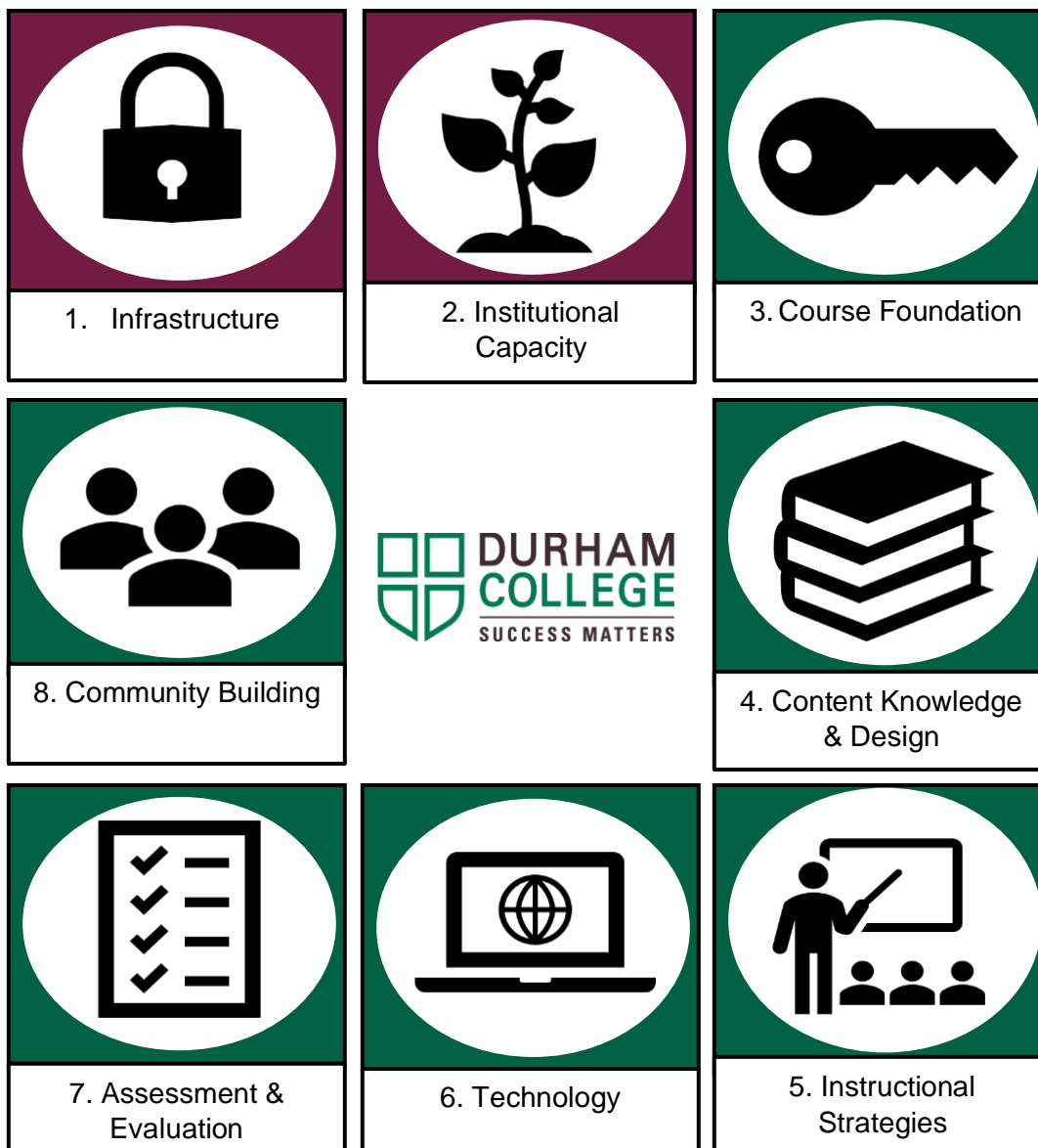


Durham College: Online Learning Quality Framework

The online learning quality framework is a reflective and evaluative tool that is intended to contribute to high quality online learning. Users are encouraged to examine online learning using each of the eight categories. The first two categories – Infrastructure and Institutional Capacity – provide points to consider at the early planning stages of online development. The remaining six categories support the design and development of online courses and programs.

