5 Pillars Quality Review

An online course is reviewed, and considered a quality course design if it embodies the following five pillars of effective course design. Items may apply to more than one pillar. They are listed under the first relevant pillar.

Course Information

Instructor:

Course number/title:

Semester offered:

Number of credits:

PILLAR 1: Initial Student Experiences

The course design includes a complete syllabus, an opportunity for students to meet others in the course early on, and a welcome module containing materials needed for online student success.

⭐ REQUIRED

1	Does the course utilize the University-approved Learning Management System, Canvas? May be used as a portal to other resources for students.	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
2	Are there accurate links or clear descriptions of student support services (like Student Resources, Technology Support, and Academic Support services) provided by the university? For course share courses, are student support services identified for all campuses?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 1: Initial Student Experiences *cont'd*

⭐ REQUIRED

3	Is the course syllabus available as a PDF or Word file (or pasted into Canvas) in the Syllabus button or Canvas module?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
4	Does the syllabus/course include an institution catalog or bulletin course description with necessary prerequisites/co-requisites and number of credit hours?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
5	Are grading criteria (example: grading scale, grading/weight table, etc.) clearly outlined in the syllabus or at the beginning of the course?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
6	Are the points/percentages listed consistently throughout the course site?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
7	Does the syllabus/course include online participation policies and expectations? For blended courses this should include policies for both face-to-face and online components.	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 1: Initial Student Experiences *cont'd*

⭐ REQUIRED

8	Are professional/communication expectations in discussions, email, and other course interactions with instructor and classmates clearly stated?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
9	Does the syllabus/course include or link to the policy for academic policies?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
10	Is there a clearly communicated plan for providing feedback on assignments? May include timeline/method.	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
11	Is there evidence that the instructor welcomes students to the course? May occur through an announcement, video, module, discussion, video conference, etc.	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
12	Does the course provide instructions on how to get started and navigate the course?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 1: Initial Student Experiences *cont'd*

RECOMMENDED

13	Does the syllabus/course include a preferred citation format?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ N/A ☐ Recommendations:
14	Are students directed to the online student course (or other applicable resource to acclimate students to Canvas) in the syllabus or an introductory module?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
15	Does the course provide information about the number of hours per week required for students to meet course expectations?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 1 RECOMMENDATIONS:

PILLAR 2: Interaction and Engagement

The course design includes frequent, meaningful, and relevant opportunities for students to interact with the instructor, the content, and one another. The syllabus specifies a timeline for instructor response to messages and feedback on assignments.

★ REQUIRED

16	Does the instructor provide adequate contact information? May include virtual office hours or other suitable communication media.	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
17	Are students given the opportunity to introduce themselves to each other?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
18	Does the instructor have opportunities for interaction and engagement with the students in the course on at least a weekly basis?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 2: Interaction and Engagement *cont'd*

★ REQUIRED

19	Are there opportunities to build a learning community in this course to foster student interaction throughout? Examples may include: Replying to peers in discussion, Group workspace identified and explained, Clear directions about project phases, Structure to support group communication, Group member roles defined, Peer evaluation, Evaluation criteria defined, etc.	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

RECOMMENDED

20	Does the course include faculty background information and a faculty photo?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
21	Does the course include video lectures or module introduction recordings?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ N/A ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

PILLAR 3: Learning Objectives and Assessment

The syllabus includes the course goal(s), and specific, measurable learning objectives are included in each module. The course design includes varied, systematic, and regular assessments that align to those objectives and are appropriate for the level of the course.

⭐ REQUIRED

22	Are there overall course objectives that are written in measurable terms?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
23	Are module-level learning objectives written in measurable terms that address achievable and specific student outcomes?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
24	Do all module-level learning objectives align with the course-level learning objectives?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 3: Learning Objectives and Assessment *cont'd*

⭐ **REQUIRED**

25	Do all of the assessments (learning activities and assignments) measure student performance of the stated learning objectives for that learning module/unit?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
26	Do assessments (learning activities and assignments) have clear instructions for completion?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
27	Does the course contain formative assessments (learning activities and assignments) that are sequenced and paced to allow students to assess their progress, and for instructors to monitor student learning throughout the term?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
28	Are formative assessments (learning activities and assignments) scaffolded to prepare students for successful completion of summative assessments?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 3: Learning Objectives and Assessment *cont'd*

RECOMMENDED

29	Do assessments (learning activities and assignments) have clearly articulated start dates and deadlines for completion (using the Canvas due date feature) or interim/staggered deadlines for more involved projects (as applicable)?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
30	Are expectations for assessments (learning activities and assignments) clearly communicated via a rubric or suitable alternative?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
31	Do discussion assignments include a rationale and incentive for re-visiting after the first contribution?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 3 RECOMMENDATIONS:

PILLAR 4: Technology, Student Support, and Accessibility

The course materials, activities, and assessments are varied and relevant to the course, clearly explained, and accessible to all students. The course includes current links to necessary student supports and policies.

