

# EXCELLENCE IN ONLINE COURSE DESIGN

Online Courses applying Quality Matters (QM) &  
Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles



# Key Focus Points



## Course Components

SLOs

Homepage & Navigation

Learning Materials

Assessments

Course Templates



## Canvas Add-ons

Canvas Badges

Video Software & Storage

Accessibility Tools

Analytics



## Course Development Options

SME Expectations

Contract Considerations

Design Timelines

Instructional Designer Role



# Course Components

Recommendations based on *Quality Matters, Universal Design Learning Principles, and review of other university courses including [LAPU](#) & [Biola](#)*

## Why Use Elements of Quality Matters (QM) Principles & Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles?

- Ensure learning objectives, assessments, and activities are aligned
- Consistent, high-quality online course design and continuous improvement
- Enhance course clarity and navigability for students
- Accommodate diverse learning styles and abilities
- Reduces barriers by ensuring that content is accessible to all students
- Minimizes cognitive overload via learner-friendly segments: “chunking”
- Promotes flexible learning for students



- **SLOs Mapped Throughout Course**
- **Home Page, Navigation, Instructors Only, & Start Here Sections**
- **Diverse Learning Materials**
- **Authentic & Interactive Assessments/Activities**
- **Standardized Course Templates**



# Course Components

## ● Ensure SLOs Mapped Throughout Course Consistently

- Where SLOs are mapped in Courses:
  - Dev Master courses identify SLOs to be covered in each module
  - Many courses list textbook chapter learning objectives in each module
  - Some courses list SLOs only in Syllabus
- Offer option to embed Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) in rubrics and enable *Learning Mastery Gradebook*
  - [Outcomes Assessment Resource](#)

Mapping SLOs per module ensures that course learning outcomes are clearly aligned with learning activities and assessments, as emphasized in QM Standard 2.4 and Standard 2.1. Identifying which SLOs will be covered in each module provides multiple means of representation, allowing learners to know exactly what to expect and how their progress will be measured, in line with UDL guidelines

# Course Components

## ● Home Page, Navigation, Instructors Only, and Start Here Section

### Persistent Navigation Menu

- Home, Announcements, Syllabus, Modules, Grades, Technical Support

### Home Page

- Simple, responsive, and easy to navigate.
- Example: *UCI Student Survey on use of Home vs. Syllabus page*

### Instructors Only Module

- Includes course notes, department contact info, and resources/expectations: [Example of Instructor Resources](#)

### Start Here Module

- Course Overview
- Student Resources
- Faculty Info (a short welcome video, photo, a bio, contact info, office hours to reveal instructor presence and tone)
- Student Resources with links to institutional resources (i.e., libraries, tutoring, accessibility services) [Example of Student Resources](#)
  - *Avoid links on page (see live examples)*

[Example of SBM Template](#) with these features

These elements align with QM standards on course overview and introduction, emphasizing clarity and ease of use (see QM Standard 1.1–1.4) and also support UDL by providing multiple means of orientation

# Course Components

## ● Diverse Learning Materials

### Instructor-Created Content

#### *Multimedia Learning Materials*

- Short lecture videos (segmented into 10–15 minute chunks) with clear audio and closed captions
- Audio podcasts or narrated slideshows
- Interactive presentations such as [H5P Presentations](#)
- PowerPoint or other [presentation slides](#) with narration

#### *Text-Based Learning Materials*

- [Instructor-authored readings](#) transformed into engaging documents by instructional designers
- In-house created [infographics](#), diagrams, and charts

#### *Interactive & Supplemental Resources*

- [Case Studies](#) or Ccreate Branching Chain Scenarios

### Third-Party Curated Content (use sparingly)

#### *Text-Based Materials*

- Curated readings such as textbook chapters, OER resources provided in accessible formats (i.e., screen-reader friendly PDFs)
- APU Library scholarly articles

#### *Multi Media*

- Curated infographics, diagrams, and charts from external sources
- Source external videos or podcasts

#### *Supplemental Resources*

- Links to industry articles or purchase simulations

This multi-modal approach not only adheres to QM's emphasis on varied instructional materials (QM Standard 4.1–4.4) but also fulfills UDL's goal of offering multiple means of representation

# Course Components

## Authentic & Interactive Assessments & Activities

### Formative Assessments

- Low-stakes *quizzes* and *discussion posts* that promote engagement
- Reflective journals or project/scenario/authentic assignments that allow students to process content and connect it to their experiences

### Summative Assessments (*scaffolding*)

- Projects, case studies, or research papers that require synthesis, analysis, and creative application of course concepts
- Multimedia projects (i.e., presentations, video essays) that offer students alternative modes to demonstrate learning

### Collaborative & Peer Review Assignments

- Group projects and peer review assignments that encourage community building and deeper engagement

### Discussions & Knowledge Shares

- Discussions that are varied and measure more than citation ability...(***paradigm shift - what is the purpose of a discussion?***)
- Regular and substantive interaction between instructors and learners, as well as among peers, to foster community and active learning

These strategies echo QM's emphasis on assessment alignment (QM Standards 3.1–3.5) and UDL's principle of providing multiple means of action and expression.

