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**Lake Superior College POET**

**(Program for Online Excellence in Teaching)**

**Peer Review Rubric: Standards with Annotations**

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| **Course Number:** |  |
| **Number of Credits:** |  |
| **Hybrid or Classroom:** |  |
| **Course Instructor:** |  |
| **Peer Review Team Leader:** |  |
| **Additional Peer Reviewers:** |  |
| **Date of Review Completion:** |  |

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|  | **Yes** | **In Progress** |
| **Meets standards: Must meet all mandatory elements and over 50% of best practice standards.** |  |  |

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| General Course Comments from the Review Team: |
| Specific feedback as requested by the course instructor on the Instructor Worksheet: |

**I. STRUCTURE AND EXPECTATIONS**

**General Review Standard:** The course layout, navigation, and expectations are clearly communicated and easily visible to students throughout the course.

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| **Specific Review Standards:** | **Met? Yes or No** | **Annotation: Examples and Explanations** |
| MANDATORY ELEMENTS |  |  |
| I.1 A statement introduces the students to the course layout, resources, tasks and the instructor. Is there the beginning of a sense of community? |  | Look for a statement by the instructor that welcomes and introduces students to the course and how it works  Examples:   * The instructor is clearly present and has an introduction. * There are clear directions about how to get started in the course. * There is a course overview (text, video, or other) |
| I.2 Course layout is logical, consistent, and easy to navigate. Basic elements students want at the beginning of the course are easy to find. |  | The following are easy to locate, navigate and understand:   * Course calendar with activity due dates * Syllabus * Course activities * Grading system * Testing procedures (online, proctored, etc.) * Procedure for submission of assignments * Discussion instructions   Course follows a consistent pattern (for example, quizzes are due on Tuesdays at 11:59 p.m. and discussions are due on Fridays at 11:59 p.m. every week). |
| I.3 The instructor creates a clear, consistent, engaging tone for the course. |  | The instructor sets up a consistent and clear tone for the class through news, discussion postings, lessons, examples, feedback, photos, videos, etc.  Look for the instructor’s personality to come through the course in various ways. Also look to see if the instructor changes news regularly, gives reminders, gives consistent and regular class feedback, and responds to student questions promptly. |
| I.4 Instructor sets clear expectations for student conduct. |  | Expectations of student conduct online should be clearly stated, however brief or elaborate they may be.  Consider explanations of:   * Rules of conduct for participating in the discussion board. * Rules of conduct for email content * “Speaking style” requirements * Examples of acceptable and unacceptable conduct/professionalism link |
| I.5 Instructor sets clear expectations for student coursework |  | Consider explanations of:   * Formatting for papers * correct English as opposed to internet acronyms * Spelling and grammar expectations, if any. * Late work policy * Plagiarism policy |
| I.6 Course includes a calendar or overview of assignments and due dates. |  | Look for a calendar or schedule with overview of major assignments. This can be in a text, html or PDF format, in the IMS calendar tool, in a spreadsheet, or any other form. It’s especially helpful if the students can print it. |
| I.7 Instructor has clear and course-specific explanations of college and course policies. |  | Includes more course-specific academic dishonesty statement, clear late policy, explanation of FN policy, etc. For example, the instructor clearly explains the consequences for cheating/plagiarism in the course. |
| BEST PRACTICES |  |  |
| I.8 Course tools that are not used are inactive. |  | Instructor has removed links that are not used in the course from the upper menu (such as checklist, FAQ, etc.) |
| I.9. Instructor sets clear expectations for professionalism in the course. |  | Examples and Explanations  Instructor includes College-Wide Outcomes on professionalism and explains what they mean.  Instructor describes professional behaviors (like communication, timeliness, respect, taking personal responsibility) and explains expectations for those behaviors. Instructor may include professionalism rubric. |
| 1.10 Instructor includes links to college resources to assist the online student. |  | This might include the Help Desk, SmartThinking, the library data bases, the tutorials on Word 365, etc. |

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| Additional Comments: The following recommendations of the review team are designed to assist in advancing implementation of the General Standard to the next level or in refining accomplishments. |
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**II. COURSE OUTCOMES AND EXPECTATIONS**

**General Review Standard:** Students are given the opportunity to succeed through clearly defined, explained, and connected course outcomes and assignments.

