SCORECARD
Ball State Quality Matters Plus (QM+)

The Ball State QM+ Scorecard has been adapted from Quality Matters, which has developed a nationally recognized standard in online course design. Our standards have been modified to reflect specific examples in teaching excellence and the values of a Ball State education — including our dedication to student-centered, inclusive, and community-based learning.

Ball State courses should meet a minimum score of 85 out of 100. And you must meet *all* of the essential standards, which are the first items listed in each of the eight categories. Your college or department may have additional requirements.

Course Overview and Introduction (16 Points Total)

STANDARD 1.1 (3 Points)

Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components. This is an essential standard in the Ball State QM+ Scorecard.

Examples:

- A course tour video using Mediasite or other screen-casting software
- A syllabus quiz over key points and due dates
- A module in Canvas titled *Getting Started* that includes important elements and documents

STANDARD 1.2 (3 Points)

Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.

Examples:

- Placing the official course description in your syllabus
- Creating a short video using Canvas or Mediasite (or other software) that gives students an overview of the course and how it connects to their learning process

STANDARD 1.3 (2 Points)

Communication expectations for online discussions, email, and other forms of interaction are clearly stated.

Examples:

- Professional and respectful tone and civility are used in communicating with fellow learners and the instructor, no matter the communication channel used (phone, teleconferencing, email, face-to-face, etc…).
- Written communication, formal and informal, uses Standard English rather than popular online abbreviations and regional colloquialisms.
- Video interactions reflect a respectful tone in verbal communications and body language.
- Spelling and grammar are correct.

STANDARD 1.4 (2 Points)

Course and institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated within the course or a link to current policies is provided.

Examples:

- Links are provided to key areas on Ball State's website (i.e., Disability Services, Counseling Center, Academic Integrity) in syllabus and/or modules in Canvas.
- Information is included on course policies for late assignments, absences, and other specific course expectations.
- Information is included about any proctoring services to be used for exams.

STANDARD 1.5 (2 Points)

Minimum technology requirements for the course are clearly stated and information on how to obtain the technologies is provided.

Examples of information to include in a technology requirements statement:

- Links to all downloadable resources, such as Microsoft Office or WebEx that students need to use for the course
- If speakers and/or a microphone are required
- Links to library services and documentations on how to use services (this can be provided by Bracken Library staff)
- If materials from a publisher are required, clearly stated instructions for how to obtain and use any required access codes

STANDARD 1.6 (1 Point)

Computer skills and digital information literacy skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.

Examples of these skills include:

- Using the learning management system (Canvas)
- Using email with attachments
- Creating and submitting files in commonly used word processing programs
- Downloading and installing software
- Using spreadsheet programs
- Using presentation and graphics programs
- Using apps in digital devices
- Using web conferencing tools and software

STANDARD 1.7 (1 Point)

Expectations for prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and any required competencies are clearly stated.

Example:

- State the prerequisites or competencies needed for the course in the syllabus. This would include specific course names/numbers and/or skills.

STANDARD 1.8 (1 Point)

The self-introduction by the instructor is professional and is available online.

The self-introduction helps learners get to know the instructor and, in addition to the information mentioned above, could include:

- Teaching philosophy
- Personal information such as hobbies, family, travel experiences, etc..., as appropriate
- An image, audio message, or video (including alternative formats to ensure accessibility)
- The role of the instructor
- How the instructor prefers to be addressed

STANDARD 1.9 (1 Point)

Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.

Examples:

- Personal information they wish to share (make sure to note this is voluntary.)

- Major/minor, area of discipline
- Ask learners why they are taking the course, or what they expect to learn.
- Comment on any concerns they have.

Learning Objectives and Competencies (15 Points Total)

STANDARD 2.1 (3 Points)

The course learning objectives, or course/program competencies, describe outcomes that are measurable. This is an essential standard in the Ball State QM+ Scorecard to meet minimum quality standards for an online course.

Examples: Objectives use verbs that are active and have real-world application.

