



# THE BUREAU OF FIRE STANDARDS AND TRAINING

## Online/Blended Course Evaluation Guidelines

The BFST Online/Blended Course Evaluation Guidelines are intended to help instructors create and facilitate well-designed online/blended courses. The Guidelines outline specific features of online/blended courses and recommend ways to design, deliver, and improve courses. The Guidelines identify the key features of courses and gives suggestions on how to implement each one in a course. Not all Guidelines will apply in every course.

The Guidelines are divided into 5 categories (course overview/information and content, learning objectives and learning engagement, learner support, interaction/presence, feedback and assessment).

The Guidelines shall be used as a tool:

- for self-assessment by instructors during the design and development of their online/blended courses.
- For BFST personnel to provide constructive feedback to instructors on the design and delivery of their online/blended courses.

**Course Submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course Name/Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Submitted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Evaluator Name / Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Evaluation Complete:** \_\_\_\_\_



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<b>Course Overview / Information &amp; Content</b>		<b>Suggestions for the Category</b>
1	<p><b>The Course</b> begins with a welcome message that includes instructions on how to get started and information about being a successful online learner.</p> <p>Include general information about the nature and purpose of the course, the course activities, grading structure, and where to find specific information on each. Consider different formats of delivery for your welcome message (audio, video, screencast, etc.)</p>	
2	<p><b>The Syllabus</b> is current and comprehensive, describing course objectives and description, topics, policies, expectations, and provides a list of essential university resources.</p>	
3	<p><b>The Course and unit/module learning objectives are clearly stated, measurable, and are aligned to the terminal objectives, enabling objectives and applicable NFPA JPRs listed in the BFST curriculum for this course.</b></p> <p><b>Ensure the student learning activities and assessments are clearly stated, measurable, and are aligned to the unit/module learning objectives.</b></p> <p>When developing your course, begin with the end in mind. Consider the skills and abilities you want students to master by the end of the course. In a matrix (or similar organizer) outline the relationship/alignment between the objectives, activities, and assessments.</p>	<p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> Failure to meet this requirement will result in approval denial.</p>



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4	<p><b>The Course</b> includes course task lists that detail what is expected each week/unit/module. Consider adding a course schedule and week/unit/module checklist.</p>	
5	<p><b>The Course</b> content is clearly presented and structured in a logical, consistent, and uncluttered manner. Provide consistency in the design of learning modules, assignments, and rubrics. Making the course easy to navigate includes a consistent color scheme and icon layout, related content organized together, and self-evident titles.</p>	
6	<p><b>The Course</b> content is organized in a way to help students learn the content. To avoid cognitive overload, consider dividing course information into manageable “chunks” (i.e., short videos, smaller PPT’s, etc.). These self-contained segments can be used to assess learner mastery of the content before proceeding. Explain the purpose of the material where appropriate.</p>	
<b>Learning Objectives &amp; Learner Engagement</b>		<b>Suggestions for the Category</b>
7	<p><b>The Course</b> is designed to facilitate active and self-directed learning and includes authentic activities and real-life tasks that allow students to apply knowledge and skills where appropriate. When choosing assignments, some of the best learning opportunities in an online course tend to be those that are interactive and include the instructor and other learners such as experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities. This helps build connections and understanding to real world applications and practice.</p>	



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8	<p><b>The Instructor</b> interactively engages learners in a variety of instructional delivery methods.</p> <p>Present course content using a combination of instructor-created and open resources such as written narratives, text-based presentations, videos, podcasts, websites, presentations with audio, tutorials, journal articles, readings, case studies, etc.</p>	
9	<p><b>The Course</b> provides opportunities for collaborative work.</p> <p>Provide clear directions for each collaborative task. Provide clear and concise outcomes that are appropriate, reasonable, and achievable.</p>	
10	<p><b>The Course</b> contains clearly stated instructions to learners that clarify how assignments and assessments are to be completed.</p> <p>With an online course, providing written instructions is the norm for communicating important information. A practice common in online courses is to include these instructions in the syllabus and/or within the course itself.</p>	
<b>Learner Support</b>		<b>Suggestions for the Category</b>
11	<p><b>The Instructor</b> ensures course materials are accessible and provides maximum readability.</p>	
12	<p><b>The Course</b> materials and/or media-based content contains hyperlinks that are descriptive.</p> <p>Be purposeful in describing links by providing learners with the context of where clicking the link will take them.</p>	



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	<p>Good Example: For more information, visit the <a href="#">Descriptive Links</a> website.</p> <p>Poor Example: <a href="#">Click here</a> for more information on proper link text.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Good and Poor examples of links are not active; they are for descriptive purposes only.</p>	
<b>Interaction / Presence</b>		<b>Suggestions for the Category</b>
13	<p><b>The Instructor</b> includes brief commentaries for each module/unit reflecting the instructor’s personal insight, perspective, or experience related to course content.</p> <p>Create course items such as short videos, presentations with guiding questions, course announcements, or written lecture narratives that add your voice, perspective, impressions, examples, research, stories, etc. These course items can be used to further explain difficult course concepts. Including module/unit summaries and transitions in the News, Discussion, and/or Content area can also help explain course concepts.</p>	
14	<p><b>The Course</b> contains a variety of resources or activities intended to build a sense of community, support communication, and establish trust.</p>	
15	<p><b>The Instructor</b> purposefully uses a variety of technological tools to foster engagement.</p> <p>Consider course resources and tools that engage learners. Look for ways to increase participation and activity in an online course using technology.</p>	



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Assessment and Feedback		Suggestions for the Category
16	<b>The Course</b> contains detailed rubrics or instructions for all assessments. Provide explicit guidelines for completing assignments, participating in discussions, and how activities are assessed.	
17	<b>The Course</b> contains an organized grades area with individual gradable activities. Have the grades area fully set up prior to the beginning of the course so students can see all the graded items up front	
18	<b>The Instructor</b> clearly states information concerning grading, and includes grading scale, weights, and consequences of late submissions. Clarify your grading requirements by posting them in the syllabus and in the course.	
19	<b>The Instructor</b> provides a variety of assessments that measure stated learning objectives and are appropriate for the online learning environment. Create a diversified assessment plan executed throughout the duration of the course. Use self-assessments, assignments, papers, projects, quizzes, exams, etc. to assess learning.	
20	<b>The Instructor</b> provides opportunities for the learner to give descriptive feedback on course design, course content, facilitation, assessments, and activities to improve the course for the learners.  Design evaluative methods to gather learner feedback about the ease of navigation in the class, instructor involvement and quality, as well as course content and delivery. Consider formal and informal ways to gather mid-course and end-of-course feedback (i.e., survey, discussion, email invitation).	



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21	<p><b>The Course</b> assessments, activities, and evaluations are designed to uphold academic integrity and encourage academic honesty.</p> <p>Incorporate a variety of pedagogical strategies and alternative assessments that deters learners from engaging in academic dishonesty such as timed exams, and turning large project in by sections.</p> <p>Application-type exams (problem-based learning, case-based learning) can also help.</p>	
22	<p><b>The Course</b> provides a means of tracking the time that the students are involved in the training course (as required by 69A-37.065, F.A.C.)</p>	<p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> Failure to meet this requirement will result in approval denial.</p>
<b>Additional Comments</b>		