



## QUALITY CHECKLIST: QUESTIONS FOR DESIGNING AND DELIVERING ONLINE COURSES

This Quality Checklist is designed to support DCU’s commitment to providing all students with a *transformative* digital learning experience. The checklist is intended to be used alongside other quality assurance processes and guidelines to help enhance course design through critical self-reflection and formative peer review. It focuses on individual modules and short courses in an online format rather than whole programmes, although the checklist may be useful in raising questions relevant to quality reviews. Importantly, the checklist does not attempt to cover the role of wider institutional support services and appropriate infrastructures, which are addressed in other already established benchmarking tools. The checklist is structured around six domains with ten guiding questions and a series of related design elements and specific self-reflective prompts.

DOMAINS	GUIDING QUESTIONS	DESIGN ELEMENTS	REFLECTIVE PROMPTS	SELF-RATING
1. Identity, Narrative and Philosophy	<i>i) How strong is the course narrative?</i>	Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the course have a strong narrative?</li> <li>• Is there a story or central thesis running through the course?</li> <li>• How do you establish your own identity as an educator?</li> <li>• How explicit are your assumptions about teaching and learning?</li> <li>• What type of relationship do you want to establish with your students?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input type="checkbox"/> Good  <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
2. Designing for Learning	<i>ii) How appropriate is the course design for your learners?</i>	Graduate Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the course align with your graduate attributes?</li> <li>• How does the course contribute to goals for the wider programme?</li> <li>• Are there explicit opportunities for students to develop core graduate attributes?</li> <li>• Is the course linked to DCU’s Generation 21 Learning Aspirations?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input type="checkbox"/> Good  <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the learning intentions?</li> <li>• Are there clearly stated learning outcomes?</li> <li>• To what extent are the learning outcomes relevant to students’ and/or stakeholders’ needs?</li> <li>• Are the learning outcomes defineable whilst also being aspirational?</li> <li>• When taken collectively do the learning outcomes encapsulate the essence of the discipline/profession?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent  <input type="checkbox"/> Good  <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Learner Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are your students?</li> <li>• Has the course been designed with the learner in mind?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent

	<i>iii) How well does the course flow between topics?</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the course take in to account students' prior knowledge?</li> <li>• How does the course support a diversity of students from different backgrounds with different needs?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the course well structured?</li> <li>• Is there a 'natural flow' to the course?</li> <li>• Is it easy to see where you are in the course?</li> <li>• Is the course structured into appropriate units or themes following a logical and suitable format?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Appearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the online environment attractive?</li> <li>• Is the entry point welcoming and professional?</li> <li>• Is the online environment consistent and easy to navigate?</li> <li>• Is the online content uncluttered and free of formatting errors?</li> <li>• Is the layout and presentation informed by accessibility guidelines?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
	<i>iv) How appropriate is the blend of study resources?</i>	Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the course allow choice?</li> <li>• Does the course design support flexible learning?</li> <li>• Are students able to engage with content at a pace and place convenient to their circumstances?</li> <li>• Is core content distinguished from supplementary resources?</li> <li>• Does the course support personalised learning pathways?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Wrapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the course integrate a range of learning resources?</li> <li>• How well is the online content wrapped around more conventional teaching and course materials?</li> <li>• Are static (print) and dynamic (electronic) learning resources well integrated?</li> <li>• Is the online environment more than simply a content repository or information dump?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Digital Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the technology appropriate?</li> <li>• Are learning objects in small bytes and reusable formats?</li> <li>• Does the course make effective use of open educational resources?</li> <li>• How does the use of digital media promote active engagement?</li> <li>• Are digital media including videos accessible to all students?</li> <li>• Do they come from authoritative sources?</li> <li>• Does your use of digital media meet copyright requirements?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Currency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the content current and relevant?</li> <li>• How often is course content changed to maintain currency?</li> <li>• Has substitution of old material occurred when new content has been added to the course?</li> <li>• Is there a plan for when the course will be refreshed?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved

		Workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the student workload realistic?</li> <li>• Is it consistent with the course time allocation or credit value?</li> <li>• Are the learning resources appropriate in type, level and length?</li> <li>• Do the student workload expectations fall within expected guidelines for weekly study hours?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Delivery Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the course design suited to the delivery mode?</li> <li>• Are students made aware in advance of what parts of the course will be available online?</li> <li>• Is the course suitable as an offering to be listed under DCU Connected?</li> <li>• Does the course design support people with limited Internet access?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
3. Facilitating Successful Learning	<i>v) How does the course interaction help to facilitate successful learning?</i>	Teacher Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the teacher visible?</li> <li>• What efforts are made to project the teachers as real person?</li> <li>• Are expectations of the teacher's availability made explicit?</li> <li>• What opportunities are there for interaction with the teacher?</li> <li>• Is it made clear how often the teacher will respond to students?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Student Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the course encourage online participation?</li> <li>• Are there opportunities for students to collaborate, ask questions and talk to each other?</li> <li>• How is the course designed to promote a rich, vibrant and socially interactive learning community?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Active Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the course engaging?</li> <li>• How does the course support active and meaningful learning?</li> <li>• Does the course involve a variety of interactive online activities?</li> <li>• Are activities appropriate and carefully sequenced to support deep forms of learning?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Teaching Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What teaching methods are employed?</li> <li>• Are the methods appropriate for the learning outcomes?</li> <li>• Do they help to motivate learners and engage them in the discipline?</li> <li>• Is there evidence of an explicit teaching philosophy that informs the choice of methods?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Student Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it explicit how often learners need to contribute to the online environment?</li> <li><sup>a</sup> Are students made aware of what learning, library and technical support is available and are they embedded in the course design?</li> <li>• Are the learning opportunities accessible to all students, including those with special needs?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved

4. Assessment and Feedback for Learning	<i>vi) How does the assessment promote learning?</i>	Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the assessment align with the learning outcomes?</li> <li>• Does the assessment help students to relate their learning to broader work and life contexts?</li> <li>• Does the assessment support wider critical reflection on progress through DCU's learning portfolio?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Variety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the assessment involve a variety of tasks?</li> <li>• How interesting is the assessment and will students find it rewarding?</li> <li>• Is the assessment authentic and grounded in real-world tasks?</li> <li>• How does the course design support transfer of learning through different types of assessment?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the assessment intellectually challenging?</li> <li>• Is it appropriate for the level and credit value of the course?</li> <li>• Does the assessment go beyond memory recall?</li> <li>• How does the assessment encourage deep learning and the development and sharing of products and solutions for real audiences?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
	<i>vii) How does the feedback scaffold learning?</i>	Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of feedback is given?</li> <li>• Does the assessment facilitate early and prompt feedback?</li> <li>• How will students receive timely feedback on their progress?</li> <li>• How does the course support peer and feed-forward feedback that goes beyond formal assessment?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the teacher responsive?</li> <li>• How does the teacher keep students informed of their progress?</li> <li>• How can students respond to their feedback?</li> <li>• Is there a planned way of providing feed-forward comments at key stages of the course?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
5. Evaluating Teaching and Learning	<i>viii) How is the course design informed by stakeholder feedback</i>	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is the course evaluated?</li> <li>• Has the teacher acted on previous evaluation data?</li> <li>• Is stakeholder feedback collected from a variety of sources?</li> <li>• How have evaluation results informed the course design?</li> <li>• Has institutional learning analytics informed the course design?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What sources of evidence are available?</li> <li>• Are sound methodologies used to evaluate the course?</li> <li>• Is learner success monitored across a number of indicators, including achievement, retention and completion data?</li> <li>• What evidence is there to support specific innovations in teaching?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved

6. Continuous Development and Leadership	<i>ix) What types of professional development opportunities might be beneficial?</i>	Self Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the teacher committed to their own learning?</li> <li>• How will the teacher engage in personal reflection and ongoing professional development?</li> <li>• Is there evidence that participation in internal and external professional development has informed the course design?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Quality Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the course continue to evolve?</li> <li>• Is there evidence of continuous enhancement in the development of the course?</li> <li>• Has the course leader and teaching team identified areas for future improvement from evaluation data and through honest appraisal with colleagues?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
Overall Quality of Course Design	<i>x) How would you rate the overall quality of the course design?</i>	Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the course coherent?</li> <li>• Does everything hang together?</li> <li>• Has the course adopted an appropriate instructional blend to meet the stated learning outcomes for the particular student body?</li> <li>• To what extent is the online learning environment well integrated throughout the course design?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved
		Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the course design creative?</li> <li>• Does the course promote high levels of engagement?</li> <li>• Is the course design conducive to producing connected learners who feel part of the DCU learning community?</li> <li>• How does the course design support a distinctive, exceptional and transformative learning experience?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Could be Improved



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 NIDL  
National Institute  
for Digital Learning