

## ANNOTATED Open SUNY Course Quality Review (OSCQR) Rubric

The Open SUNY Course Quality Review (OSCQR) Rubric is a 50-item checklist aimed at ensuring high quality, accessible, and easy to navigate remote learning environments. **These best practices are organized by 6 broad categories – 1) Course Overview and Information, 2) Course Technology and Tools, 3) Design and Layout, 4) Content and Activities, 5) Interaction, and 6) Assessment and Feedback.**

Faculty can use the rubric to design a new course or to conduct a self-assessment or peer-review of existing courses. A well-designed and thoughtful course will likely already meet many or most of the elements on the checklist. But faculty who are new to remote learning, or who were thrust into CV19 remote classrooms with very little training, may have more work to do to meet these best practice standards. **The good news is that faculty can easily meet many of the standards by doing six things.**

### 1. Use institutionally supported technologies (ex: Bb, Collaborate, WebEx, Knowmia).

By using institutionally supported technologies, faculty and students will have in-house tech support and faculty can rest assured that several items on the OSCQR checklist will be met without any additional effort on their part.

### 2. Use the New Paltz Accessible Template Syllabus

The accessible syllabus template, posted in the Instructional Resources tab on the Division of Academic Affairs webpage, is also downloadable from the OIT template course shell. Simply by using the template syllabus faculty can easily meet several OSCQR standards.

### 3. Use the template OIT Bb course shell or consult the shell as a model in building/revising your shell.

The template OIT Bb course shell incorporates many of the OSCQR standards. By using the template's prompts and uploading the faculty-specific and course-specific content as indicated, faculty will achieve nearly half of the OSCQR standards.

- a. Course Orientation. Following the Course Orientation directions alone, which includes placeholders and directions, guides faculty toward meeting nearly 20 of the OSCQR standards.
- b. Content. The Content section of the template provides a clear organizational structure as well as placeholders and directions, helping faculty meet several more OSCQR standards.

### 4. Use the default left-hand navigation bar in Bb.

The default left-hand navigation bar includes the essential course communication, content and support elements. Although the navigation bar is editable, faculty should use the left-hand navigation bar *as designed*. This saves time and ensures that students have a consistent navigational experience across courses.

## 5. Provide regular and substantive interaction.

Faculty know what quality teaching and learning looks like in a seated classroom (see [Chickering et al](#)), but those not trained in online teaching and who have not experienced online education as a student may find it difficult to adapt seated classroom practices to online environments.

- a. Time on Task. New York requires 45 hours of learning time, or “time on task,” per credit. (9 hours/week for a 3-credit, 15-week semester course). For classroom-based courses, this generally means 15 hours of instruction plus 30 hours of out-of-class work/study per credit. For online courses, instructors should calculate how much time a student performing satisfactorily would take to complete the course work.
  - i. Because online learning is sometimes more “active” for students than sitting in a lecture, students may experience an online course as “more work.” *Faculty can ameliorate this problem by clarifying time on task expectations in the Orientation and Syllabus.*
  - ii. Faculty sometimes underestimate how much time a task will take students online or they may overcompensate for missed class time by over-assigning online work. Plan thoughtfully, connecting required activities to meaningful learning objectives.
- b. Required Elements. Including these elements will achieve several of the OSCQR standards and will meet expectations regarding regular and substantive interaction.
  - i. All remote courses should include the following elements:
    1. Assessment/feedback on student coursework
    2. Provision of information or responding to questions about course work
    3. An opportunity for live office hours via phone or web-conferencing
  - ii. Remote courses should use high impact practices appropriate to the modality to encourage critical thinking, collaboration, and engagement. To that end, faculty should include 2 or more of the following:
    1. Direct instruction
    2. Facilitation of group discussion of coursework or study groups
    3. Facilitation of team projects or student presentations
    4. Opportunities for feedback from students via surveys, discussion boards, or web-conferencing
    5. Other high impact practices designed to facilitate substantive interaction not named above

## 6. Make Accessibility a practice.

Accessibility is the law, and it is a moral obligation. If faculty have not done so already, they should make a practice of using the styles feature in Word, using headers in tables, adding alt text to images, and considering color choices to avoid confusion for colorblind students. Faculty should keep power points simple and uncomplicated. As these practices become habits, faculty will find they are not time consuming and a growing percentage of their course content will be accessible. Building these habits will help faculty meet many of the OSCQR standards.

