Western Michigan University
Functional Course Design Guide

WMU Functional Course Design Guide
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Introduction to Functional Course Design

About the WMU Functional Course Design Guide

This guide has been created to support WMU instructors in the design and development of courses for all modalities, helping them to create learning experiences that meet instructional goals and outcomes, encourage interaction between the learner and instructor, and allow for learner-self directedness. The guide is also explicitly designed to help instructors leverage Elearning (WMU's online learning management system) tools to create a navigable, accessible, and supportive learning experience.

This guide will provide resources and step-by-step guidance to support instructors in:

Conducting a learner analysis: Gather key information about learners to inform course design decisions and develop targeted learning objectives.

Aligning and outlining course components: Use a variety of templates to break down outcomes, develop key assessments, and outline objectives, activities, and assessments to scaffold learning.

Designing a syllabus and schedule: Consider best practices and templates for developing accessible documents that align with university standards.

Leveraging Elearning tools: Integrate course components into Elearning to create consistency and enhance navigation, accessibility, and interaction.

Applying a functional course review: Consider course function based on standards for navigation, alignment, interaction and accessibility.

Evaluating design effectiveness: Gather student feedback to identify strengths and areas for refinement that will enhance future course iterations.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is intended to support the full course development process and completion of the guide as a whole can be helpful to instructors at all levels for all modalities. However, depending on an instructor's specific interest, need, and/or comfort with course development, the documents and steps outlined in this guide may also be helpful in isolation.

For support in the course development process as a whole or in part, please reach out to the Instructional Design and Development Team.

The Course Development Process

The WMUx Instructional Design and Development (IDD) team collaborates with instructors and staff to imagine, design, and realize ideas that transform and enhance the learning experience. The Course Development Process, which can be applied to new courses, new modalities, or new iterations of a course, is an important example of this collaboration.

The four-phase Course Development Process outlined below provides a framework for functional course design. By working through each stage independently, or in collaboration with an instructional designer, instructors and other subject-matter experts can create learning experiences with clearly aligned outcomes, activities, and assessments. Using Elearning to guide students through those experiences, instructors can also create courses that meet learner needs and expectations for navigation, accessibility, and interaction.

Phase 1: Ideation

- Establish goals for learners and instructor
- Consider potential challenges for learner and instructor
- Identify desired learner transformation
- Determine overarching outcomes and summative assessments

Phase 1 Checkpoints

☐ Completion of *Step 1: Pre-Design Considerations*

☐ Completion of *Step 2: Course Outcomes and Key Assessments*

Phase 2: Design

- Identify knowledge and skills needed to complete summative assessments
- Determine daily, weekly, or monthly objectives and formative assessments
- Outline materials and/or activities that support formative development
- Develop a course plan and map
- Establish grade scale, grade components, and calculation method

Phase 2 Checkpoints

☐ Completion of *Step 3: Module Objectives and Activities*

☐ Completion of *Step 4: Course Design Storyboard*

☐ Completion of *Step 5: Assessment, Grading, and Course Workload*

Phase 3: Development

- Develop course syllabus and schedule
- Build out template course in Elearning
- Create/curate instructional content, materials, activities, and assessments
- Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles
- Ensure syllabus, course schedule, and Elearning information is aligned

Phase 3 Checkpoints

☐ Completion of *Step 6: Regular and Substantive Interactions*

☐ Completion of *Step 7: Syllabus Accessibility and Design Checklist*

☐ Completion of *Step 8: Activity Descriptions and Template Development*

Phase 4: Review and Iteration

- Review template or live course from learner perspective
- Address functional challenges highlighted in review
- Address accessibility issues highlighted in ALLY report
- Use learner data and feedback to support continuous improvement

Phase 4 Checkpoints

☐ Completion of *Step 9: Functional Course Review Checklist*

☐ Completion of *Step 10: Learner Perspectives and Iteration on Design*

Following a systematic instructional design process allows instructors to apply evidence-based, best practices in course design to promote learning, satisfaction, and success in all modalities. By incorporating Elearning in that design, instructors can also more aptly support learner self-directedness, communication, and interaction. Additionally, collaborating with an instructional designer can support instructors in thinking through a variety of strategies, approaches, and perspectives to make teaching and learning more manageable. For this reason, any instructor or staff member who is interested in collaborating on any aspect of the design and development process is encouraged to connect with the IDD team. If it is for learners at WMU, the IDD team is available to help.