# Course Components

## ● Standardized Course Templates

### Template Components

- A standardized home page
- Pre-built modules that include a consistent layout
- Areas for *Faculty Customization and Knowledge Share*

### Grading Rubrics for All Graded Assessments

- Rubrics for clear grading criteria and expectations that align with measurable objectives

### Faculty Resources and Continuous Improvement

- Offer in-course instructions so instructors understand the template and pedagogical goals
- Create continuous improvement loop for course maintenance, feedback, and course revisions

Many institutions have successfully implemented course templates that reflect full or customized QM and UDL guidelines.

# Canvas Add-Ons



Video Platform

YouTube  
vs.  
Video Hosting Tools



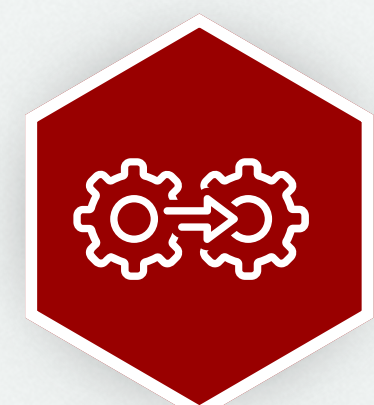
Canvas Badges

Free Version  
vs.  
Pro Features



Accessibility Tools

Accessible  
Design and  
Features



3rd Party LTIs

3rd Party Links  
to Publisher &  
Other Resources

# Course Development

- Agile Instructional Design
- Course Development Process
- SME Expectations & Contract Considerations



# Agile Instructional Design

Fully Innovative. Fully Supportive.

## **Full Design** (10–12 weeks)

Full Development with SME and ID with periodic meetings. Design Doc, SME upload content to Design Doc, weekly meetings with ID, ID build Canvas course for SME review, and chair approval.

## **Lite Design** (8–10 weeks)

Instructor create course in Canvas, Use 3D Resource or embedded Resources in template course, ID answer questions throughout development, ID review for functionality, accessibility, and template.

## **Course Pack Conversion** (3–4 weeks)

ID convert specified live course into an official course pack. Review for functionality, accessibility, and template.

## **Add-ons** (1–2 weeks)

ID consult with chairs/faculty leads to embed outcomes assessment, badges, and other elements to course packs.

# The Process



1

## Request and Scheduling

- **Chair or dean request course development** by filling out a form designed to capture all essential details about the curriculum development needs.
- The Lead Instructional Designer (Lead ID) reviews the submission and schedules an initial consultation meeting with the requesting chair or dean.

2

## Scoping Meeting & ID Assignment

- **Define the project scope** clearly, set timelines, and outline specific deliverables and expected outcomes.
- The Lead ID **assigns an Instructional Designer** to the project based on the chosen Agile Design Methodology, course content, required expertise, and availability.
- The assigned ID will be responsible for the course development, importing and maintenance working closely with subject matter experts (SMEs) and the academic staff.

3

## Develop, Launch, & Maintenance

- **Development of the course** by the assigned ID with inputs from designated SMEs with an emphasis of staying on track with appropriate timeline for build. Keep chair updated on status using **Tracking Sheet** for transparency and accountability.
- **Review and final approval** by the academic chair and dean.
- **Importing or blueprinting** the course into the LMS for deployment in the specified term.
- ID will continue to update and perform maintenance on the course in future.

# Course Development

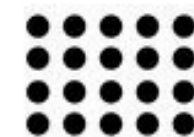
## ● SME Expectations & Contract Considerations

### Subject Matter Expert (SME) Expectations

- Meet with Instructional Designer (ID) weekly during build of course
- SMEs must provide detailed, original content, including instructor-authored readings, quiz questions, and multimedia materials
- Content designed in collaboration with instructional designers to meet quality standards
- IDs enhance SME-provided materials by structuring content, ensuring accessibility compliance, and integrating interactive elements.
- Develop SME and ID Expectations - [Example of SME Expectations](#)
- Finalized course content is subject to review and approval to align with APU's academic and instructional quality standards.

### SME Contract Considerations

- All course materials (text, videos, assessments) created by SMEs are the intellectual property of APU.
- SMEs cannot share, reuse, or repurpose any content for other institutions or personal projects.
- *Currently, faculty can download their content to use elsewhere.*



# Doing More

**For APU!**

