TCU Online Structure Assessment Tool [OSAT]

# Course Basics

Addresses elements of instructional design and course fundamentals based on SACS Best Practices and WCET and USDLA recommendations.

|  | **Incomplete [0]** | **Sufficient [1]** | **Accomplished [2]** | **Exemplary [3]** |
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| 1. **Welcome** – *An introduction to the course. A foundational course module can serve as a secondary welcome if it introduces course themes.* | Nothing stated in syllabus; no welcome announcement, welcome message in Course Overview, or welcome content item. | Welcome information addressing either general course topics or specific getting started information present in one place in the course. | Welcome announcement and welcome note in syllabus or a secondary welcome provide an introduction (either course themes or where to begin in the course).  OR  One audio / video welcome message. | Welcome announcement, welcome note in syllabus, and additional introduction to the course is present. Course topics are mentioned, students are directed where to begin within the course shell, and video/audio is used. |
| 1. **Instructor Bio** – *Introduces the instructor to the students and sets the tone for the course. The instructor bio can be part of the syllabus, a dedicated content item, or part of the course introduction threaded discussion.* | No instructor bio is present, or bios are not present for all instructors in the course. | Instructor bio is present as text only. | Photo accompanies instructor bio. | Audio or video accompanies or is used for instructor bio. (A welcome announcement may fulfill this category if it introduces the instructor in addition to the course.) |
| 1. **Learning Outcomes** – *Measurable course-level learning outcomes indicate the skills that students will gain as a result of engagement with course content.* | No course-level learning outcomes are provided. | Outcomes are listed, but not measurable. | Measurable outcomes are listed, but no specific ties to activities or assessments are articulated. | Measurable course-level outcomes are listed and tied to specific course activities or assessments. |
| 1. **Evaluation Design** – *Assessments are varied and reflect course learning outcomes. Different assessment types may use the same TCU Online tool, so long as the activity itself varies significantly in design and shape of student engagement (e.g., Discussions tool used for whole-class discussions and journals).* | Fewer than three different types of assessments are present in the course. | A minimum of three different types of assessments are present in the course. | A minimum of three different types of assessments are present in the course.  AND  Assessments are clearly labeled with their associated learning outcomes. | A minimum of three different types of assessments are present in the course.  AND  Assessments are clearly labeled with their associated learning outcomes.  AND  Rubrics are present for all course assessments (other than self-assessment or reflective activities). |
| 1. **Grading Policy** – *Explains how students will be evaluated, grades will be calculated, and feedback will be provided.* | No policies or procedures stated. | Grading scale (points or percentage equivalent to letter grades) is present.  OR  Grading structure (breakdown of course assignments and their relative impact on the final grade) is present. | Grading scale is present.  AND  Grading structure is present. | Grading scale is present.  AND  Grading structure is present.  AND  TCU Online grades area is explained as a place to view grades. |
| 1. **Course Schedule** – *The course schedule provides for regular and substantive interaction throughout the duration of the stated term dates for the course session, including through the university-designated end date of the session.* | The course does not require students to produce an artifact of learning each week  AND  The last due date in the course falls before the final week of the session. | The course does not require students to produce an artifact of learning each week  OR  The last due date in the course falls before the final week of the session. | N/A | The course requires students to produce a learning artifact each week (every seven days) during the designated session (including finals week, if applicable). |
| 1. **Redundancy** – *Essential information (relevant course policies, submission directions, rubric, impact of item on final course grade), activity directions, and dates are present in multiple locations in the course.* | No redundancy of essential information. | 1 -2 instances of repetition in the syllabus and welcome message, but repetition is not generally present at the module level or accompanying specific assignments. | Repetition extends to the module level, with module intros listing work or due dates within that module or specific activities listing the due dates or some other necessary pieces to complete the activity. | Redundancy of essential information is achieved throughout the course; redundancy extends to activities with the repetition of course policies, the grading scale or grading structure or grading rubric, dates, submission protocol, and other relevant information.  AND  Navigation through course content is clear and discussions, quizzes, assignments, etc. appear as links to TCU Online tools inside the appropriate content modules. |
| 1. **Universal Design** – *Modifications to the course shell and course content built in the shell ensure an engaging learning experience for all students.* | Two or more of the following elements that create an inconsistent or flat course are present: course has few visual / audio elements, sub-module structure does not support ease of navigation, no course templates are used, documents cannot be read by ReadSpeaker, font size / color / style / significantly impacts the cohesiveness of the course experience. | Course has audio / visual elements throughout the course. The following may or may not be present: templates, font issues, closed captions or transcripts, sub-module structure that supports ease of navigation, and documents readable by ReadSpeaker.  OR  Course has few visual / audio elements and documents may or may not be readable by ReadSpeaker, but a generally consistent course experience (templates or lack thereof, fonts, and sub-module structure navigation) creates a predictable learning environment. | Modified graphical elements create a course that is visually appealing: templates and fonts are used consistently, visual / auditory elements enhance the content throughout the course, most videos have closed captions, most audio has transcripts; most uploaded documents can be read by ReadSpeaker; and sub-module structure supports ease of navigation. | Modified graphical elements create a course that is visually appealing: templates and fonts are used consistently, visual / auditory elements enhance the content and are fully accessible; most uploaded documents can be read by ReadSpeaker; and sub-module structure supports ease of navigation. |