WMU's Stipend Eligible Course Development Agreement

Per WMU AAUP Agreement (2021), with the support of their department chair and approval by their dean, instructors at Western Michigan University may be eligible to receive a stipend for the collaborative design and development of an online course. Depending on departmental need, however, other course modalities may also be stipend eligible.

Note: Stipend payments are managed by and paid through individual department or college business offices.

Stipend Eligibility Process

1. The instructor meets with their chair and/or dean to determine eligibility for stipend according to department and/or college procedures.
2. The instructor completes a Course Development Agreement (CDA).
3. The department or college reviews the CDA, approves the Course Development, and notifies the Instructional Design and Development team.
4. An Instructional Designer (ID) reaches out to the instructor to begin collaboration on the Course Development Process.
5. At the conclusion of Phase 2 of the Course Development Process, the instructor completes the Course Design Storyboard outlining the course.
6. The ID reviews the Storyboard and offers feedback to support development.
7. Once storyboard feedback is reviewed by the instructor, the ID recommends payment of the first half of the stipend.
8. The instructor curates and creates learning materials and activities to be included in a template course with support, as needed, from the ID.
9. The instructor works, as needed, with the ID, Instructional Technology, and Accessibility teams to build out a template course in Elearning.
10. At the conclusion of Phase 4 of the Course Development Process, the instructor and an ID reviewer apply the Functional Course Review Checklist to the course, adjusting the course template as needed.
11. Upon the instructor's completion of the review process, the ID recommends payment of the second half of the stipend.

Guiding Documents for Design and Development

Functional Course Design is focused on the creation of navigable, accessible, and interactive learning experiences for learners that are supported, regardless of modality, by Elearning. Broken down into ten steps, the documents described below offer support for conceptualizing, implementing, and iterating on course design.

Phase 1: Ideation

Step 1: Pre-Design Considerations

What is it?

Reflection on learner experiences, motivations, and needs, in relation to instructional goals, values, and expectations

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in the design and development of a learner-centered course tailored to learner abilities, perspectives, and goals

Beginning the course design process with this document helps instructors to consider, from the start, ways to make their course more accessible, flexible, and inclusive, leading to better outcomes for all students. Ideally, the information explored in this document is used to guide the approach to each of the steps that follow.

Step 2: Course Outcomes and Key Assessments

What is it?

Clarification of the alignment between course-level outcomes and key assessments

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in defining the overarching goals for course design and ensures assessments adequately measure them

In conjunction with *Pre-Design Considerations*, this document encourages instructors to use learner-centered language to clarify and connect course outcomes to course assessments and to what learners value.

Phase 2: Design

Step 3: *Module Objectives and Activities*

What is it?

Deconstruction of key assessments into aligned module-level objectives and activities

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in distinguishing the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to achieve key assessments while considering the sequence of course content and activities that will best scaffold learning

Building upon the previous two steps of the process, this document helps instructors to consider the ways in which knowledge, skills, and behaviors will be introduced, reinforced, and assessed. This document can be used to draft ideas for content and activities before mapping out specific weekly/unit plans in the *Course Design Storyboard*.

Step 4: *Course Design Storyboard*

What is it?

Creation of a course outline that illustrates alignment between course components: course outcomes, key assessments, module objectives, learning materials, activities, and interactions

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in writing a plan for the course and modules that can be used to clarify content and material needs; the storyboard is also structured to support ease of transcription into the *IDD Elearning Course Template*

This culminating development document helps instructors to identify content, activities, and assessments that will need to be curated or created to support learning. Upon completion, the storyboard also serves as an outline for transfer into Elearning and can be used to create a course map for sharing with learners, making transparent how each part of the learning journey connects to the overarching course goals.

Step 5: *Assessment, Grading, and Course Workload*

What is it?

Reflection on grading practices and development of a plan around graded activities

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in considering ways grades and grading might be used to convey instructional values, encourage effort on assessment, and engage learners in development focused interactions

This document serves as a reference and self-check for thinking through grading, helping instructors to consider the value of an assessment to the overall grade of a course and how the course gradebook, scale, and approach to calculation might be used to support and motivate learner effort and development.

Phase 3: Development

Step 6: *Regular and Substantive Interactions*

What is it?

