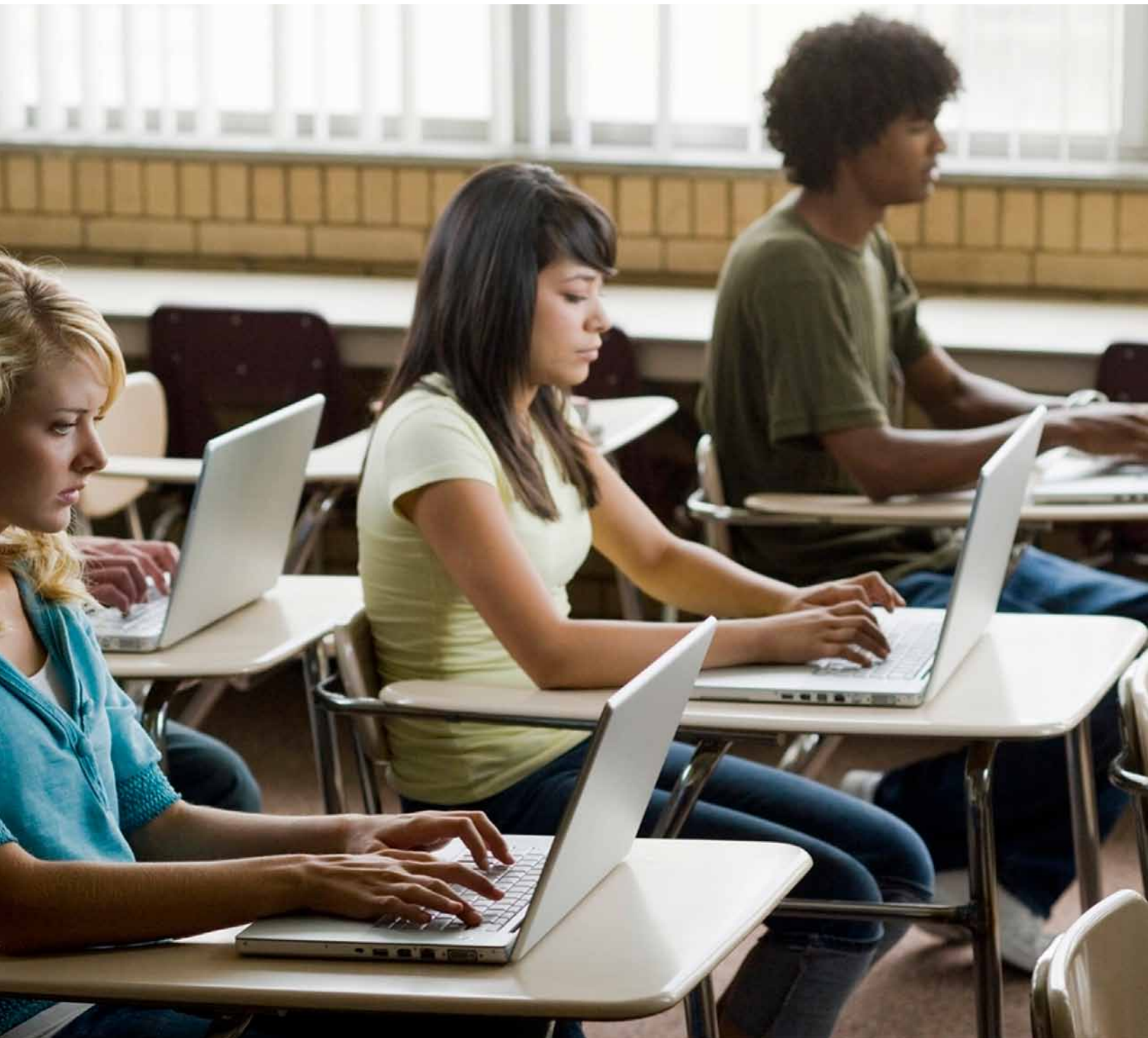
October 2011

VERSION 2

National Standards for Quality Online Courses

iNACOL
International Association for K-12 Online Learning



VERSION 2

National Standards for Quality Online Courses

October 2011

iNACOL
International Association for K-12 Online Learning

TOLL-FREE 888.95.NACOL (888.956.2265)
DIRECT 703.752.6216 FAX 703.752.6201
EMAIL info@inacol.org WEB www.inacol.org
MAIL 1934 Old Gallows Road, Suite 350 Vienna, VA 22182-4040

Acknowledgements

iNACOL organized a committee of experts with various backgrounds in the field of K-12 online learning to take the lead in refreshing the *iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses, Version 2*. They are representatives from educational organizations that share an interest in online education and believe that it is important that students have access to the highest quality of online courses.

With their experience and expertise of the original National Standards of Quality for Online Courses, Brent Bakken from the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) and Brian Bridges from the California Learning Resources Network (CLRN) co-chaired this project. iNACOL would like to thank them for their leadership as well as the involvement of these experienced and knowledgeable leaders in the field of K-12 online learning:

Brent Bakken – Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) Region 10
Chris Bell – Julian Carter School
Jeff Bergin – Pearson
Brian Bridges – California Learning Resource Network (CLRN)
Sheryl Dalpe – Clear Creek Independent School District
Kelley Day – Program Manager – California Learning Resource Network
Jill Dickinson – Florida Virtual School (FLVS)
Jean Dixie – Deer Park Independent School District
Yvonne Domings – National Universal Design for Learning Taskforce/CAST
Rick Ferdig – Kent State University
Myk Garn – Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
Mark Hicks – National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)
Pat Hoge – Connections Academy
Denise Kelly – Apex Learning
Shawn Mahoney – NovaNet
Scott McLeod – University of Kentucky
Melissa Myers – Advanced Academics
Susan Patrick – International Association for K-12 Online Learning
Nick Sproull – National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)
Rick Ogston – CarpeDiem Schools
Liz Pape – Virtual High School Global Consortium
David Pelizzari – K12 – Inc.
Allison Powell – International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL)
Chris Rapp – Evergreen Education Group
Ruth Rominger – National Repository of Online Courses (NROC)
Theresa Rouse – Santa Cruz County Office of Education
Kelly Schwirzke – Santa Cruz County Office of Education
Themy Sparangis – Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)
Tom Stanley – Clark County School District
Matt Wicks – International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL)
Amy Wood – Pearson

VERSION 2

National Standards for Quality Online Courses

Originally published in 2007 by the North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL)

Introduction

The mission of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) is to ensure all students have access to world-class education and quality online learning opportunities that prepare them for a lifetime of success. *National Standards for Quality Online Courses* is designed to provide states, districts, online programs, and other organizations with a set of quality guidelines for online course content, instructional design, technology, student assessment, and course management.

The original initiative in version one of the standards began with a thorough literature review of existing online course quality standards, followed by a survey offered to representatives of the iNACOL network to ensure the efficacy of the standards adopted. As a result of the research review, iNACOL had chosen to fully endorse the work of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) *Quality Online Course Standards* as a comprehensive set of criteria.* The standards as identified by SREB, already in use by sixteen SREB states, proved to be the most comprehensive and included guidelines set forth in the other criteria from the literature review. A full cross-reference of standards is available, including the iNACOL-endorsed *NEA Guide to Teaching Online Courses*, which included the key fundamental criteria. We were and are still grateful for SREB's work and for their permission to distribute these standards on a national scale.