**A final over-arching best practice is COMMUNICATION.** Consider all the ways we communicate formally and informally with students in seated classrooms. We visit in the hallways before and after class and as we await the beginning of the class. We make announcements. Students drop

by our offices. In addition to all the formal ways in which faculty communicate course expectations and performance feedback in the online environment, faculty should also reach out to students with announcements and emails that create the rapport most of us long for in any learning environment. THAT is part of what makes students feel their faculty are present in the classroom. So, introduce yourself, announce campus or community events, ask students if they have announcements to share from their clubs and organizations, speak to current issues of the day, acknowledge stresses that may be common to everyone in the class. **Be present.**

- Although all items on this chart are important (except #3), faculty should begin by ensuring that the standards highlighted in grey are present.
- The center matrix illustrates how each of the practices helps to meet OSCQR standards. The Notes for Faculty provide additional pointers.
- The standards are linked to SUNY Online’s website (a repository of information about each standard). Faculty can obtain more information, tips, and training using the Developing a Blended Learning Course and Accessible Classroom materials available in every faculty member’s Bb.

### Course Overview and Information

| Standard and Number   | Using Institutional Technologies | Using Template Syllabus | Using Template OIT Bb Shell | Using Default Left Menu | Providing Regular and Substantive Interaction | Paying Attention to Accessibility | Notes for Faculty  |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Standard 1:</b><br>Course includes Welcome and Getting Started content.  |                                  |                         | X                           | X                       |   |                                   | The Welcome and Orientation content does not have to be complex. Introduce yourself, preferably with a short video, and provide a basic overview of what students can expect from the learning experience. |
| <b>Standard 2:</b><br>An orientation or overview is provided for the course overall, as well as in each module. Learners know how to navigate and what tasks are due. |                                  |                         | X                           | X                       |   |                                   |  |
| <b>Standard 3:</b><br><del>Course includes a Course Information area that deconstructs the syllabus for learners in a clear/ navigable way.</del>                     |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   | <b>This item is superfluous.</b><br>Using the New Paltz syllabus template and posting it in the Syllabus section of Bb will meet this standard.  |

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| <p><b>Standard 4:</b><br/>A printable syllabus is available to learners (PDF, HTML).</p>   |                                  | X                       | X                           |                         |   |                                   | <p>Use the Official New Paltz Syllabus and post it in the Syllabus section of Bb.</p> <p>Note: using the Official Syllabus will, in fact, meet Standards 4-10 on the OSCQR.</p> |
| <p><b>Standard 5:</b><br/>Course includes links to relevant campus policies on plagiarism, computer use, filing grievances, accommodating disabilities, etc.</p>   |                                  | X                       | X                           |                         |   |                                   | <p>These are all included in the template Syllabus.</p>   |
| <p><b>Standard 6:</b><br/>Course provides access to learner success resources (technical help, orientation, tutoring).</p>   |                                  | X                       | X                           |                         |   |                                   | <p>These are included in all Bb course shells under the "Support" tab.</p>  |
| <p><b>Standard 7:</b><br/>Course information states whether the course is fully online, blended, or web- enhanced.</p>   |                                  |                         | X                           |                         |   |                                   | <p>This is a standard element in the template Syllabus.</p>   |
| <p><b>Standard 8:</b><br/>Appropriate methods and devices for accessing and participating in the course are communicated (mobile, publisher websites, secure content, pop-ups, browser issue, microphone, webcam).</p> |                                  |                         | X                           |                         |   |                                   | <p>This should be in the orientation and on the syllabus so that students know upfront what they will need to use in the course.</p>  |

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| <b>Standard 9:</b><br>Course objectives/outcomes are clearly defined, measurable, and aligned to learning activities and assessments. |                                  | X                       | X                           |                         |   |                                   | Listing course objectives is a standard part of the template Syllabus.  |
| <b>Standard 10:</b><br>Course provides contact information for instructor, department, and program.                                   |                                  | X                       | X                           |                         |   |                                   | Instructor information is standards in the template Syllabus. It would be helpful to also include information about how to contact the department or program. |

