

College of Engineering Minimum Quality Standards for Enhanced Remote Teaching

As seasoned instructors, you know that high quality instruction has clearly articulated learning objectives, and is well organized, highly engaging, and student-centered. High quality online instruction also has these features, but offers different challenges for achieving these goals. Consider examining your elements of your course in the following areas:

Course Setup and Structure

Think about the setup and structure of your online course as a roadmap for students in the absence of guided in-person sessions, giving them a single access point to understand what the expectations of the course, what to do each session, and how to submit assignments. It also allows for adaptation to remote learner communication needs that are unique to an online environment, such as asking questions or getting technical support remotely. Finally, course setup and structure includes considering ADA accessibility, technical requirements, and copyright rules specific to online delivery.

Content, Activities, and Assessments

When considering your content, activities, and assessments, consider leveraging the opportunities of the online format. We have heard many stories about people doing things online or at a distance that they previously thought were not possible. Alternative pedagogies for content, assignments, exams, and other assessment strategies can support students' learning remotely and uphold the academic integrity of the College's academic Honor Code. Lastly, fulfilling basic audio-visual production requirements helps students remain engaged with the content you are creating.

Engagement and Interactivity

Engagement and inclusivity requires advanced planning and course design in a remote environment with a geographically distributed group of students who may be dealing with low technology bandwidth, schedule challenges, health issues, and family care responsibilities, all of which can impact the learning experience. Consider your course design plan and communication to support a learning environment that addresses challenges and needs, and demonstrate presence by engaging actively and frequently. Finally, consider implementing strategies to promote both student-student and student-faculty interaction in an online environment, such as redesigning office hours for remote interactivity.

For more resources and information on these standards, please visit facultyresources.nexus.engin.umich.edu or contact NexusDesign@umich.edu.



Course Setup and Structure

- Course is delivered via a central organization system, such as Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) or a course website.**
 - Set up the remote course in Canvas or another LMS and leverage functionality such as navigation features, course announcements, file posting, lecture posting, discussion boards, and assignments/quizzes. Alternatively, another tool such as a course website may be used to organize and centralize access to content and communications.
 - **Why:** The more modalities used (e.g., course lecture notes via a website, Canvas for exams, assignments distribution via email listserv, regular course communication via Canvas email) tends to increase student questions, misunderstanding about how and when to receive communication from their instructor, and overall increases in managing course logistics for faculty. Giving students one place to navigate course content, information and submissions decreases the number of modalities that students access, and gives faculty one place to point all students.
- Syllabus is posted with the critical information students need to operate in the course.**
 - Students have access to a comprehensive syllabus with course objectives, grading scale, semester course schedule—including topics, assessment distribution and due dates—and clear expectations for remote participation.
 - **Why:** Students in a remote learning environment rely heavily on the course syllabus to understand what expectations of them for their engagement and to successfully complete the course. For in-person classes, students know where and what time they need to be in class. In your online class, do they know what participation you expect from them? Clarity around remote participation, especially live synchronous portions of the course is important in a remote course. Are there specific times they need to be dialed in live? Consider posting those details upfront in the course syllabus, including the platform or tool (e.g., Zoom) being used, so students know what is expected and can plan accordingly.
- Course is set up with user-centered navigation and organization that aligns with syllabus.**
 - Use a consistent and intuitive navigation system that aligns with the syllabus, enabling students to quickly locate course information such as lecture files, assignments (e.g., labs), quizzes, discussions, and lecture recordings.
 - **Why:** For in-person classes, instructors guide and set the agenda of what is being covered for each session. For online courses, a roadmap should be made equally clear, through course design and navigation, about exactly what to do each session, where to find lectures, how they are progressing toward meeting course expectations, and how to submit assignments.
- Course meets ADA accessibility requirements and minimizes technical requirements.**
 - Ensure all tools and content, including recordings, meet ADA accessibility standards, and refer students to the related university policies and services for additional accommodations. Communicate technology requirements, for both hardware and software, with clearly stated instructions for use. Minimize technology requirements as much as possible to serve the broadest possible student audience.
 - **Why:** Students have adapted to in-person instruction for years. For some, the transition to online will trigger additional accommodations they may not have previously needed (increased use of



screen-readers, captioning, more time for exams, etc). Also, technology requirements may come with additional technical/bandwidth issues for students. Minimizing the hardware and software required in the course reduces these potential challenges.

5. **Course materials adhere to rules regarding copyright and third-party materials.**

- Adhere to the current University policies for the use of third-party copyrighted material or provide evidence of appropriate copyright clearance.
- **Why:** Due to the scale and delivery mode of remote courses, it is especially important to ensure all materials are used properly to avoid infringements.

Content, Activities, and Assessments

6. **Content, activities, exams, and assessments are designed for remote delivery and leverage the opportunities of the online format.**

- Use alternative pedagogies for content, assessment, assignments, exams, and other [assessment strategies](#) to leverage the opportunities of the online format, support students' learning remotely, and uphold the academic integrity of the College's academic Honor Code.
- **Why:** During these unprecedented times, we have heard many stories about people doing things online or at a distance that they thought were previously not possible. What does this look like for our courses? Does this mean you are not bound to specific class/lecture meeting times? That class discussions can be done via discussion boards, blogs, or chats, where faculty are reporting they are hearing from more students, because those that were less likely to speak up in class were more likely to participate when they could plan their remarks? This is a time to be bold and daring.

7. **Lecture recordings and other content fulfill basic audio-visual production requirements.**

- Ensure recordings can be played remotely over a standard internet connection using a video player with user controls (e.g., with search, captions, video quality/speed adjustments). In addition, ensure video background and lighting are adequate and sound is clear for effective viewing of digital media content.
- **Why:** User controls allow the student to pause and rewind the video as needed and search content as needed. Reducing distractions and quality issues in the video helps students remain engaged with the content. Consider the student experience when creating your videos, such as repeating or paraphrasing student questions, making videos available in a timely fashion, and providing direct links to external videos (e.g., YouTube) instead of streaming them during the lecture recording.

8. **Course integrates experiential learning components as applicable to remote learning.**

- Use various techniques, applied methods, and practitioners to promote experiential learning at a distance and leverage asynchronous learning opportunities.
- **Why:** Incorporating practical and experiential learning opportunities for remote students will allow them to learn by doing and to apply course content remotely. For example, create scenario-based discussion boards for students to interact around course content and share learning; have students observe a recording of a simulation or lab and comment on their observations; incorporate online simulations to allow students to explore different solution paths to a problem; or assign offline



learning activities with a debrief to other students in the course (e.g., use breakout rooms in Zoom and then reconvene).

Engagement and Interactivity

9. Instructor maintains consistent presence and interactivity.

- Demonstrate presence by engaging actively and frequently throughout the course.
- Why: Often some of the most valuable components for student learning are stories, applications, anecdotes, asides, and the organic dialogue that doesn't always appear on course slides. As seasoned faculty, you know what this looks like—now it's a matter of finding a way of maintaining the authenticity of who you are as an instructor, and helping students experience learning, even if they aren't in the classroom with you. Engagement can be more difficult in a remote environment with a geographically distributed group of students. Building community by posting announcements, anticipating needs, and addressing student issues proactively helps establish presence and also reduces redundancy in responding individually to students.

10. Instructor promotes student-student and student-faculty engagement and interactions.

- Offer strategies and expectations for how students will interact with each other in the course and provide opportunities for interaction both student-student and student-faculty.
- Why: Interaction among students and between the student and instructor is natural in an in-person classroom environment. In remote learning, the instructor must proactively create a strategy and associated structures to foster interactivity. On campus, students learn about where to go for help, or how to contact you if you have a question. In the online space, give students the same direction, about how best to reach you if they need help—or where to go if they have questions. Do they email the GSI or instructor? Do they come to the instructor for course content but go somewhere else for technical support questions? Do they have a form where you are asking them to submit questions? Should they come to live office hours? Are you using Piazza in the course? Do they email you the question, and then you will address it in the lecture or announcements, or should they wait for individual responses?