

## General Standard 6 ... Course Technology

Course navigation and technology support student engagement and ensure access to course components.

SPECIFIC REVIEW STANDARDS	POINTS	YES	NO	NOTES
<p><b>6.1</b> The tools and media support the course learning objectives.</p> <p><i>Alignment</i></p>	3			
<p><b>6.2</b> Course tools and media support student engagement and guide the student to become an active learner.</p>	3			
<p><b>6.3</b> Navigation throughout the online components of the course is logical, consistent, and efficient.</p>	3			
<p><b>6.4</b> Students can readily access the technologies required in the course.</p>	2			

**General Standard 6:** *The technology enabling the various course components facilitates the student's learning experience and is easy to use, rather than impeding the student's progress.*

## ANNOTATIONS

**Alignment:** The tools and media selected for the course align with the course and module objectives of the course (see Standards 2.1 and 2.2) by effectively supporting the assessment instruments (Standard 3.1), instructional materials (Standard 4.1), and learning activities (Standard 5.1) in the course.

Tools are functional software that provide areas for interaction in the course; they may be included in the learning management system (LMS) or external to the LMS.

Examples of tools include discussion boards, chat rooms, grade book, social media, games, whiteboard, wikis, blogs, virtual classrooms, web conferencing, etc.

Media are one-way delivery modalities that enhance learning.

Examples of media include video, audio, animations, and podcasts.

Specific tools and media are not required for this standard to be met. If they are used, they support the learning objectives and fit the learning activities.

Clear information and instructions are provided regarding how the tools and media support the learning objectives. Technology is not to be used simply for the sake of using technology. For example, a course might require viewing video materials, but it may not be clear how the video materials illustrate or support a learning objective.

**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 6.1.

Tools and media used in the course help students actively engage in the learning process rather than passively absorb information. Selected tools and media help the student engage in the reflection that leads to deep learning. Types of learner interaction include learner-content, learner-instructor, and learner-learner. Interactions can provide opportunities to increase students' comfort with course material and technology, and the goal should be to facilitate the broadest and deepest learner engagement possible in the course.

### Examples of tools and media that support engagement:

1. Interactive, real-time software, such as real-time collaborative tools, webinars, and virtual worlds
2. Software that facilitates interactions and collaborations, such as shared documents or wikis
3. Animations, simulations, and games that require student input
4. Discussion tools with automatic notification or a "read/unread" tracking feature
5. Automated self-check exercises requiring student responses

Navigation refers to the process of planning, recording, and controlling the movement of a learner from one place to another in the online course.

### Considerations for effective navigation devices in the online course may include

1. Adherence to accepted web standards-of-function for hypertext links, buttons, and windows
2. Provisions for intuitive understanding of a function when non-standard navigation devices are employed (e.g., clicking and dragging a playing card from a deck into an appropriate category)

3. Consistent use of navigation devices within the learning management system (LMS) and for moving between the LMS and other sites, such as a publisher site

Some navigation devices--next and previous links, for example--are provided by the learning management system used for course delivery and cannot be modified. Other navigation devices--hypertext links, icons, and window functions, for example--may be within the control of the course designer. In evaluating this standard, the reviewer should determine the locus of responsibility for the design of course navigation features.

All required technologies are easily obtainable, either through download, purchase at the bookstore, or another means. The word "technologies" covers a wide range, including hardware, software, subscriptions, and plug-ins. In evaluating this standard, reviewers should consider both the availability of the technologies and other resources and whether clear instructions are provided for access, installation, and use.

From information provided in the course instructions, students are able to readily obtain the hardware and peripherals necessary to complete all course activities. For specific peripheral devices needed for course completion, instructions are included on how to obtain the peripheral devices, and on how to install and use them.

Students have ready access to all software used in the course. Examples of software include statistical analysis software, equation editors, web authoring tools, or programming software. Students also have access to online tools and plug-ins, such as Acrobat Reader and Flash, Java, media players, MP3 players, wikis, social media, etc.

A clearly worded statement lists the required software and plug-ins, along with instructions for obtaining and installing them.

For technologies that require subscriptions, instructions are provided on how to obtain the subscription, including information on acquisition of access codes and on user identification requirements.

### Examples of how to help ensure student access:

1. If speakers, a microphone, and/or a headset are necessary, the need for such peripherals is clearly stated.
2. Links are provided to required peripherals to be purchased from the college bookstore or other source.
3. A list of required downloadable resources, including links, is provided.
4. Links are provided to access materials such as OpenOffice, to allow students free access to necessary course documents.
5. If publisher materials are used, clearly stated information about how to obtain and use any required access codes is provided.
6. Instructions are provided on how to access materials available through subscriptions to online journals or databases. When feasible, links are also provided.
7. For textbooks, CDs, and DVDs, information provided includes the title, author, publisher, ISBN number, copyright date, and details on where copies can be obtained.
8. A navigation button devoted to "Resources" is integrated in the overall course design.
9. A custom CD or DVD prepared for the course is surface-mailed to students.

Information on how to reach technical support likewise is easy to find and clearly presented for students who may need assistance with obtaining necessary course technologies or with changing software versions.

*Course Technology continued on next page*