Since the original standards were released, other organizations have released quality standards for online courses. iNACOL organized a team of experts in the area of course development, instructional design, professional development, research, education, and administration to review these new standards and new literature around the topic and determined there was a need to refresh version one of the iNACOL standards. The same process was used in developing version two of the standards in addition to having version one as a starting point in the development of the new version.

Over the past three years, iNACOL has received feedback that several organizations are using these standards in the development and review of online courses. In this new version of the standards, reviewer considerations have been added for each indicator. Additionally, a rubric has been included to assist in the review of online courses based on this new version. iNACOL would like to thank the Texas Education Agency's Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) for developing and sharing this rubric.

These guidelines should be implemented and monitored by each district or organization, as they reserve the right to apply the guidelines according to the best interest of the population for which they serve.

National Standards of Quality for Online Courses (CC-BY 2007)

Understanding Online Courses and Blended Learning

Online learning is expanding access to courses in K-12 education and providing a new network of highly qualified teachers to schools and students in underserved communities. Online learning has numerous benefits, including expanding course offerings, offering customized and personalized learning, giving struggling students a second chance to master a subject through online credit recovery when they fall behind, and providing a rigorous, interactive learning model for schools with embedded assessments that are data-rich[1]. Online learning is providing the content, pedagogical approach and integration of digital tools and resources that now support new models of teaching and learning, including blended learning, personalized instruction, portable and mobile learning.

Blended learning occurs in a variety of venues and models. It occurs at the district and school level, where both online and face-to-face classes are offered. At the classroom level, blended learning can occur when online courses are supported with in-class instruction or instructional support. At the instructional level, blended learning incorporates digital tools and resources into content and assessments, building students' digital literacy skills as well as content knowledge. Blended classrooms enable schools to maintain continuity of learning during a pandemic or natural disaster, offer opportunities for personalization of classroom instruction, and offer students multiple pathways to learning.

Blended learning may incorporate online content in the form of a lesson, a single course, or an entire curriculum. The roles of teachers and students may be quite similar to their roles in a typical classroom, or they may change dramatically as learning becomes student-centered[2] as shown in the diagram below. A blended classroom or course that includes online instruction may expand learning beyond the school day or school year, or it may still be defined by classroom hours.

The committee of experts who refreshed the online course standards have also developed a diagram of the Defining Dimensions of Blended Learning Programs based on the original work of Michigan Virtual School to assist in the understanding of how quality online content and digital resources and tools can be implemented within a blended school or program. This diagram specifically focuses on the unique characteristics across blended learning programs. From minimally using online content and digital tools and resources in a face-to-face classroom to a cohesively designed blended learning model, blended learning is emerging in a variety of forms. Blended learning trends show that implementations of new models look less like older models of distance learning and are emerging toward personalizing digital learning for each individual student at scale.

The focus of this diagram is on illustrating the variety of instructional models for blended learning. Blended learning can and does happen in a school model and there are specific operational issues an administrator must be aware of such as various policy issues, how funding follows the student, and technical issues of how administrative tools connect and work together; however, in this graphic we chose to focus on the course/instructional level.

---

[1] Wicks, M. (2010). *A National Primer for K-12 Online Learning, Version 2*. International Association for K-12 Online Learning: Vienna, VA.

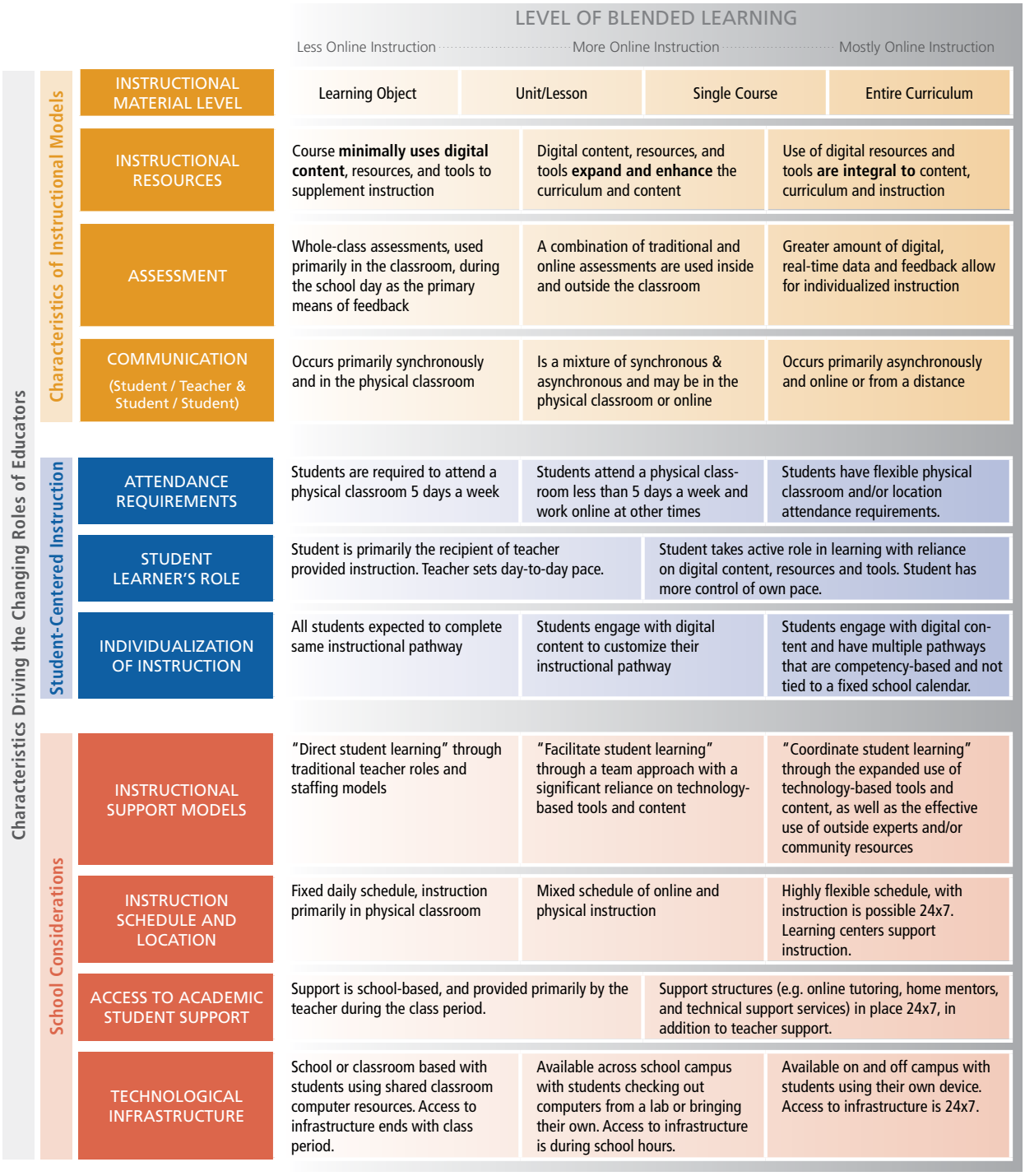
[2] Watson, J., Murin, A., Vashaw, L., Gemin, B. and Rapp, C. (2010). *Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning: A Review of Policy and Practice*. Evergreen Education Group: Evergreen, CO.