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| **Specific Review Standards** | **Met? Yes or No** | **Annotation: Examples and Explanations** |
| MANDATORY ELEMENTS |  |  |
| II.1 The posted outcomes of the course include the outcomes in the college’s approved course outline. Any additional outcomes used are observable, measurable, and achievable. |  | All outcomes from the approved course outline must be present on the syllabus of the course being reviewed. A best practice is to include the course outline somewhere in the Content.  Reviewers can suggest that the approved course outcomes might need to be revised or added to; however, those suggestions will not prevent course from meeting this standard. |
| II.2 Learning activities are relevant to course outcomes. |  | This may be a bit difficult to assess depending on the discipline, but if a learning activity sticks out as being unrelated to anything the course outcomes detail, the instructor may need to re-evaluate the value of the activity. Look especially at how required activities tie to course outcomes. |
| II.3 Course assignments provide clear and consistent explanations/directions. |  | Can directions on assignments always be found in the same place in the course?  Look for questions from students about how to find directions on assignments or student questions on why or how to complete tasks. |
| BEST PRACTICES |  |  |
| II.4 Course includes samples of assignments that meet and do not meet expectations. |  | Students like to see examples of assignments of differing levels but especially “A” or “B” work. This can include sample papers, discussion postings, exam answers, projects, etc. |
| II.5 Course communicates learning objectives at the module or unit level. |  | Look for learning objectives at the start of modules, weeks, units, and/or on individual assignments and tasks. These learning objectives should connect to the course outcomes. Learning objectives do not need to be stated as such. They can be in narrative form in the news area, for example. |

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**III. RESOURCES AND MATERIALS**

**General Review Standard:** Course materials and resources support course outcomes, are appropriate to the academic level of the course, and are easily usable for the online learner.

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| **Specific Review Standards** | **Met? Yes or No** | **Annotation: Examples and Explanations** |
| MANDATORY ELEMENTS |  |  |
| III.1 The instructional materials have sufficient depth in content and are sufficiently comprehensive for the student to meet the course outcomes. |  | Decisions on this standard may be particularly difficult for individual reviewers whose expertise is not in the area of the course discipline. Reviewers should assume that the instructor/designer is a competent expert in his or her discipline and is guided by a curriculum committee at his or her institution.  Make sure to take into account all the materials that the instructor uses: textbooks, publisher websites and other sites outside the IMS, videos, etc. |
| III.2 Course materials are appropriate to the level of learner preparation expected for the course. |  | Appropriate to level of any pre-requisites  Appropriate to first or second year students  Vocabulary of materials is appropriate (not graduate or developmental level if class is college level, etc.) |
| III.3. Course materials, resources, and assessments all relate to course outcomes. |  | Does anything in the course “stick out” as being unnecessary, inappropriate, etc.? Are there too many extra assignments, links, etc.? Are any major course outcomes not addressed in materials or assignments? |
| III.5 Course limits the number of required outside resources that need a separate password login. |  | Embed videos when possible. Instructors should only require outside sources with separate logins when activities are tied to course outcomes and can’t be met any other way. |
| III.6 The course contains links to any additional requirements such as browser plug-ins, media players, or additional software. |  | Look for clear instructions on how students can obtain needed plug-ins and software packages.  If some of the course resources, including textbooks, videos, CD-ROMS, etc., are unavailable within the framework of the course website, investigate how students would gain access to them, and examine their ease of use.  Examples:   * If publisher materials are used, information as to how materials are accessed is included. * An area on the syllabus is devoted to required resources. * Required software is listed, along with instructions for obtaining and installing the software (example—Flash) |

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**IV. ASSESSMENT METHODS**

**General Review Standard:** Assessment methods used in the course are clearly communicated and effectively measure student achievement of course outcomes in an online environment.

