

## Online Course Observation Rubric June, 2008

Instructor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_ College: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The Online Course Observation Rubric is one of several data sources for evaluating the effectiveness of instruction of online courses – distance education, hybrid, and web-enhanced. It can be complemented with other sources of data such as on-campus observation forms, SEOI reports, syllabi, class handouts and projects, tests, etc.

Source: “Quality Matters: Inter-Institutional Quality Assurance in Online Learning” from Mary Wells, Quality Matters co-director and consultant for Maryland Online, 2006. The Quality Matters™ Rubric is owned by MarylandOnline and is sponsored in part by the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education.

**Note to Supervisors:** Supervisors should complete a comment on every item on the Observation Rubric that they give an “Exemplary,” “Needs Improvement,” or “Unsatisfactory” rating. Additionally, on the last page of the Observation Rubric, supervisors should write final comments about the overall observation of the course.

### I. COURSE OVERVIEW AND ORGANIZATION

**General Review Standard:** The overall design of the course, navigational information, as well as course, instructor, and student information are made transparent to the student at the beginning of the course.

	Yes/No	Comments
Navigational instructions make the organization of the course easy to understand. For example, the items on the Course Menu and the icons are in a logical, and easy-to-follow sequence. Also all the items and links “work.”	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
A statement introduces the student to the course and to the structure of the student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Minimum technology requirements, minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline, are clearly stated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Exemplary

Needs improvement

Not applicable

Professional performance

Unsatisfactory

**Comments and Recommendations:**

### II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES (COMPETENCIES)

**General Review Standard:** Learning objectives are clearly defined and explained. They assist the student to focus on learning activities.

	Yes/No	Comments
The learning objectives of the course describe outcomes that are measurable.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The learning objectives address content mastery, critical thinking skills, and core learning skills.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The learning objectives of the course are clearly stated and understandable to the student.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The learning objectives of the course are articulated and specified on the module/unit level.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Exemplary

Professional performance

Needs improvement

Unsatisfactory

Not applicable

**Comments and Recommendations:**

**III. ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT**

**General Review Standard:** Assessment strategies use established ways to measure effective learning, assess student progress by reference to stated learning objectives, and are designed as essential to the learning process.

	Yes/No	Comments
The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The grading policy is transparent and easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Assessment and measurement strategies provide feedback to the student.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The types of assessments selected and the methods used for submitting assessments are appropriate for the online environment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
“Self-check” or practice types of assignments are provided for quick student feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

- Exemplary
- Professional performance

- Needs improvement
- Unsatisfactory

- Not applicable

**Comments and Recommendations:**

**IV. RESOURCES AND COURSE MATERIALS**

**General Review Standard:** Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve announced objectives and learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. (Materials, other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by the instructor or other educators skilled in preparing materials for online learning.)

	Yes/No	Comments
The instructional materials support the stated learning objectives and have sufficient breadth and depth for the student to learn the subject.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The instructional materials include instructor’s notes in addition to links, the publisher’s website, quizzes, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Instructional materials are presented in a format appropriate to the online environment, and are easily accessible to and usable by the student.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The purpose of the course elements (content, instructional methods, technologies, and course materials) is evident.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The instructional materials, including supporting materials (such as manuals, videos, CD ROMs, and computer software) are consistent in organization.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
All resources and materials used in the online course are appropriately cited. An image of the required materials is recommended.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Exemplary

Professional performance

Needs improvement

Unsatisfactory

Not applicable

**Comments and Recommendations:**

**V. LEARNER INTERACTION**

**General Review Standard:** The effective design of instructor-student interaction, meaningful student cooperation, and student-content interaction is essential to student motivation, intellectual commitment, and personal development.

	Yes/No	Comments
The learning activities promote the achievement of stated objectives and learning outcomes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Learning activities foster instructor-student interaction, content-student interaction, and, if appropriate to this course, student-student interaction.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
“Netiquette” expectations with regard to discussions and email communication are clearly stated; the instructor’s “tone” is respectful.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turn-around time for email, grades posted etc.). For example, the instructor should respond to WebCT mail and other questions within two business days.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The requirements for course interaction are clearly articulated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The course design prompts the instructor to be present, active, and engaged with the students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Exemplary

Professional performance

Needs improvement

Unsatisfactory

Not applicable

**Comments and Recommendations:**

**VI. COURSE TECHNOLOGY**

**General Review Standard:** To enhance student learning, course technology should enrich instruction and foster learner interactivity.

	Yes/No	Comments
The tools and media support the learning objectives of the course and are integrated with texts and lesson assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The tools and media enhance student interactivity and guide the student to become a more active learner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Technologies required for this course are either provided or easily downloadable.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The tools and media are compatible with existing standards of delivery modes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Instructions on how to access online resources are sufficient and easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Course technologies take advantage of existing economies and efficiencies of delivery.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

- Exemplary
- Professional performance

- Needs improvement
- Unsatisfactory

- Not applicable

**Comments and Recommendations:**

**VII. LEARNER SUPPORT**

**General Review Standard:** Courses are effectively supported for students through fully accessible modes of delivery, resources, and student support.

	Yes/No	Comments
The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's academic support system can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student support services can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Course instructions articulate or link to tutorials and resources that answer basic questions related to research, writing, technology, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Exemplary

Professional performance

Needs improvement

Unsatisfactory

Not applicable

**Comments and Recommendations:**

### VIII. ACCESSIBILITY

**General Review Standard:** The course is accessible to all students.

	Yes/No	Comments
The course acknowledges the importance of ADA requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Web pages provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Web pages have links that are self-describing and meaningful. All the images should be tagged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
The course demonstrates sensitivity to readability issues. For example, avoid long scrolling text and red or other bright colors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Exemplary

Professional performance

Needs improvement

Unsatisfactory

Not applicable

**Comments and Recommendations:**

**Final comments about the course as a whole and its potential to promote student learning (add a page if necessary):**

Observer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_