Development of an intentional plan for 1:1 interaction with learners throughout the semester

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in considering and making explicit how they will encourage and support learner development relative to course content and performance

This document helps instructors to think through ways they might initiate and facilitate learner engagement with course content while creating opportunities for feedback and interventions that encourage and support learner development.

Step 7: *Syllabus Accessibility and Design*

What is it?

Identification of university required and recommended elements for the course syllabus as well as accessibility and Universal Design for Learning practices and principles

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in ensuring all learners have access to the information they need in a format that supports their learning needs

This document offers instructors a self-review checklist for syllabus design that can help them to ensure the inclusion of university syllabus requirements and the consideration of basic accessibility and Universal Design for Learning principles.

Step 8: *Activity Development and Descriptions*

What is it?

Creation of a learner-centered structure for course activities

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in drafting activities for learners that highlight activity purpose, expectations, and instruction for submission or completion; the description structures are also intended to support ease of transcription into the *IDD Elearning Course Template*

This document offers best practice information for describing items and activities in Elearning, helping instructors to plan for the development of various components of their course.

Phase 4: Review and Iteration

Step 9: *Functional Course Design Checklist*

What is it?

Identification of design components essential for learner navigation, course alignment, instructor-to-student interaction, and content accessibility

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in examining their course from a learner perspective to identify components that might benefit from further design or development

Recommended as both a starting and ending point for the course development process, this document serves as a guide and a self-assessment tool for instructors, highlighting essential best practices for learner-centered and supportive Elearning course design.

Step 10: *Learner Perspectives and Iteration on Design*

What is it?

Examination of learner feedback to inform continuous improvement and support iteration on course design.

Why is it Important?

Supports instructors in using course data, learner feedback, and their own experience to consider what might be added or modified in the course to create a more positive teaching and learning experience.

Where the *Functional Course Design Checklist* serves as a self-check, this document serves as a post-course reflection for the instructor, highlighting useful information and data resources to support improvement and iteration on design.

How to Use These Documents

These documents can be completed in order or according to individual interest or instructional need. Depending on where an instructor finds themselves in the course design process, whether the course is new to the program or new to the instructor, whether the modality has changed or an instructor is looking to update their course, the documents are intended to make the process of design or redesign more manageable. If more information or support is needed, instructors are encouraged to contact the Instructional Design and Development team.

Design Goals: The Functional Course Design Checklist

Functional design is an approach to course design that incorporates key elements which directly impact the learner's experience and ability to successfully engage with course content. The *Functional Course Design Checklist* included in the *Review and Iteration Phase* of design aligns with WMU-AAUP Standards, HLC Criteria for Accreditation, and U.S. Department of Education Regulations for Postsecondary Education, as well as best practices as defined by Quality Matters and the Online Learning Consortium. It serves as both a starting and ending point for design in that it outlines the goals for functional design.

Functional Design Goals and Checklist Components

Navigation - *Learner to Content*

Consistent, logical navigation creates an intuitive path for learners, reducing their need to search for materials and information so they can focus on learning and application.

Alignment - *Outcome to Assessment*

From the introduction of a concept to reinforcement and mastery, the intentional alignment of course goals and outcomes with course content, activities, and assessments supports the scaffolding of learning.

Interaction - *Instructor to Learner*

Opportunities for substantive, content-specific interactions and feedback between students and instructors on a predictable and regular basis support students in engaging more authentically with the course and their own learning.

Accessibility - *Learner to Content*

Accessible course materials ensure that all students are offered the same opportunity to engage with learning content and activities in a way that is enjoyable and effective by removing barriers to access.

How to use the Checklist

Instructors are encouraged to approach the use of the *Functional Course Design Checklist* from a student perspective, using it as a:

- Guide for course design and development
- Self-check to identify areas for course iteration and improvement

Instructors are also encouraged to connect with the Instructional Design and Development team and/or peers in the continuous improvement of courses.

Definitions for Design

Terminology related to teaching and learning can vary across contexts and disciplines. Recognizing this, for the purposes of *Functional Course Design the Course Development Process*, the following, distinct, learner-centered definitions will be used.



Course-Level Outcomes (CLOs) - Course-level outcomes clarify the broad skills and knowledge learners will develop throughout the course and guide the overall design of the course. These outcomes may originate in departments, programs, or be dictated by accrediting bodies.



Key Assessments - Key assessments, often referred to as summative assessments, are used to evaluate achievement of course-level outcomes (CLOs). They measure the extent to which the learner is able to demonstrate an appropriate level of competency across stated program, department, and/or accreditation outcomes.



