

ENSURING CURRICULUM QUALITY

Purdue University Global's data-driven and collaborative approach to designing quality curriculum includes systematic processes for tracking course metrics, instructional design, and conducting internal and external audits. This document provides a high-level overview of how PG's curriculum approach ensures a quality learning experience that is rigorous, engaging, and adapted to the needs of adult students.

Course Metrics

Ongoing Review

The curriculum development team, including the Assistant Dean of Curriculum (ADoC), Curriculum Specialist (CS), Course Lead (CL), and Academic Department Chair, regularly review course metrics at the end of each term. During these reviews, the team examines longitudinal data to identify low-performing courses, trends, and outliers. Trends may indicate courses the team needs to revise. However, there may be alternative explanations for low metrics, such as first-term courses, low-enrollment courses, or courses with more challenging content. The team considers all possibilities before scheduling course revisions. The team also analyzes each term individually, where low metrics might indicate specific issues that the team needs to address immediately. The team reviews metrics including W-rate (students who withdraw), F-rate (students who fail), course-level assessments, grade point average, quantitative and qualitative feedback from student and faculty end-of-term surveys, and average grades by unit.

Prerevision

The team reviews the same metrics at the start of major revision projects to inform specific changes needed in the course. When course metrics are not at the desired level, there may be a mismatch between a course-level outcome and its corresponding assignment, the assignment may be unclear, or there may be an error in the assignment directions. Lower metrics may also be the result of instructor error or the performance of one to two students that skews the metrics. The course lead approves any action taken in response to the analysis of course metrics.

Three-Term Report

Three terms after each revision, the team reviews metrics using the Three-Term Report (TTR). The TTR compares the three terms before and after the revision and indicates where metrics have improved, declined, or remained the same.

External Exams

In addition to internal Purdue Global metrics, the team uses data from external exams to provide insight about course quality. For example, the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) is a standardized exam that each state board of nursing uses to determine if a candidate is prepared for entry-level nursing practice. The team integrates the Health Education Systems, Inc. (HESI) Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) exam into the curriculum to provide students with a representation of the NCLEX exam.

Curriculum Design

The curriculum team uses a collaborative, systematic, and replicable instructional design approach to ensure courses are appropriate for adults in a distance learning environment. A centralized curriculum team collaborates with school faculty and academic administration to design and develop Purdue Global curriculum using a standards-based, outcomes-focused approach. This approach includes five phases: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation (ADDIE).

Before the analysis phase, department chairs identify highly qualified faculty subject matter experts (SMEs) to develop course content. During the analysis phase, the team reviews course metrics and may conduct a task and learner analysis. Based on the analysis, the team determines the scope of the project.

In the design phase, the team writes learning outcomes and develops a course map. All course outcomes are carefully reviewed by Purdue Global's Faculty Curriculum Committee (FCC), comprising faculty members from across the institution. Once the FCC has approved the course outcomes, the team develops assessments and rubrics to measure student mastery of course outcomes. Finally, the team develops course content to provide support to students in achieving course outcomes.

The typical Purdue Global students are 35 or older working adults, many of whom are first-generation students, single parents, and/or military servicemembers, veterans, or military spouses. To meet their learning needs, the curriculum team employs research-based best practices from cognitive science, distance learning, and andragogy. Courses and activities are designed to motivate and engage adult learners through personalization, relevance, contextualization, and scaffolding, while honoring students' time.

The courses are structured to provide instructional materials and opportunities to practice, discuss, and demonstrate learning. For example, courses include discussion questions that build on students' life and work experiences and build learning communities; formative assessments and learning activities that are based on authentic problems and allow learners to build competency throughout the course; and competency-based summative assessments, including papers, projects, and exams. Our courses also incorporate live seminars to provide both social learning and ongoing feedback from the instructor.

Once the design phase is complete, the Department Chair and SME complete a quality audit of all course content and deliverables before curriculum developers and media specialists build the course in Purdue Global's learning management system, Brightspace. Purdue Global delivers the course to students and faculty in the implementation phase. The process concludes with an evaluation of course metrics.

Internal Review

The Purdue Global curriculum team has a rigorous and ongoing audit process to confirm quality standards are met along the continuum of course revision through the student experience. The following audit thresholds ensure quality standards remain forefront within curriculum's course management.

Audit Checklists

The project team, comprising curriculum, the SME or CL, and school leadership, use a standard and consistent audit checklist during all revision work. The audit checklist ensures all team members conduct a comprehensive review of all content, technology, and learning management system functionality within a course. Curriculum, production, and the SME/CL must complete the audit checklist before Purdue Global releases a revision or new course for student use.

Unit Time Allocation

The U.S. Department of Education specifies expected numbers of in- and out-of-class activity based on the number of course credit hours. The curriculum team audits each new and revised course during development to ensure the activities in the course meet these expectations. The team records the audit results within the credit hour database.

The curriculum team prepares reports for each migration term to monitor compliance. An annual report ensures all courses are compliant with U.S. Department of Education expectations and the curriculum team remedies issues in noncompliant courses.

Editorial

The curriculum editorial team reviews major revision work to ensure the project team follows the Purdue Global editorial standards and course model. Editorial plays a pivotal role in maintaining acceptable standards of academic writing and design and meeting expectations of Purdue Global's academic leadership.

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 Compliance Audits

Within the revision process, curriculum specialists and media developers review course content for ADA and Section 508 compliance. The team designs student activities and engagement processes within to address ADA and Section 508 standards to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Course Lead Quarterly Audit and Meeting Minutes

The CL program provides ongoing faculty oversight of curriculum quality and the student experience. Each quarter during the calendar year, CLs review courses for content and functionality using an audit form. In addition, CLs meet with the teaching cadre for their assigned courses to assess the course from teaching and student perspectives, share data metrics and survey results, and discuss recent updates.

External Review

Advisory Boards

External boards provide recommendations on the academic quality of Purdue Global curriculum. The Student Advisory Board (SAB) comprises students tasked with reviewing academic issues and policies. The SAB suggests improvements to assessments, rubrics, and resources; represents the student perspective in course pilots; and provides advice regarding student academic concerns.

Accreditation

Accreditors assess curriculum quality and compliance of the program and institutional requirements. For example, accreditors, such as The Higher Learning Commission (HLC), conduct site visits to evaluate the success of programs and to assess academic compliance. As part of the quality evaluation process, accreditor representatives meet with program stakeholders and administrators, review courses, and complete board review quality checklists.

Summary

In addition to adhering to external quality standards, Purdue Global employs a systematic, multifaceted approach to quality assurance in its curriculum. Through data-driven analysis, research-based instructional design practices, and comprehensive internal review and evaluation, we continuously improve our students' learning experience.