NASHVILLE STATE ONLINE COURSE REVIEW PROCESS

Updated Summer 2022

WHY WE NEED COURSE REVIEWS AS PART OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AT NASHVILLE STATE

Nashville State is a member of the National Council of State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA), a private, nonprofit organization that helps expand students' access to postsecondary educational opportunities and ensure more efficient, consistent, and effective regulation of distance education programs through the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA). SARA provides state authorization portability for higher education institutions in the United States, and NC-SARA serves as a national leader in enhancing quality and consumer protections in interstate postsecondary distance education.

Updated Accreditation and Eligibility Requirements for Distance Education. *WCET Article:* https://wcetfrontiers.org/2021/08/26/rsi-refresh-sharing-our-best-interpretation-guidance-requirements/

- On July 1, 2021, the Department of Education released the final set of proposed regulations stemming from the 2019 Negotiated Rulemaking process (the Distance Education and Innovation Regulations). As part of these regulations, the definition of "distance education" in Chapter 34, §600.2 was updated, including specifically defining the critical terms: *instructor*, *regular*, and *substantive*.
- *"Regular and substantive interaction" is used in the "distance education" definition as a consumer protection mechanism for students and to delineate federal financial aid eligibility for courses and competencies.*
  - *Five factors are the focus of "regular and substantive interaction" …*
    1. *Appropriate form of media used.*
    2. *Instructors meet accreditation requirements.*
    3. *At least 2 of 5 "substantive" activities are used.*
    4. *There are scheduled and predictable interaction opportunities.*
    5. *Instructor responsive to student requests.*
- *NC SARA updated 21st Century Guidelines for Distance Education to now include C-RAC statement on proposed DE Guidelines*
  - Six categories based upon *C-RAC Statement on Proposed Distance Education Guidelines*
    1. Institutional Capacity
    2. Institutional Transparency and Disclosures
    3. Academic Programs (directly related to course review)
       - *The academic team includes individuals with expertise in the subject-matter, instructional design, interaction with students, and assessment of student learning.*
       - *The institution collects, analyzes, and uses data on student engagement, achievement, and feedback for improvement of the academic program and of student success.*
       - *Institutions that offer the same program in multiple modalities ensure learning outcomes and levels of student achievement are comparable across modalities.*
       - *Learning activities and assessments are aligned with measurable learning outcomes. Formative and summative assessments of student learning provide feedback to students and serve as a basis for program improvement.*
    4. Support for Students

5. Program Review <mark>(directly related to course review)</mark>
   - *Programs offered through distance learning are reviewed on a regular cycle that includes external perspectives. Reviews are informed by empirical evidence including feedback from students and graduates about the academic program and information about graduates' success (e.g., employment and further education).*
   - *The institution documents improvements made as a result of the program reviews and other feedback.*
6. Academic and Institutional Integrity <mark>(directly related to course review)</mark>
   - *The institution promotes a culture of academic integrity.*
   - *The process for addressing academic integrity issues is clearly outlined by the institution and includes the opportunity for appeal.*
   - *Learning outcomes are clear to prospective students and the public.*
   - *The institution demonstrates its understanding of the requirements and obligations of participation in NC-SARA, such as SARA consumer protection provisions. Note: This item is the responsibility of the states.*

4-YEAR ONLINE MASTER COURSE REVIEW CYCLE

All online master courses (MC-WEBO) courses will be reviewed on a 4-year cycle. Courses that successfully complete the Quality Course Design Certification (QCDC) are automatically enrolled in the review cycle in the year of completion.

<mark>Below is the process for course review for non-QCDC courses. These courses have no associated contract for development.</mark>

Course Selection

Online courses have been categorized into a 4-year rotation cycle. Selected courses have already been taught online. Some MC-WEBO courses were developed with a quality development process, the goal of this review is to update the courses to address any objective or alignment changes, ensure the technology and materials are current with improved accessibility scores, and identify regular and substantive interactions within the course as necessary to maintain continuous quality.

Course Inquiries

1. Who developed the master course, are they still available for consultation?
2. Who is the course lead or course maintainer responsible?
3. When was the course created or last updated? Has it previously been reviewed? (Quality Matters or OSCQR)
4. Is there a curriculum or course map available with measurable objectives, aligned with assessments and learning outcomes/objectives?
5. Has the syllabus been updated to the latest template?

6. Is the course content accessible? OOL (Office of Online Learning) expects an Ally accessibility score of 90% or higher.