Module-Level Objectives (MLOs) - Module-level objectives clarify the specific knowledge, skills, behaviors, or attitudes that learners need to demonstrate their preparedness for successfully completing key assessments. These MLOs guide the information and activities that will need to be included in the course to effectively introduce, reinforce, and support the development of necessary competencies within daily, weekly, or unit-based Elearning modules.



Formative Assessments - Formative assessments explicitly align with module-level objectives and can be used to gauge learner progress toward key assessments and course outcomes, support instructors in identifying potential gaps in understanding in order to adjust instruction at a whole class or individual level and offer instructors an opportunity to offer developmental feedback and support.

Phase 1: Ideation

The first phase of Functional Course Design is focused on supporting instructors in the examination of their own and learner expectations for the course as well as the clarification of course outcomes and the development of aligned key assessments that adequately measure learner achievement of those outcomes.

Important Definitions



Course-Level Outcomes (CLOs) - Course-level outcomes clarify the broad skills and knowledge learners will develop throughout the course and guide the overall design of the course. These outcomes may originate in departments, programs, or be dictated by accrediting bodies.



Key Assessments - Key assessments, often referred to as summative assessments, are used to evaluate achievement of course-level outcomes (CLOs). They measure the extent to which the learner is able to demonstrate an appropriate level of competency across stated program, department, and/or accreditation outcomes.

Phase Objectives

- ☐ Establish goals for learners and instructor(s).
- ☐ Consider potential challenges for learners and instructor(s).
- ☐ Identify desired learner transformation.
- ☐ Determine overarching outcomes and summative assessments.

Guiding Documents

Step 1: Pre-Design Considerations
This document is intended to support instructors in thinking through and blending their instructional goals with learner needs and goals, ensuring courses are relevant to learners while also meeting the expectations of instructors.

Step 2: Course Outcomes and Key Assessments
This document is intended to support instructors in clarifying course-level outcomes and drafting aligned summative assessments.

Phase 2: Design

The second phase of Functional Course Design is focused on supporting instructors in deconstructing the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or practices that are needed to successfully complete key course assessments and meet course-level outcomes. This phase is also focused on helping instructors to determine what information and activities need to be included in the course and in what order to best scaffold learning and allow for developmental feedback and support to be offered before key assessments are completed. Another essential component of the design phase is the determination of how learner participation and development will be assessed and graded.

Important Definitions



Module-Level Objectives (MLOs) - Module-level objectives clarify the specific knowledge, skills, behaviors, or attitudes that learners need to demonstrate their preparedness for successfully completing key assessments. These MLOs guide the information and activities that will need to be included in the course to effectively introduce, reinforce, and support the development of necessary competencies within daily, weekly, or unit-based Elearning modules



Formative Assessments - Formative assessments explicitly align with module-level objectives and can be used to gauge learner progress toward key assessments and course outcomes, support instructors in identifying potential gaps in understanding in order to adjust instruction at a whole class or individual level and offer instructors an opportunity to offer developmental feedback and support

Phase Objectives

- ☐ Identify knowledge and skills needed to complete summative assessments.
- ☐ Determine daily, weekly, or monthly objectives and formative assessments.
- ☐ Outline materials and/or activities that support formative development.
- ☐ Develop a course plan and map.
- ☐ Establish grade scale, grade components, and calculation method.

Guiding Documents

Step 3: Module Objectives and Activities
This tool supports instructors in breaking down the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed to successfully complete key assessments; brainstorming activities; and thinking through the order and number of activities needed in a given week.

Step 4: Course Design Storyboard
This tool creates a week-by-week storyboard breakdown that can help instructors visualize the structure of a course and make building in Elearning more efficient.

Step 5: Assessment, Grading, and Course Workload
This document is intended to support instructors in developing a plan for grading that aligns assessment purpose and value, instructor and learner needs, and department or program requirements while being sensitive to instructor and learner workload.

Preparation for Development

Getting Ready to Build



Once the ideation and design phases of the Course Development Process have been completed, course development can begin in earnest. This next phase begins with the drafting of the course syllabus and schedule.

Drafting the Course Syllabus and Schedule

Using the *Course Design Storyboard* and *Assessment, Grading, and Course Workload*, the following documents are intended to support instructors in thinking through best practices around the creation of the course syllabus and schedule.