- Select appropriate tax strategies for different financial and personal situations.
- Develop a comprehensive, individualized wellness-action program focused on overcoming a sedentary lifestyle.
- Evaluate barriers to women's empowerment and effective approaches to reducing global discriminatory practices.
- Demonstrate correct use of personal protective equipment.
- Tweet a picture that portrays a mathematical concept in daily life.
- Articulate personal attitudes and values related to the use of medical marijuana.
- Apply microeconomic principles to explain why environmental problems occur.
- Bookmark five examples of clickbait in advertising.
- Create original musical compositions using computer technology.
- Analyze a business situation to determine an information management need.

STANDARD 2.2 (3 Points)

The module/unit-level learning objectives or competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies.

Examples are the same as Standard 2.1

STANDARD 2.3 (3 Points)

Learning objectives or competencies are stated clearly, are written from the learner's perspective, and are prominently located in the course.

Examples:

- Objectives are listed on a course schedule in a Word or PDF document.
- Objectives are placed in a Canvas module for that topic/week.

STANDARD 2.4 (3 Points)

The relationship between learning objectives or competencies and learning activities is clearly stated.

Examples of course components that clarify the relationship:

- A course map shows how the learning objectives or competencies connect to the learning activities.
- A module or unit introductory page is provided with a summary or overview of module- or unit-level learning objectives or competencies, related course-level learning objectives or competencies, and course activities (learning activities, assessments, and use of instructional materials).
- An explanation is provided for how the course-level and module- or unit-level learning objectives or competencies are met through each learning activity.
- A numbering system demonstrates the relationship between course-level objectives or competencies, module- or unit-level objectives or competencies, and learning activities.

STANDARD 2.5 (3 Points)

The learning objectives or competencies are suited to the level of the course.

Example:

- A gateway or entry-level class covers introductory materials to an academic discipline and focuses on broad conceptual knowledge while a 400-level course may demonstrate cognitive thinking regarding a very specific concept or topic within a larger discipline or across disciplines. Learning is dependent on having attained prerequisite knowledge at each level.

Assessment and Measurement (13 Points Total)

STANDARD 3.1 (3 Points)

The assessments measure the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies. This is an essential standard in the Ball State QM+ Scorecard to meet minimum quality standards for an online course.

Examples:

- An essay or discussion shows learners can “explain” or “describe” something.
- A multiple-choice quiz verifies that learners can “define” or “identify” vocabulary.
- An assignment shows that learners can “write” or “compose” a composition.

- A group project where learners will compare and contrast two approaches.
- A video of a learner presentation in a foreign language shows that learners can speak or translate a foreign language.

STANDARD 3.2 (3 Points)

The course grading policy is stated clearly at the beginning of the course.

Examples:

- A list of all activities, tests, and other assignments that will determine the final grade, along with their weights or points
- An explanation of the relationship between the final course letter grade and the learner's accumulated points or percentages
- A clear statement about how late submissions will be graded, including information on any point deductions for assignments submitted late

STANDARD 3.3 (3 Points)

Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of the learner's work and their connection to the course grading policy is clearly explained.

Examples:

- Evidence that the instructor has stated the evaluation criteria for all graded work. Criteria may be in the form of a detailed checklist, rubric, or other evaluation instrument.
- A description of how a learner's participation in discussions will be graded, including the number of required postings per week, the criteria for evaluating the originality and quality of a learner'' comments and responsiveness to classmates' comments; and the grade or credit learners can expect for varying levels of performance.
- Clearly stated point values for each question in quizzes and exams, including information about partial credit.
- For group or team projects, an explanation of the criteria used to evaluate individual or team performance and whether scores or grades will be assigned by individual or by team.

STANDARD 3.4 (2 Points)

The assessments used are sequenced, varied, and suited to the level of the course.

Examples:

- A series of assessments progress from the definition of terms, to a short paper explaining the relationship between various theoretical constructs, to a term

paper that includes the application of theoretical constructs and critical analysis of a journal article.
- Assessments in a public speaking course include first submitting an outline of a speech, next a draft of the speech, and, finally, delivering the speech.
- An upper-level course in world history has multiple-choice quizzes and discussions, and also includes a term paper and final presentation that ask students to analyze and evaluate the various events leading up to World War II.

STANDARD 3.5 (2 Points)

The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress with timely feedback.

Examples:

- Writing assignments that allow for the submission of a preliminary draft for instructor comment and suggestions for improvement
- Self-mastery tests that include informative feedback with each answer choice
- Self-scoring practice quizzes
- Practice written assignments that receive feedback, such as journals, reflection papers, or portfolios
- Peer reviews and critiques
- The opportunity for learners to compare their work to model papers or essays, sample answers, or answer keys prior to completing an assessment, thereby encouraging reflection and improvement

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Instructional Materials (12 Points Total)

STANDARD 4.1 (3 Points)

The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies. This is an essential standard in the Ball State QM+ Scorecard to meet minimum quality standards for an online course.

Examples:

- Instructional materials may include but are not limited to textbooks, open educational resources, publisher- or instructor-created materials, slide presentations and interactive content (such as simulations), expert lectures, videos, images, diagrams, and websites.
- The materials align with the learning objectives or competencies to provide the information and resources learners need to achieve the stated learning objectives or competencies.

STANDARD 4.2 (3 Points)

The relationship between the use of instructional materials in the course and completing learning activities is clearly explained.

Examples:

- A schedule of assigned readings is accompanied by an explanation of how the readings will be used in online discussion forum posting.
- Links to external websites include a description of the site and an explanation of how the information at the site is to be used in the learning activities.
- An explanation is provided for how required or optional publisher materials, including presentation slides, practice quizzes, videos, and other content, are to be used in the learning activities.

STANDARD 4.3 (2 Points)

The course models the academic integrity expected of learners by providing both source references and permissions for use of instructional materials.

Examples:

- Images that appear in a module
- Videos that are linked from a video repository tool
- Journal articles that are linked from a library portal for download

STANDARD 4.4 (2 Points)

The instructional materials represent up-to-date theory and practice in the discipline.

Examples:

- An introductory computer course might include information on recent trends in data storage.
- A sociology course might discuss the validity of evidence-based research.
- A chemistry course might include computerized models to demonstrate chemical operations.

Note: Seminal readings and works that provide a foundation of the discipline are also valid options.

STANDARD 4.5 (2 Points)

A variety of instructional materials is used in the course.

Examples:

- A text from a single author, multiple videos, and a selection of websites

- Several scholarly journal articles as readings, multiple videos, and a few audio podcasts created by the instructor
- A series of topical videos and a textbook
- Instructional materials are sourced from diverse authors - in background, origin, and points of view (according to academic discipline)

Learning Activities and Learner Interaction (11 Points Total)

STANDARD 5.1 (3 Points)

The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies. This is an essential standard in the Ball State QM+ Scorecard to meet minimum quality standards for an online course.

Examples:

- The objective or competency requires that learners deliver a persuasive speech. Activities include choosing an appropriate topic for the speech, creating an outline, and recording a practice of the speech delivery.
- The objective or competency is “Prepare each budget within a master budget and explain the importance of each in the overall budgeting process.” The learners review information about this objective or competency in their texts, watch videos of case studies in which the different budgets are used, review informational web resources on creating the different budgets, construct the different budgets as practice activities, and develop a case study for a fictitious company, explaining what would happen if each budget is not included in the master budget.

STANDARD 5.2 (3 Points)

Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.

Examples:

- Study Groups; Small Group Discussions; Collaborative Projects; Team Presentations, etc…
    - Learners are asked to watch examples of effective persuasive speech delivery and identify components of effective delivery, and then receive feedback from the instructor on that assignment.
    - Learners are asked to interact with peers by recording a practice of the speech delivery and posting it for peer feedback.

STANDARD 5.3 (3 Points)

The instructor's plan for interacting with learners during the course is clearly stated.

Examples:

- A statement that clearly communicates the instructor's normal response time to student emails and assignment feedback.
- A statement that learners will receive regular (weekly, daily) announcements that include reminders and information pertinent to the course
- A statement that some assignments will receive summary feedback directed to all learners
- Clear information on any additional feedback or guidance that will be provided by the instructor for auto-graded items

STANDARD 5.4 (2 Points)

The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.

