Online Course Approval Rubric Narrative

The following rubric has been approved by the Standing Committee on Online Education to guide the design and delivery of online courses at Loyola University. It contains 8 standards that must be met for approval of the online course. All instructors developing a course for online delivery must meet with the Online Learning Team.

1. The **Course shell template** standards deal with the overall look and feel of the online course. Minimum standards of design and usability help the instructor communicate course content to the student, help the student navigate the course, and ensure that programs have consistent branding and uniform design.

2. The **Student feedback** standard ensures that the instructor has developed a method by which students can contact the instructor with questions or concerns. Best practices dictate that, regardless of method, instructors should respond to student concerns within one business day.

3. The **Student engagement** standard ensures that the instructor has provided an opportunity for students to engage with each other and with the instructor in pursuit of course goals and learning objectives. Allowing opportunities for students to construct their own learning leads to deeper student involvement with the course and with the content and is consistent with best practices of Jesuit pedagogy. Furthermore, instructor presence within the online course is essential to student success. With active participation in the course, instructors can more effectively guide student learning and respond to questions. The course should include at least one of either type of engagement activity (student-to-student or student-to-instructor) regularly (at least once a week). Some examples of engagement activities include (but are not limited to) discussion boards, shared document markup (synchronous or asynchronous), and video chat.

4. The **Learning tasks** standard requires two methods of assessment of student learning (see #5 below for exceptions). This is to ensure that different types of student learners have an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the course material and fulfillment of the learning objectives. A diversity of learning tasks allows students to engage with the material in different ways, enhancing student understanding of the material. Non-assessed learning tasks allow the student to ask questions, explore, and make mistakes while developing an understanding of the course material, and therefore learning tasks that are not graded should also be included here.

5. Not all courses will lend themselves equally to diverse learning tasks (see #5 above). If you feel that your course is ill-suited to these requirements, please describe why in the space provided for **Exceptions to learning tasks**.
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6. The **Instructor availability** standard ensures that the instructor has clearly communicated ways in which students may contact the instructor.

7. The **Technical support** standard ensures that the instructor has clearly communicated how students are to proceed when they encounter technical difficulties. The instructor may act as point of contact for frontline technical support, but information on Blackboard support and Loyola technical support should also be provided.

8. The **Online education tutorial** standard requires that the SCOE-approved general online tutorial has been posted in the online course shell.