

The Exemplary Course Program recognizes instructors and course designers whose courses demonstrate best practices in four major areas: Course Design, Interaction & Collaboration, Assessment, and Learner Support. Submitted courses are evaluated by a peer group of Blackboard clients using the Exemplary Course Program Rubric.

SCORES AND VALUES IN THE EXEMPLARY COURSE PROGRAM RUBRIC

The Exemplary Course Program Rubric uses numerical point values for each standard. These point values (from 1 to 5) have been assigned to indicate the relative importance of that standard, with values of 5 representing compulsory standards. Compulsory standards must be met in order to receive an Exemplary course award. The 14 compulsory standards are as follows:

Compulsory Standards:

- › Goals and objectives are clearly written, appropriate for the course level, and aligned to desired outcomes
- › Content is made available or “chunked” in manageable segments (i.e., presented in distinct learning units or modules)
- › It is clear how the instructional strategies will enable learners to reach course goals and objectives (e.g., instructions or overview of course activities is provided and aligned to course objectives)
- › Course design includes guidance for learners to work with content in meaningful ways (e.g., clear instructions, content outline, video, course orientation) and how to proceed
- › The design and delivery of content integrate alternative resources (e.g., transcripts) or enable assistive processes (e.g., voice recognition) for those needing accommodation
- › Course files (e.g., documents, PDFs, presentations) are easily readable by assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers, screen magnification)
- › A rubric or equivalent grading document is included to explain how participation will be evaluated
- › It is clear to students how performance in an assessment(s) will be evaluated (e.g. rubric, equivalent grading document, section in syllabus)
- › Assessment activities occur frequently throughout the duration of the course
- › Multiple types of assessments are used (e.g., research project, objective test, discussions, etc.)
- › Orientation materials explain how to navigate both the LMS and the course
- › Contact information for the instructor is easy to find
- › Course/instructor policies (e.g., decorum, behavior, netiquette) are included and easy to find
- › Learners have the opportunity to give feedback to the instructor regarding course design and course content both during course delivery and after course completion

There are 191 total points available in the Exemplary Course Program Rubric. In order to receive an Exemplary course rating, a score of at least 85% must be earned. Ratings of Compelling and Promising will be awarded with scores of 80% and 70%, respectively.

Exemplary 85% (163 points or more)

Compelling 80% (153-162 points)

Promising 70% (134-152 points)

COURSE DESIGN

Course Design addresses elements of instructional design. For the purpose of this rubric, course design includes such elements as structure of the course, learning objectives, organization of content, and instructional strategies.

INTERACTION AND COLLABORATION

Interaction and Collaboration can take many forms. The ECP criteria place emphasis on the type and amount of interaction and collaboration within an online environment.

Interaction denotes communication between and among learners and instructors, synchronously or asynchronously. Collaboration is a subset of interaction and refers specifically to those activities in which groups are working interdependently toward a shared result. This differs from group activities that can be completed by students working independently of one another and then combining the results, much as one would when assembling a jigsaw puzzle with parts of the puzzle worked out separately then assembled together. A learning community is defined here as the sense of belonging to a group, rather than each student perceiving himself/herself studying independently.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment focuses on instructional activities designed to measure progress toward learning outcomes, provide feedback to students and instructors, and/or enable grading or evaluation. This section addresses the quality and type of student assessments within the course.

LEARNER SUPPORT

Learner Support addresses the support resources made available to students taking the course. Such resources may be accessible within or external to the course environment. Learner support resources address a variety of student services.



Blackboard Exemplary Course Program Rubric

Standard Categories and Subcategories	Exemplary Standard	Points
1.0 Course Design		
Goals and Objectives	1.1 Goals and objectives are clearly written, appropriate for the course level, and aligned to desired outcomes	5
	1.2 Goals and objectives are easily located within the course visible in a variety of areas (e.g., within the syllabus and each individual learning unit)	4
	1.3 Goals and objectives are written in measurable outcomes (e.g., learners know what they are expected to be able to do)	4
Content Composition and Structure	1.4 Content is made available or “chunked” in manageable segments (i.e., presented in distinct learning units or modules)	5
	1.5 Content is enhanced with multimedia (e.g., video, audio, images, interactive learning objects)	4
	1.6 Navigation is intuitive	3
	1.7 Low-cost or no-cost materials are used when available	1
Learner Engagement	1.8 It is clear how the instructional strategies will enable learners to reach course goals and objectives (e.g., instructions or overview of course activities is provided and aligned to course objectives)	5
	1.9 Course design includes guidance for learners to work with content in meaningful ways (e.g., clear instructions, content outline, video, course orientation) and how to proceed	5
Technology Use	1.10 LMS tools are used to reduce the labor intensity of learning (e.g., providing links to needed resources where they will be used in the course, integrating publisher resources that are tailored to the course materials, and providing streamlined access to supplementary materials)	4
	1.11 Technology available in the course is used to facilitate learning by engaging learners with course content	3
	1.12 Technologies are used creatively in ways that transcend traditional, teacher-centered instruction (e.g., peer-led instruction, technology-supported learner choice, flipped classroom)	3