Course Syllabus and Considerations

Incorporating Universal Design Principles

Regular and Substantive Interaction Defined

Additional support for drafting accessible and inclusive versions of these documents can be found in Phase 3: Development.

Developing and Sharing Course Materials

Once the syllabus and schedule are drafted, it is time to curate or create course materials and activities. It is also time to decide when, where, and how learners will interact with these materials and activities. Regardless of modality, the following documents and resources can offer insight into the creation and curation of accessible course materials, communication, and interactions as well as the development of a welcoming and inclusive learning environment.

Instructional Accessibility Resources

The Benefits of Using Elearning in All Modalities

The IDD Elearning Course Template

Course Syllabus & Schedule Considerations

The course syllabus and schedule offer students their first impression of the course, presenting course logistics, conveying instructional values and goals, and communicating expectations to learners. These documents also contain key information for the development of the course, including the course grade scale/scheme, the grade calculation plan, and key assessment titles, descriptions, and due dates.

Although there are many tools available to support instructors in the development of accessible and learner-centered syllabi, the optional templates below can offer a solid place to begin. See also *Syllabus Accessibility and Design*.

Syllabus Template Tool - Faculty Senate Statements, Templates, and Forms

UDL Considerate Syllabus Template - The Syllabus - WMUx Resources



When developing the syllabus and schedule, the following recommendations can also help to support a positive experience for learners and instructors.

Establish a conversational and inclusive tone.
Welcome learners to the course, acknowledging the value their experiences bring and encouraging their connection to the work, the instructor, and their peers.

Invite engagement, investment, and interaction.
Highlight the purpose and goals of the course for learners, note opportunities for learner autonomy and choice, and explicitly encourage interaction with instructor and peers.

Call attention to routines, timelines, and expectations.
Explain the design of the course, how it can best be navigated, and consider presenting some basic "tips" for success to support learner self-directedness.

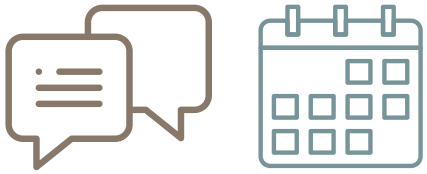
Explain instructional approach, assessment, and grading.
Share with learners what is expected and what they can expect relative to instructional approach, feedback, and support for development.

Incorporate support for anticipated learner challenges.
Include course-specific and university resources to proactively address academic, technological, and personal wellness needs.

Balance workload and due dates.
Consider the semester calendar and obligations that might impact instructor or learner capacity; build in flexibility where possible.

Cross-reference syllabus, schedule, and Elearning information.
Ensure consistency of titles, naming conventions, dates, and grading policies.

Separate the schedule.
Create a separate, print-friendly schedule to allow for easy reference and updating.



Incorporating Universal Design Principles

Accessible and impactful learning experiences don't just happen, they are intentionally designed to proactively address the needs of all learners. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an instructional framework that can provide more equitable learning experiences by reducing physical, cognitive, intellectual, and organizational barriers.

To incorporate UDL principles in the design and development of the course, instructors should consider ways to:

Provide multiple means of engagement: the "why" of learning.

- Include pre-reflection activities to gauge prior knowledge, prime interest in a topic, and identify potential misconceptions.
- Engage learners in goal setting, finding connections between course outcomes and their own interests and aspirations.
- Scaffold materials and activities to meet learners where they are, anticipating various levels of experience, need, and interest.
- Allow flexibility with timelines and pacing when possible.

Provide multiple means of representation: the "what" of learning.

- Present course content in multiple different ways, such as through text, audio, and video.
- Offer a variety of content and options for interaction, allowing learners to be guided, when possible, by interest, need, or experience level.
- Make course materials accessible across devices and assistive technologies.
- Provide rubrics and exemplars to clarify expectations and provide equitable evaluation regardless of format.

Provide multiple means of action and expression: the "how" of learning.

- Build content and activities with awareness of physical and mental differences, planning for potential challenges.
- Develop assessments that allow choice in how learners demonstrate knowledge.
- Teach, model, offer resources and/or explicitly explain language, tone, and formatting expectations for assessments.
- Solicit learner feedback and create opportunities for learner self-reflection.



Incorporating Universal Design principles is an iterative process, not something that needs to be done all at once. The key is to regularly evaluate and enhance course practices around accessibility and inclusivity to meet the diverse needs of learners.