⭐ REQUIRED

32	Do required audio recordings and videos have transcripts and/or captions provided?	Meets Expectations ☐	Does Not Meet Expectations ☐	N/A ☐
		Recommendations:		
33	Do all images embedded in course pages and/or faculty-created documents contain alternate text and if not, are they marked as decorative?	Meets Expectations ☐	Does Not Meet Expectations ☐	N/A ☐
		Recommendations:		
34	Do all faculty-created documents in the course (Word, PowerPoint, PDF, etc.) pass the accessibility checker built into each product?	Meets Expectations ☐	Does Not Meet Expectations ☐	N/A ☐
		Recommendations:		

PILLAR 4: Technology, Student Support, and Accessibility *cont'd*

★ REQUIRED

35	Does the course and all components therein use color combinations that are high contrast? In other words, they avoid bad color combinations that may present an issue for color blind students, such as red/green, green/brown, green/blue, blue/gray, blue/purple, green/grey, and green/black)?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
36	Are hyperlinks meaningful? For example: "Access UM System Resources for Students" instead of "https://keeplearning.umsystem.edu/students."	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
37	Does the course provide information to students about how to access University Disability Services?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 4: Technology, Student Support, and Accessibility *cont'd*

RECOMMENDED

38	If students are asked to create separate accounts in order to use a third-party tool, are they provided the following? (Tools in which students have to create their own accounts should go through a UM security audit before using.)			
		Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations	N/A
	Purpose	☐	☐	☐
	Privacy policy	Meets Expectations ☐	Does Not Meet Expectations ☐	N/A ☐
	Support document	Meets Expectations ☐	Does Not Meet Expectations ☐	N/A ☐
	Accessibility documentation	Meets Expectations ☐	Does Not Meet Expectations ☐	N/A ☐
39	Does the instructor provide student-facing instructions for using all required tools not supported by the University?	Meets Expectations ☐	Does Not Meet Expectations ☐	
		Recommendations:		
40	Does the use of technology support the learning goals, unit objectives, and competencies?	Meets Expectations ☐	Does Not Meet Expectations ☐	
		Recommendations:		

PILLAR 4: Technology, Student Support, and Accessibility *cont'd*

RECOMMENDED

41	If applicable, are library resources (PDFs, articles, ebooks, etc.) provided using a sustainable method (e.g., permalinked, e-reserves, etc.)?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ N/A ☐ Recommendations:
42	If the course uses Affordable/Open Educational Resources or AutoAccess resources, are students provided access and/or opt-out information?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ N/A ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 4 RECOMMENDATIONS:

PILLAR 5: Course Structure

The course design is organized in time-based or thematic modules, and clear instructions about how to navigate the course are present. Each module includes a timespan for completion and a checklist of deadlines and point values. The Grade Book is organized and reflects the grading criteria and structure specified in the syllabus.

⭐ REQUIRED

43	Is the course organized in a logical and consistent manner?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
44	Does each content area/learning module have a relevant title? The title should generally reflect the topic covered in the module, or the chronological order of the course.	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:
45	Does each module/unit contain activities with due dates? This may be achieved in multiple ways.	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ Recommendations:

PILLAR 5: Course Structure *cont'd*

RECOMMENDED

46	Do all visible navigation menu items serve a necessary purpose?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ .... Recommendations:
47	Does the course provide an overview (e.g., a list, table, or schedule, etc.) of all course activities and corresponding deadlines?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ .... Recommendations:
48	Is there a repeating pattern or rhythm to the course activity deadlines?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ .... Recommendations:
49	Does each module/unit have a start/stop date specified?	Meets Expectations ☐ Does Not Meet Expectations ☐ .... Recommendations:

PILLAR 5 RECOMMENDATIONS: