Quality Standards for Courses in D2L Brightspace

The following course quality standards were developed in January 2021 in consultation with Accessibility, Copyright, Human Resources, Instructional and Leadership Development Centre (ILDC), Learning Technologies (LT), Library, and Privacy and Governance. It is a guide intended for Saskatchewan Polytechnic faculty developing and delivering courses in D2L Brightspace, our learning management system (LMS).

Please note: This document is divided into two sections: Course Development and Delivery. Based on their level of skills and experience, faculty will self-identify and progress through the listed Emerging, Evolving, and Mastering categories below. **All courses are expected to demonstrate the standards found in the Emerging column**; however, faculty are encouraged to integrate standards from the Evolving and Mastering columns as appropriate.

Course Development Section

This section is for faculty developing online and blended courses.

Course Information Standards			
Course information standards relate to the standard pages included in the Course Outline and Important Course Information module of the Brightspace for Classrooms course shell.			
Category	**Emerging**	**Evolving**	**Mastering**
Course Outline	▪ Includes an approved course outline with course description, course length, credit hours, learning outcomes and course assessment		
Learning Resources	▪ Includes a list of required resources	▪ Includes a list of required and supplementary resources along with information on how it connects to the learning outcomes ▪ Identifies supplemental resources as optional ▪ Encourages learners to use the supplemental resources as their time and interest allows	
Evaluation Summary	▪ Includes list of evaluation activities such as assignments and weighting	▪ Provides links to assignment pages	

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Resource Standards
Resource standards relate to the selection of relevant and appropriate learning materials for the course.

Category	Emerging	Evolving	Mastering
Learning Materials	- Includes learning materials that are relevant, credible and from reliable sources - Informs learners about materials that are from potentially unreliable resources (e.g., wikis, blogs, etc.) - Provides learning materials from a variety of sources to ensure balanced views of topic(s) - Provides clear information on how to access and use library databases or other online publisher materials, if applicable	- Includes a list of supplementary and/or additional learning resources for each learning outcome, as applicable - Provides an overview of how supplementary learning resources relate to the learning outcomes and/or learning steps - Provides learning materials in a variety of formats such as videos, podcasts, websites, etc.	- Offers learners the opportunity to contribute to the course learning resources through their own research, projects, assignments and/or work, practicum, or volunteer experience - Provides a collaborative document, forum, or other medium to house and share these resources with other learners - Develops and shares Open Educational Resources (OER)

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Assessment & Evaluation Standards			
Assessment and evaluation standards relate to the creation of assessment tools for the course.			
Category	**Emerging**	**Evolving**	**Mastering**
Graded Assignments	▪ Creates Brightspace dropbox folder for each assignment ▪ Labels each Brightspace dropbox folder with an assignment or activity title ▪ Creates authentic assessments that closely align to the learning outcomes ▪ Provides clear and complete assignment instructions for learners to understand how to complete and submit assignments ▪ Includes clearly stated and detailed assessment tools for each assignment which describe the required performance criteria ▪ Organizes discussions in clearly labelled forums and topics	▪ Provides opportunities for the learner to practice using assessment tools before formal evaluations ▪ Includes a link to the Brightspace dropbox folder in assignment instructions ▪ Creates assignment pages that are consistent in format and structure ▪ Includes explanation for how each assignment connects to the course content	▪ Builds rubrics within the LMS ▪ Links rubrics to assessments or to the gradebook ▪ Provides assignment instructions in multiple forms (e.g. text, audio, and/or video), as appropriate ▪ Provides learners with multiple options to demonstrate their learning (e.g., written paper, podcast, video recording, infographic, etc.) ▪ Provides multiple topics and questions for discussions to provide learners options to decide what they would like to discuss ▪ Provides samples of exemplary work for assignments and projects

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Instruction & Delivery Standards			
Instruction and delivery standards relate to the development of learning activities and the use of varied instructional methods.			