The graphic of the Defining Dimensions of Blended Learning Models tries to draw out what the possibilities are in terms of the continuum of blended instructional approaches. iNACOL is not making a value judgment on what is appropriate and what should or should not be used in a blended learning model within this graphic. The goal of this graphic is to show how blended models are being implemented from the early stages to mature, fully developed blended programs. In the original version of the iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses (2006), iNACOL identified key criteria for course quality standards and since then has revised these standards based on surveys of best practice in the field. iNACOL's goal is to provide a working framework of the characteristics of emerging blended learning and a multi-stage process of defining high-quality blended learning in the future.

Each of the dimensions impacts the role of the teacher across a variety of implementations. We have divided the dimensions into categories to show characteristics of the instructional model, student-centered approaches, and operational dimensions.

The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) hopes this diagram will serve as a tool for educators, administrators and policymakers to understand the essential elements of blended learning in order to make informed decisions about implementing blended programs. These leaders and innovations in online and blended learning continue to build a pathway to change the landscape of how we think about learning while increasing student opportunities for a new community of learners.

THE DEFINING DIMENSIONS OF BLENDED LEARNING MODELS



© International Association for K-12 Online Learning

iNACOL included this graphic within the National Standards for Quality Online Courses to provide those new to the field with a better understanding of how online content and digital tools and resources can be implemented in both face-to-face classrooms as part of a blended learning environment as well as within a fully online course. As the committee was refreshing the course standards, the topic of developing a separate set of standards for blended courses was discussed. The committee and iNACOL believe that all online content, however it may be implemented, should meet the standards in this document, and hope that the graphic above will serve as a guide to implementing quality blended learning models for our students.

The National Standards for Quality Online Courses are identified on the following pages.

Rating Scale

0 Absent—component is missing
1 Unsatisfactory—needs significant improvement
2 Somewhat satisfactory—needs targeted improvements
3 Satisfactory—discretionary improvement needed
4 Very satisfactory—no improvement needed

Section A: Content

Description: *The course provides online learners with multiple ways of engaging with learning experiences that promote their mastery of content and are aligned with state or national content standards.*

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Academic Content Standards and Assessments		
1. The goals and objectives clearly state what the participants will know or be able to do at the end of the course. The goals and objectives are measurable in multiple ways.	Within the learning management system, course goals and objectives are present, explicitly stated, and can be easily found by students. The student's level of mastery is measured against each goal and objective. After reading the list of goals and objectives, students will understand what they will be learning throughout the course.	
2. The course content and assignments are aligned with the state's content standards, common core curriculum, or other accepted content standards set for Advanced Placement® courses, technology, computer science, or other courses whose content is not included in the state standards.	The content and assignments for the core courses are explicitly and thoroughly aligned to the credit granting state's academic standards, curriculum frameworks and assessments. Advanced Placement® courses must be approved with the College Board and other elective courses should be aligned to other nationally accepted content standards such as computer science, technology courses, etc.	

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Academic Content Standards and Assessments (continued)		
3. The course content and assignments are of sufficient rigor, depth and breadth to teach the standards being addressed.	The course components (objectives, assessments, instructional strategies, content, assignments and technology) are sufficiently broad, deep and rigorous such that successful students will have the knowledge and skills required by the standards upon completion of the course.	
4. Information literacy and communication skills are incorporated and taught as an integral part of the curriculum.	Information Literacy, including digital fluency, and communication skills are incorporated as an integral part of the curriculum.	
5. Multiple learning resources and materials to increase student success are available to students before the course begins.	Before the course begins, students are provided multiple learning resources that prepare them for the online course. These could include textbooks, instructional materials links to browser plug-ins, and other software, which students must install. Additional materials related to successful strategies for completing an online course, tutorials, orientations, and a list of prerequisite knowledge and skills are also provided at this time.	
Course Overview and Introduction		
6. A clear, complete course overview and syllabus are included in the course.	The syllabus and overview include: course objectives and student learning outcomes; assignments; student expectations; time requirements; required materials; the grading policy; teacher-student, teacher-parent contact policies; the intended audience; and the content scope and sequence.	
7. Course requirements are consistent with course goals, are representative of the scope of the course and are clearly stated.	The course requirements include: a timeframe for participation, an approximate time required for individual activities, and expectations for communications.	

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Course Overview and Introduction (continued)		
8. Information is provided to students, parents and mentors on how to communicate with the online instructor and course provider.	Instructor information is provided to students with contact, availability, and biographical information. Information on how to contact the instructor via phone, email, and/or online messaging tools is provided within the contact information. If regular contact with the instructor is required as part of the course, clear expectations for meeting this requirement are posted within the course.	
Legal and Acceptable Use Policies		
9. The course reflects multi-cultural education, and the content is accurate, current and free of bias or advertising.	The course creates equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class and cultural groups. The content is up to date, accurate and free of any bias.	
10. Expectations for academic integrity, use of copyrighted materials, plagiarism and netiquette (Internet etiquette) regarding lesson activities, discussions, and e-mail communications are clearly stated.	A "Code of Conduct" including netiquette standards, copyright and academic integrity expectations is provided.	
11. Privacy policies are clearly stated.	A policy statement is posted on the course provider's website and/or in the learning management system disclosing the organization's information gathering and dissemination practices.	
Instructor Resources		
12. Online instructor resources and notes are included.	Resources and notes to aid online instructors in teaching and facilitating the course are included within the learning management system.	
13. Assessment and assignment answers and explanations are included.	Built-in course assessments are provided, and access to answers, explanations, and/or rubrics are included.	

Section B: Instructional Design

Description: *The course uses learning activities that engage students in active learning; provides students with multiple learning paths to master; the content is based on student needs; and provides ample opportunities for interaction and communication — student to student, student to instructor and instructor to student.*

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Instructional and Audience Analysis		
1. Course design reflects a clear understanding of all students' needs and incorporates varied ways to learn and master the curriculum.	A variety of instructional and assessment methods, materials and assessments are used throughout the course, which allow students to demonstrate their achievement of the goals and objectives of the course.	
Course, Unit and Lesson Design		
2. The course is organized by units and lessons that fall into a logical sequence. Each unit and lesson includes an overview describing objectives, activities, assignments, assessments, and resources to provide multiple learning opportunities for students to master the content.	The course is organized by units and lessons that fall into a logical sequence. At the start of each unit or lesson, an overview is posted describing the objectives, activities, assignments, assessments, and resources to be used and completed. A variety of activities, assignments, assessments, and resources are used to provide students with different paths to master the content.	
Instructional Strategies and Activities		
3. The course instruction includes activities that engage students in active learning.	The course provides multiple opportunities for students to be actively engaged in the content that includes meaningful and authentic learning experiences such as collaborative learning groups, student-led review sessions, games, analysis or reactions to videos, discussions, concept mapping, analyzing case studies, etc.	

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
4. The course and course instructor provide students with multiple learning paths, based on student needs that engage students in a variety of ways.	Students are given a variety of activities, assignments, assessments and resources to allow them to successfully master the content. If a student is unsuccessful with mastering a particular concept, the course content provides the instructor with suggestions they are able to use in order to provide additional remediation activities or alternative assignments. If a student is not challenged throughout the course, the instructor may adapt the content to add enrichment activities to best meet the student's talents and skills.	
Instructional Strategies and Activities (continued)		
5. The course provides opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking, critical reasoning activities and thinking in increasingly complex ways.	Assignments, activities and assessments provide opportunities for students to elevate their thinking beyond knowledge and comprehension into the realm of analyzing situations, synthesizing information or evaluating an argument. Activities should include open-ended questions and encourage students to categorize and classify information. Opportunities for group work, decision-making and finding patterns should also be included in the course activities.	
6. The course provides options for the instructor to adapt learning activities to accommodate students' needs.	The instructor has access to adapt the course to meet the students' needs by providing additional assignments, resources and activities for remediation or enrichments for the course.	
7. Readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements are appropriate for the course content and grade-level expectations.	The course content should be written at appropriate readability levels for the grade level of the student audience and the grade level should be prominently explained within the course description.	

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Communication and Interaction		
8. The course design provides opportunities for appropriate instructor-student interaction, including opportunities for timely and frequent feedback about student progress.	Learning activities and other opportunities are created to foster instructor-student interaction. Students receive timely and frequent feedback on their progress that emphasizes the intended learner outcomes. The feedback is highly individualized, detailed, and recommends specific, individualized improvement, and strategies to encourage continued progress toward mastery.	
9. The course design includes explicit communication/activities (both before and during the first week of the course) that confirms whether students are engaged and are progressing through the course. The instructor will follow program guidelines to address non-responsive students.	Instructor-student interactions begin early enough in the course to confirm active participation by all students.	
10. The course provides opportunities for appropriate instructor-student and student-student interaction to foster mastery and application of the material.	Learning activities and other learning opportunities are developed to foster instructor-student and student-student interaction. The technology and course content encourage exchanges amongst the instructor and students through email, discussions, synchronous chats, simulations, lab activities and other group projects. Within the grading policy, guidelines defining student participation and expectations are provided. Threaded and/or synchronous discussions are available for developing community, asking and finding answers to questions about the course, and around the content. Access is available to groups or individual students based on the purpose of the activity. Rules, roles, and expectations for the discussion are clear and posted within the discussion forum.	
Resources and Materials		
11. Students have access to resources that enrich the course content.	A wide variety of supplemental tools and resources are clearly identified and readily available within the learning management system.	

Section C: Student Assessment

Description: *The course uses multiple strategies and activities to assess student readiness for and progress in course content and provides students with feedback on their progress.*

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Evaluation Strategies		
1. Student evaluation strategies are consistent with course goals and objectives, are representative of the scope of the course and are clearly stated.	The strategies used to assess students throughout the course are consistent with and aligned to what is presented in the course goals and objectives document posted within the course.	
2. The course structure includes adequate and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.	Assessment types are matched to the level of knowledge being tested. Both formative assessments (that inform and support learning) and summative assessments (that demonstrate mastery) are a part of the course structure. Student-selected assessment options, enabling learners to demonstrate mastery in different ways, are available.	
Feedback		
3. Ongoing, varied, and frequent assessments are conducted throughout the course to inform instruction.	The course provides frequent and ongoing formative assessments to check for student understanding and to ensure they are prepared for the next lesson. Initial pre-tests may be provided to assess student readiness.	
4. Assessment strategies and tools make the student continuously aware of his/her progress in class and mastery of the content.	Feedback tools and procedures are built into the course to allow students to periodically self-monitor their academic progress.	
Assessment Resources and Materials		
5. Assessment materials provide the instructor with the flexibility to assess students in a variety of ways.	Multiple versions of tests, test banks and other resources that support alternative evaluation methods are available.	
6. Grading rubrics are provided to the instructor and may be shared with students.	Rubrics, rationale, and/or characteristics are provided for each graded assignment.	
7. The grading policy and practices are easy to understand.	Grading policies and practices are clearly defined and may include any penalties that may be assessed to grades and/or extra credit opportunities.	

Section D: Technology

Description: *The course takes full advantage of a variety of technology tools, has a user-friendly interface and meets accessibility standards for interoperability and access for learners with special needs.*

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Course Architecture		
1. The course architecture permits the online instructor to add content, activities and assessments to extend learning opportunities.	The instructor of record for the course has access to make additions to the content within the learning management system (LMS). Access should allow the instructor to add content, activities, and assessments, where appropriate. The content from the "original" base course is left unchanged.	
2. The course accommodates multiple school calendars; e.g., block, 4X4 and traditional schedules.	The course is created to adjust to multiple school calendars. Assignments and deadlines can easily be adapted and updated depending on the program offering the course's schedule.	
User Interface		
3. Clear and consistent navigation is present throughout the course.	The course utilizes consistent and predictable navigation methods. Students can move logically and easily between areas of the course; color, graphics and icons are used to guide the student through the course; and a consistent look and feel exist throughout the course (consistent text, colors, bullets, and heading styles). Minimal training is required to navigate the course.	
4. Rich media are provided in multiple formats for ease of use and access in order to address diverse student needs.	Course makes maximum use of the robust capabilities of the online medium and makes these resources available by alternative means (video, CDs, podcasts).	

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Technology Requirements and Interoperability		
5. All technology requirements (including hardware, browser, software, etc...) are specified.	All technology requirements (including hardware, browser, software, etc.) are identified in the course description or during the student registration process and specified to students before they begin the course.	
6. Prerequisite skills in the use of technology are identified.	All prerequisite technology skills necessary for the specific class are identified in the course description or during the registration process and are shared with students before they begin the course.	
7. The course uses content-specific tools and software appropriately.	A variety of software and online tools are used appropriately and as needed within the online course. Tools should be easy to use, necessary for teaching and/or enriching the lesson, cross-platform and free to the student (or built into the course). The tools should be linked from within the course or sent as software with other course materials at the beginning of the course.	
8. The course is designed to meet internationally recognized interoperability standards.	Interoperability technical standards allow sharing content among different learning management systems and ensure sharing of questions, assessments and results with others.	
9. Copyright and licensing status, including permission to share where applicable, is clearly stated and easily found.	Course developers or publishers clearly state the copyright and licensing status of all content, including permission to share where applicable. Copyright and licensing information should be readily available, understandable and standardized in terms of use.	