Each category outlines subcategories and reflective questions to support development and design of online learning courses. Examples and resources are provided wherever possible.

This framework can be used as a starting point, or as an anchor when designing online courses. It can also be used as an evaluative reference after the design and development of content is completed.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Infrastructure and Institutional Capacity provide the opportunity to reflect on the high-level foundational needs for online learning. These categories allow the identification of infrastructure and capacity gaps, supporting remediation plans to ensure high quality online learning experiences for students.

INFRASTRUCTURE		EXAMPLES/RESOURCES
1.1	Strategic Planning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the overall purpose, vision, and goals for online learning? 2. How does the proposed online learning fit within the overall strategic planning? 	
1.2	Technology Infrastructure <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What technical resources already exist to support online development and delivery? 2. What additional technical resources are required? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LMS storage capacity ○ Hardware & software requirements ○ Content Management System such as cloud capacity

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY		EXAMPLES/RESOURCES
2.1	Leadership and Administrative Capacity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there appropriate leadership capacity to support online learning? 2. Have stakeholders impacted by online learning been identified and consulted? 3. What gaps have been identified? What is the remediation plan to resolve them? 4. Which institutional policies, structures, and processes support online learning? 5. What safeguards are in place to authenticate student identity and maintain the integrity of student work? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for developing and delivering online learning assets • Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Relevant policies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Acceptable use of information technology ○ Learning Management System usage ○ Recording of learning activities ○ Standards of student conduct for all learning environments • Creation of potential new policies (eg. Cyberbullying policies) • Structures and processes to support online learning including orientation for online students
2.2	Quality Assurance Infrastructure <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What QA structures, processes, and procedures are in place for online learning? 2. What gaps have been identified? What is the remediation plan to resolve them? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online learning development and delivery framework • DC Connect templates
2.3	Student Supports <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What wrap around supports are in place, and/or need to be developed, for students to succeed as online learners? 2. What technical supports are available to students? Where can contact information and service hours for technical support be found? Is it easily accessible for students? How are these technical supports communicated? (i.e., troubleshooting tips, FAQs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student services support resources availability including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Library ○ Student advising ○ ASC ○ SALS ○ FPIC ○ International ○ RO ○ Academic school support ○ ITS
2.4	Faculty Supports <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What faculty supports are available, or needed, for investigating and using technology to support online learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AODA compliance training • Copyright & intellectual property training • Educational Technology – Training for using asynchronous & synchronous tools • Training for building digital assets and teaching online

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. What supports and training are available to faculty for AODA compliance, copyright and intellectual property issues? 3. What training is available to develop and apply best practices for learning, including student engagement, and assessment and evaluation during online learning? 4. How might the faculty become confident in fielding basic technical questions, particularly during synchronous sessions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DC Communities of Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online Faculty CoP ○ Working with International Students ○ Flexible Delivery
--	--

ONLINE LEARNING: COURSE DESIGN AND DELIVERY

The categories below focus on the design and delivery of online learning courses. This section is intended to support the creation of online courses based in best practice. These questions can be used as a means of anchoring the design process, or as reflective evaluation after creation of online content is completed, and/or as ongoing assessment as a course is delivered.