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) Defined

Instructor to learner interaction is an essential element of the functional course design. For online/distance education courses, "regular and substantive" interactions, as defined below, are also a federally regulated requirement of the U.S. Department of Education.

Regular interaction is... predictable, built into the course design, and responsive to learner needs for feedback and support.



Substantive interaction is... intentional, instructor-initiated, and directly related to course content and/or learner performance in the course.

Together, the goal of these interactions is the integration of regular touchpoints, interactive dialogue, and opportunities for questions, clarification, feedback, and support relative to course content and learner performance.

Designing for RSI

Throughout the development of a course, regardless of modality, instructors can incorporate interactions that benefit learners by:

- Integrating regular opportunities for learners to respond to open-ended questions, ask for clarification, reflect, and offer ideas during direct instruction.
- Scheduling announcements, reminders, and/or using Elearning tools to encourage learner progress and success.
- Responding to questions about course content or learner performance.
- Providing regular and individualized feedback on learner coursework.
- Facilitating group discussions focused on the advancement of content understanding or learner performance.
- Monitoring student progress, providing instructional support, and/or connecting learners with institutional support as needed.
- Holding regular conferences with learners to discuss course goals, content, and/or performance.

When designing and developing a course, it can also be helpful to create a definitive *plan for RSI*, highlighting course materials and activities that will support intentional and impactful connections between learners and instructors. To that end, it can be helpful to clarify in the syllabus, and throughout the course, how the instructor will approach interactions with learners, e.g. outlining expectations, encouraging two-way communication, and explaining how and when feedback will be shared.

Benefits Of Using Elearning in All Modalities

Whether instruction is taking place in-person, synchronously or asynchronously online, or in a hybrid format, the use of Elearning (WMU's Learning Management System) can provide significant organizational and instructional benefits.

- If intentionally designed, Elearning can enhance teaching and learning by:
- Centralizing all course components into one shared, easily accessible, and navigable online space for learners and instructors.
- Providing learners 24/7 access to the information they need to complete course requirements.
- Offering analytic tools and intelligent agents that can support instructors in monitoring student progress.
- Supporting instructor-learner interaction through features like the news tool and instructor bio widget, as well as audio/video options for feedback.
- Making grading and learner-to-learner collaboration more efficient for group assignments through communication features for group discussion and assignment collection.
- Including multiple tools for supporting instructors in the ongoing design and delivery of accessible content, specifically Ally.
- Offering access to alternative downloads of resources to better meet learner needs



Designing and Developing for Elearning

The following documents can be helpful in preparing to build out the online components of any course in Elearning:

Step 4: Course Design Storyboard

Course Syllabus and Schedule Considerations

Step 7: Syllabus Accessibility and Design

Step 8: Activity Development and Descriptions

Support for Building in Elearning

The Instructional Technology Center (ITC) has a number of step-by-step guides for supporting instructors in building in and using Elearning. They also offer in-person and virtual support and can assist instructors with a variety of educational technology tools and publisher content, including support for building in Elearning.

Other resources, information, and support for developing in Elearning (known as D2L/Brightspace outside of the university) can be found through the D2L/Brightspace Community and Brightspace Tutorials.

The IDD Elearning Course Template

The IDD Elearning Course Template is a framework that can be copied into any Elearning course shell, providing a pre-built structure for more efficient course creation and development. This template supports instructors by incorporating functional course design components including clear navigation, opportunities for interaction, alignment, and accessibility. This structure also helps create consistency for learners.

Instructors are encouraged to use the IDD Elearning Course Template, in full or in part, to develop template courses of their own in which no students are enrolled. Creating a template course allows instructors to work outside of their live courses to design, iterate, and make improvements for future courses at any time. Once developed, the individual components of the template course or an entire course can be transferred into live course shells for use with students.

Features of the WMUx template include:

☑ A Bio Widget that introduces the instructor and promotes community

☑ A "Welcome" News Item to support learner navigation

☑ A "Start Here" module with accessible syllabus and schedule templates

☑ Accessible Module Description that can be modified for each week/module

☑ Links to WMU resources for learner and instructor support

☑ Discussion, assignment dropbox, and quiz tool templates

☑ Example rubrics to aid in assessment grading and formative feedback

☑ Surveys for collecting learner feedback on course design

To request an IDD Elearning Course Template or for support building your course in Elearning, contact the Instructional Technology Center.