Standard Categories and Subcategories	Exemplary Standard	Points
Accessibility of Course Design	1.13 The design and delivery of content integrate alternative resources (e.g., transcripts) or enable assistive processes (e.g., voice recognition) for those needing accommodation	5
	1.14 Course files (e.g., documents, PDFs, presentations) are easily readable by assistive technologies (e.g., screen readers, screen magnification)	5
	1.15 Course materials support multiple learning preferences (e.g., visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), kinesthetic (moving), and tactile (touching))	3
	1.16 Design factors such as color, text size manipulations, audio and video controls, and alt text reflect universal accessibility considerations	2
2.0 Interaction and Collaboration		
Communication Strategies	2.1 Synchronous communication activities benefit from real-time interactions (e.g., students gain practice discussing course content extemporaneously in office hours, exam review sessions, student-led live meetings, real-time class meetings)	4
	2.2 There are opportunities for synchronous (e.g., live meetings, chat) and/or asynchronous (e.g., discussion board, email) interaction, as appropriate	3
	2.3 Communication strategies promote critical reflection or other higher order thinking aligned with learning objectives	3
Development of Learning Community	2.4 Collaboration activities reinforce course content and learning outcomes, while building workplace-useful skills (e.g., teamwork, cooperation, negotiation, consensus-building)	4
	2.5 Learner-to-learner and learner-to-instructor interactions are required as part of the course	3
	2.6 Activities are designed to help build a sense of community, rather than each learner perceiving himself/herself studying independently	2
Interaction Logistics	2.7 A rubric or equivalent grading document is included to explain how participation will be evaluated	5
	2.8 Examples of quality communications (e.g., what constitutes a “good” response) are provided to the student	4
	2.9 Instructions are written clearly (e.g., quantity of interactions, levels of participation) and presented inline	3

Standard Categories and Subcategories	Exemplary Standard	Points
3.0 Assessment		
Learner Expectations	3.1 It is clear to students how performance in an assessment(s) will be evaluated (e.g. rubric, equivalent grading document, section in syllabus)	5
	3.2 Assessments align to goals, objectives, and content and are visible to the learner	4
	3.3 Instructions are written clearly (e.g., grading, acceptable file formats, due dates, number of attempts, required posts) and presented inline	4
	3.4 Examples of quality work are provided to the student	4
Assessment Design	3.5 Assessment activities occur frequently throughout the duration of the course	5
	3.6 Multiple types of assessments are used (e.g., research project, objective test, discussions)	5
	3.7 Assessments are designed to mimic authentic environments to facilitate knowledge transfer (e.g., role-playing, scenario-based questions, clinical experience, practicum)	4
Learner Self-Assessment	3.8 Opportunities for learner self-assessment are provided (e.g., practice test, journal, self-reflection, quiz)	2
	3.9 Self-assessments provide constructive, meaningful feedback	2
4.0 Learner Support		
Orientation to Course and LMS	4.1 Orientation materials explain how to navigate both the LMS and the course	5
	4.2 Orientation materials are found easily (few clicks) with clear return to other areas of the course	3
	4.3 Information regarding required/optional technology, including how to access/acquire, and any additional costs, is provided	3
Instructor Contact Information & Communication	4.4 Contact information for the instructor is easy to find	5
	4.5 The instructor's methods of collecting and returning work are clearly explained	4
	4.6 Acceptable communication methods for contacting the instructor are identified and included (e.g., email, phone, chat, social media)	4
	4.7 Expected response time for instructor replies is included	3
	4.8 The instructor's role within the course is explained	3

Standard Categories and Subcategories	Exemplary Standard	Points
Course / Institutional Policies & Support	4.9 Course/instructor policies (e.g., decorum, behavior, netiquette) are included and easy to find	5
	4.10 Links to institutional policies (e.g., academic honesty policies), materials, and forms relevant for learner success are included and easy to find	4
	4.11 Links to institutional services (e.g., tech support, help desk, library, writing center) are included and easy to find	4
	4.12 Links to institutional policies, contacts, and procedures for supporting learners with disabilities are included and easy to find	4
Accessibility and Technical Factors for Learner Support	4.13 Alternative file types are provided (e.g., learner needs and/or choice, availability)	3
	4.14 Lengthy/large files are broken into smaller segments for improved content consumption and usability (e.g., six 10-minute audio/video files versus a single 60 minute file, five 10-page documents versus a single 50 page document)	2
	4.15 Multimedia is optimized for web delivery (e.g., videos are streamed whenever possible, graphics are optimized for web delivery)	2
	4.16 Course materials use standard formats to ensure usability	1
	4.17 If technology is required for a specific learning activity, the link to that technology is included with the instructions	1
Feedback	4.18 Learners have the opportunity to give feedback to the instructor regarding course design and course content both during course delivery and after course completion	5
	4.19 Feedback mechanisms allow learners to participate anonymously in course evaluation	3

Points Total 191

For more information about the Exemplary Course Program, please visit blackboard.com/ECP or email us at ecp@blackboard.com.