Overview and Expectations

- The review process will be conducted by the Office of Online Learning. Constructive feedback and justifications will be provided for OSCQR rubric standards to aid course designers in the course evaluation process. Consistent communication between course designers and reviewers should occur until the review process is complete. The course designer will communicate any recommended revisions and scores will be adjusted accordingly by the reviewer.

- The OSCQR Rubric will be used to evaluate the course design to quality standards. Courses must achieve a score of 80% or higher and an accessibility score of 90% or higher.

- The course developer is expected to develop a curriculum map using the current course content. Measurable objectives (course and module) must be aligned with course assessments. Any revisions or changes made to the course
outcomes must be observed and appropriately assessed within the curriculum map.

- Reviewed courses must provide substantial evidence of accessibility, instructor engagement, clarity of instruction, student assessment, and provide outlets for student-to-student and student-to-instructor communication.

- There will be an agreed upon timeline for completion among AA, OOL, the division, and the course developers involved.

Online Learning requirements for online course design include the following;

- Syllabus and Curriculum Map must be completed and aligned.

- Course content must meet accessibility standards. Courses relying solely on publisher materials must provide an alternative access plan.

- Courses must incorporate at least 3 methods of assessment (e.g., discussions, essays, projects, tests) with associated rubrics, that exemplify both summative and formative learning.

- Publisher assessments cannot make up more than 50% of the graded course content, unless approved by the division dean.

- Asynchronous online courses fall under a specific set of regulations compared to hybrid and on-ground courses. As the course designer, you should ensure that you have

multiple opportunities for interactions to ensure your course meets a federal regulation for "regular and substantive interaction," and to meet accreditation requirements. The most common ways to meet these requirements are to have multiple scheduled discussions, an open discussion forum for responding to questions about the course content or competencies and developing robust rubrics to help with opportunities to provide feedback on a student's course work. The course should directly address at least 2 of the 5 options and are evident within the course.

Process

1. Phase 1 Mapping (2 weeks)
   a. Designated course assigned Instructional Designer (ID)
   b. 1st Developer ID consultation
      i. Discuss the process, the course, the expectations, and the agreed timeline for completion.
   c. Course map due (aligned and measurable course objectives, module objectives, and assessments). ID can use the existing course to help with mapping if needed.
2. Phase 2 Review, Feedback, and Recommendations (2 weeks)
   a. 2nd Developer ID consult to review course map and written feedback utilizing OSCQR rubric.
      i. Developer makes updates/alterations to course based on course map, meeting QSCQR standards, and ID feedback.
   b. Syllabus due based on provided template.
   c. Self-review and ID review can be conducted together if needed. Much of the focus of the initial review and feedback should focus on the following;
      i. Evaluate ALL course content for accessibility scores in Ally,
      ii. evidence of instructor engagement,
      iii. clear and detailed instructions and rubrics, TiLT (Teaching Center)
      iv. up-to-date gradebook, and
      v. opportunities for student interactions.
   d. Developer establishes appropriate timeline for online course revisions.
3. Phase 2 Revision (4 weeks)
   a. Any needed revisions are addressed.

b. All content meets accessibility requirements to 90% or has an associated alternative access plan.

c. Review updated and completed indicating course meets QSCQR standards by 80% threshold.

d. 3rd Developer ID consult for outstanding revisions and updated timeline.

e. Submit to OOL for final review.

Conclusion

The developer should work with the instructional designer to ensure the course meets quality standards. All stakeholders will be notified when a course successfully meets the OSCQR standards at 80% or higher and will be renewed for another cycle.

Courses that do not meet the 80% expectation would go to Academic Affairs in recommendations for course redesign.

Approval

A quality course design is considered complete when development criteria listed above are met. The Director of Online Learning will conduct a final meeting with the course developer and assigned instructional designer to signify completion. The confirmation to stakeholders from the Director of Online Learning will signify that the course meets online learning quality standards as well as when the class will be reviewed in the next cycle.

The approved course should be utilized for all future online deliveries of the designed course, regardless of the instructor of record, for a period of no less than four years or unless a major redesign is recommended by administrators. Department representatives who sign off on approvals are responsible for distributing the course design to new instructors as needed.

Follow Up

Faculty teaching a reviewed course should not make changes in the course that affect the learning objectives or the alignment without contacting the Office of Online Learning. Faculty can add personal information, instruction, videos, etc., to help with the context of materials and assignments, but they should not change the assignments, or anything that alters the alignment, without consulting with the OOL. The divisions are responsible for the maintenance and distribution of completed courses to faculty.