Essential Principles of Quality

Guidelines for Web-based Courses for Middle and High School Students

Checklist

This checklist is based on the SREB *Essential Principles of Quality* and is designed to assist states and schools in determining the quality and effectiveness of Web-based courses. It is suggested that each course be rated on the extent to which it meets the criteria, with 1 indicating that a course does not meet the criteria and 3 indicating that it does.

Course: _____

Course provider: _____

Reviewer: _____

Date: _____

Curriculum, Instruction and Student Assessment

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Considerations	Meets criteria	Barely meets criteria	Does not meet criteria	Inadequate information
1. The course content and assessments are aligned with the state's academic standards.	Course objectives and student learning objectives are listed. Assessments are matched to course content and state academic standards.	3	2	1	0
2. The course engages students in learning activities that address various learning styles.	Learning activities and options — including case studies, simulations, written assignments, Web resources, reading activities, discussions, labs and multimedia — are embedded in the course.	3	2	1	0

The *Essential Principles of Quality* was developed based on the SREB *Principles of Good Practice,* the *Essential Elements for Web-based Courses for High School Students* and the work of SREB Educational Technology Cooperative representatives who have developed, administered and used Web-based courses.

Curriculum, Instruction and Student Assessment

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Considerations	Meets criteria	Barely meets criteria	Does not meet criteria	Inadequate information
3. The course gives students opportunities to engage in abstract thinking and critical reasoning.	Inquiry-based learning and discussions are used. Students are challenged and encouraged to predict, summarize, interpret, contrast and differentiate ideas.	3	2	1	0
4. The course structure includes fair, adequate and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.	Valid and reliable assessments include online or proctored testing, performance assessments, standardized tests, projects, demonstrations, multimedia presentations, case studies, simulations and electronic portfolios.	3	2	1	0
5. The course provides appropriate teacher-to-student interaction, including timely, frequent feedback about student progress.	Teachers respond to students within 24 hours. Feedback may include e-mails, discussions, portfolios, telephone calls, regular progress reports, and term/semester grades.	3	2	1	0
6. The course provides opportunities for appropriate student-to-student interaction and a plan for monitoring that interaction.	Collaborative learning opportunities — through e-mails, discussion strands, simulations, lab activities and other group projects — are embedded in the course design.	3	2	1	0
7. The course complies with the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.	See act requirements.	3	2	1	0

Curriculum, Instruction and Student Assessment

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Considerations	Meets criteria	Barely meets criteria	Does not meet criteria	Inadequate information
8. Students have access to resources that enrich the course content.	All materials and/or Web links have been reviewed for appropriateness and are aligned with course objectives and specifications.	3	2	1	0
9. A complete, clear course syllabus is available for review.	The syllabus outlines course content, expectations of students, required materials, the course's credit value and a grading scale.	3	2	1	0
10. Issues associated with the use of copyrighted materials are addressed.	The course provider guarantees in writing that all course materials comply with copyright laws.	3	2	1	0
11. The teacher can adapt learning activities and assessments to accommodate students with disabilities.	The course can be modified to meet the needs of students or teachers with disabilities.	3	2	1	0
12. Other criteria:		3	2	1	0
		3	2	1	0

Comments: Curriculum, Instruction and Student Assessment

Management

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Considerations	Meets criteria	Barely meets criteria	Does not meet criteria	Inadequate information
1. The course provider is authorized to operate by the state where the course originates.	State review of courses and accreditation of providers are ways to ensure that the course provider is of quality.	3	2	1	0
2. School districts or the state department of education has reviewed the course to ensure its quality before it is used.	There is documentation of these reviews.	3	2	1	0
3. The school in which the student is enrolled or the school district in which he or she lives will accept the course for credit.	Is this course taught for credit? Will the school district accept this course for credit?	3	2	1	0
4. Procedures for fees and payment are established before students enroll in a course.	Tuition and fees related to the course are disclosed fully, and payment methods and schedules are provided.	3	2	1	0
5. Student work and personal data are secure.	Student information remains confidential, as required by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.	3	2	1	0
6. Students are monitored to ensure academic honesty.	School districts provide means to monitor student performance. The course design promotes monitoring of student performance.	3	2	1	0

Management

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Considerations	Meets criteria	Barely meets criteria	Does not meet criteria	Inadequate information
7. A teacher or other educator coordinates and assists students with instructional, technical and management requirements.	The course provider offers training and support to the school coordinator, who assists with course requirements, assignments and grades and who acts as liaison among students, the school, parents and the course provider.	3	2	1	0
8. The course provider offers the course teacher and school coordinator assistance with technical and course management.	The course provider offers orientation training, distance learning training, product/course updates, a help desk, special technical assistance and answers to frequently asked questions.	3	2	1	0
9. Students have access to necessary, relevant learning materials.	The course provider identifies materials and technological resources that students will need. There is a list of who is expected to provide these materials, which may include scanners, digital cameras, reference materials, books, videos, software and lab equipment.	3	2	1	0
10. The course provider has identified prerequisite skills in the use of technology.	The course syllabus describes in detail what knowledge of certain programs and/or multimedia students should have before enrolling in the course.	3	2	1	0
11. There are technical requirements for acceptable access.	The course requirements include minimum technical requirements.	3	2	1	0

Management

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Considerations	Meets criteria	Barely meets criteria	Does not meet criteria	Inadequate information
12. The teacher is trained to use the course and resources effectively to deliver instruction.	If the course provider employs the teacher, the provider submits evidence that the teacher is certified in the subject matter and has been trained as an online instructor.	3	2	1	0
13. The students receive technical support to ensure easy use of the course.	Every student has access to a work station, network, ISP and course support.	3	2	1	0
14. There is a policy for recourse or appeal if the Web-based course is not delivered as described.	Contracts and licensing agreements specify how the course will perform and the sanctions and penalties that will result if it does not meet those expectations.	3	2	1	0
15. The course is coordinated with the academic calendar of the students and teacher before it begins.	The course can accommodate multiple school calendars (block, 4X4, traditional).	3	2	1	0
16. Other criteria:		3	2	1	0
		3	2	1	0

Comments: Management

Evaluation

To what extent does the course meet the criteria in this area?	Considerations	Meets criteria	Barely meets criteria	Does not meet criteria	Inadequate information
1. The Web-based course's success is measured by the achievement of students taking it.	The course provider should have references concerning the number of students who complete the course and results of end-of-course tests.	3	2	1	0
2. The state agency or its designees evaluate the course over time.	The course provider cooperates with states and schools in their efforts to monitor student participation in the course.	3	2	1	0
3. A new course provides documentation of its reliability and completeness.	Evidence of beta testing, peer review and student evaluations are available upon request.	3	2	1	0
4. Each teacher of a Web-based course will be evaluated at least once a year.	The course provider furnishes evidence of criteria for teacher evaluations and of the methods and frequency of evaluations.	3	2	1	0
5. The school and state can verify a student's participation and performance in a Web-based course during the course and upon its completion.	The course provider furnishes evidence of student participation and performance as needed.	3	2	1	0
6. Other criteria:		3	2	1	0
		3	2	1	0

Comments: Evaluation

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Checklist
Summary Evaluation of the Course

Course is: ❑ **Recommended**   ❑ **Not recommended**

Course: _____

Course provider: _____

Reviewer: _____

Date: _____