

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

Quality Assurance Frameworks



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Quality Assurance Frameworks

DESCRIPTION

Quality Assurance (QA) involves identifying best practices and applying evidence-based research in the design, development and delivery of courses, whether face-to-face, blended or fully online.

Promoting high-quality standards for learning experiences requires collaboration between the main stakeholders in course development and delivery, including educational technology and instructional design leads, faculty, and academic program leads.

For an effective QA process, Cintana recommends ongoing course and program-level assessments using quality metrics before, during, and after courses are offered.


Ongoing QA: Before Course Launch

The following are key aspects that help ensure the best quality for a course offer:

- **Faculty readiness and expectations:**
 - Cintana Alliance English language faculty have access to ASU and Cintana faculty development courses, in addition to the 150-hour ASU TESOL Professional Certificate.
- **Course design and development:**
 - Members of the Cintana Alliance may access and download the ASU Global Launch courses via the ASU-Cintana Content Repository or the [Engage by Powered by ASU Portal](#).
 - Courses are ready to be implemented and they can be customized as needed to fit the needs of each institution.
 - To understand the main QA points assessed by ASU in their course design and development process, review the ASU Online Design Standards, which is presented as a checklist available in the next page. The ASU Online course development checklist was adapted from the QM Quality Matters research-based rubric and the Peralta Online Equity Rubric for equity and inclusion.

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 ASU Online Course Design Standards Checklist - Adapted from Quality Matters & Peralta Rubrics	
ASU Online	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Course uses ASU Online Canvas course template and design theme and includes required syllabus criteria 2. Course is organized and optimized for student success to be delivered in the scheduled time frame (typically 7.5wk format) 3. Course setup information is included for future instructors (course structure, to-dos, instructor guide notes) 4. Course includes videos (mini-lectures, demonstrations, interviews) to engage students
Course Overview & Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Students are introduced to the purpose, navigation, structure of the course, and how to begin (QM1.1,1.2) 6. Course welcome & introduction encourages personal connections and demonstrates that each unique student's participation & success in the course is valued. Video highly encouraged (QM1.8,PE8) 7. When possible, human biases are acknowledged and information is provided on how to address (PE6)
Learning Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Course and module learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable and course level appropriate (QM2.1,2.2,2.5) 9. The relationship between learning objectives and learning activities is clearly stated (QM2.4)
Assessment & Measurement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Assessments measure stated learning objectives (QM3.1) 11. Course grading policy is stated clearly at the beginning of the course (QM3.2) 12. Clear instructions and specific and descriptive criteria (rubrics) exist for evaluation of student work (QM3.3) 13. Assessments are sequenced and varied, providing multiple ways to demonstrate progress and mastery (QM3.4) 14. Course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their progress with formative assessments (QM3.5)
Instructional Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Instructional materials clearly communicate to students how they align with course and unit objectives (QM4.1.4.2) 16. Instructional materials (readings, images, activities, etc.) reflect and demonstrate the value of diversity and encourage students to analyze course content from multiple perspectives (PE4) 17. Instructional materials/ activities invite students to connect course content to their own lives and /or reflect on course content as relevant to their future (PE7) 18. Instructional materials are appropriately cited and adhere to copyright (QM4.3)
Learner Activities & Interaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. Learning activities promote the achievement of stated learning objectives (QM5.1) 20. Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning (QM5.2)
Course Technology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Tools used in the course support learning objectives (QM6.1) 22. Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning (QM6.2) 23. Resources to support the use of course tools are provided (PE1)
Learner Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 24. Technical support information and how to access it is provided and easily located (QM7.1) 25. Accessibility policies and support services are provided and easily located (QM7.2) 26. Academic support services and resources that can help learners succeed in the course are provided (QM7.3)
Accessibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 27. Course navigation and design facilitates ease of use readability (QM8.1,8.2) 28. Digital textbooks and course materials are prioritized (QM8.2) 29. Course provides accessible text and images that value and represent the diversity of online learners (QM8.3,PE4)



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- **Course readiness prior to launch:**

- Faculty and/or the instructional design team at the institution should perform course readiness checks to ensure syllabus is updated, due dates are accurate, links work, all materials are available, and course is ready.
- Review the recommended Course Readiness Checks below (adapted from ASU).

24+ Course Readiness Checks

Items should be checked by instructional designers and/or educational technology team, and alerts should be sent to the instructor or documented for possible future recommendations.