Category	Emerging	Evolving	Mastering
Instructions for Learning Activities	- Includes an appropriate title for each activity - Includes clear and complete instructions for all activities so learners understand how to complete and submit them - Includes all required details for activities - Uses plain language - Defines any jargon or uncommon terms	Uses consistent structure and format for all learning activities	- Provides activity instructions in multiple or alternative formats, as appropriate - Considers and incorporates reading levels consistently using Microsoft Word or external resources
Learning Activities	- Selects activities that contribute to learners' achievement of learning steps and learning outcomes - Selects learning activities that support active learning - Selects learning activities that are suited to course level - Designs authentic learning activities that are relevant to the future workplace - Uses one or two learning activity types (e.g., readings, videos, reflections, interactive reviews such as matching, sorting, etc.)	- Explains connections between the learning activity and learning outcome - Supports scaffolding of learning activities by building upon learners' prior knowledge to new content - Designs learning activities to allow learners to practice before summative assessments - Uses several activity types (e.g., readings, videos, reflections, interactive reviews such as matching, sorting, etc.)	- Uses a wide variety of learning activities (e.g., readings, videos, reflections, interactive reviews such as matching, sorting, etc.) - Includes multiple modes of learning activities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)

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Organization Standards			
Organization standards relate to the structure of the course content.			
Category	**Emerging**	**Evolving**	**Mastering**
Course Content	▪ Presents course content in a consistent and logical sequence according to learning outcome ▪ Uses transition statements or other strategies to identify relationships between learning outcomes and steps	▪ Breaks down course content into learning steps with appropriate sequencing	▪ Provides learners with strategies to work with the course material using organizers, pre-readings, pre-tests, concept maps, etc. ▪ Uses the conditional release feature within the LMS to create customized learning paths

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Course Design Standards			
Course design standards relate to the writing style and use of pre-designed templates in the course.			
Category	**Emerging**	**Evolving**	**Mastering**
Writing	▪ Uses clear, concise and objective writing ▪ Writes all content in a positive and supportive tone ▪ Reviews the course to ensure there are no grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors	▪ Utilizes supports to aid comprehension such as glossaries, FAQs, definition of terms, etc.	
Templates	▪ Applies blank templates in Brightspace to each content page for consistency	▪ Selects templates in Brightspace that best matches content and learning activities	
Copyright	▪ Uses APA or another standard citation style to consistently quote or paraphrase content, including images, data, tables, charts, videos, etc. ▪ Includes references on course pages where citations are used ▪ Creates, modifies, and reproduces copyright-protected materials in learning and teaching activities ▪ Refers to Sask Polytech Library's Copyright website for more information as it applies to developing courses in Brightspace, including understanding your rights and responsibilities with respect to copyright and how to make decisions about using copyrighted materials		

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Technology Standards		
Technology standards relate to overall functionality, as well as privacy and security considerations.		
Category	**Emerging**	**Evolving**	**Mastering**
Functionality	- Informs learners about any specialized technology requirements used in the course - Ensures multimedia functions well - Uses basic hardware and software as required - Provides an orientation to the technologies used in the course - Uses Sask Polytech supported platforms and technologies	- Provides avenues for learners to share and troubleshoot any technology issues (e.g., via discussion forum) - Provides learners with information about drop-in sessions for any technology assistance - Selects external third-party tools that are relevant and appropriate for the course content - Selects external third-party tools with consideration for the learners (e.g., refer to Rubric for Evaluating E-Learning Tools as an example from Western University)	
Privacy & Security	- Contacts the Sask Polytech Privacy Office for access and completes Sask Polytech's Access and Privacy online module - Notifies learners prior to any recording of classes or exams, including the purpose of the recording and how the recording will be used. - Recognizes implications for learner privacy and security when using third-party software - Identifies technologies in the course where personal information may be used or stored outside of Sask Polytech - Safeguards personal and confidential information of learners - Ensures all Sask Polytech Information Management and Confidentiality policies are followed - Directs learners to contact the Sask Polytech Privacy Office with any privacy concerns - Notifies the Sask Polytech Privacy Office of any potential breach of personal information and works collaboratively towards continuous improvement of privacy practices		

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Indigenization & Reconciliation Standards

Indigenization and reconciliation standards relate to the inclusion of Indigenous content, teaching strategies, resources and perspectives in online courses.