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| **Specific Review Standards** | **Met? Yes or No** | **Annotation: Examples and Explanations** |
| MANDATORY ELEMENTS |  |  |
| IV.1 Course uses multiple methods of assessment to measure the achievement of stated course outcomes. |  | Example that DOES meet the standard: Students are required to write papers, interact with others through discussions, take quizzes, do group projects, etc.  Example that does NOT: Students are required to take tests, and no other method of assessment is utilized. |
| IV.2 The grading policy is easy to locate and understand. |  | The grading policy needs to be easy to locate and access. Language used to describe how course activities are graded and how the final grade is calculated should be easy to understand. |
| IV.3 The instructor provides meaningful and timely feedback to the learner. |  | Students learn more effectively if they receive frequent, meaningful, and rapid feedback. Ideally, for small assignments, 7 days would be helpful. For larger assignments, the grading might take longer. Students need to know what to expect. This feedback may come from the instructor directly, from assignments and assessments that have feedback built into them, or even from other students.  Examples:   * Instructor comments on papers, assignment folder feedback, group and individual quiz/test feedback. * Instructor participation in a discussion assignment. * Rubrics through D2L or of one's own design are included. * Writing assignments that require submission of a draft for instructor comment and suggestions for improvement. * Self-mastery tests and quizzes that include informative feedback with each answer choice. * Interactive games and simulation that have feedback built in. |
| IV.4 Assessment design promotes academic honesty. |  | In most online courses, the types of assessments used are appropriate for the online environment. Assume that the course meets the standard unless you find evidence to the contrary.  Examples that DO meet the standard:   * Submission of files by email or assignment folder * Exams given in a proctored testing center * Quizzes with time limits and printing disabled * Open-ended/essay test/quiz questions * Multiple assessments which enable the instructor to become familiar with individual students’ work and which discourage “proxy cheating” (someone other than the student completing and submitting work) * Test bank with randomized questioned used   Example that does NOT meet the standard:   * A course in which the entire set of assessments consists of 5 multiple choice tests taken online, with no enforced time limit and the print function enabled. |
| IV.5 The gradebook tool or alternative communication method is utilized so that students may monitor their course progress. |  | Are students able to view their assignment/quiz grades at any time and monitor their course progress?  Are student questions asking about viewing their grades? Can they view the feedback in all assignments/quizzes/discussions? |
| IV.6 The methods used for submitting assessments are appropriate and ensure the privacy of the student work. |  | Examples that DO meet the standard:   * Assignment folder or course email is used for the submission of assignments. * Quiz feature is utilized. * Publisher materials are utilized   Example that does NOT meet the standard:   * All assignments are to be submitted to the discussion area of the course. Classmates may view others’ work and possibly the feedback provided, as well. * Instructor is answering questions about student grades, personal issues, etc. in public discussions/spaces. |
| IV.7 Quizzes allow students to see feedback after they have been graded. |  | Quizzes/tests allow students to see at least wrong answers. Instructor can limit the viewing time.  Instructors give general class feedback on quizzes/tests by using general feedback tool in quizzes, by posting answers on comments in the discussion area, and/or by posting feedback in the news area. |

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**V. LEARNER INTERACTION**

**General Review Standard:** Course activities encourage interaction, and the instructor demonstrates continuous involvement in student learning.

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| **Specific Review Standards** | **Met? Yes or No** | **Annotation: Examples and Explanations** |
| MANDATORY ELEMENTS |  |  |
| V.1 Course learning activities promote instructor-student, content-student interaction. |  | The learning activities in the course should foster the following types of interaction:   * Instructor-student: Self-introduction; discussion postings and responses; feedback on assignments; evidence of one-to-one email communication, etc. * Student-content: essays, term papers, group projects, etc. based on readings, videos, and other course content (including resources outside IMS); self-assessment exercises; group work products, etc. |
| V.2 The instructor sets clear expectations for student-student participation and interactive learning activities. |  | A clear statement of requirements is particularly important when a type of interaction (e.g. participation in a discussion) is not optional. What are the penalties for non-participation? Impact on grade, etc.?  Examples of student-student activities:   * Self-introduction exercise * Group discussion postings * Group projects * Peer critiques   Students required to participate in discussions are told how many times each week they must post original comments, how many times they must post responses to other’s comments, what the quality of the comments must be, how the comments will be evaluated, and what grade credit they can expect for various levels of performance. |
| V.3 The selection and use of tools and media enhances student interactivity and guides the student to become a more active learner. |  | Look for tools and media in the course that help students actively engage in the learning process, rather than passively “absorbing” information.  Examples:   * automated “self-check” exercises requiring learner response * simulations, virtual tours, and games that require student input * use of discussions that require follow up questions and answers * Use of Learning Objects requiring content integration into a paper |
| V.4 Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turnaround time for email, grades posted, etc.) |  | Students need clear information about how quickly the instructor will respond and how frequently he or she is available. Informing students about instructor response and availability times prevents unreasonable expectations from developing.  Look for clear standards for:   * Instructor response time for key events and interactions, including email turnaround time, time required for grade postings, discussion postings, etc. * Also look for clear standards for instructor availability including degree of participation in discussions, email response time, and availability via other media (phone, in-person) if applicable. * Best practice is that instructors should be available during regular college hours and return communication within 24 hours during regular college hours. |
| V.5 The instructor is consistently visible and responsive in the course. |  | Students need to feel that the instructor is close at hand, but the opportunities for interaction will vary with the discipline of the course.  Look for examples such as:   * An actively used and well-organized instructor-facilitated discussion board. * Optional “electronic office hours” provided in the chat room. * An invitation for the class to email the instructor with individual concerns. * Updated news postings with instructor greeting and information. |
| V.6 Directions for contacting the instructor are clear and specific. |  | Are directions for contacting the instructor found easily within the course (preferably in more than one place)?  Examples:   * syllabus * course homepage * course overview * introduction |
| BEST PRACTICES |  |  |
| V.8 Students are required to introduce themselves to the class. |  | The student introduction helps to create a supportive learning environment and a sense of community.  Look for a request that students introduce themselves as well as for instructions on where and how they should do so. Student introductions themselves should not be evaluated.  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 should consider providing an example of an introduction and/or start the process by introducing themselves. |