Examples:

- A written explanation of the requirements for learner interaction that focuses on class participation.
- A statement that indicates how learner interaction will be evaluated.
- Instructions for assessments are clear in defining in what ways learners can interact for the purposes of academic integrity/honor code.

Course Technology (8 Points Total)

STANDARD 6.1 (3 Points)

The tools used in the course support the learning objectives or competencies. This is an essential standard in the Ball State QM+ Scorecard to meet minimum quality standards for an online course.

Examples:

- A course objective requires learners to compare and contrast two different periods in U.S. history. The Canvas assignment tool is used for learners to submit a short essay comparing and contrasting the two periods.
- A module-level objective is that learners be able to demonstrate the steps of performing CPR. Learners use a simulation tool to demonstrate the steps on a virtual patient.

STANDARD 6.2 (3 Points)

Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.

Examples:

- Software that facilitates interaction in real-time (synchronous), such as collaborative tools, webinars, and virtual worlds
- Software that facilitates asynchronous interaction, such as shared documents or wikis
- Animations, simulations, and games that require learner input and allow for faculty feedback (automated or instructor-initiated)
- Discussion tools with automatic notification of new posts
- Wiki tools for collaboration and project building
- Automated self-check exercises

STANDARD 6.3 (1 Point)

A variety of technology is used in the course.

Examples:

- Instructor-created videos
- YouTube and other web-based videos
- Online educational games or simulations
- Scholarly reference tools or databases, such as Google Scholar
- Synchronous web conferencing tools used for orientation, group projects, tutoring, test reviews, etc...
- A wiki used for group collaboration
- Web-based voice tools used by language instructors and learners to practice pronunciation, vocabulary, etc...

STANDARD 6.4 (1 Point)

The course provides learners with information on protecting their data and privacy.

Examples:

- Privacy policies for publisher resources and integrations
- Links to the privacy policies of social media and third-party websites being used
- Links to the privacy policies of external tools integrated into Canvas, such as plagiarism detection tools, messaging tools, collaboration tools, and assistive technology

Learner Support (10 Points Total)

STANDARD 7.1 (3 Points)

The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it. This is an essential standard in the Ball State QM+ Scorecard to meet minimum quality standards for an online course.

Examples:

- A clear description of the technical support services provided by Ball State, including a link to a technical support website
- An email link to Ball State's Help Desk
- A phone number for Ball State's Help Desk
- Links to tutorials or other resources providing instructions on how to use the tools and features of Canvas and other course technologies

STANDARD 7.2 (3 Points)

Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's accessibility policies and services.

Examples:

- A link to Ball State's accessibility policy
- A statement that informs the learner how to access Ball State's disability support services.

STANDARD 7.3 (3 Points)

Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's academic support services and resources that can help learners succeed in the course.

Examples:

- A description on Ball State's website of academic support services with information about each service (e.g., location of testing center or proctored test sites, hours of operation, phone numbers and email addresses for key personnel) and links included for each service
- Links to online orientations or demo courses
- A link to the library, including information on how to gain access to library materials and databases, and how to contact a librarian
- A link to tutorials or guides on conducting research, writing papers, and citing sources

STANDARD 7.4 (1 Point)

Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's student services and resources that can help learners succeed.

Examples:

- A description of support services and how to obtain them (including email addresses and phone numbers for key personnel)
- Guidance on when and how learners may obtain a particular support service or resource (for example, when and how to meet with an academic advisor)
- Links to each of Ball State's student support services web pages or a single student support web page detailing each of Ball State's student support services

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Accessibility and Usability (15 Points Total)

STANDARD 8.1 (3 Points)

Course navigation facilitates ease of use. This is an essential standard in the Ball State QM+ Scorecard to meet minimum quality standards for an online course.