Category	Emerging	Evolving	Mastering
Course Content	- Includes an acknowledgement of the treaty territories and traditional homelands of the Métis people - Includes course learning materials that are reflective of the learner population - Follows Section 4.2.2 Indigenous Knowledge in the Curriculum Framework guidelines for including Indigenous Content - Consults the **kiskēyihtamowin asiwacikan** (Cree) Knowledge Container for resources and information on best practices	- Includes examples, case studies, and/or resources that highlight Indigenous peoples/ Indigenous ways of knowing, in the place of generic "mainstream" examples and stories - Promotes Indigenous voices, perspectives, and cultures in teaching materials (e.g., Elders, role models - internal & external to Sask Polytech, etc.)	- Embeds Indigenous ways of knowing and world views into curriculum - Includes different ways of learning (e.g., reading materials, videos, links to resources, etc.) which value and respect lived experience and knowledge - Provides opportunities for reciprocity, community building and sharing between participants

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Diversity & Inclusion Standards

Diversity and inclusion standards relate to teaching strategies and best practices that respect the diverse learner community at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

Category	Emerging	Evolving	Mastering
Course Content	▪ Acknowledges that learners are diverse in culture, experience, expression, and expectations ▪ Includes course learning materials that are reflective of the learner population ▪ Includes teaching strategies from the Intercultural Toolkit focused on Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	▪ Utilizes intercultural communication in a variety of learning environments (F2F, blended, online). ▪ Promotes diverse voices, perspectives, genders, and cultures in teaching materials ▪ Includes various learning modalities, mediums, media and materials to support various ways of learning (i.e., visual, aural, verbal, physical, social, solitary, logical, physical, etc.)	▪ Embeds cultural and global ways of knowing and world views into curriculum ▪ Provides personalized, learner-friendly, and strength-based, actionable feedback ▪ Analyzes course and program materials, seeking to include and highlight principles of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

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Course Delivery Section

This section is for faculty delivering fully developed online or blended courses. This includes all aspects of instruction, including pre-delivery, delivery, and post-delivery. Upon receiving the course, faculty are recommended to review the Course Development Section to ensure all aspects have been addressed.

Course Information Standards

Course information standards relate to the standard pages included in the Course Outline and Important Course Information module of the Brightspace for Classrooms course shell.

Category	Emerging	Evolving	Mastering
Contact Information	- Provides instructor's contact information including, at a minimum, email address, and phone number - Includes information on virtual and in person office hours		
Important Dates	- Provides a course schedule so learners can plan their workload - Sets start and end dates for quizzes, assignments and any other restrictions in the course	- Designs course schedule to allow the instructor the ability to provide effective and timely feedback - Includes due dates for assignments and discussions in the course calendar	
Course Outline	Reviews course outline with learners at the start of the course (i.e., in an asynchronous or synchronous video session, discussion, presentation, etc.)		

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Course Maintenance Standards

Course maintenance standards relate to the practice of ensuring all website links and third-party software are functioning prior to delivery and documenting any required changes to the course.

Category	Emerging	Evolving	Mastering
Website Links and Third-Party Software	• Reviews all website links and third-party software applications prior to the course delivery to ensure they are working • Updates website links as necessary		
Course Review/Maintenance	• Documents required or suggested changes to the course and shares with the lead instructor prior to the next course delivery date		

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Instruction and delivery standards in this phase relate to how instructors build community and relationships with and between the learners in the course.

Category	Emerging	Evolving	Mastering
Community Building	■ Posts welcome message to learners upon start of course ■ Posts news message or uses discussion forum to introduce themselves to the learners ■ Includes online discussions ■ Includes icebreaker at the start of the course	■ Posts regular written announcements ■ Provides opportunities for learners to engage with the instructor ■ Regularly checks-in and participates in discussion forums ■ Encourages learners to engage with each other in the discussion forum	■ Creates video or schedules a Zoom/video chat to introduce themselves to the learners ■ Posts frequent text and video announcements ■ Provides opportunities for learners to engage with the instructor and with each other ■ Encourages deeper connections amongst learners by creating smaller discussion groups ■ Encourages peer review by providing opportunities for learners to offer feedback to one another
Learner Engagement	■ Provides online etiquette expectations for communication tools (refer to "General Discussion Guidelines" in the Brightspace discussion tool) ■ Posts weekly news messages and when important issues arise ■ Encourages learners to introduce themselves to the	■ Holds regular office hours via Zoom or other medium ■ Creates welcome and mini-lecture videos ■ Uses a combination of instruction types (e.g., direct, indirect, cooperative, experiential, independent study, etc.) ■ Encourages learners to use the discussion forum to troubleshoot	■ Provides multiple means of connection for learners – Zoom office hours, email, etc. ■ Connects with each learner individually during the first two weeks of the course ■ Organizes a synchronous welcome session during the first week to provide an opportunity for learners to connect with their instructor

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Instruction & Delivery Standards			
Instruction and delivery standards in this phase relate to how instructors build community and relationships with and between the learners in the course.			
Category	**Emerging**	**Evolving**	**Mastering**
	class using the Discussions tool (or another appropriate tool) ▪ Highlights important concepts in weekly news messages	or ask questions about the course	▪ Provides important news messages or announcements in alternative formats (i.e., audio, video and text) ▪ Utilizes multiple instructional strategies to enhance learning and engagement such as discussion, lecture, self-directed learning, small group work, collaborative learning, case studies, guest speakers, etc.
Accessibility	▪ Provides instructions on how to access and make arrangements with the Testing Center for invigilated exams and for learners with accommodations ▪ Ensures learners with accommodations are provided the procedures to follow that will meet the recommendations outlined ▪ Provides learners with clear explanations and rationale if an accommodation cannot be met ▪ Encourages learners to contact Accessibility Services if they require additional support or accommodations.		

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Assessment & Evaluation Standards			
Assessment and evaluation standards in this phase relate to how feedback is provided to the learners.			
Category	**Emerging**	**Evolving**	**Mastering**
Learner Progress & Feedback	▪ Provides timely feedback on assessments ▪ Sets up gradebook prior to the start of the course ▪ Enters grades into gradebook regularly so learners can keep track of their progress ▪ Monitors progress of learners ▪ Sends personal emails to learners who appear to be struggling or falling behind	▪ Provides formative feedback throughout the course ▪ Encourages learners to connect via Zoom or telephone to answer questions or clarify comments included in feedback	▪ Includes formative assessments in the LMS (e.g., quizzes, surveys, etc.) so learners can "self-check" their learning and are provided immediate feedback ▪ Includes clear directions for how the learner can improve on future assignments when providing feedback ▪ Provides feedback in multiple ways such as text, video, or audio

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Glossary & Resources

- **Authentic assessment:** assessments that closely align with the learning outcomes in the course and resemble real-world tasks and activities
    - Saskatchewan Polytechnic Curriculum Framework – see Appendix 4 Student Assessment
- **Active learning**: instructional strategies that provide opportunities for learners to participate or interact with the learning process.
    - ILDC – Active Learning (SharePoint)
    - Active Learning Strategies for Your Online Classroom (Video)

- **Formative assessment**: occurs during learning activities and provides learners with feedback about their progress and growth.
    - ILDC- Assessment Clinics
    - Choosing an Assessment Tool

- **Learning modalities**: ways that learners use their senses throughout the learning process to acquire new skills (e.g. visual, auditory, verbal, kinesthetic, etc.).

- **Scaffolding**: an instructional method where learners progressively develop their skills, understanding and mastery of tasks.
    - Scaffolding Learning in the Online Classroom (external resource)

- **Summative assessment**: occurs at the end of a unit or course of study and involves assigning a grade.

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