COURSE FOUNDATION		EXAMPLES/RESOURCES
3.1	<p>Initial Contact</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will the faculty welcome students or make initial contact to support the creation of a comfortable and collaborative online learning space? 2. How will the initial contact support students in understanding: 1) how to get started; 2) how to be successful online learners? 3. Does the faculty outline his/her preferred means of contact? When will they be available? What is the estimated response timelines? 4. Where does the faculty outline how students should communicate with each other? Is netiquette regarding this communication outlined? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video welcome • Email welcome in DC Connect • Announcement in DC Connect • Welcome Infographic • Welcome module (like “Start Here”) • Game or simulation – digital scavenger hunt
3.2	<p>Course Blueprint</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the course outline readily available and easily accessible for students? 2. Does the course outline include elements specific to online learning such as communication and collaboration expectations and netiquette, resources required – hardware & software – and wrap around supports? 3. How and where does the faculty clearly outline the requirements for the various learning delivery modes? Synchronous meeting requirements? Synchronous and asynchronous assignments? Time commitments for synchronous and asynchronous tasks? 4. Where does the faculty outline the material to be covered on a weekly basis? 5. Does the faculty outline the module/unit task details? 6. Where does the faculty outline the assessment and evaluations, due dates, meeting dates, and time-sensitive events? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post the course outline in DC Connect • Review the course outline – synchronously / asynchronous • Highlight requirements for online learning noted on the course outline • Reference the course outline throughout the course content modules, linking content to the course outline • Include a student resource section • Question board / open forum for students to ask and answer each other's questions • Use of the LMS calendar for assessment types and due dates • Announcements in the LMS re: upcoming due dates
3.3	<p>Faculty Presence (for further details regarding this subtopic see the Community Building category)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide targeted and individualized feedback

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will faculty maintain an online presence throughout the course? 2. How will students be engaged throughout the course? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference with students in small groups/individually • Weekly review video/audio/written message • Engage in asynchronous discussions to extend student thinking • Solicit feedback from students about faculty presence and student needs (e.g., stop / start / continue) • Embed active learning strategies
--	--	--

CONTENT KNOWLEDGE AND DESIGN		EXAMPLES/RESOURCES
4.1	Course Orientation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What resources are available to support student orientation to the course requirements and expectations? 2. How are online navigation directions communicated to students? How will they know how to proceed between pages, activities, tasks, or modules? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A “Start Here” module • Video orientation guide of the LMS • “How To Navigate the Course” info graphic • Synchronous office hours to explain the course structure and navigation
4.2	Course Purpose <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are program, course, and module outcomes easy to locate, written in student-centered language, and directly linked to the course description and outcomes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content and tasks begin with explanations of their connection to course outcomes • Students reflect on what they think they will learn using a short survey
4.3	Course Organization <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the course logically structured and sequenced? 2. How has the course material been chunked into digestible pieces? 3. What media types are included to support diverse student learning needs? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Page level chunking that includes descriptive headings and subheadings • Content divided by week or module • Reasonable number of content & tasks to be completed per week / module • Larger tasks are chunked, and benchmark submission dates included to support executive function; for example, a summative project is divided and scaffolded into four smaller and progressive tasks: brainstorm conference, outline, research review, presentation, with their own due dates • Content presented using a mixture of text, images, and videos
4.4	Course Design <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How has the course been designed to facilitate active and self-directed learning? 2. How have activities within the course been designed to be authentic and mirror real-life tasks, allowing students to apply knowledge and skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intersperse passive learning (i.e., reading/watching) with active learning activities (i.e., formative questions and interactive activities to support knowledge checks and scaffolding) • Simulate industry activities • Integrate case studies • Assign collaborative projects / tasks
4.5	Course Accessibility <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How have the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) been integrated into the overall design of the course? 2. Does the course content comply with accessibilities standards, regulations, and good practices? 3. Do the course multimedia assets comply with copyright and intellectual property right laws? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heading styles and fonts are accessible • Colours are not used to convey meaning, and colour contrast is present • Lists, links, and images are accessible (alt text) • Resource formats can be read by screen readers • Video captions, audio transcripts, and live captions are available

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attributions are provided when necessary
--	--	--

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		EXAMPLES/RESOURCES
5.1	Connections <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the faculty support students in making connections between overall course learning outcomes and each module/unit? 2. How does the faculty support students in making connections between the content and students, and between content and the world? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos explaining each module / unit that includes thought-provoking questions • Interactive tasks <i>before, during</i> and <i>after</i> content delivery – reflective questions, case studies, quizzes, or games
5.2	Delivery Methods <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are variety of instructional delivery methods used? 2. Are there a variety of learning opportunities to support student engagement in meaningful and relevant ways included? 3. How are the principles of universal design for learning (UDL) considered and used? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized, remedial, or advanced learning experiences and/or collaborative opportunities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Choose delivery mode ○ Simulations and/or games ○ Resource websites ○ Presentations, infographics, elevator pitches ○ Multiple means of engagement (UDL Guidelines) • Multiple means of representation (UDL Guidelines)