# Interaction and Collaboration

Communication between and among learners, as well as how learners themselves interact with course content

|  | **Incomplete [0]** | **Sufficient [1]** | **Accomplished [2]** | **Exemplary [3]** |
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| 1. **Student & Content Interactions** – *Course activities in which students interact with the content. Differentiated and Supplementary resources may include uploaded or linked additional course content materials in alternative formats that address different learning preferences, remedial or extension materials to support individualized student needs, or course reference materials (e.g. citation guides).* | Students engage with content solely by reading. | Interactive materials are regularly offered to help students understand material (e.g. self-assessments or module checklists, brain teasers, weekly quizzes). Higher-order thinking may or may not be required to complete activities.  Differentiated instruction or supplementary resources are absent or available on a limited basis. | Application of concepts to authentic problems or new situations are regularly used (e.g. case studies, papers, role plays, debates, simulations, discussions, etc.). Higher-order thinking is required only for some activities.  Differentiated instruction or supplementary resources are absent or available on a limited basis. | Application of concepts to authentic problems or new, meaningful situations are regularly used (e.g. case studies, papers, role plays, debates, simulations, discussions, etc.). These activities significantly draw upon students’ higher-order thinking skills.  Differentiated instruction or supplementary resources are provided, either at the course level or accompanying specific topics. |
| 1. **Student Self-Assessment** **or** **Reflection**– *The opportunity for students to reflect on or evaluate their learning progress.  These are meta-cognitive activities in which students think about their learning growth/progress/gaps/how content applies in their lives, not opportunities to assess students regarding mastery of course content* | No self-assessment or reflective activities are present in the course. | Self-assessment or reflective activities are present, but they do not offer constructive or meaningful feedback or they do not provide an opportunity for meaningful reflection. | Self-assessment activities provide constructive or meaningful feedback (e.g. mastery quizzes, self-tests, sample problems, etc.) or a written reflection opportunity is present, but these types of learning occur only once in the course. | Students have two or more opportunities to engage in self-assessment activities that provide constructive and meaningful feedback (e.g. mastery quizzes, self-tests, sample problems, etc.) or a written reflection opportunity is present two or more times in the course. |
| 1. **Development of Learning Community** - *Opportunities for students to connect with one another while focusing on course content.*   *This item is not scored for pre-delivery OSAT reviews.* | No viewable opportunities for student-student interaction; student introductions may or may not be present. | Discussions are single postings, student introductions are not present.  OR  Discussions are in-depth dialogues where peer feedback is evident, but student introductions are not present. | Discussions are in-depth dialogues where peer feedback is evident.  AND  Student introductions are present. | Course facilitates a community feeling: discussions are in-depth dialogues where peer feedback is evident. Student introductions are present.  AND  Course provides at least one group project where members collaborate to produce a single artifact or provide small-group leadership for the rest of the class (such as leading a discussion). |
| 1. **Participation Logistics** – *Expectations regarding the quality and quantity of student participation in the course.* | No information is provided regarding the desired quantity of posts/shared items.  OR  No information is provided regarding the desired quality of participation within the course. | Information explaining required levels of participation (i.e., quantity of interactions) is provided.  OR  Information regarding the quality of communications (i.e., what constitutes a “good” answer) is provided. | Information explaining required levels of participation (i.e., quantity of interactions) is provided.  AND  Information regarding the quality of communications (i.e. what constitutes a “good” answer) is provided. | Rubric explaining required levels of participation (i.e., quantity of interactions) is provided.  AND  Rubric regarding the quality of communications (i.e., what constitutes a “good” answer) is provided. |
| 1. **Online Etiquette** – *Guidelines for acceptable online behavior and the consequences for misbehavior.* | No information provided. | Link provided to external information regarding online etiquette.  OR  Description of what instructor considers acceptable online etiquette listed on syllabus. Text may or may not reference either particularities in the subject matter or indicate how violations will be addressed. | Link provided to external information regarding online etiquette.  AND  Description of what instructor considers acceptable online etiquette listed on syllabus. Text may or may not reference either particularities in the subject matter or indicate how violations will be addressed. | Link provided to external information regarding online etiquette.  AND  Description of what instructor considers acceptable online etiquette listed on syllabus. Text references either particularities in the subject matter or indicates how violations will be addressed.  AND  Policies are referenced in individual discussion prompts. |

