



HLC Accreditation 2020-2021

Evidence Document

Academic Affairs

Media Resources Center

Friendly Audits of Online Courses AY 2018 – 2019

Additional information:

Friendly Audits AY 2018 – 2019

In accordance with the Office of Online Learning (OOL) Procedure manual, all online and hybrid courses for 2018-2019 were audited for compliance and effectiveness.

The course audits led to the review of 1104 fully online courses and 37 hybrid courses taught by 382 instructors. The most persistent and significant issues found by the auditors were organizational/navigational problems, for which 57 courses were flagged, and accessibility concerns, for which 15 courses were flagged. Eight courses and seven instructors flagged in the 2018-2019 audits, were previously flagged in the 2015 – 2016 audits.

Of all courses audited, the following concerns were noted:

- Approximately 38% of courses used inconsistent or unfocused navigation for a clear course structure. This is an improvement of 12% over the Fall 2015 audit.
- Approximately 21% of courses are lacking any instructor – student interaction, and approximately 24% of courses are lacking any student – student interaction.
- Approximately 13% of courses are lacking any instructor-generated content.
- Only 9% of courses were found to be lacking measurable learning objectives.
- Only 6% of courses were found to be lacking adequate content. Note: in some instances, this could possibly be due to an instructor removing content after the course has concluded.

Of all courses audited, the following accessibility concerns were noted:

- Approximately 68% of courses that featured images failed to provide alt tags or other essential text alternatives for all images. This is an improvement of 2% over the Fall 2015 audit.
- Approximately 58% of courses contained inaccessible documents, such as: scanned PDFs, untagged PDFs, and/or documents with heading issues.
- Approximately 53% of all narrated media, including lecture videos, podcasts, and external videos, were lacking captions and/or transcripts - showing a 32% improvement from the Fall 2015 audit.
- Approximately 44% of courses included inaccessible text, such as: using color as the only way to convey meaning, insufficient color contrast, or text that is not selectable and/or resizable.
- Approximately 32% of courses contained raw URL's, an improvement of 38% from the Fall 2015 audit.

To address the issues found during the 2018 – 2019 audit, WSU responded in the following ways:

- The Office of Instructional Resources (OIR) will send each instructor who had a course audited a personal and confidential letter outlining areas for improvement in the course. The letter will contain links to any training necessary for the instructor to meet these suggestions.
- OIR is available to all instructors and GTAs seeking training or guidance in improving their course.
- In response to accessibility, OIR's instructional designers staff a drop-in "Accessibility & Blackboard" lab twice a week, which provides assistance and guidance on accessibility and Blackboard issues to all instructors and GTAs.
- In response to organizational/navigational problems, OIR provides course building workshops and course-building services. In-addition, multiple course templates, to address a variety of course-organization methods, are now available to all instructors in the institution content of the Blackboard platform.