TECHNOLOGY		EXAMPLES/RESOURCES
6.1	Asynchronous Engagement Tools <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the LMS provide learning materials and experiences / activities that are innovative and engaging for students? 2. How will the LMS be used as the primary home for learning activities? Does the LMS contain live and accurate links to external tools being used? 3. Will students be required to have additional, or personal, logins or accounts to access technological tools or multimedia assets outside of the LMS? 4. Do students have access to a variety of technological tools and multimedia assets that are fully accessible to foster engagement and active learning and enhance student-centered learning within asynchronous spaces? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous virtual labs, simulations, games - assigning a Kahoot, respond to a Padlet, converse through word comments • Use H5P activities within content for student engagement • Use the DC Connect interactive template tool • Use any one of the following video tools: Flipgrid, VoiceThread, Miro • Integrate Articulate activities, if applicable, for interactivity • Link necessary and open-resource information to the main content • External tools should not require students to have multiple logins • Students require laptop or computer with specific capacities (Storage, CPU Processing, Basic Applications) • Additional software for students– this is program dependent (e.g. CAD, QuickBooks, etc) • See this link on how to achieve outcomes using educational technology tools

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with instructions as to how to use the educational technology tools in the course
6.2	Synchronous Engagement Tools <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If synchronous meetings occur, how will students be supported using synchronous meeting platforms? 2. How will synchronous sessions be planned and scheduled, taking into account such complexities as participation from different time zones? 3. Have synchronous sessions been recorded and made available to students who are unable to attend during the scheduled times? 4. What technological tools and multimedia assets will students have access to in order to foster engagement, and enhance active and student-centered learning within synchronous sessions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with options for synchronous sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See this link if using Zoom ○ See this link if using MS Teams • Record all synchronous sessions as a resource for those who cannot attend • Streamline access to synchronous tool – include link in LMS as a one-stop-shop for students • Integrate virtual labs, simulations, games within synchronous platform • Use synchronous time for active work/discussion rather than lecturing/streaming content one-way

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION		EXAMPLES/RESOURCES
7.1	Assessment and Evaluation Types <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How are assessments of student learning aligned with course outcomes? 2. Are assessments distributed throughout the course to create a manageable workload? 3. Are a variety of assessment types used to measure student progress? 4. Are principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) considered? 5. Do assessments occur in logical and regular intervals to assess student progress? 6. How are authentic assessments used to support deep and transferable learning? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video explaining how the assessment will measure the course outcomes • Scaffold larger assessments using many parts and set benchmark dates for each part to be submitted – feedback is actionable • Multiple means of action and expression (UDL Guidelines) • Allow choice as to how the assessment is completed – video, presentation, essay, report • Presentations, problem-based learning, projects, case studies, studios • See eCampusOntario resources on authentic assessment • See this CTL link for Academic Integrity resources
7.2	Assessment and Evaluation Instructions <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are descriptions and instructions presented clearly, in student friendly language and with enough details for successful completion? 2. Are dates, times, means and methods for assessment submissions clear, easily found, and discussed with the class? 3. Have rubrics, checklists, or grading rationales / descriptions been included with the assessment instructions? 4. Do students have the opportunity to review the rubrics, checklists and/or grading rationales and ask questions prior to the completion of the assessments? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video explanations of assignments • Exemplars to support understanding of parameters • Review of rubrics with students (or co-creation of rubric) • Use of course calendar to set due dates and times for assessments • Use of announcements for due dates / times • Examining exemplars against the grading scheme • Question period / board about assessments • See this link for student resources on the CTL website