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Accessibility		
10. Course materials and activities are designed to provide appropriate access to all students. The course, developed with universal design principles in mind, conforms to the U.S. Section 504 and Section 508 provisions for electronic and information technology as well as the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0).	Through the use of web accessibility evaluation tools, all web pages required for students to engage in online education (e.g., registration, library, course materials, grade retrieval) are validated to conform to accessibility standards. NIMAS is used to ensure textbooks and other instructional materials are accessible to the visually impaired.	
Data Security		
11. Student information remains confidential, as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).	Defined course procedures for reporting grade and student information complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html) posted within the course.	

Section E: Course Evaluation and Support

Description: *The course is evaluated regularly for effectiveness, using a variety of assessment strategies, and the findings are used as a basis for improvement. The course is kept up to date, both in content and in the application of new research on course design and technologies. Online instructors and their students are prepared to teach and learn in an online environment and are provided support during the course.*

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Accessing Course Effectiveness		
1. The course provider uses multiple ways of assessing course effectiveness.	A combination of student, instructor, content experts, instructional designer and outside reviewers may be used to evaluate the course for effectiveness. A variety of methods may be used including course evaluations, student completion rates, satisfaction surveys, peer review, teacher and student feedback, and student performance on in-course as well as state or national assessments. University researchers have been encouraged to conduct studies on the effectiveness of the course.	
2. The course is evaluated using a continuous improvement cycle for effectiveness and the findings used as a basis for improvement.	The provider indicates the frequency of course evaluations, whether reviews are conducted internally or externally, and how the provider uses evaluation results to improve courses.	
Course Updates		
3. The course is updated periodically to ensure that the content is current.	The date the course was last updated is posted. Courses should be reviewed at a minimum of every three years to keep the content current, engaging, and relevant.	
Certification		
4. Course instructors, whether face-to-face or virtual, are certificated and "highly qualified." The online course teacher possesses a teaching credential from a state-licensing agency and is "highly qualified" as defined under ESEA.	This standard can only be evaluated in the context of specific instructor(s) having been identified to teach the course. The online course teacher possesses a teaching credential from a state-licensing agency and is "highly qualified" as defined under ESEA.	

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Instructor and Student Support		
5. Professional development about the online course delivery system is offered by the provider to assure effective use of the courseware and various instructional media available.	Professional development is available for instructors of online courses, which includes using the technology tools specific to the course. Appropriate evidence could include training schedules, materials, tutorials or external links, as well as expectations for training frequency and annual hours of training.	
6. The course provider offers technical support and course management assistance to students, the course instructor, and the school coordinator.	Online technical help and support should be available any time. If 24/7 support is not available, support hours are clearly posted within the course or on the online program's website and a maximum response time is noted. Assistance may take the form of Frequently Asked Questions, training resources, mentors, or peer support.	
7. Course instructors, whether face-to-face or virtual, have been provided professional development in the behavioral, social, and when necessary, emotional, aspects of the learning environment.	This standard can only be evaluated in the context of specific instructor(s) having been identified to teach the course. Online instructors have been provided professional development to identify and address the ways in which the online environment can enhance and/or hinder the learning experience and have sensitivity to the perception of written online language.	
8. Course instructors, whether face-to-face or virtual, receive instructor professional development, which includes the support and use of a variety of communication modes to stimulate student engagement online.	This standard can only be evaluated in the context of specific instructor(s) having been identified to teach the course. Professional development prepares the instructor to use multiple, varied means of communication with and stimulating engagement of online students. Modes include but should not be limited to email, threaded discussions, live chat/whiteboard sessions, document sharing, etc.	

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Reviewer Considerations	Rating
Instructor and Student Support (continued)		
9. The provider assures that course instructors, whether face-to-face or virtual, are provided support, as needed, to ensure their effectiveness and success in meeting the needs of online students.	This standard can only be evaluated in the context of specific instructor(s) having been identified to teach the course. Instructor curricular support, contact numbers, guidelines, mentor assistance, best instructional practices, or accessibility and participation in professional networks are available.	
10. Students are offered an orientation for taking an online course before starting the coursework.	Students are offered an orientation for taking an online course before starting the coursework. The orientation should describe the experience of learning online and what is needed to manage challenges successfully. Time commitments, software and hardware requirements, and how to set up the student's computer and work environment may be part of this orientation. The training may be provided either in written form, face-to-face, through a video, or entirely online.	

Appendix A: Sample Rubric

Course Review Scoring Rubric developed by the Texas Education Agency's Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN)

