

Adapting Online Course Quality in Asynchronous Education

FACT2 Task Group Charge - DRAFT

Introduction

The landscape of asynchronous online education continues to evolve rapidly. Advances in generative AI, emerging communication technologies, changing student expectations, and growing interest in authentic assessment are prompting faculty, instructional designers, and academic leaders to reconsider traditional approaches to online course design. Building upon OSCQR's established framework, the task group will explore how course quality can be maintained and enhanced as instructional practices, assessment methods, and educational technologies continue to evolve.

Purpose

The purpose of this task group is to:

- Explore contemporary challenges and opportunities related to asynchronous online course quality, especially in response to external pressures such as generative AI usage and students' changing expectations of online learning.
- Identify how emerging technologies, including generative AI, are influencing online course design and assessment.
- Collect examples of effective tools and practices for student engagement, instructor presence, communication, and assessment.
- Contextualize OSCQR quality indicators for current and emerging online learning environments.
- Collect examples of course building and review processes and explore tools, both within and beyond the DLE, that can support these processes. This includes multiple models for online course design, such as blueprint/shared courses, exceptional instructor-based courses, and high-throughput courses
- Develop practical resources that support faculty and instructional designers across SUNY.

Guiding Questions

The task group may consider the following questions:

- What is the current literature about online course quality in relation to changing technology needs and expectations?
- How can the OSCQR framework help address emerging challenges related to AI and assessment security?
- What forms of interaction and communication are most effective for contemporary online learners?

- How can online courses foster engagement without relying primarily on text-based discussion boards?
- What role should video, audio, and multimedia communication play in supporting instructor presence and student success?
- Which OSCQR standards may require reinterpretation or expansion in light of emerging technologies and instructional practices?
- What are current processes for course building and review? Who is available within SUNY, such as distinguished academics and instructors? What is available in the current Digital Learning Environment that can support these processes? What are other tools that could be leveraged as well? What processes should be modified based on the findings of this group?

Deliverables

The task group will produce resources and recommendations that support SUNY's ongoing efforts to improve online course quality.

Potential deliverables include:

Resource Guide

The resource guide could include:

- A review of the current literature on changing models for online course delivery
- Examples of emerging models for asynchronous engagement
- Practical Applications of OSCQR for contemporary online course design
- Video, audio, and multimedia communication strategies for online learning
- Assessment design and academic integrity in the age of AI
- The future of instructor presence in asynchronous learning environments

Professional Development Activities

- FACT2 webinar series featuring SUNY faculty, instructional designers, and researchers to cover specific topics and collect data from practitioners
- Conference presentations at CIT and other appropriate regional conferences
- Faculty learning communities and workshops focused on OSCQR-aligned course improvement

Final Recommendations Report

A comprehensive report that:

- Identifies emerging themes and challenges in online course quality
- Highlights promising practices aligned with OSCQR principles
- Provides recommendations for supporting faculty and instructional designers
- Suggests future directions for FACT2 and SUNY related to online learning quality

By the completion of its work, the task group will provide FACT2 and the SUNY community with an OSCQR-informed perspective on the future of asynchronous online course quality. The

resulting resources and recommendations will help faculty and instructional designers leverage the strengths of the OSCQR framework while responding to emerging challenges related to assessment, engagement, communication, and technology in online learning.

This approach positions the outcomes from this group as a natural companion to OSCQR—examining how the rubric's established quality standards can be interpreted, applied, and extended to meet the realities of online education in the AI era.

Potential Working Groups

Working groups will be used to divide the work into more manageable outcomes for smaller groups to focus on. Each group would collect data for their topic, collect data from the current literature on this topic, and explore how their findings align with the current version of OSCQR. Some potential topics for these groups include:

- **Student Exploration Group** – This group would work with campuses to collect data from current online students to see what their expectations for online learning are, what types of tools they are using to complete their online learning, and how they are interacting with content in online courses.
- **Technology Exploration Group** – This group would identify changing needs from professors for online courses and explore technology solutions to identify best practices.
- **Process Exploration Group** – This group would identify current practices for the creation and review of online courses and explore what tools are available to support these practices.

Out of Scope

The task group will not:

- Develop mandatory SUNY policies or compliance requirements.
- Conduct formal course certification or quality assurance reviews.
- Recommend specific commercial products for procurement.
- Establish accreditation standards.
- Evaluate individual courses or instructors.
- Develop system-wide governance or technology adoption policies.