#### Course Technology and Tools

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| <b>Standard 11:</b><br>Requisite skills for using technology tools (websites, software, and hardware) are clearly stated and supported with resources. | X                                |                         | X                           | X                       |   |                                   | All Bb course shells include links to Support for institutionally supported technology tools. |

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| <p><b>Standard 12:</b><br/>Technical skills required for participation in course learning activities scaffold in a timely manner (orientation, practice, and application - where appropriate).</p> | X                                |                         | X                           |                         |   |                                   | Students may be new to online learning. The Student Online Learning Orientation that is available in Bb for all students. Faculty should link students to appropriate support and/or give students assignments aimed at learning to use any course-specific technology tools. |
| <p><b>Standard 13:</b><br/>Frequently used technology tools are easily accessed. Any tools not being utilized are removed from the course menu.</p>  | X                                |                         | X                           |                         |   |                                   | Faculty can use the OIT Bb shell and/or the default navigation bar to meet this standard.   |
| <p><b>Standard 14:</b><br/>Course includes links to privacy policies for technology tools.</p>   | X                                |                         | X                           |                         |   |                                   | Using technology provided and supported by the institution, will meet this standard.  |
| <p><b>Standard 15:</b><br/>Any technology tools meet accessibility standards.</p>  | X                                |                         | X                           |                         |   |                                   | Technology provided and supported by the institution has already been vetted.   |

Design and Layout

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| <p><b>Standard 16:</b><br/>A logical, consistent, and uncluttered layout is established. The course is easy to navigate (consistent color scheme and icon layout, related content organized together, self-evident titles).</p> |                                  | X                       |                             |                         |   |                                   | The OIT Bb shell and the default navigation bar help with this standard. Organize course content in a clear way – by Module, Lesson, Week or other logical, consistent format. |
| <p><b>Standard 17:</b><br/>Large blocks of information are divided into manageable sections with ample white space around and between the blocks.</p>   |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 |  |
| <p><b>Standard 18:</b><br/>There is enough contrast between text and background for the content to be easily viewed.</p>  |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 | Make a habit of using the Accessibility Checker in Word and Power Point and this as well as other accessibility issues will be highlighted along with tips for remediation.    |
| <p><b>Standard 19:</b><br/>Instructions are provided and well written.</p>  |                                  |                         | X                           |                         |   |                                   | The OIT Bb shell provides some tips for clear instructions.  |
| <p><b>Standard 20:</b><br/>Course is free of grammatical and spelling errors.</p>   |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   | This should be a given.  |
| <p><b>Standard 21:</b><br/>Text is formatted with titles, headings, and other styles to</p>   |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 | Making a habit of using Word's Styles features accomplishes this.  |

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| enhance readability and improve the structure of the document.   |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   |  |
| <b>Standard 22:</b><br>Flashing and blinking text are avoided.   |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 |  |
| <b>Standard 23:</b><br>A sans-serif font with a standard size of at least 12 pt is used.                 |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 |  |
| <b>Standard 24:</b><br>When possible, information is displayed in a linear format instead of as a table. |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 | Use of tables is sometimes helpful, but where you use them, be sure to make them accessible, as is largely modeled in this OSCQR rubric.           |
| <b>Standard 25:</b><br>Tables are accompanied by a title and summary description.                        |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 |  |
| <b>Standard 26:</b><br>Table header rows and columns are assigned.                                       |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 | Making a habit of using the header features in Word or Excel accomplishes this. <i>Note how it helps to make this OSCQR rubric easier to read.</i> |
| <b>Standard 27:</b><br>Slideshows use a predefined slide layout and include unique slide titles.         |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 |  |



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| <b>Standard 28:</b><br>For all slideshows, there are simple, non-automatic transitions between slides. |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 |                   |

Content and Activities

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| <b>Standard 29:</b><br>Course offers access to a variety of engaging resources that facilitate communication and collaboration, deliver content, and support learning and engagement. |                                  |                         |                             |                         | X   |                                   | Regular and substantive interaction happens when faculty use high impact practices to encourage critical thinking, collaboration and engagement. |
| <b>Standard 30:</b><br>Course provides activities for learners to develop higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills, such as critical reflection and analysis.                 |                                  |                         |                             |                         | X   |                                   |  |
| <b>Standard 31:</b><br>Course provides activities that emulate real world applications of the discipline, such as experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities.  |                                  |                         |                             |                         | X   |                                   |  |

