illustrate ideas without causing distractions.
2. Images are appropriately sized and can be viewed in their entirety without scrolling.
3. Audio quality is clear.
4. A video window can be resized; resolution is sufficient for comprehension.
5. Long videos (videos longer than 15 to 20 minutes) are broken into shorter segments or are searchable.
6. Movement through presentations can be controlled.
7. Video streams smoothly without frequent interruptions. If a video requires high bandwidth, that information is included with the video. Some videos must be of high quality for content to be clearly understood, e.g., a video demonstrating sign language, in which students need to be able to accurately discern hand shapes and movement.

Interactive elements integral to the content are cross-platform (PC, Mac) and cross-browser, or guidance is provided about the best browser to use.

Standard 7c (8.6). 2 points.

Vendor accessibility statements are provided for all technologies required in the course.

Annotation:

Students have access to information on the accessibility of the learning management system and all additional required technologies.

For this Specific Review Standard to be met, the course includes a link to the vendor accessibility statement for each required technology. If an accessibility statement does not exist for a particular technology, a link to the vendor's Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) statement is provided or a statement is provided that the accessibility statement does not exist.

Examples of technologies that require an accessibility statement:

1. A learning management system, including integrated third-party software;
2. Plagiarism detection software;
3. Presentation software;
4. Web conferencing tools;
5. Polling tools;

Clovis Community College Online Course Review Rubric – Reference Sheet

6. A lecture-capture system;
7. Media players;
8. A document-sharing system;
9. Social media tools;
10. "Lab in a box" technologies;
11. Mobile applications;
12. Publisher materials or platforms.

Examples of where the accessibility statements may be linked or located within the course:

1. Course syllabus;
2. Page on required technology software;
3. Page on resources;

Institutionally managed web page that includes anchored links to the accessibility statements for technologies used in the course.