For support in thinking through design and delivery of content within Elearning and using the IDD Elearning Course Template as a starting point for your own template course, contact the Instructional Design and Development Team.

Phase 3: Development

The third phase of Functional Course Design is focused on supporting instructors in creating an online learning environment that supports clear alignment, learner navigation, access, and interaction with content, the instructor, and peers.

Helpful Resources for Elearning and Materials Development

Instructional Design and Development: Reach out to discuss best practices in the creation and curation of materials and to discuss ways to use Elearning to engage learners and enhance instruction.



Instructional Technology Center (ITC): Reach out for support in building and troubleshooting in Elearning, incorporating publisher content in to your Elearning course, or using various learning technologies to enhance instruction.

Accessibility Support: Reach out to request video captioning and transcriptions as well as guidance on the creation of accessible materials and resources for learners.



WMU Libraries: Reach out to explore options for developing and incorporating, Course Reserves, Video Streaming, and/or Online Educational Resources into an Elearning course. Consider working with Technology Spaces to create instructional materials and experiences with emerging technologies.

Phase Objectives

- ☐ Develop course syllabus and schedule.
- ☐ Build out a template course in Elearning.
- ☐ Create/curate instructional content, materials, activities, and assessments.
- ☐ Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles.
- ☐ Ensure syllabus, course schedule, and Elearning information is aligned.

Guiding Documents

Step 6: Regular and Substantive Interactions
This document is designed to support instructors in thinking through ways they might intentionally incorporate regular and substantive interaction (RSI) with learners throughout the semester.

Step 7: Syllabus Accessibility and Design
This document contains information and a checklist to support instructors in the development of a syllabus that follows best practices for accessibility and inclusion and is considerate of required and recommended information.

Step 8: Activity Development and Descriptions
This checklist will help instructors to consider helpful information for including in descriptions for modules and various Elearning content items.

Phase 4: Review and Iteration

The final, but ongoing, phase of the Functional Design Process is focused on supporting instructors in identifying, collecting, and using available university, Elearning, and learner survey data to inform continuous improvement of the course.

Helpful Resources for Elearning and Materials Development

Cognos Reports - Available through WMU Institutional Research, internal reports can offer insight into learner demographics, DEWI rates, and performance across semesters.

Elearning Course Progress Data - Available under Assessments in Elearning, these reports can offer instructors insight into learner course access, module completion, and interactions with course materials.

Midterm Evaluation Surveys - Created by the instructor, these surveys can be used to elicit actionable feedback on learner experiences with course design.

University Course Evaluation Reports - Collected through the Anthology Student Course Ratings System, these reports can offer further insight into how courses are being perceived by learners.

Phase Objectives

☐ Review template or live course from learner perspective.

☐ Address functional challenges highlighted in review.

☐ Address accessibility issues highlighted in ALLY report.

☐ Use learner data and feedback to support continuous improvement.

Guiding Documents

Step 9: Functional Course Design Checklist
This checklist supports instructors in course development and iteration. Reviewing each criterion from a learner perspective, the checklist aims to highlight potential challenges for learner navigation, access, and interaction within the course through the consideration of key components of functional design.

Step 10: Post Design Considerations and Iterations
A follow-up to Pre-Design Considerations, this document is intended to support instructor reflection on the implementation of design, prompting consideration of both instructor and learner perspectives on the experience to identify areas of potential focus for redesign and development.

Supplemental Resources & Support

Outcomes, Objectives, and Bloom's Taxonomy

Whether developing course-level outcomes or module-level objectives, there are four best practices that can support instructors in clarifying what learners should expect to gain from a course (or module) and what is expected of them. Writing outcomes and objectives in this way also supports alignment, a key aspect of functional course design.

Outcome/Objective Basics

☐ Use **learner-centered language**. Beginning with language like, "in this course or module, you will" can be a good place to start.

☐ Use **active and measurable verbs**. Describe what learners will be able to "do" and will need to do to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and successful achievement within the course or module.

☐ Identify the **knowledge, skill, or behavior** that will be gained or demonstrated through the course or activity.

☐ Define the **general conditions** under which competency will be assessed.