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**VI. ADA AND COPYRIGHT COMPLIANCE**

**General Review Standard:** Course design demonstrates a clear commitment to the Americans with Disabilities Act and U.S. copyright laws are followed.

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| **Specific Review Standards** | **Met? Yes or No** | **Annotation: Examples and Explanations** |
| MANDATORY ELEMENTS |  |  |
| VI. 1 Information on how to request disability accommodations is listed in the course syllabus. |  | The syllabus should include a clear statement on how to contact the college’s disabilities office, preferably with a link to the department’s webpage. |
| VI.2 Course materials show a good faith effort to comply with ADA requirements, including:   1. Use of modifiable fonts in outside resources 2. Clear color contrast 3. Publisher resources captioned and accessible 4. Alt texts for images 5. Closed captioning for videos 6. Use of headings 7. No red/green issues 8. Use of list tool 9. No high movement images 10. Alternate transcripts for audio 11. Links in words not URL or “click here” 12. Charts adjusted for screen reader flow |  | Looking for the majority of these to be met, and some will be Not Applicable.  Alternative means of access to course information is provided for students who are hearing or visually impaired. Look for:   * Equivalent textual representations of images * Closed Captioning or transcript for audio, animations, and video in the course website. LSC uses iLos, which is easy to use <https://www.ilosvideos.com/> and you can get training from Val Lundberg. * Presenting information in text format is generally acceptable, because screen reader software (used by those who are visually impaired) can read text.   Three essential elements:   * uses colors wisely (ADA compliant colors/contrast) * Uses alt tags on images * Uses san-serif fonts (Ariel, Tahoma, Verdana).   Use of flashing and moving images should be ADA compliant. <https://webaim.org/techniques/images/> has great information!  All file names and web hyperlinks should have meaningful names. For instance, the link to take a quiz should say “Take Quiz 1”, not “click here”.  Icons used as links should also have HTML tags or an accompanying text link.  To accommodate students who are color blind, color text should also be identifiable by other methods (such as bold, italics, etc.). Use an ADA html color contrast checker to check for compliance. The D2L html editor has one built in. <http://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>  Resources might include:   * Closed Captioning through iLos. * Adjusting YouTube captioning * Alternative assignments to adapt to disabilities * VPAT included in course. The Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (**VPAT**) is a document which evaluates how accessible a particular product is according to the Section 508 Standards. It is a self-disclosing document produced by the vendor which details each aspect of the Section 508 requirements and how the product supports each criteria. |
| VI.3 No apparent violations of copyright law exist within the course content or related materials. |  | Materials in the course meet fair use of educational resources. Linking to outside sources is always acceptable and recommended. Embedded materials should be used with caution (check use license). <https://creativecommons.org/> |
| BEST PRACTICES |  |  |
| VI. 4 A statement is found in the syllabus affirming the instructor's commitment to accessibility, and offers assistance if any materials are difficult to use. |  |  |

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This review rubric and annotations are adapted from the Quality Matters project that was awarded to MarylandOnline and sponsored in part by The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education.

LSC originally adapted this rubric in 2004 and has been using and revising it since.

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