# Course Facilitation

Items that make the course run smoothly and improve the learning experience

|  | **Incomplete [0]** | **Sufficient [1]** | **Accomplished [2]** | **Exemplary [3]** |
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| 1. **Faculty-centered Tools** - *Tools within TCU Online that do not primarily call upon student knowledge of course content: Announcements, Attendance, Awards, Calendar events or due dates, Date restrictions on content, FAQ tool, Forms, Intelligent Agents, Links, Panopto use by faculty, Surveys, Video note use by faculty, and Virtual Classroom.* | 0-1 tools used in course.  OR  Course uses outside tools instead of embedded available tools (i.e. students are instructed to view a Google calendar, email assignments, etc.). | 2 tools used in course. | 3-5 tools used in course.  OR  A smaller number of tools are used, but these tools are used intensively. | 6 or more tools used in course, and tools result in meaningful engagement with course content or other students.  OR  A smaller number of tools are used, but tools are used creatively in ways that promote connections to course content. |
| 1. **Student-centered Tools** - *Tools within TCU Online where students are producing content, demonstrating skills, collaborating, or working toward mastery: Assignments, Blog, Chat, Checklist tool, Discussions, ePortfolio, Glossary, Groups, Rubrics, Release Conditions, Self-Assessments, Panopto Assignments, Quizzes, and Video Note use by students. Outside learning tools may include embedded flashcards or games, an online course gallery, external lab/quiz programs, outside tutorials, Zoom, interactive Google Drive items, etc.* | 0-1 tools used in course.  OR  Course uses outside tools instead of embedded available tools (i.e. students are instructed to email documents instead of using the Assignments tool). | 2 tools used in course.  OR  Tools do not result in meaningful engagement with course content or other students. | 3-5 tools used in course.  OR  A smaller number of tools are used, but these tools result in meaningful engagement with course content or other students. | 6 or more tools used in course, and tools result in meaningful engagement with course content or other students.  OR  A smaller number of tools are used, but tools are used creatively in ways that transcend traditional, instructor-centered content delivery. |
| 1. **Instructor Involvement** - *Instructor presence and engagement during the current course.*   *This item is not scored for pre-delivery OSAT reviews.* | No viewable involvement by the current instructor. | Instructor provides course updates, reminders, special announcements, etc. | Instructor is involved in threaded discussions, synchronous chats, virtual classroom sessions, or online virtual office hours.  OR  Instructor frequently offers assistance and encourages students to follow-up regarding questions. | Instructor is an active participant through threaded discussions, synchronous chats, virtual classroom sessions, or online virtual office hours.  AND  Instructor frequently offers assistance and encourages students to follow-up regarding questions, or instructor makes adaptations during the semester to address learner differences and particular circumstances. |
| 1. **Module Intro** - *The module introduction is the instructor's opportunity to discuss progression through course content, class events, and prepare students for the new module’s content.* | No introduction or a simple module title is provided. | Module activities and/or topics are introduced with adequate detail, but without references to current events or course news; likely written before the start of the semester. | Module introduction or announcement driving students to module includes references to student work in current class discussions or assignments or current external events with comments obviously written in current semester.  OR  Introduction includes an audio/video element to grab attention.  OR  Introduction includes module-level objectives. | A robust introduction links current lesson to previous knowledge/topics; explains why content is relevant.  AND  Module introduction or announcement driving students to module includes references to student work in current class discussions or assignments or current external events with comments obviously written in current semester; or introduction includes an audio/video element to grab attention.  AND  Introduction includes module-level objectives |
| 1. **Feedback** – *Rubrics,* *grades and comments used to communicate assessment results.*   *This item is not scored for pre-delivery OSAT reviews unless gradebook is not set-up [meriting a score of 0].* | TCU Online Grades area is not used.  OR  TCU Online Grades area is incomplete: grades for some course assessments are not included in the online Gradebook. | All course assessments have grades posted in the online gradebook. | All course assessments have grades posted in the online gradebook. Brief, non-individualized, or inconsistent feedback is provided. (Online exams where the students can later see the exam do not require comments.)  OR  Rubrics are present, but not used to provide feedback. | All course assessments have grades posted in the online gradebook. All assignments other than self-assessment or reflective activities have extensive, individualized comments or use rubrics. (Online exams where the students can later see the exam do not require comments.) |

