

Quality Assurance (QA) Checklist

This **Quality Assurance (QA) Checklist** is designed to evaluate and maintain the quality of online learning experiences. It ensures that course materials meet standards for accessibility, design, accuracy, and instructional alignment. By using this checklist, educators and designers can verify consistency, identify areas for improvement, and enhance the overall learner experience.

Section 1

Focuses on content quality, clarity, and writing consistency

Course Content

Determine whether the course provides comprehensive information and resources to support successful learning and meets the appropriate ethical and legal requirements.

Criteria	Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
	Yes	No	
All course materials and activities explicitly support measurable learning objectives. Each resource contributes directly to the stated outcomes (Quality Matters, 2023).			
Content integrates diverse perspectives, examples, and case studies to promote inclusivity and relevance for a wide learner audience (CAST, 2018).			
The text is written in clear, concise language at an appropriate reading level for the target audience, free from jargon and unnecessarily complex terms (Merrill, 2020).			
Spelling, grammar, headings, fonts, and styles are consistently applied throughout the course to promote professionalism and reduce cognitive load (Mayer, 2021).			

Proofreading

Ensure the course is free of mechanical errors and consistent in voice.

Criteria	Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
	Yes	No	
There are no grammatical or spelling errors.			

Section 2

Covers course structure, flow, visuals, and engagement.

Course Design

Ensure the course utilizes a logical progression of learning activities and engaging learner experiences.

Criteria	Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
	Yes	No	
Home page provides a brief course description or introduction, clear instructions for students (e.g., where to begin), and quick and easy navigation to start.			
Backward design alignment. Each module's objectives map directly to course objectives, and every activity/assessment aligns to a stated objective (include an alignment map or tags). (Quality Matters, 2018; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)			
Consistent module pattern. Modules follow a predictable sequence (overview → objectives → content → practice → assessment → wrap-up) to reduce cognitive load. (Mayer, 2021)			
Chunking & signaling. Long pages are segmented into short sections with descriptive headings; key ideas are highlighted via cues. (Mayer, 2021)			
Learner guidance. Each module opens with a brief "What to do first / estimated time / tech needed" panel to support self-regulation. (Quality Matters, 2018)			

Multimedia

Determine whether the course provides high-quality audio, video, and interactive elements.

Criteria		Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
Yes	No			
Audio:	Accessible AV. All audio/video include accurate captions and transcripts; images have meaningful alt text; diagrams include text descriptions. (WCAG 2.1, 2018; CAST, 2018)			
Video & Interactivity:	Usable media. Media controls (play/pause, volume, captions, speed) are exposed; file sizes are optimized for low bandwidth. (OSCQR, 2020)			
Images:	Apply CTML principles. Avoid extraneous media (coherence), place words and graphics near each other (contiguity), use cues (signaling), and avoid on-screen text that duplicates narration (redundancy). (Mayer, 2021; Clark & Mayer, 2016)			

Navigation and Technical Functionality

Ensure the course incorporates seamless navigation and functionality appropriate for the learner.

Criteria	Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
	Yes	No	
Technology is appropriate for the audience.			
Clear, consistent navigation. Primary menus and page layouts are consistent across modules; link text is descriptive (no “click here”). (Nielsen Norman Group, 2020; Quality Matters, 2018)			
Link & file integrity. All links work; files open in expected apps; external links warn if opening new tabs. (OSCQR, 2020)			
Device and browser support. Course renders responsively; critical tasks tested on at least two modern browsers and mobile. (ISO 9241-210, 2019; OSCQR, 2020)			
Technical orientation. A “Start Here/Technology” page states minimum tech requirements, support contacts, and privacy notices for any third-party tools. (Quality Matters, 2018)			

Section 3

Ensures inclusivity, usability, and fair, aligned assessments.

Accessibility

Determine whether the course reflects the principles of universal design and ensures inclusivity and accessibility of all learners.

