

Preparations for Online Course Application (POCA)

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to gather all the information essential for approving the conversion of existing courses to an online format or designing new online courses. If approved, courses are developed with eConcordia.

Approval Process

1. Fill out the POCA form with all available supporting information as the assigned Subject Matter Expert (SME), as well as consult CTL whenever needed.
2. Submit this form to your Chair for approval, who will then submit to the Associate Dean / Faculty Dean for further approval.
3. Following approval from your Associate Dean / Faculty Dean, forward the completed form to Kristen Laguia (onlinecoursedev.admin@concordia.ca) for VPITL review.
4. Set up the login account and complete the mandatory learning of **Faculty Online Readiness (FOR) modules** (*approximately 2 hours to complete*). – Please contact eConcordia (xiaojing.ge@knowledgeone.ca) to complete the account setup right before you start the learning.
5. Start working with eConcordia team for specific online course design and development.

Overview

This document contains several parts:

1. **Course Context:** basic information about the course and rationale for proposing the online course development.
2. **Course Vision:** to support alignment between course learning outcomes and the learning activities at a high level of design.
3. **Course Assessment Strategy:** to support aligning assessment with online course quality standards at a high level of design.
4. **Quality Standards for Online Course Design at Concordia:** to increase the general awareness of latest standards for online course design and development (*SME's signature is required*).
5. **Approvals at the different levels:** requiring signatures from the Department, Faculty and Office of Provost accordingly.
6. **Appendix:** to provide the guidance for form filling.

I. Course Context

Course code and title

Faculty & Department

Is this an existing course? Yes No

Number of credits

Name of Subject Matter Expert (SME) #1 who will develop online course

Status of SME #1

Full-time (CUFA) member

Part-time (CUPFA) member

Name of Subject Matter Expert (SME) #2 who will develop this online course (if applicable)

Status of SME #2 (if applicable)

Full-time (CUFA) member

Part-time (CUPFA) member

Course instructor / Course coordinator (if different from above):

Name of faculty members who have taught the course in the last five (5) years

In any given academic year, when has the course been offered?

Please provide the enrolment numbers for the last five offerings.

Does the course have a lab? Yes No

Does the course have a tutorial? Yes No

Will there be a face-to-face section of this course as well as an online section? Yes No

If yes, will they both be offered in the same term? Yes No

If the course is coordinated, how much coordination occurs between sections? **Check all that apply.**

Shared syllabus Coordinated assignments

Coordinated tests/exams

Comments (if applicable):

Is grading coordinated with the other instructor(s)? Yes No

When do you hope to have the online version ready?

(Note: it takes a minimum of **six (6)-eight (8)** months to complete the development of an online course from the time it starts.)

Is the course a program requirement, program elective, service course, etc.?

What is the SME's availability or working schedule?

Example: *planned average working hours per week for this project, unavailable time during the production period (including sabbatical, conferences, other research/teaching tasks), etc.*

2. Course Vision*

For guidance on how to complete this section, see attached Appendix

Why are you thinking of developing an online version of this course?

Course Learning Outcomes: Typically, a course has 3-5 outcomes.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Course components: Here are a few prompts to help you answer this question.

- How is the course taught currently? What happens in class?
- Is it mainly lecture format?
- Are there any group activities in class?
- Is there any peer-teaching during class?
- Are any third-party applications (e.g., publisher applications or software) used in the course? Do they comply with university policies on accessibility and privacy? If a log-in or payment are required third-party applications are used, are alternatives options provided?

- Is there any plan to use external videos/websites? *(an alternative to reading, part of learning activities, etc.)*

3. Course Assessment Strategy*

For guidance on how to complete this section, see attached Appendix

Complete each column with the corresponding details to indicate how your assessments will be aligned with the course learning outcomes, how your grade values will be distributed and balanced, and how your feedback will effectively support student success.

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Activities	Further Information
	<i>Example: Group presentation, graded quiz, one-minute paper</i>	<i>Grading weight (%), evaluation rubric, automated feedback for quiz, direct feedback all of class on common struggles, peer-to-peer feedback activity</i>

4. Quality Standards for Online Course Design at Concordia - *Developed by eConcordia in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)*

The quality standards presented herein are intended to assist faculty members working with eConcordia in the development of online courses. The quality standards reflect the evidence-based practices, approaches, and expectations that guide online course design at Concordia University.

The standards were adapted from a range of published sources, including:

- [Standards from the Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric](#), Sixth Edition
- [OSCQR 4.0 Course Design Review Scorecard](#), Online Learning Consortium (OLC)
- [Quality Guidelines for Online Courses](#), University of Waterloo
- [Quality Online Course Initiative \(QOCI\) Rubric](#), University of Illinois Springfield
- [21st Century Distance Education Guidelines 2021](#), Higher Learning Commission
- [Guiding Principles of Blended and Online Course Design](#), University of Calgary

Broad Standards for Online Course Design

The broad standards represent the overarching principles of course design that inform the individual quality standards presented on the next five pages.

Accessibility | Content is available through various modes of engagement, representation, and learning expressions; obstacles for access to learning materials are anticipated and moderated.

Alignment | Learning outcomes, activities, and assessments are intentionally connected; technologies and tools are suited to best represent the course activities and content.

Balance | The course provides an equivalent learning experience for all students within the course and across multiple sections, regardless of delivery mode.

Engagement | Collaborative activities encourage interaction, peer-to-peer learning, feedback, and community-building; members of the instructional team are regularly present and active in the course, as they engage and involve students in their learning experiences.

Improvement | The course includes feedback mechanisms to collect information from students and the instructional team on their respective learning and teaching experiences; the information is used to generate strategies for continuous improvement, generally implemented within a 3-5-year cycle.

Integrity | The course promotes academic rigour; expectations for engagement and interaction within the learning environment are clear; the course introduces and upholds the institutional standards of academic integrity; transparent assessment practices and criteria promote fairness.

Relevance | Activities and assessments are relevant, current, and authentic to the discipline; they provide students with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge to “real-world” contexts; the curriculum offers students choices in their learning activities and/or assessments.

Course Design Components

The following categories detail the standards for distinct components of online course design.

Note: Standards have **Bold** text when they are the responsibility of eConcordia without significant requirements from the faculty member.

Course Design

Standard

-
- I.1 The relationship between learning outcomes, learning activities, instructional materials, and assessments is clearly documented as part of a course high-level design.

 - I.2 Course includes a [syllabus](#) that follows the CTL guidelines to provide key information about the course, student support services, and relevant institutional policies.

 - I.3 The overall course workload aligns with the academic activity regulations as per [Concordia’s calendar and is communicated to students at the beginning of the course](#).

Learning Outcomes

Standard

- 2.1 The course includes student-friendly learning outcome statements that describe observable and measurable levels of knowledge skills and attributes students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of the course.

- 2.2 Each module/unit includes learning outcomes (supporting outcomes) that are observable, measurable, and consistent with the course-level outcomes.

- 2.3 The learning outcomes are suited to the level of the course and where it is situated in a program curriculum.

Teaching and Learning Activities

Standard

- 3.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the course learning outcomes and align with the course assessments.

- 3.2 The course includes planned activities that provide opportunity for learners to monitor their progress and evaluate their own learning throughout the semester (knowledge-checks with automated or instructor feedback).

- 3.3 Learning activities are varied to engage students on multiple levels and support a diverse learning audience.

- 3.4 Learning activities are personally meaningful and draw on students' previous knowledge and experiences.

- 3.5 The requirements for learner interaction (instructor to student, student to student, student to instructor, student to self) are intentionally planned and clarified to learners.

- 3.6 The estimated workload for each course activity and/or unit is calculated to ensure alignment with the academic activity regulations as per [Concordia's calendar and is shared with students](#).

- 3.7 The course includes, by design, opportunities for individual instructors to customize course resources, activities, and assessments for the current term and student population.

- 3.8 Learning activities use active learning techniques that help students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the learning outcome(s).

- 3.9 Course provides activities that emulate real world applications of the discipline, such as experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities, in as much as possible.

Assessment

Standard

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- 4.1 Course assessments allow students to demonstrate the intended level of learning for each learning outcome.
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- 4.2 Each course learning outcome is evaluated at least once with formative (non-graded) activities and feedback over the semester that adequately prepare students for the assessment.
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- 4.3 Each course learning outcome is evaluated 2-3 times over the semester.
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- 4.4 Each graded assessment/assignment includes instructions, specific and descriptive expectations, and evaluation criteria.
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- 4.5 Course assessments/assignments are varied in their design to provide alternative means for students to demonstrate their learning.
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- 4.6 Course assessments are designed to include actionable and timely feedback (in as much as possible) to provide learners information on their progress throughout the semester.
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- 4.7 Assessments provide some choice (e.g., podcast, or paper, or artwork, etc.) for students to demonstrate their learning.
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- 4.8 Assessments are designed, and periodically revised to uphold academic integrity as appropriate.
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- 4.9 Learners have easy access to an up-to-date gradebook.
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- 4.10 Testing parameters such as time limits and repeat attempts are explained (where applicable).

Instructional Materials

Standard

- 5.1 Each instructional resource in the course platform is introduced with a descriptor to clarify the purpose and relationship to the course / unit level outcomes.

- 5.2 The instructional materials represent up-to-date theory and practice in the discipline and include diverse perspectives.

- 5.3 Instructional material and course information include multiple modes of representation (i.e., text-based, audio, graphics, simulations, video, etc.).

- 5.4 Open Educational Resources, free, or low-cost materials are used in as much as possible.

- 5.5 Images in the course reflect diversity¹.**

- 5.6 Course materials and resources are copyright clear.

Interaction

Standard

- 6.1 Communication expectations for protocols, participation, appropriate behaviour in online discussions and other forms of interaction are prominently located in the course platform.**

- 6.2 The instructor establishes a teaching presence with a personal introduction (e.g., video, welcome email, etc.) to the course and themselves, as instructor.

- 6.3 The instructor develops activities/applies strategies to initiate and support on-going interaction.

- 6.4 The instructor defines how asynchronous work will be monitored in the course platform.

- 6.5 The instructor plans for predictable and scheduled interactions and feedback with students (inclusive office hours², follow-up on assignments & assessments).

¹ Peralta Community College District. (2020). Peralta Online Equity Rubric, version 3.0 [Creative Commons license: BY-SA]. Retrieved from <https://web.peralta.edu/de/peralta-online-equity-initiative/equity/>.

² Inclusive office hours remove barriers to students meeting instructors. Offer “a variety of times (time of day and length of meeting), formats (e.g. video conference, audio call, email), and structures (e.g. one-on-one and in groups).” Source: Concordia, [Inclusive Teaching Practices](#).

- 6.6 Course learning activities include some opportunity for group discussion and student exchange.
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- 6.7 Course includes opportunities for collective knowledge-building from diverse sources of information, in as much as possible.

Accessibility, Usability and Layout

Standard

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- 7.1 Course content is structured and sequenced in an organized, logical format.
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- 7.2 The course design facilitates readability.
- a. **Large blocks of information are divided into manageable sections with ample white space around and between the blocks.**
 - b. **There is enough contrast between text and background for the content to be easily viewed.**
 - c. Instructions are provided and well written.
 - d. Course is free of grammatical and spelling errors.
 - e. Text is formatted with titles, headings, and other styles to enhance readability and improve the structure of the document.
 - f. **Flashing and blinking text are avoided.**
 - g. **A sans-serif font with standard size of at least 12 pt. is used.**
 - h. **When possible, information is displayed in a linear format instead of as a table.**
 - i. Tables are accompanied by a title and summary description.
 - j. **Table header rows and columns are assigned.**
 - k. **Slideshows use a predefined slide layout and include unique slide titles.**
 - l. **For all slideshows, there are simple, non-automatic transitions between slide titles.**
 - m. **A text equivalent for every non-text element provided (“alt” tags, captions, transcripts, etc.), and audio description is provided for video-only content.**
 - n. **Hyperlink text is descriptive and makes sense when out of context (avoid using “click here”).**

- 7.3 All assignments/assessments, and course resources and instructional materials including syllabus, etc. (text-based, audio, video, etc.) are accessible as per WCAG 2.0 guidelines.

- 7.4 The course provides alternative means of access to multimedia content or files in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.

- 7.5 All technologies required in the course must be accessible.

Course Overview, Information and Learner Support

Standard

- 8.1 Course provides an overall orientation that introduces students to the course and the instructor.

