**What is an Academic Review?**

Online academic courses offered by various departments and programs in the Faculty of Education are supported by the office of Professional Development and Community Engagement (PDCE) and undergo two different reviews to ensure and improve academic rigour and currency and ascertain and assure and improve learning design quality:

1. Academic Review during the initial course development stage;
2. Academic Review at intervals of 4-5 years after the first offering.

**Purpose of Academic Review**

The primary purpose of a subject matter expert Academic Review is to the identify strengths and weaknesses of every course from an academic and subject matter perspective at key points in the course development and / or revision process, with the goal of maintaining high academic standards across all courses within each program. The main goal of the academic course review is to make detailed recommendations for improvement from an academic subject matter and a learning design perspective.

**Is the Subject Matter Expert Peer Reviewer Expected to Review both Subject Matter course content and Learning Design?**Subject matter peer reviewers are requested to provide an academic assessment of course content. Those peer reviewers with expertise in the design of online courses can review both the content and the design features. Those peer reviewers without design expertise can review only the content, in which case, an ETS Design expert will review the course design.

**Who conducts an Academic Review?**

Each academic course review is normally conducted by a faculty member appointed by the Department Head or Program Director in the case of an interdisciplinary non-departmentalized program. The Academic Reviewer will normally be a tenure/track faculty member whose appointment is in a different Department than that of the major faculty author of the course being proposed for a major revision and is in an arms-length relationship to the proposed major revision faculty course author. In some cases, at the discretion of the Department Head or Program Director, people other than noted abve can be appointed as reviewers (e.g., members within the same department, or field experts that are not UBC Faculty). Overall, it is expected that a reviewer is recognized as an expert in the discipline/field of the course under review.

**When is the Academic review conducted?**

Academic Review is conducted at key points and throughout the development process. The first key point is upon initial completion of a course’s authorship. Subsequently, a major revision is scheduled every 5 years. The Academic Review in the major revision schedule is carried on a schedule appropriate for the course (i.e. before, during, after course development – or a combination of these), it is recommended however that some portion of the review be completed prior to making a decision whether to go forward with a revision at all. The Academic review assists us to make a principled decision about whether a major revision is required and also, so that we can utilize peer review to secure subject matter expert feedback for the course author/s.

**Copy Editing**

Some courses may contain typos and grammatical errors. It is not the academic reviewer’s responsibility to correct these errors, so if these are identified as part of the academic review. Departments can assign a person to complete copy editing of content.

*Course:*

*Academic Reviewer:*

**Academic Content Integrity and Learning Design Appropriateness**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Subject Matter Course Content (to be completed by Subject Matter Expert peer reviewer)** | **E**xcellent,  **A**dequate or  **S**erious improvement | Notes & Recommendations |
| Course objectives are aligned with overall scope of the course and are well articulated and clearly addressed in the actual course content. Are there any objectives that are not clearly visible in the course content? Any objectives that need to be more clearly stated? Any missing objectives given the course content? | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| Course content is current relative to academic knowledge in the field that is the focus of this course. Are any parts of the course content outdated? Are there missing Readings based on current academic work in the field? | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| Content is organized logically and follows the appropriate sequence of student knowledge building. Would the course content be improved by a reorganization? | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| The course content is well written and clear, with sufficient detail to meet the stated objectives. | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| The scope of course content appropriately represents the actual scope of content relevant to the subject and discipline. What, if anything, that is a highly significant topic in the course focus is missing? | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| The instructional materials (e.g., Readings) support the stated learning objectives and have sufficient breadth and depth for the student to learn the subject. | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| Course learning activities promote the achievement of stated objectives and learning outcomes. | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| The course content includes and acknowledges the importance of, social justice curricular and disciplinary contribution and priorities. | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| Assessment genres address the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources. | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:      Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| Assessment strategies are appropriate for the subject matter being taught. |  |  |
| Assessment strategies are appropriate for the online modality of this course. |  |  |
| Assessments and their proportionate contribution to the final grade are weighted appropriately for the course outcomes they are intended to measure. |  |  |
| Assessment and grading strategies provide frequent and regular feedback to the student. |  |  |
| The types of assessments address the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources. |  |  |
| Assessment strategies are appropriate for the subject matter being taught. |  |  |
| **Design of the Online Course (to be completed either by Subject Matter Expert peer reviewer or an ETS Learning Design expert)** | **E**xcellent,  **A**dequate or  **S**erious improvement | Notes & Recommendations |
| Overall Design of the course environment. The course design operationalizes major disability design (ADA) requirements. | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| Overall Design of the course environment. Graphics are appropriate and enhance the quality of the learning environment and student learning experience. | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| Course design prompts the instructor to be present, active, and engaged with the students. | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |
| Overall Design of the course environment. Navigational instructions and layout make the organization of the course easy to understand. How could the overall design be improved? Are any particular aspects of navigation in this course poorly designed? | E  A  SI | Evidence Found:       Strengths:       Areas for Improvement: |

**Core Recommendation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Overall Recommendation** | **Choose only one option** |
| Major Revisions are warranted as this major revision work would significantly improve a course that is already excellent in many respects. |  |
| Only minor revisions are needed for satisfactory course quality in terms of subject matter content. |  |
| Course content is excellent but the learning design is poor. Only minor content revisions are required but a major learning design overhaul is necessary. |  |
| Course content is outdated and learning design is poor – The subject area for the course is highly significant and it would likely be better to start over with a whole new course |  |

**Summary of Observations Regarding Course Quality: Content and Design**

Please provide a summary of your overall observations and recommendation pertaining to the quality of the course content as well as the design.