Examples:

- Consistent layout and design are used throughout, making content, instructional materials, tools, and media easy to locate from anywhere in the course. Design elements are used repetitively, increasing predictability and intuitiveness.
- Course pages have links, files, and icons that are labeled with easy-to-understand, self-describing, and meaningful names; for example, the text "Ball State website" is the hyperlink rather than bsu.edu. Icons used as links also have HTML tags or an accompanying text link.
- All links within the course, external and internal, are working properly; there are no broken links.
- The course design enables learners to easily locate where they are within the course and to easily return to the home page from any location.
- Tables are used to organize data and have appropriate table headers. Data cells are associated with their appropriate headers, enabling learners to navigate and understand the data.
- The hierarchy of material in a page or document is clearly indicated through heading styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc...). A table of contents can be included that allows learners to move easily throughout documents.
- Canvas tabs should be re-ordered in a way to invite students to where they should begin the course.
- Unused Canvas tabs should be made hidden.

STANDARD 8.2 (3 Points)

The course design facilitates readability.

Examples of strategies that facilitate readability and minimize distraction:

Layout

- Content is formatted to serve specific instructional purposes. For example, format and text color are used purposely to communicate key points, group like items, and emphasize relevant relationships. Color alone is not used to convey meaning.
- Similar content is grouped together; headings are used to indicate a change of topic.
- White space or negative space is used around content to help increase comprehension and reduce eye fatigue that occurs with large blocks of text or use of many images.

Text

- Heading and body styles are consistent throughout the course.
- Font style and size are selected to maximize on-screen legibility; simpler fonts are chosen over more ornate fonts, and the number of font families is limited to one or two.
- Text is in a contrasting color that makes it clearly distinguishable from the background.
- Color coding, e.g., text or highlighting, is used to serve specific instructional purposes. Color alone is not used to convey meaning.
- Items can be bold, or underline, but not both bold and underlined.
- Avoid using all CAPS.

STANDARD 8.3 (3 Points)

The course provides accessible text and images in files, documents, Canvas pages, and web pages to meet the needs of diverse learners.

Examples:

- Images and graphs are described via an alt tag, long description, or audio description.
- All tables are set up as text and not embedded as images. They are not presented as screen captures.
- Tables are set up with headings for columns and rows and are used only for summarizing data, not for formatting. Tables have captions, alt text or alt tags, and are formatted so that headings repeat.

- Document or HTML titles, headings, etc..., are formatted using styles (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc...) found in the word processing software (such as Word) style gallery; they do not merely utilize a larger or bold or italic font.
- PDFs that contain text are not merely image scans; any text contained in PDFs is selectable and searchable.
- Text colors alone are not relied on to convey meaning. The meaning is also conveyed in another way that does not require perceiving different colors.
- Underlined text is avoided unless used for navigation (hyperlinks).

STANDARD 8.4 (2 Points)

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

Examples:

- If the audio content corresponds with the visual content in a way that conveys meaning (e.g., a video demonstrating how to operate a Bunsen burner in a chemistry lab), captions provide an equivalent experience. Reviewers review the captions to confirm the captions correctly represent the audio content, the speaker, and non-speech information conveyed through sound, such as meaningful sound effects.
- If the audio content does not correspond with visual content (e.g., a visual of an instructor providing a lecture without visual aids), then a text transcript is sufficient.
- Visual information that is critical to meaning is conveyed through audio description.

STANDARD 8.5 (2 Points)

Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.

Examples:

- Graphics and animations are used to enhance instructional materials and illustrate ideas without causing distractions.
- Images are appropriately sized and can be viewed in their entirety without scrolling.
- Audio quality is clear.
- Length of video is noted.
- A video window can be resized; resolution is sufficient for comprehension.
- Long videos (videos longer than 15 to 20 minutes) are broken into shorter segments or are searchable.
- For linked videos from outside sources, students are guided on points/aspects to focus on or pay close attention to.
- Movement through presentations can be controlled.

STANDARD 8.6 (2 Points)

Vendor accessibility statements are provided for all technologies required in the course.

Examples:

- Canvas, Ball State's learning management system, and integrated third-party software
- Plagiarism detection software
- Presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint
- Web conferencing tools such as WebEx
- Media players
- Box.com
- Publisher materials or platforms

Examples of where the accessibility statements may be linked or located within the course:

- Course syllabus
- Page on required technology software
- Page on resources
- Ball State web page that includes anchored links to the accessibility statements for technologies used in the course

QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP?

Contact the instructional support team within Online and Strategic Learning.

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BALL STATE UNIVERSITY
Online and Strategic Learning