- 8.2 Instructor preferred communication modes are explained with expected response timelines.

- 8.3 A platform calendar includes all due dates and other time-sensitive events.

- 8.4 The instructor sends weekly email/announcement check-ins to remind students about important upcoming deadlines and provide general feedback on previous week's forums, assignments, etc.

Student and Instructor Feedback

Standard

- 9.1 Instructors reflect on their teaching experience and provide feedback to inform ongoing improvements on the course design, content, user experience, and technology.

- 9.2 The course platform gathers data on learner engagement with all course activities and materials, which is then analyzed to inform course review.

- 9.3 Course feedback is analyzed and used to improve the course for future offerings.

- 9.4 Students have the opportunity to provide mid-course feedback on their learning experience.

Discretionary Standards

Standard

10.1 The course gives students the opportunity to post early drafts of their work for peer feedback.

10.2 The course provides opportunities for students to revise their work in light of feedback.

- I have reviewed these Quality Assurance standards and recognize that these standards will ensure a quality learning experience for all Concordia students. I also recognize that since teaching online is distinct from in-classroom teaching, these standards may shift previous teaching experiences. For example, since no time will be spent preparing or delivering synchronous teaching, those hours may be spent interacting with students, grading their work, or conducting other activities.

As each course is designed to meet different disciplinary, pedagogical, and curricular needs, some of these standards may differ from current practice. Please note which standards will require further discussion with the eConcordia team and why.

- I acknowledge the requirement to complete the [Faculty Online Readiness \(FOR\) modules at eConcordia Moodle platform](#), to adhere to specific accessibility standards (WCAG2.0 AA), and that the course produced must meet Quality Standards for online courses included in this document.

Name of SME #1 _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Name of SME #2 (if applicable) _____

Signature (if applicable) _____ Date _____

Chair's Recommendation

Chair's Name _____

Chair's Signature _____ Date _____

Associate Dean's Recommendation
(Associate Dean, Academic Programs)

Associate Dean's Name _____

Associate Dean's Signature _____ Date _____

Final Approval Signatures

Faculty Dean's Comments

Faculty Dean's Name _____

Faculty Dean's Signature _____ Date _____

VPITL's Comments

Vice-Provost's, Innovation in Teaching and Learning Name _____

Vice-Provost's, Innovation in Teaching and Learning Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix – Guidance

Course Vision*:

Instructions

1. Write the course learning outcomes in the space provided.
2. List all related teaching resources to prepare students for the different types of learning activities that would prepare students for the assessment.

Guiding questions to analyze and improve the alignment table

Step 1: Analyze the learning outcomes

- Do my learning outcomes reflect the precise knowledge, skills and attributes of the course curriculum?
- Do my learning outcomes identify the accurate level of learning that I expect?

Step 2: Analyze the alignment between each assessment and the related teaching resources

- Do my teaching resources address the knowledge essential to the assessment task?

Step 3: Analyze the alignment between each learning activity and the related learning outcome

- Do my learning activities effectively promote a deeper understanding of the concepts and skills students are expected to demonstrate?
- Have I planned opportunities for practice and formative feedback to help students deepen their conceptual understanding?
- Are my learning activities authentic to the discipline?

Course Assessments Strategy*:

Instructions

1. Copy the learning outcomes and assessments from the Course Vision section, if needed.
2. List any additional assessment activities and identify the corresponding learning outcome.
3. List the further information for each assessment activity if applicable.
4. Use the questions below to analyze your assessment plan.

Guiding questions

- Is the assessment plan balanced?
 - Does it include more than one evaluation of each course outcome?
 - Are grades distributed proportionally to the work effort and level of learning?
 - Is student work distributed across the semester?
 - No single exam is higher than 40%.
- Are the assessment activities varied in providing different ways of demonstrating learning?
- What type of feedback will help students improve and monitor their progress?
- What type of feedback will help me identify the trouble spots and plan further activities to help students progress?
- Have I planned sufficient opportunities to provide timely, qualitative feedback to students?
- Who will provide the feedback (e.g., instructor, TA, peers, self)?
- What methods have been planned to provide feedback (e.g., rubric, quiz w/auto-grading, 2-stage exam, etc.)?