



**PEER COURSE REVIEW -- RUBRIC**

**FY 05/06**

**Alignment:** Critical course components - Course Objectives (III), Learner Interactions and Activities (V), Resources, Materials, and Technology (IV and VI), Assessment and Measurement (III) - work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes. Specific standards included in Alignment are indicated in the rubric annotations.

**I. COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION**

**General Review Standard:** The overall design of the course, navigational information, as well as course, instructor and student information are made transparent to the student at the beginning of the course.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
<p>I.1 Navigational instructions make the organization of the course easy to understand.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Instructions provide a general course overview, guide the new student to explore the course website, and indicate what to do first, rather than list detailed navigational instructions for the whole course.</p> <p>Instructors may choose to incorporate some of this information in the course syllabus. If so, students should be directed to the syllabus at the beginning of the course. A useful idea is a “Read Me First” or “Start Here” button or icon on the course home page, linking students to start-up information.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A course “tour”</li> <li>• Clear statements about how to get started in the course</li> <li>• A “Scavenger hunt” assignment that leads students through an exploration of the different areas of the course areas</li> </ul>
<p>I.2 A statement introduces the student to the course and to the structure of the student learning.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>The instructor’s statement gives the new student an idea of how the learning process is structured including schedule, communications modes, types of activities, and assessments. These features are often found in the course syllabus.</p> <p>Look for some or all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course schedule (self-paced, following a set calendar, etc.)</li> <li>• Course sequencing, such as a linear or random order</li> <li>• Types of activities the student will be required to complete (written assignments, online self-tests, participation in the discussion board, group work, etc.)</li> <li>• Course calendar with assignment and test due dates</li> <li>• Preferred mode of communication with the instructor (email, discussion board, etc.)</li> <li>• Preferred mode of communication with other students</li> <li>• Testing procedures (online, proctored, etc.)</li> <li>• Procedure for submission of electronic assignments</li> </ul>
<p>I.3 Netiquette expectations with regard to discussions and email communication are clearly stated.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Expectations of student conduct online are clearly stated, however brief or elaborate they may be. The expectations themselves are not evaluated.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules of conduct for participating in the discussion board</li> <li>• Rules of conduct for email content</li> <li>• “Speaking style” requirements, (i.e. use of correct English required as opposed to net acronyms)</li> <li>• Spelling and grammar expectations, if any</li> </ul>

I.4 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate.	1	<p>The initial introduction creates a sense of connection between the instructor and the students. It should present the instructor as professional as well as approachable, and include more than the essentials, such as the instructor's name, title, field of expertise, email address and phone.</p> <p>The self introduction helps students get to know the instructor. It could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on teaching philosophy</li> <li>• Past experiences with teaching online classes</li> <li>• Personal information such as hobbies, etc.</li> <li>• A photograph</li> </ul>
I.5 Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class.	1	<p>The student introduction helps to create a supportive learning environment and a sense of community. Students are asked to introduce themselves and given guidance on where and how they should do so. Student introductions themselves are not evaluated.</p> <p>Instructors may ask students to answer specific questions (such as why they are taking the course, what concerns they have, what they expect to learn, etc.) or may choose to let the student decide. Instructors may provide an example of an introduction and/or start the process by introducing themselves.</p>
I.6 Minimum technology requirements, minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline, are clearly stated.	1	<p>Explanations of technical requirements and skills, and prerequisite knowledge and skills may be found within the course, in documents linked to the course, or in supporting material not on the course site. Look for a link to that content and/or a reminder of it for the entering student.</p> <p>Technology requirements may include information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hardware</li> <li>• Software and plug-ins</li> <li>• ISP requirements</li> </ul> <p>Examples of technology skills may include the capability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use email with attachments</li> <li>• Save file in commonly used word processing program formats (e.g. MS Word)</li> <li>• Use MS Excel or other spreadsheet programs</li> </ul> <p>Discipline knowledge prerequisites should include academic course prerequisites.</p>

## II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES (COMPETENCIES)

**General Review Standard:** Learning objectives are clearly defined and explained. They assist the student to focus learning activities.

<b>Specific Review Standards:</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Annotation: What's the idea?</b>
II.1 The learning objectives of the course describe outcomes that are measurable.	3	<p>Measurable learning objectives ensure instructors precisely describe what students are to gain from instruction, and then guide instructors to accurately assess student accomplishment. Objectives should describe student performance in specific, observable terms. If this is not possible, (e.g., internal cognition, affective changes), check for clear indications that the learning objective is meaningfully assessed.</p> <p><u>Special situations:</u> In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), objectives for the course are institutionally mandated and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, review Standard II.1 in connection with Standard II.5 below. If the specific learning outcomes on the module/unit level are measurable but the institutionally mandated learning objectives <i>for the course</i> are not, Standard II.1 should be considered as met for scoring purposes.</p>

		<p>Please note in the “comments” box that the institutionally mandated learning objectives for the course are not measurable.</p> <p>Examples of measurable objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select appropriate tax strategies for different financial and personal situations</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive, individualized wellness action program focused on overcoming a sedentary life-style</li> </ul> <p><b>Alignment:</b> This standard is included in Alignment. (Critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.)</p>
<p>II.2 The learning objectives address content mastery, critical thinking skills, and core learning skills.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Examine the learning objectives (course and unit level) as a whole for all three types of skill. Every single objective may not contain all three components.</p> <p>Content mastery should be appropriate for the type and level of the course. Ask the Subject Matter Expert (SME) for guidance.</p> <p>Critical thinking skills may include the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish between fact and opinion</li> <li>• Distinguish between primary and secondary sources</li> <li>• Identify bias and stereotypes</li> <li>• Evaluate information sources for point of view, accuracy, usefulness, timeliness, etc.</li> <li>• Recognize deceptive arguments</li> </ul> <p>Core learning skills may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written and oral communication skills</li> <li>• Manipulation and organization of information in various ways or using different tools</li> <li>• Understanding what one knows and how one knows it, and also understanding what one does not know and what one needs to find it out.</li> </ul> <p><b>Alignment:</b> This standard is included in Alignment. (Critical course components work together to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.)</p>
<p>II.3 The learning objectives of the course are clearly stated and understandable to the student.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Students can easily grasp the meaning of the learning objectives. Use of jargon, confusing terms, unnecessarily complex language, and puzzling syntax are avoided.</p> <p><u>Special situations:</u> In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), objectives for the course are institutionally mandated and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such courses, review Standard II.4 in connection with Standard II.5 below. If the specific learning outcomes on the module/unit level are clearly stated and understandable to the student but the institutionally mandated learning objectives <i>for the course</i> are not, Standard II.4 should be considered as met for scoring purposes. Please note in the “comments” box that the institutionally mandated learning objectives for the course are not clearly stated and understandable.</p>
<p>II.4 Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and easy to understand.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Instructions may take various forms (e.g. narratives, bulleted lists, charts) and may appear at different levels within the course, such as module-based or weekly assignment sheets. Instructions are clear and complete.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Module-based or weekly assignment pages in narrative, bulleted list, or chart form, indicate a list of steps that guide the student to meet learning objectives for each week</li> <li>• Information indicates which learning activities, resources, assignments, and assessments support the learning objectives</li> </ul>