# Learner Support and Policies

Resources available to students to help them succeed in the course

|  | **Incomplete [0]** | **Sufficient [1]** | **Accomplished [2]** | **Exemplary [3]** |
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| 1. **TCU Online Orientation** – *Information provided to students about how to navigate the course shell and use course tools.* | No mention of the student orientation tutorial. | Student orientation tutorial is mentioned, but directions for accessing it are not provided. | Student orientation tutorial is mentioned, and directions for accessing it are provided. | Student orientation tutorial is mentioned, and directions for accessing it are provided.  AND  How-to information for specific course tools is provided via a link or embed, or text directs students how they might find this tool-specific documentation. Alternately, help information for external learning resources is provided. |
| 1. **Getting Help** - *Clear directions for obtaining assistance through the 24/7 TCU Online Help Desk are provided.*   *Course nav bar does not count as a Getting Help instance unless faculty direct students there.* | No help information is provided in the course.  OR  Incorrect contact information is listed. | Correct contact information is listed only in one place in the course. | Correct contact information is listed in two areas in the course.  AND  Students are directed to contact the instructor to keep him/her apprised of student progress in dealing with technical issues. | Correct contact information is listed in more than two areas in the course.  AND  Students are directed to contact the instructor to keep him/her apprised of student progress in dealing with technical issues. |
| 1. **Instructor Contact Information** – *Information about how students should contact the instructor and the timeliness of a response.* | No contact information present in course. | Contact information is present, but does not include email or virtual office hours response/review time. | Contact information includes email or virtual office hours response/review time. | Contact information includes email or virtual office hours response/review time. One additional method of contact is also provided (e.g. phone or in-person office hours). |
| 1. **Campus Resources *–*** *Contact information for students so that they can find support.* | No mention of campus resources on syllabus. | Provides contact information for 1-3 of the following:  Library, Writing Center, Student Development, Campus Life, Health Center, Title IX resources. | Provides contact information for 4 of the following:  Library, Writing Center, Student Development, Campus Life, Health Center, Title IX resources. | Provides contact information for ALL of the following:  Library, Writing Center, Student Development, Campus Life, Health Center, Title IX resources. |
| 1. **TCU Disability Information** – *University –level assistance for learners with disabilities.* | No links to institutional policies, contacts, and procedures to support learners with disabilities. | N/A | Links to current institutional policies, contacts, and procedures for supporting learners with disabilities are present. | Text addresses current institutional policies, contacts, and procedures for supporting learners with disabilities. |
| 1. **Course Accessibility** – *Course-level accommodations and materials accessibility for learners with accommodations.*   *This item is not scored as part of OSAT reviews; information is provided for course revision purposes and to assist instructors in thinking about accessibility for their course.* | Features that make the course accessible are largely absent or inconsistently used so as to render the majority of course content / activities inaccessible (example: missing transcripts, missing meaningful image alt text) | Accessibility is not sufficient or complete, but progress has been made: the majority of required and optional course content is formatted to meet accessibility guidelines; where there are issues, these do not prohibit students from gaining access to content, although they may make it more difficult (example: missing heading tags). | Course is fully accessible, although there may be some issues with optional / supplementary content on external sites. | All required and optional course content is formatted to meet accessibility guidelines. |
| 1. **Academic Misconduct** - *Information about academic honesty including university policies and the instructor's requirements.* | No policies present in course. | Brief, non-specific statement on academic integrity is offered; link to the official TCU policy may or may not be present. | Detailed academic honesty policy statement includes cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.  AND  Either the official TCU policy is present or a link is provided or course-specific examples of what instructor sees as cheating are provided. | Detailed academic honesty policy statement includes cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.  AND  Either the official TCU policy is present or a link is provided.  AND  Course-specific examples of what instructor sees as cheating are provided or the instructor has provided a description of common academic misconduct issues for specific course activities (e.g. unacknowledged outside assistance on the final paper, talking about a quiz). |
| 1. **Learner Evaluation of the course** – *Students have an active role in reviewing the course.* | The only reference to learner evaluation of the course is the global TCU Online announcement reminding students to complete the SPOT. | Instructor reminds students to complete the SPOT, either with an additional instructor-authored announcement or within the course content area.  Opportunities within the course shell for learners to give feedback may or may not exist. | Instructor reminds students to complete the SPOT, either with an additional instructor-authored announcement or within the course content area.  AND  Learners have an in-course opportunity to give feedback  to the instructor regarding  course design and/or course  content, but only after course completion. | Instructor reminds students to complete the SPOT, either with an additional instructor-authored announcement or within the course content area.  AND  Some form of mid-semester/ongoing feedback regarding course design and course content is present within the course shell. |