1. Institutional course template applied
2. Navigation menu items (Resources, Accessibility, Course Policies, etc.) exist
3. Online Instructor guide information provided for faculty teaching the course
4. Let's Get Started/ Start Here module or information provided for students
5. Instructor welcome and course tours exist to welcome & orient students to course
6. Syllabus exists and includes assessment criteria and help statement for technical support
7. Textbook information or other content materials easily located with digital access links
8. Course assignments have accurate due dates
9. Module overviews exist
10. Outdated references to unavailable technology or content are removed
11. Course and module learning objectives exist
12. Course is complete and all modules of content are ready
13. Community forum equivalent exists to provide students opportunities to question
14. Course content reflects the diversity of online and international students
15. Course has video content/lectures that play, are high-quality, and appropriate in length
16. All course materials, links, documents, files, images appear and work
17. Course uses discussion forums for student interaction beyond the community forum
18. PDF documents are accessible for a screen reader
19. Rubrics exist to communicate clear expectations for graded work
20. Academic integrity: course assessments are more than just a few high stakes exams
21. Course evaluation reminder exists in the last module to encourage participation
22. Font is consistent and accessible in text and style for easy readability
23. Course meets essential design standards or should be reviewed for enhancement
24. Course is ready for students

Ongoing QA: During Course Delivery

Instructor presence and instructor communication are main contributors to student success and retention. This includes all interactions with students, from the first welcome to the course to the last feedback and grading. The constant communication also allows for instructors to discover aspects that need to be reviewed or improved in the course, which should be noted for future course enhancements.

The following best practices are recommended to enhance course facilitation (adapted from ASU):

Welcoming Students

- Communicate required materials and textbook information to students prior to course start (e.g. upload text and syllabus to student dashboard, email students, have a list at the library).
- Add a Welcome to the Course video to your online classroom and/or publish a welcome announcement to students.
- Provide an introduction to the purpose, navigation, and structure of the course (e.g. Course Tour).
- Create an inclusive and supportive environment by welcoming all students in your first communication. Express appreciation and encouragement for diverse ideas, experiences, and perspectives.
- Communicate the availability and encourage attendance of virtual office hours (3-6 hours/week recommended).
- Discuss and assess academic integrity to ensure students understand expectations related to plagiarism and academic integrity.

Instructor Presence & Communication

- Create a visible presence by introducing yourself to students, posting announcements regularly, facilitating discussions, and hosting virtual office hours, etc.
- Respond with timeliness (within 24 hours is encouraged) to student correspondence (Community Forum, emails, etc.).
- Offer flexibility and support services to respond to the needs of digital immersion students.
- Clearly communicate to students your availability and encourage them to connect and engage with you, other students, the university as a whole, and the academic program.

Feedback & Grading

- Communicate the purpose for learning activities (e.g. readings, lecture videos, discussions) and success criteria for assessments (e.g. assignments, quizzes, discussions).
- Provide constructive, meaningful, personalized, and timely feedback (grading within 48 hours encouraged), ensuring it is aligned with learning objectives and assignment requirements.

Discussion & Groups

- Actively facilitate discussion forums.
- Provide continued guidance on working effectively in groups.
- Ensure individual accountability for any group work.

Ongoing QA: After Course Delivery

The following are key aspects that help ensure the best quality for the next time the course is delivered:

- **Course Evaluation Survey:**

- Every course should have a Course Evaluation Survey to assess the course content and instructor. Responses are used to identify areas for improvement in online courses; each question is tied directly to course enhancement opportunities.
- In online offers, questions should appear at the bottom of the last module of the course. In face-to-face offers, the survey can be made available in the student portal or sent by email.
- Example: Questions used by ASU in the ASU Online Course Evaluations:

Strongly Agree -- 5 4 3 2 1 -- Strongly Disagree

1. The course

- was easy to navigate
- presentations contributed to my learning
- criteria for success on graded work was clear and specific
- learning activities adequately prepared me for graded work

3. Open ended:

What did you like the most about the course?

2. The instructor

- was visibly present in the course (e.g. posted announcements, active in discussions, etc.)
- responded to inquiries within 24 hours
- provided meaningful feedback on graded work

4. Open ended:

What did you like the least about the course?

- **End-of-course review:**

- Course review that includes:
 - Pass rates
 - Withdrawal rates
 - Student course evaluations
 - Success Coach and/or Student Services feedback
 - LMS reports & analytics
 - Faculty assessment/ feedback
 - Pre-launch course readiness check results
 - Any other data to identify needed enhancements
- Results should be shared with instructional design and/or educational technology team, who can perform additional course reviews and make specific recommendations for course enhancement.
- Course enhancement recommendations should be shared with academic program leads and faculty, who is responsible for implementing enhancements for the next course offer.