Criteria	Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
	Yes	No	
Course meets all WCAG and POUR standards.			
Pages meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards for contrast, text resizing, and keyboard navigation; no keyboard traps are present. (W3C, 2018)			
Headings (H1–H3) reflect a logical outline; lists and tables use true semantic elements. (WCAG 2.1)			
All images/graphics include meaningful alt text (or are marked decorative); complex charts provide long descriptions. (WCAG 2.1)			
Video/audio provide accurate captions and transcripts; auto-captions are human-edited for accuracy and include speaker labels. (WCAG 2.1)			
Links use descriptive text that states the destination/action (without “click here”); the document link's purpose is provided for screen reader users. (WCAG 2.1)			
Documents (PDF/Word/Slides) are tagged for accessibility; reading order and bookmarks verified. (WCAG 2.1)			
Motion/animation is minimal, purposeful, and user-controllable; there is no autoplay with sound. (WCAG 2.1)			
Language is set for each page; foreign terms are tagged with the correct language attribute. (WCAG 2.1)			
Provide multiple formats where feasible (HTML and downloadable document), and avoid using images as the primary source of text. (CAST, 2018)			

Assessment

Determine whether the course's assessments prioritize clarity, engagement, and alignment.

Criteria	Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
	Yes	No	
Assessment instructions are clearly written.			
Each assessment is explicitly aligned with the stated module/course objectives (alignment map or objective tags are visible). (QM, 2018; Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)			
Assessments honor UDL—multiple means of expression (e.g., written, oral, multimedia, performance), with equivalent rigor and clear options. (CAST, 2018)			
Instructions & criteria are presented in plain language, organized into chunks, and accompanied by exemplars and rubrics with observable performance descriptors. (Mayer, 2021)			
Formative checks (low-stakes) are embedded to provide timely, specific feedback tied to criteria. (Hattie & Timperley, 2007)			
Time limits, retakes, and item types are appropriate to the construct; avoid construct-irrelevant barriers (e.g., speed for conceptual tasks). (CAST, 2018)			
Accessibility of assessments is verified (keyboard operability, screen reader compatibility, and alt text in stem/stimuli). (WCAG 2.1)			
Academic integrity is supported through authentic tasks, item pools, randomized order, and clear citation expectations. (QM, 2018)			
Accommodations (including extended time and alternative formats) are documented and available without stigma or undue burden. (CAST, 2018)			
Analytics/item analysis are reviewed to detect confusing items or unintended difficulty; improvements are logged. (QM, 2018)			
Privacy of learner data for e-proctoring/third-party tools is disclosed, with opt-in/alternatives when feasible. (FERPA/GDPR principles)			

Consistency and Branding

Determine the course is cohesive in its design and utilizes organizational branding.

Criteria	Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
	Yes	No	
Course design is cohesive throughout.			
A style guide governs typography, color, iconography, and tone, ensuring consistent usage across all modules. (OSCQR, 2020)			
Color palette meets contrast ratios (normal text 4.5:1; large 3:1) and is not the sole carrier of meaning. (WCAG 2.1)			
Templates (module overview, lesson pages, assessment shells) are reused to create predictable patterns and wayfinding. (QM, 2018)			
Navigation labels are consistent and descriptive (e.g., "Overview," "Practice," "Check Your Understanding"). (NN/g, 2020)			
Brand elements (logos, marks) include alt text, don't crowd headers, and never impede readability. (WCAG 2.1)			
Voice and tone guidelines promote inclusivity and plain language; avoid idioms/jargon that may hinder multilingual learners. (CAST, 2018)			
Iconography is used sparingly with text labels; icons are consistently interpreted across the course. (OSCQR, 2020)			
File naming and versioning conventions are standardized (e.g., Module##_Topic_v1.2) for maintenance and auditability. (QM, 2018)			
Microcopy (button labels, alerts) is concise and consistent; error messages are constructive and actionable. (NN/g, 2020)			
Brand vs. accessibility conflicts are resolved in favor of accessibility (e.g., adjust brand colors to meet contrast). (WCAG 2.1)			

Section 4

Verifies legal, ethical, and branding consistency.

Copyright Compliance

Ensure the course complies with all copyright laws and standards of practice.

Criteria	Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
	Yes	No	
Facts have been verified and properly referenced.			
All course materials (text, images, videos, and audio) are verified for proper licensing and attribution before publication.			
Open Educational Resources (OERs) are prioritized when available and used under appropriate Creative Commons licensing.			
A visible copyright statement and citation list are included for all course materials.			
Faculty and designers receive periodic training on copyright and fair use guidelines.			

Other

Criteria	Criteria Met?		If No: Location and Summary of the Issue
	Yes	No	
Facts have been checked and referenced appropriately.			
Course design includes inclusive examples, case studies, and imagery reflecting diverse cultural and social identities.			
Discussion prompts and assessments encourage multiple perspectives and respect for differing viewpoints.			
The course includes mechanisms for learners to provide accessibility and inclusion feedback.			
Designers ensure consistent tone, culturally responsive language, and equitable assessment standards across all modules.			

References

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