Quality Guidelines for University of Waterloo Online Courses

The Centre for Extended Learning, together with the Advisory Committee on Distance and Online Education and the Associate Vice-President Academic are committed to promoting the following principles of good practice in the design and delivery of University of Waterloo online courses.

1. **General Principles**
   - uWaterloo online courses strive to be academically rigorous, current, and reflective of the standards of scholarship within the discipline, as well as best practices in pedagogy.
   - uWaterloo online courses strive for a learning experience that is equivalent for all online students, regardless of their geographic location, schedule, or disability.
   - uWaterloo online courses encourage and exemplify the highest standards of academic integrity.
   - uWaterloo online courses have a course outline that complies with University Policy.

2. **Intended Learning Outcomes**
   - Outcomes are measurable, achievable, relevant, concise, and clearly stated.
   - The learning activities, assessments, and content align with and promote the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

3. **Learning**
   - The course engages students in active learning through an appropriate mix of student-content, student-instructor, and student-student interaction.
   - Course activities respect diverse talents, backgrounds, and ways of learning, and reflect an awareness of an international audience.
   - Whenever possible learning activities should reflect activities within the discipline, and are relevant and/or applicable to real-world situations.

4. **Assessment**
   - Policies pertaining to assignments and grades are clearly stated.
   - Students are provided with the necessary information to complete assignments (e.g., instructions, evaluation criteria).
   - Constructive feedback about performance is provided to students in a timely manner throughout the course (e.g., providing sufficient time for students to incorporate feedback into next assignment).

5. **Content Presentation and Media Selection**
   - The technology and media chosen are appropriate for the content, audience, and intended learning outcomes.
   - The course follows CEL practices for ensuring accessibility, in accordance with provincial legislation (the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act or AODA) and uWaterloo accessibility guidelines.
   - Media resources follow CEL’s Presentation Standards and are consistent with Waterloo’s institutional identity.
• Media used in the course complies with Canadian copyright legislation.

6. **Pace, organization, and sequencing of the course**

• Work expectations are clearly communicated to students and fall within the University of Waterloo’s guidelines (i.e., approximately 10 hours per week for undergraduate courses).
• The course includes standardized information that supports the learner’s progress (e.g., Getting Started, Technology Check, Schedule, Assignment Submission Instructions, and Final Exam Centre Information).
• The course is well-organized and uses an evident design framework (e.g., chronological, thematic, easy-to-difficult, etc.)

7. **Teaching and Facilitation**

• The instructor maintains a presence and interacts with students in a variety of ways throughout the course.
• The instructor fosters a supportive learning environment for students.
• The instructor sets and meets expectations for instructor responsiveness and availability (e.g., turn-around time for email and discussion forum postings, feedback on assignments, etc.)
• Student feedback is collected and used to continually improve course quality.