

General Standard 4 ... Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve stated course objectives and learning outcomes.

SPECIFIC REVIEW STANDARDS	POINTS	YES	NO	NOTES
<p>4.1 The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course and module/unit learning objectives.</p> <p>Alignment</p>	3			
<p>4.2 The purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained.</p>	3			
<p>4.3 All resources and materials used in the course are appropriately cited.</p>	2			
<p>4.4 The instructional materials are current.</p>	2			
<p>4.5 The instructional materials present a variety of perspectives on the course content.</p>	1			
<p>4.6 The distinction between required and optional materials is clearly explained.</p>	1			

General Standard 4: *The instructional materials form the core of the course, and these standards respect the instructor's prerogative in selecting them. The focus of this standard is on supporting the course objectives and competencies, rather than on qualitative judgments about the materials.*

ANNOTATIONS

Alignment: The instructional materials used in the course align with the course and module learning objectives of the course (see Standards 2.1 and 2.2) by contributing to the achievement of those objectives and by integrating effectively with the tools and media selected for delivery (see Standard 6.1).

Course materials, resources, and learning objectives align in a clear and direct way. The course materials and resources enable students to achieve the stated learning objectives. As a reviewer, consider both the course and module/unit learning objectives in your assessment of this standard. Note: at some institutions, learning objectives may be called learning outcomes.

Decisions on this standard may be difficult for reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Reviewers should consult with the team SME (subject matter expert) and use common sense to determine if the instructional materials support the learning objectives.

Normally textbooks are not provided to reviewers because of cost and logistical limitations. Many publishers provide web links to their textbooks, and reviewers may wish to consult these links. In evaluating the course against this standard, reviewers will work closely with the SME on the team.

Students can easily determine the purpose of all content, materials, resources, technologies, and instructional methods used in the course, and how each will help them achieve the stated learning objectives.

Examples:

1. Links to external websites indicate the purpose of the links or are completely self-evident.
2. The function of animated games or exercises is clearly explained or is completely self-evident.

If various instructional materials (books, manuals, videos, CD-ROMs/DVDs, computer software, etc.) are used in the course, the purpose of their use and relationship to one another is clearly explained to students. Reviewers should determine if the diversely formatted course materials are integrated well enough to be useful to the student.

Sources for materials used in the course are clearly identified. Text, images, graphic materials, tables, videos, audios, websites, and other forms of multimedia are appropriately referenced according to the institution's copyright and intellectual property policies.

The instructional materials represent current thinking in the discipline. Older works considered to be seminal are cited with publication dates. The SME on the team should verify that the works are seminal in the discipline.

The course materials are robust and create a rich learning environment for students. The course presents meaningful instructional materials from a variety of sources, including the textbook(s), PowerPoint presentations, websites, lecture notes, periodicals, outlines, and multimedia.

Instructional materials are varied, and different perspectives are presented (including, if relevant, perspectives from different cultures). Typically, reviewers would expect to find multiple sources and not just one author. In some disciplines,

Clear explanations are provided to students regarding which materials and resources are required and which are optional. Particular attention is given to those resources students need to acquire through purchase, download, CD-ROM, or web access outside of the course. Instructors should clearly indicate materials students are expected to acquire and use to complete course activities and assignments.

NOTE: If the course is built solely or predominantly from publisher material, the Quality Matters Publisher Rubric may be a better evaluation tool.

In some advanced undergraduate courses and graduate courses, no textbook(s) are assigned. Reviewers will need to consider bibliographies and webliographies provided by the instructor, or, in some cases, developed by students themselves, following guidelines provided by the instructor. Reviewers should focus only on the alignment of the instructional materials with the learning objectives rather than attempt to evaluate the content. If the learning objectives have been judged to be appropriate to the level of the course (Standard 2.5), we assume instructional materials that support these objectives are also appropriate to the level of the course.

Special situations: In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), the course objectives are institutionally mandated, and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, consider instead the module/unit objectives to assess and score Standard 4.1.

For example, a course requires students to use the following materials: a textbook divided into chapters, video segments ordered by topics, a website organized around specific skills, and a tutorial CD-ROM or DVD that has an opening menu consisting of "practice quizzes," "images," and "audio examples." Consider whether it is clear to students the order in which they should approach these varied materials, how each is related to the learning objectives and activities, and how the materials are related to one another.

In some advanced undergraduate and graduate courses in which students are expected to find their own learning materials, the instructor posts guidelines that assist the student in identifying relevant materials and in distinguishing between core and supplementary materials and between scholarly and non-scholarly sources for academic writing. Reviewers should determine whether these guidelines satisfy the standard.

When an extensive body of material comes from a single source, a general statement will suffice. The material may include an e-pack, instructor material, publisher material, etc.

Decisions on this standard may be difficult for individual reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Reviewers should consult with the team SME (subject matter expert) and use common sense to determine if the materials are current.

It may be appropriate to have all materials from a single author. If multiple sources are used, evidence of the intent to include a range of cultural perspectives is found in the sources selected for the course.

Decisions on this standard may be difficult for individual reviewers whose expertise is not in the course discipline. Reviewers should consult with the team SME (subject matter expert) and use common sense to determine if the materials are from multiple sources.

Such indications about required and optional materials may appear in the syllabus, class schedule, or instructions for learning activities. Ideally, students should be provided this information at the beginning of the class or prior to the start of the class.