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| <p><b>Standard 32:</b><br/>Where available, Open Educational Resources, free, or low-cost materials are used.</p>  |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   | This is a current campus initiative.   |
| <p><b>Standard 33:</b><br/>Course materials and resources include copyright and licensing status, clearly stating permission to share where applicable.</p>  |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   | Many course materials already include this information. Using the library as a source for content such as videos or articles can help avoid copyright/licensing issues.        |
| <p><b>Standard 34:</b><br/>Text content is available in an easily accessed format, preferably HTML. All text content is readable by assistive technology, including a PDF or any text contained in an image.</p> |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 | Standards 34-37 address accessibility issues. Using Accessibility Checker tools in Word and Ally in Bb readily helps faculty identify and remediate many accessibility issues. |
| <p><b>Standard 35:</b><br/>A text equivalent for every non-text element is provided ("alt" tags, captions, transcripts, etc.).</p>   |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 | Making a habit of using alt text for images is a good practice.  |
| <p><b>Standard 36:</b><br/>Text, graphics, and images are understandable when viewed without color. Text should be used as a primary method for delivering information.</p>                                      |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 | For example, although this chart uses color, it also uses X to identify items in the matrix. This makes it easier for colorblind readers to make sense of the chart.           |

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| <b>Standard 37:</b><br>Hyperlink text is descriptive and makes sense when out of context (avoid using "click here"). |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   | X                                 | Once you develop this has a habit, it will become second nature to you. |

Interaction

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| <b>Standard 38:</b><br>Expectations for timely and regular feedback from the instructor are clearly stated (questions, email, assignments).                       |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   | The orientation sets the stage for these 3 elements. Students need to know what to expect and need to experience the instructor as present in the course. |
| <b>Standard 39:</b><br>Expectations for interaction are clearly stated (netiquette, grade weighting, models/examples, and timing and frequency of contributions). |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   |   |
| <b>Standard 40:</b><br>Learners have an opportunity to get to know the instructor.  |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   |   |

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| <b>Standard 41:</b><br>Course contains resources or activities intended to build a sense of class community, support open communication, and establish trust (at least one of the following - Ice- breaker, Bulletin Board, Meet Your Classmates, Ask a Question discussion forums). |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   | High impact practices include collaboration and engagement. Course assignments should include these kinds of activities that contribute to regular and substantive engagement in an online environment. |
| <b>Standard 42:</b><br>Course offers opportunities for learner to learner interaction and constructive collaboration.  |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   |   |
| <b>Standard 43:</b><br>Learners are encouraged to share resources and inject knowledge from diverse sources of information in their course interactions.   |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   |   |

#### Assessment and Feedback

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| <b>Standard 44:</b><br>Course grading policies, including consequences of late submissions, are clearly stated in |                                  | X                       | X                           |                         |   |                                   | The template syllabus requires this. |

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| the course information area or syllabus.  |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   |   |
| <b>Standard 45:</b><br>Course includes frequent and appropriate methods to assess learners' mastery of content.   |                                  | X                       |                             |                         | X   |                                   |   |
| <b>Standard 46:</b><br>Criteria for the assessment of a graded assignment are clearly articulated (rubrics, exemplary work).  |                                  | X                       |                             |                         | X   |                                   | The OIT Bb shell's Orientation section includes directions and tips for rubrics.            |
| <b>Standard 47:</b><br>Learners have opportunities to review their performance and assess their own learning throughout the course (pre-tests, automated self-tests, reflective assignments, etc.). |                                  |                         |                             |                         | X   |                                   |   |
| <b>Standard 48:</b><br>Learners are informed when a timed response is required. Proper lead time is provided to ensure there is an opportunity to prepare an accommodation.                         |                                  |                         | X                           |                         |   |                                   | Assignments should have clear directions that inform students of due dates and time limits. |
| <b>Standard 49:</b><br>Learners have easy access to a well-designed and up-to-date gradebook.   |                                  |                         | X                           |                         |   |                                   | Use the Bb gradebook and keep it up-to-date.  |
| <b>Standard 50:</b>   |                                  |                         |                             |                         | X   |                                   |   |

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| Learners have multiple opportunities to provide descriptive feedback on course design, course content, course experience, and ease of online technology. |                                  |                         |                             |                         |   |                                   |                   |