With that in mind, both course-level outcomes and module-level objectives might follow this pattern: ***Action + Knowledge, skill, or behavior + Condition.***

Example Outcomes/Objectives

Action	Knowledge, skill, or behavior	Condition
Define	key terms	used in the professional analysis of human behavior
Explain	concepts of communication and therapeutic interaction	and their significance to patient care.
Apply	chemical concepts	to solve qualitative and quantitative problems
Analyze	a written mathematical proof	to locate and correct logical fallacies
Select	appropriate primary and secondary research	to support your response to a current challenge with historical context
Develop	a board presentation	that effectively outlines value rationale, cost, and recommended plan for a building project

Bloom's Taxonomy

Although there are a number of taxonomies aimed at supporting instructors in the development of meaningful outcomes and objectives, Bloom's Taxonomy, and the levels of learning, measurable actions, and potential activities outlined in it, offers a useful framework to support instructors in articulating what learners can expect to gain, what they will be expected to do to demonstrate that gain, and under what conditions.

Levels and Descriptions	Example Actions
Remembering – Recalling information, terminology, facts, simple processes, and/or basic concepts	Cite, Copy, Define, Identify, Index, Label, Locate, List, Name, Order, Recognize, Recite, State, Trace
Understanding – Explaining the purpose and significance of information, complex ideas, concepts, or processes	Associate, Clarify, Classify, Convert, Describe, Diagram, Discuss, Explain, Generalize, Paraphrase, Predict, Summarize, Translate
Applying - Using knowledge, skills, or behaviors to complete a task or respond to a specific scenario	Apply, Calculate, Complete, Facilitate, Interpret, Implement, Manipulate, Operate, Perform, Solve, Use
Analyzing - Examining, questioning, or explaining connections between concepts, details, and structures of information	Analyze, Compare, Contrast, Differentiate, Dissect, Distinguish, Examine, Experiment, Extrapolate, Organize, Relate, Test
Evaluating - Justifying a perspective, approach, or decision; forming ideas based on assessment of information	Appraise, Argue, Assess, Critique, Defend, Judge, Justify, Recommend, Select, Support, Validate
Creating - Combining information to generate new approach, solution, or structure; producing an original work	Adapt, Author, Assemble, Compile, Compose, Construct, Create, Design, Develop, Formulate, Invent, Produce

WMUx Instructional Resources & Support

Teaching, learning, and instructional technology support at WMU is a collaborative effort between four teams. Each offering specific, but related, services to support instructors in imagining, designing, and realizing ideas that transform and enhance the learning experience.

Instructional Design and Development

Connect with the Instructional Design and Development Team

- Request 1:1, small group, department/program specific teaching and learning support.
- Talk through ideas or challenges related to teaching and learning.
- Develop, design, or re-design a learning experience, course, or program in any modality.
- Explore ways to use Elearning to support instruction.
- Request a course review.



Participate in events, workshops, training, or learning communities.

Explore actionable, on-demand resources, articles, and activities encompassing varied levels of instructional experience, course size, and modality.

Accessibility Support

Connect with the Accessibility Support Team to:

- Request 1:1 or small group support focused on the creation, curation, or adaptation of accessible course materials.
- Request closed captioning and transcripts for videos.
- Find information on how to use Ally, an Elearning integrated tool, for assessing and improving course content accessibility.
- Explore simple ways to improve the accessibility of documents and presentations.



Elearning and Instructional Technology

Connect with the Instructional Technology Team to:

- Request 1:1 or small group support focused on the use of WMU supported instructional technology tools like Teams, Webex, Mediasite, and Elearning for any modality.
- Request an IDD Template Course be added to a live course shell in Elearning.
- Request a sandbox course to explore, develop content, and/or practice building in Elearning.
- Integrate your syllabus into Elearning, including setting up the gradebook and connecting dropbox, quizzes, and discussions.
- Request support for building quizzes and/or creating quiz banks in Elearning
- Incorporate publisher-based content into an Elearning course.
- Troubleshoot issues with and explore technical questions related to how to use Elearning or other instructional technology tools.
- Request that online sections of a course be combined.
- Talk through Western Essential Studies (WES) questions.



Explore the ITC's Elearning Self-Help Guides.

Faculty Development

Connect with the Office of Faculty Development to:

- Request 1:1, small group, department/program specific professional development support.
- Request a teaching observation.
- Talk through faculty-level teaching and learning opportunities and challenges.
- Identify fellowship, grant, and other opportunities focused on teaching a nd learning for instructors at all levels.



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