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
A1	The goals and objectives clearly state what the participants will know or be able to do at the end of the course. The goals and objectives are measurable in multiple ways.	Within the learning management system, course goals and objectives are **not** present.	Within the learning management system, course goals and objectives are stated, but are **not** complete, easily found, or understood by students. The course measures goals and objectives in **only ONE** way.	Within the learning management system, course goals and objectives **are** present, clearly stated, and can be found by students. The student's level of mastery is measured in **only ONE** way.	Within the learning management system, course goals and objectives **are** present, clearly stated, and can be found by students. The student's level of mastery is measured in **at least TWO** different ways against the goals and objectives.	Within the learning management system, course goals and objectives **are** present, explicitly stated, and can be easily found by students. The student's level of mastery is measured in **THREE or more** ways against the goals and objectives.	
A2	The course content and assignments are aligned with the state's content standards, common core curriculum, or other accepted content standards set for Advanced Placement® courses, technology, computer science, or other courses whose content is not included in the state standards.		**ONE or more** of the state content standards are not observed or partially observed.		The course content and assignments are aligned to the state's academic standards, assessments, or nationally/ internationally accepted content standards set for Advanced Placement® or other elective courses whose content is not included in state standards.	The course content and assignments are **ALL** explicitly and thoroughly aligned to the state's academic standards, assessments, or nationally/ internationally accepted content standards set for Advanced Placement® or other elective courses whose content is not included in state standards.	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
A3	The course content and assignments are of sufficient rigor, depth and breadth to teach the standards being addressed.	Course components (objectives, assessments, instructional strategies, content, assignments, and technology) have **no** rigor or depth and breadth.		Course components (objectives, assessments, instructional strategies, content, assignments, and technology) **lack sufficient** rigor or depth and breadth.	Course components (objectives, assessments, instructional strategies, content, assignments, and technology) are **sufficiently** broad, deep and rigorous such that successful students will have the knowledge and skills required by the standards upon completion of the course.	Course components (objectives, assessments, instructional strategies, content, assignments, and technology) are **exceptionally** broad, deep and rigorous such that successful students will have the knowledge and skills required by the standards upon completion of the course.	
A4	Information literacy and communication skills are incorporated and taught as an integral part of the curriculum.	Information literacy and communication skills are **not** integrated into the course content.	**Minimal and insufficient** information literacy and communication skills are integrated in the course content.	**Insufficient** information literacy and communication skills are integrated into the course content.	Information literacy including digital fluency and communication skills are incorporated as an integral part of the curriculum.	Information literacy including digital fluency and communication skills are incorporated **extensively** as an integral part of the curriculum.	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
A5	Multiple learning resources and materials to increase student success are available to students before the course begins.	Before the course begins, there are no learning resources available for students.		Before the course begins, there are insufficient learning resources available for the students.	Before the course begins, students are provided multiple learning resources (textbooks, instructional materials, links to browser plug-ins, and other software, which students must install) that prepare them for the online course.	Before the course begins, students are provided multiple learning resources (textbooks, instructional materials, links to browser plug-ins, and other software, which students must install) that prepare them for the online course. Additional materials related to successful strategies for completing an online course, tutorials, orientations, and prerequisite knowledge and skills are also provided at this time.	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
A6	A clear, complete course overview and syllabus are included in the course.	There is no course overview and syllabus.	There is a location within the course for the course overview or syllabus but the actual overview or syllabus is missing.	The course overview and/or syllabus need to be significantly improved. Minimal information is provided.	The course overview and syllabus include items such as: course objectives and student learning outcomes, assignments, student expectations, time requirements, required materials, grading policy, teacher contact information, and content scope and sequence.	The course overview and syllabus include course objectives and student learning outcomes, assignments, student expectations, time requirements, required materials, grading policy, teacher contact information, intended audience, content scope and sequence, and other helpful information.	
A7	Course requirements are consistent with course goals, are representative of the scope of the course and are clearly stated.	Course requirements are missing.	Course requirements are vague and are not consistent with the course goals.	The course requirements (timeframe for participation, approximate time required for individual activities and expectations for communications) are inconsistent with course goals, or not representative of the scope of the course, or not clearly stated.	Course requirements (timeframe for participation, approximate time required for individual activities and expectations for communications) are consistent with course goals, representative of the scope of the course and clearly stated.	The course requirements include: a detailed timeframe for participation, an approximate time required for individual activities, and specific expectations for communications, and are consistent with course goals, representative of the scope of the course and clearly stated.	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
A8	Information is provided to students, parents and mentors on how to communicate with the online instructor and course provider.	There is no instructor/provider contact information available.		There is little instructor/provider contact information provided.	Appropriate instructor/provider communication information such as office hours, phone number, email, and biographical information is provided.	Appropriate instructor/provider communication information such as office hours, phone number, email, and biographical information is provided. The process for communicating with the instructor is clearly outlined.	
A9	The course reflects multi-cultural education, and the content is accurate, current and free of bias or advertising.	Content does not reflect multi-cultural education, is not up-to-date, accurate, or free of any bias or advertising.	Content is missing **TWO** of four conditions (multi-cultural, up-to-date, accurate or free of any bias or advertising).	Content is missing **ONE** of four conditions (multi-cultural, up-to-date, accurate or free of any bias or advertising).	The course reflects multi-cultural education, and the content is accurate, current and free of bias or advertising.	The course creates equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups. The content is up to date, accurate and free of any bias or advertising.	
A10	Expectations for academic integrity, use of copyrighted materials, plagiarism and netiquette (Internet etiquette) regarding lesson activities, discussions, e-mail communications are clearly stated.	Copyright, plagiarism, netiquette, and integrity information are not included in the course or are not linked to if located outside of the course.		Some, but not all expectations are clearly stated in the course or are not linked to if located outside of the course.	Issues addressing copyrighted materials, plagiarism, netiquette, and integrity are included in the course or are linked to if located outside of the course.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
A11	Privacy policies are clearly stated.	Privacy policies are not included in the course or are not linked to if located outside of the course.			A policy statement is included in the course or is linked to if located outside of the course. The policy discloses the organization's information gathering and dissemination practices.	A policy statement is posted on the course provider's website and in the course and is easily found by the student. The policy discloses the organization's information gathering and dissemination practices.	
A12	Online instructor resources and notes are included.	Instructor resources and notes are not included in the course.			Instructor resources and notes are available in the course.	Instructor resources and notes are available for every learning unit in the course.	
A13	Assessment and assignment answers and explanations are included.	No answers, explanations, rubrics or examples are included.		Answers and explanations are available, but no rubrics or examples are included.	Answers, explanations, and rubrics are provided; however, no examples are included.	Answers, explanations, rubrics, and examples of completed assessments and assignments are included in the instructor resources.	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
B1	Course design reflects a clear understanding of all students' needs and incorporates varied ways to learn and master the curriculum.	There is **no** variety of instructional and assessment methods.		There is **limited** variety of instructional and assessment methods. Materials and assessments used throughout the course prevent students from demonstrating achievement of the goals and objectives of the course.	There is a variety of instructional and assessment methods. Materials and assessments used throughout the course allow students to demonstrate achievement of the goals and objectives of the course.	There is a **rich** variety of instructional and assessment methods. Engaging materials and authentic assessments are used throughout the course to allow students to demonstrate achievement of the goals and objectives of the course.	
B2	The course is organized by units and lessons that fall into a logical sequence. Each unit and lesson includes an overview describing objectives, activities, assignments, assessments, and resources to provide multiple learning opportunities for students to master the content.	The course is not organized into units/ modules and lessons that fall into a logical sequence.		The course is organized into units/ modules that fall into a logical sequence, **but** some lessons do not include an overview, or few or limited resources are noted.	The course is organized by units and lessons. At the start of each unit or lesson, an overview is posted describing the objectives, activities, assignments, assessments, and resources to be used and completed.	The course is organized by units and lessons. At the start of each unit or lesson, an overview is posted describing the objectives, activities, assignments, assessments, and resources to be used and completed. A variety of activities, assignments, assessments, and resources are used to provide students with different paths to master the content.	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
B3	The course instruction includes activities that engage students in active learning.	The course instruction does not include activities that engage students in active learning.		The course provides limited opportunities for students to be actively engaged in the content.	The course provides several opportunities for students to be actively engaged in the content that includes meaningful and authentic learning experiences such as collaborative learning groups, student-led review sessions, games, analysis or reactions to videos, discussions, concept mapping, analyzing case studies, etc.	The course consistently provides multiple opportunities for students to be actively engaged in the content that includes meaningful and authentic learning experiences including collaborative learning groups, student-led review sessions, games, analysis or reactions to videos, discussions, concept mapping, analyzing case studies, etc.	
B4	The course and course instructor provide students with multiple learning paths, based on student needs that engage students in a variety of ways.	The course and course instructor do not address a variety of learning styles.		The course and course instructor provide a limited variety of activities, assignments, assessments, and resources.	The course and course instructor provide a variety of learning activities that address different learning styles and preferences (auditory, visual, tactile/kinesthetic).	The course and course instructor consistently provide a wide variety of learning activities that address different learning styles and preferences (auditory, visual, tactile/kinesthetic).	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
B5	The course provides opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking, critical reasoning activities and thinking in increasingly complex ways.	The course does **not** provide opportunities for students to elevate their thinking beyond remembering and understanding.		The course provides an **inadequate amount** of assignments, activities, and assessments for students to elevate their thinking beyond remembering and understanding.	The course provides a **sufficient amount** of assignments, activities, and assessments for students to elevate their thinking beyond remembering and understanding.	The course **consistently** provides assignments, activities, and assessments for students to elevate their thinking beyond remembering and understanding.	
B6	The course provides options for the instructor to adapt learning activities to accommodate students' needs.	The course **does not** provide options for the instructor to adapt the course to meet the students' needs.			The course provides options for the in-structor to adapt the course to meet the students' needs by providing addi-tional assignments, resources, and activi-ties for remediation or enrichments for the course.		
B7	Readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements are appropriate for the course content and grade-level expectations.	Readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements are **not** appropriate for the course content and grade-level expectations.		Readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements are sometimes inappropriate for the course content and grade-level expectations.	Readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements are appropriate for the course content and grade-level expectations.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
B8	The course design provides opportunities for appropriate instructor-student interaction, including opportunities for timely and frequent feedback about student progress.	The course design does **not** provide opportunities for appropriate instructor- student interaction, including opportunities for timely and frequent feedback about student progress.	The course design provides few opportunities for appropriate instructor-student interaction, **and** few opportunities for timely and frequent feedback about student progress.	The course design provides few opportunities for appropriate instructor-student interaction, **or** few opportunities for timely and frequent feedback about student progress.	Learning activities and other opportunities are created to foster instructor-student interaction. Students receive timely and frequent feedback on their progress that emphasizes the intended learner outcomes. The feedback is individualized and detailed.	Learning activities and other opportunities are created to foster instructor-student interaction. Students receive timely and frequent feedback on their progress that emphasizes the intended learner outcomes. The feedback is highly individualized, detailed, and recommends specific, individualized improvement, and strategies to encourage continued progress toward mastery.	
B9	The course design includes explicit communication/ activities (both before and during the first week of the course) that confirm whether students are engaged and are progressing through the course. The instructor will follow program guidelines to address non-responsive students.	There is **no** evidence of instructor-student interactions before and during the first week of the course to confirm active participation by all students.		There is evidence of instructor-student interactions before **or** during the first week of the course to confirm active participation by all students.	There is evidence of instructor-student interactions before **and** during the first week of the course to confirm active participation by all students.	Introductory student communication and activities are present and required before and during the first week of the course to confirm active participation by all students.	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
B10	The course provides opportunities for appropriate instructor-student and student-student interaction to foster mastery and application of the material.	There is **no** opportunity for instructor-student or student-student interaction with the purpose of mastering content.	There is only instructor-student **or** student-student interaction, but not both.	Only **ONE** type of active, ongoing learning activity is created to foster instructor-student **and** student-student interaction. This activity is integral to content but may lack monitoring and clarity.	A **minimum of TWO** differentiated active, ongoing and required (graded) learning activities are created to foster instructor-student **and** student-student interaction. These activities are integral to content and are defined and monitored to ensure mastery of content.	**Three or more** differentiated active, ongoing learning and required (graded) activities are created to foster instructor-student **and** student-student interaction. These activities are integral to content and are defined and monitored to ensure mastery of content. There is appropriate depth, complexity and rigor to these activities.	
B11	Students have access to resources that enrich the course content.	No additional tools and resources are identified or available within the course to enrich the content.		Supplemental tools and resources are identified but do not enrich and are inappropriate and/or not relevant to the content.	Supplemental tools and resources are identified and readily available within the learning management system. The resources enrich and are relevant to the content.	A wide variety of supplemental tools and resources are clearly identified and readily available within the learning management system. The resources enrich and are relevant to the content.	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
C1	Student evaluation strategies are consistent with course goals and objectives, are representative of the scope of the course and are clearly stated.	Strategies to assess students **are not** aligned with the course goals and objectives.	**FOUR or more** assessments are not consistent or aligned with the course goals and objectives.	**ONE to THREE** assessments are not consistent or aligned with the course goals and objectives.	The strategies used to assess students throughout the course are consistent with and aligned to what is presented in the course goals and objectives posted within the course.		
C2	The course structure includes adequate and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.	Course has **no** form of assessment to determine student mastery.		The course structure includes inadequate/ inappropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.	Multiple types of assessments allow students to demonstrate their understanding. Formative and summative assessments are a part of the structure of the course. Examples may include pre-tests, post-tests, objective and subjective questioning, self-assessments, group projects, evaluating levels and quality of participation and portfolios.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
C3	Ongoing, varied, and frequent assessments are conducted throughout the course to inform instruction.	Student assessment is not ongoing, varied and/or frequent.		The course contains inadequate assessments to check for student understanding and to ensure they are prepared for the next lesson.	The course provides ongoing, varied, and frequent formative assessments to check for student understanding and to ensure they are prepared for the next lesson.	The course provides ongoing, varied, and frequent formative assessments to check for student understanding and to ensure they are prepared for the next lesson. Pre-assessments are provided to determine student readiness.	
C4	Assessment strategies and tools make the student continuously aware of his/her progress in class and mastery of the content.	No feedback tools or procedures are found in the course.			Feedback tools and procedures are built into the course for continuous student self-monitoring.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
C5	Assessment materials provide the instructor with the flexibility to assess students in a variety of ways.	The course does not offer any type of assessment.		The course only offers ONE type of assessment with no variation.	The course offers multiple types of assessments with alternate types of evaluation methods available in the learning management system.	The course offers a wide variety of assessment techniques to measure ongoing student progress on clearly identified learner outcomes. Alternative evaluation methods are used to gauge student progress, and authentic assessments are provided to demonstrate mastery.	
C6	Grading rubrics are provided to the instructor and may be shared with students.	There are no rubrics of assignments available.			Rubrics are provided to the instructor and may be shared with the student.	Explicit rubrics and work samples are provided for each type of graded assignment and are shared with the student.	
C7	The grading policy and practices are easy to understand.	The course does not contain a grading policy.		The course includes a grading policy that is either difficult to locate or hard to understand.	Grading policy and practices are easy to locate and are well-defined.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
D1	The course architecture permits the online instructor to add content, activities and assessments to extend learning opportunities.	The course architecture does not allow the teacher to add content, activities and assessments to extend learning opportunities.			The course architecture permits the teacher to add content, activities and assessments to extend learning opportunities.		
D2	The course accommodates multiple school calendars; e.g., block, 4X4 and traditional schedules.	The course does not accommodate multiple school calendars.			The course accommodates multiple school calendars.		
D3	Clear and consistent navigation is present throughout the course.	The course navigation is inconsistent and unpredictable. At times the navigation is missing.		The course navigation is inconsistent and unpredictable.	The course utilizes consistent and predictable navigation methods. Minimal training is required to navigate the course.	The course utilizes consistent and predictable navigation methods. Students can move logically and easily between areas of the course; color, graphics and icons are used to guide the student through the course; and a consistent look and feel exist through-out the course (consistent text, colors, bullets, and heading styles).	

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
D4	Rich media are provided in multiple formats for ease of use and access in order to address diverse student needs.	The course does not provide rich media in any format.	The course uses video or audio sparingly.	The course uses media but not in multiple formats. The media may be insufficient in quality.	The course uses quality video, audio and Internet resources throughout the course.	The course makes maximum use of the robust capabilities of the online medium and makes these resources available by alternative means (video, CDs, podcasts).	
D5	All technology requirements (including hardware, browser, software, etc...) are specified.	All technology requirements are not specified.			All technology requirements (including hardware, browser, software, etc...) are identified in the course description or during the student registration process and specified to students before they begin the course.	All hardware, Web browser and software requirements are identified. Links for available downloads are provided to students at the beginning of the course.	
D6	Prerequisite skills in the use of technology are identified.	No prerequisite skills in the use of technology are identified.			Prerequisite technology skills necessary for the specific class are identified in the course description or during the registration process and are shared with students before they begin the course.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
D7	The course uses content-specific tools and software, appropriately.	The course does not utilize appropriate content-specific tools and software.			Software and online tools are used appropriately and as needed within the online course. The tools should be linked from within the course or sent as software with other course materials at the beginning of the course.		
D8	The course is designed to meet internationally recognized interoperability standards.	The course provider has no plans to meet the interoperability standards.		The course provider has a target date to meet the interoperability standards.	Interoperability technical standards allow sharing content among different learning management systems and ensure sharing of questions, assessments, and results with others.		
D9	Copyright and licensing status, including permission to share where applicable, is clearly stated and easily found.	Copyright and licensing status, including permission to share where applicable, is not stated or found.			Course developers or publishers clearly state the copyright and licensing status of all content, including permission to share where applicable. Copyright and licensing information is readily available, understandable and standardized in terms of use.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
D10	Course materials and activities are designed to provide appropriate access to all students. The course, developed with universal design principles in mind, conforms to the U.S. Sections 504 & 508 provisions for electronic and information technology as well as the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0).	The course does not provide appropriate access.	The course includes: The National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) to ensure textbooks and other instructional materials are accessible, alt tags for images, transcripts (audio and video), and links are consistent and include the URL.	The course includes all of Rating 1 plus: keyboard accessible (does not rely on mouse for navigation), recommended fonts and sizes, and appropriate contrast colors.	The course includes all of Ratings 1 and 2 plus: Closed Captioning, timed assignments can be adjusted, and instructor created documents use Styles.	The course includes all of Ratings 1-3 plus: descriptions for audio and video and tables contain proper headings and labels.	
D11	Student information remains confidential, as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).	Course procedures for reporting grade and student information are not included.			Defined course procedures for reporting grade and student information comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
E1	The course provider uses multiple ways of assessing course effectiveness.	The course provider does not provide multiple ways of assessing course effectiveness.		The course provider uses only **ONE** way of assessing course effectiveness.	A combination of student, instructor, content experts, instructional designer and outside reviewers **may be** used to evaluate the course for effectiveness. Methods **may include** course evaluations, student completion rates, satisfaction surveys, peer review, teacher and student feedback, and student performance on in-course as well as state or national assessments.	A combination of student, instructor, content experts, instructional designer and outside reviewers **are** used to evaluate the course for effectiveness. Methods **include** course evaluations, student completion rates, satisfaction surveys, peer review, teacher and student feedback, and student performance on in-course as well as state or national assessments.	
E2	The course is evaluated using a continuous improvement cycle for effectiveness and the findings used as a basis for improvement.	The course is not evaluated regularly for effectiveness.		The course is evaluated regularly for effectiveness, but the findings are not used as a basis for improvement.	The provider indicates the frequency of course evaluations, whether reviews are conducted internally or externally, and how the provider uses evaluation results to improve courses.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
E3	The course is updated periodically to ensure that the content is current.	The course is not updated periodically.			The course is updated a minimum of every three years to keep the content current, engaging, and relevant.	The course is updated annually to ensure the content is current, engaging, and relevant. The date the course was last updated is posted.	
E4	Course instructors, whether face-to-face or virtual, are certificated and "highly qualified." The online course teacher possesses a teaching credential from a state-licensing agency and is "highly qualified" as defined under ESEA.	The online course instructor is neither credentialed nor "highly qualified."		The online course instructor possesses a teaching credential from a state-licensing agency **or** is "highly qualified" as defined under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).	The online course instructor possesses a teaching credential from a state-licensing agency **and** is "highly qualified" as defined under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).		
E5	Professional development about the online course delivery system is offered by the provider to assure effective use of the courseware and various instructional media available.	No professional development is offered.			Professional development is available for instructors of online courses, which includes using the technology tools specific to the course. Appropriate evidence could include training schedules, materials, tutorials, or external links, as well as expectations for training frequency and annual hours of training.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
E6	The course provider offers technical support and course management assistance to students, the course instructor, and the school coordinator.	No technical support or course management assistance is offered.			Technical support and course management assistance is available and hours are clearly posted within the course or on the online provider's website. Assistance may take the form of Frequently Asked Questions, training resources, mentors or peer support.	Technical support and course management assistance is available 24/7 and a maximum response time is noted on the provider's website.	
E7	Course instructors, whether face-to-face or virtual, have been provided professional development in the behavioral, social, and when necessary, emotional, aspects of the learning environment.	No professional development has been provided in the behavioral, social, and emotional aspects of the learning environment.			Online instructors have been provided professional development to identify and address the ways in which the online environment can enhance and hinder the learning experience and have sensitivity to the perception of written online language.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
E8	Course instructors, whether face-to-face or virtual, receive instructor professional development, which includes the support and use of a variety of communication modes to stimulate student engagement online.	No professional development has been provided in support and use of a variety of communication modes to stimulate student engagement online.		Professional development is offered but is limited to only synchronous or asynchronous forms of communication.	Professional development prepares the instructor to use multiple, varied means of communication with and stimulating engagement of online students via synchronous and asynchronous communication. Modes include but should not be limited to messaging, threaded discussions, live chat/ whiteboard sessions, document sharing, etc.		
E9	The provider assures that course instructors, whether face-to-face or virtual, are provided support, as needed, to ensure their effectiveness and success in meeting the needs of online students.	No support is provided to ensure the instructor's effectiveness and success in meeting the needs of online students.			Instructor curricular support, contact numbers, guidelines, mentor assistance, best instructional practices, accessibility and participation in professional networks are available.		

	Standard	Absent 0	Unsatis-factory 1	Somewhat Satisfactory 2	Satisfactory 3	Very Satisfactory 4	Score
E10	Students are offered an orientation for taking an online course before starting the coursework.	No student orientation is offered before starting the course.			Students are offered an orientation for taking an online course before starting the coursework. The training may be provided either in written form, face-to-face, through a video or entirely online.	Students are offered an orientation for taking an online course before starting the coursework. The orientation should describe the experience of learning online and what is needed to manage challenges successfully. Time commitments, software and hardware requirements and how to set up the student's computer and work environment may be part of this orientation. The training may be provided either in written form, face-to-face, through a video or entirely online.	

TOLL-FREE 888.95.NACOL (888.956.2265) DIRECT 703.752.6216 FAX 703.752.6201
EMAIL info@inacol.org WEB www.inacol.org
MAIL 1934 Old Gallows Road, Suite 350, Vienna, VA 22182-4040