7.3	Assessment and Evaluation Feedback – 1. How will feedback and grades be provided to students before the next assignments are due? 2. Are students provided with clear instructions on accessing feedback? 3. Are students provided with guidance on applying feedback to improve learning and performance? 4. What opportunities are available for students to provide descriptive feedback on course design, course content, facilitation, assessments, and activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferencing with faculty to discuss assessment • Video of feedback – require students to replay back • Feedback is provided in the same location for consistency • Direct messaging students to assist them in finding the feedback • Students create action plan for improvement • Surveys – Start, Stop, Continue
7.4	Assessment and Evaluation Policy: Administrative 1. Is the course grading policy clear and easily found? 2. Does the LMS house all grades for all students? 3. Is the LMS the primary host for assessments? 4. What processes are in place to ensure the LMS gradebook is maintained accurately and updated in a timely manner?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades policy is provided to students in orientation – reviewed • LMS grades updated after each assessment/evaluation • Students regularly asked to review grades/feedback and report back

COMMUNITY BUILDING		EXAMPLES/RESOURCES
8.1	Belonging 1. What resources are presented and used to build community and establish trust?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to introduce themselves - Padlet bio, Flipgrid video, discussion board • Student-led icebreakers/community building activities – asynchronous or synchronous • Partner activities
8.2	Faculty-to-Student Interaction 1. How will the faculty regularly interact with the students? 2. How will consistent interactions be encouraged, and focused on feedback and support to facilitate learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual office hours – synchronous / asynchronous • Email or Zoom/Teams chat • Individual or small group conferences – synchronous • Asynchronous dialogue in feedback through MS Word, Padlet, or Miro
8.3	Student-to-Faculty Interaction 1. Are students encouraged to connect with faculty through easily accessible contact information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual office hours – synchronous/asynchronous • Email or Zoom/Teams chat
8.4	Student-to-Student Interaction 1. What opportunities exist for student-to-student interaction? Is there a variety of opportunities? 2. How are students expected to interact with one another? 3. What opportunities are available for unstructured interactions?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class discussion boards • Learning pods • Synchronous meeting spaces (Zoom or Teams) • Questions Board • Flipgrid responses/reflection board • Small group conferences • Group projects

WORKS CONSULTED

- Course Design Rubric*. California Community Colleges: Online Education Initiative. (2018, October). Retrieved November 3, 2021 from <https://cvc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/CVC-OEI-Course-Design-Rubric-rev.10.2018.pdf>
- Getting Started with Online Teaching*. University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. (2021). Retrieved November 2, 2021 from <https://www.uwlax.edu/catl/guides/online/online-principles/>
- Guidelines Online Course Design Rubric Based on the Quality Matters 05/06 Rubric*. New Mexico State University Teaching Academy. (2013). Retrieved April 4, 2021 from <http://hpd.education.nmsu.edu/files/2013/07/online-course-design-rubric-.pdf>
- Manual for Public Organizations (Including Ontario Colleges)*. Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB). (2020). Retrieved November 3, 2021 from http://www.peqab.ca/Publications/Handbooks%20Guidelines/MANUAL_COLLEGES_PUBLICS%20MARCH2021.pdf
- Online Course Design Rubric*. University of Kentucky. (n.d.). Retrieved November 3, 2021 from <https://www.uky.edu/elearning/online-course-design-rubric>
- OSCQR -SUNY Online Course Quality Review Rubric*. The State University of New York. (n.d.). Retrieved November 3, 2021 from <https://oscqr.suny.edu/evidence-examples/overview-and-information/>
- Quality Framework for Designing & Delivering Online Courses*. The Teaching and Learning Centre, Seneca College. (May 2, 2021). Retrieved November 3, 2021 from <https://employees.senecacollege.ca/spaces/39/the-teaching-learning-centre/files/9231/seneca-s-quality-framework-for-designing-delivering-online-courses-pdf>
- Quality Online Course Initiative Rubric: A tool to assist in the design and redesign of online courses*. Illinois Central College. (n.d.). Retrieved November 2, 2021 from <https://icc.edu/faculty-staff/files/ICC-QOCI-Version-4.4-published-05.04.17-2.pdf>
- Universal Design for Learning Guidelines*. CAST. (2021). Retrieved November 3, 2021 from https://udlguidelines.cast.org/?utm_source=castsite&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=none&utm_content=footer
- UW-La Crosse Online Course Evaluation Guidelines*. University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. (n.d.) Retrieved November 2, 2021 from <https://www.uwlax.edu/globalassets/offices-services/catl/guidelines.pdf>