

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development
and
Assessment Rubric for Online Courses

The two documents, *Guidelines for Online Course Development* and *Assessment Rubric for Online Courses*, have been developed as tools to aid faculty in ensuring that online courses meet the highest possible standards.

The College is applying to the Higher Learning Commission to offer online degrees and certificates. Both the College and the Higher Learning Commission recognize the need for best practices and assessment in online classes. The *Guidelines* have been created as a set of best practices that can be followed in developing an online class. The *Assessment Rubric* assesses how well those best practices are being followed and are a tool for ensuring continuous self-study and improvement.

The *Guidelines* are to be used as a checklist by faculty developing online classes. They can also be used to revise an existing course. The *Assessment Rubric* follows the *Guidelines* point-by-point. It can and should be used for self-assessment. However, it is intended for use by an independent reviewer who can then make suggestions for course improvement. The rubric is not an evaluation of the faculty member teaching the course and has no assessment tools pertaining to the faculty member.

Training on how to effectively use both the *Guidelines* and the *Assessment Rubric* will be offered in the Teaching & Learning Center.

Acknowledgement: The *Guidelines for Online Course Development* and *Assessment Rubric for Online Courses* were adapted from materials originally developed by the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative and the De Paul University Online Teaching Institute. However, the finished product is unique to this institution.

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Learner Analysis/Support

Principle: Careful analysis of the target student population lays the groundwork for building an effective distance learning course. Areas worth considering are (a) demographics, (b) previous experience and coursework, (C) technological skill and access, (d) learning preferences/styles, and (e) possible special needs.

Indicators:

- A. Welcome message in the announcement
- B. Information on online etiquette
- C. Statement of required software and/or materials/ special requirements
- D. Links/phone number for technical support
- E. Complete staff information
 - 1. Name, degrees, office number and hours, telephone, email address, college postal address

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Content/Course Organization

Principle: Clear learning objectives provide a useful framework for the courses' content, activities, and learning assessments. Construction units or modules around discrete objectives help structure students' learning, making the course more unified and coherent.

Indicators:

- A. A complete course syllabus with:
 - 1. measurable course objectives
 - 2. course materials (including purchasing information for distance learners)
 - 3. course schedule/course organization
 - 4. grading policy (appropriate for the online environment – easy to comprehend)
 - 5. required software/materials/special requirements clearly stated
- B. A clear structure of course content:
 - 1. Module based? Unit based? Weekly-based? Chapter/Lesson-based?
 - 2. Clear and measurable objectives for each learning unit
 - 3. A clear timeline for the learning process (e.g. due dates for each assignment)

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Active Learning Design

Principle: Engaging students in application activities—case studies, journal writing, role playing, problem-solving, class discussions—encourages active learning and continual involvement with course content.

Indicators:

A. Activities that promote active learning:

1. role playing
2. problem-solving
3. online discussion
4. case study
5. journal writing
6. group work
7. other _____

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Learning Assessment

Principle: Frequent learning assessments –either graded or ungraded—can help students evaluate and guide their own learning, and can help instructor adjust to learners’ needs throughout the course. Tying assessments closely to objectives adds further consistency and clarity to the course.

Indicators:

A. Assessment for each learning unit should include one or more of the following:

1. quiz
2. survey
3. online discussion
4. case study
5. project
6. group work
7. paper
8. other _____

B. Evaluation criteria or rubrics for all assessment methods used in the class:

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Communication and Collaboration

Principle: Communication and collaboration foster strong learning communities, counteracting the often-isolated nature of distance learning. Providing a variety of communications channels —email, telephone, video, discussion forums, online chats, etc. — encourages student/teacher and student/student interaction, particularly if that communication is integrated well into assignments.

Indicators:

A. Communication method(s) used in the class, such as:

1. email
2. online discussion forums
3. online chat
4. video/audio
5. other _____

B. Instructor's availability:

1. office hours
2. email turn around time (no more than 24 hours, without prior notification)

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Course Evaluation

Principle: Course evaluations by students can identify strengths and weaknesses in the course. Open-ended questions can provide valuable contextualized information that will help in improving the course.

Indicators:

- A. An evaluation of the class is conducted by the students.
 - 1. Evaluation is easy to understand and submit
 - 2. Questions are relevant to the class
 - 3. Some questions provide opportunities for students to provide open-ended answers.

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Online Resources

Principle: Use of online resources—academic journals, professional organizations, etc.—are fully integrated into assignments and course schedules, making full use of existing services.

Indicators:

A. Online Resources

1. Academic resources (e.g. stable links to database articles)
2. Web sites (e.g. professional organizations, educational resources)

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Legal and Ethical Use

Principle: Resources are included in the course in accordance with copyright regulations and ethical use policies.

Indicators:

A. Legal and Ethical Use

1. Online resources, Embedded graphics, videos, other material (e.g. copyright permission sought)
2. The instructor clearly states ethical and legal expectations for student work (e.g. plagiarism)

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Course Design Standards, Graphics

Principle: Multi-media materials—video, audio, graphics, and presentations—are optimized for online delivery. All materials are targeted to support learning objectives.

Indicators:

A. Web Design

1. Web pages are accessible, easy to understand and navigate.
2. Reliable links to course materials are maintained
3. All materials are compatible with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

B. Materials are optimized for web delivery:

1. Visual presentations, video and audio files are compressed
2. Graphics, photographs use web resolution and compression standards

C. Multimedia materials support learning goals:

1. Materials are integral to the learning goal (e.g. support diverse learning styles, present complex concepts in a visual manner)
2. Ethical and legal expectations are met (e.g. copyright permission sought)

John A. Logan College
Guidelines for Online Course Development

Editorial Checking

Typos:

Unclear sentences:

Other: