With the growing number of online classes at UHWO, we must ensure a high quality learning experience for our students. These guidelines provide a checklist of helpful components that can improve our online classes.

These best practices guidelines were originally compiled by UH-Hilo, and were based on materials produced by the following: Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications, Good Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs (endorsed by the eight regional accrediting commissions, including WASC); the American Distance Education Consortium; Illinois Online Network; and online course review checklists used by the California State University at Humboldt, CSU-Chico, the University of Alaska at Anchorage, and the University of Texas Telecampus.

It is not expected that all items in a category will be found in a course. Teaching and learning of the curriculum determines the best tools to be used. The faculty member, as the Subject Matter Expert (SME) controls the creation of the best learning environment.

Faculty members can access books and other resources regarding online instruction through the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence and the Online Distance Education Laulima site.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Learning outcomes are clearly defined and explained, allowing students to focus on learning activities.

- The online course has comparable content, expectations for student learning outcomes, and acceptable levels of student performance with the corresponding F2F course.

- The course syllabus gives the student an accurate and comprehensive overview of learning outcomes, assignments and exams, expectations, course policies (e.g. late papers, make-up exams), access to information, grading and other essential information. The intent is this information is available the first day of the term.

- The learning outcomes described in the course are documented through exams/quizzes, journals, papers, projects and/or portfolios.

RESOURCES AND COURSE MATERIALS: Course materials foster learning in the online environment. The instructor monitors the effectiveness of the technology and presentation of content throughout the course.

- The instructional materials support the stated learning outcomes and have sufficient content for the student to learn the subject.

- Course materials are organized in logical order over the term.

- Lectures, notes, readings and other materials are posted in platform-free format (e.g., PDF, RTF, PPS); students have the option of printing at least some materials. Instructors should be aware that compatibility may be an issue (as in the case of Mac users).

- The instructor has complied with the appropriate copyright guidelines and, if needed, used the additional resources on Copyright Fair Use from the University of California. (http://copyright.university-ofcalifornia.edu/fairuse.html)
RESOURCES AND COURSE MATERIALS: Course materials foster learning in the online environment. The instructor monitors the effectiveness of the technology and presentation of content throughout the course. (cont’d)

- Course materials are presented in a variety of formats in addition to print text, such as streaming video, narrated PowerPoints, PDF files, movies, web conferencing, live capture lectures and discussions.

- Assignments engage students in active and interactive learning, such as problem-solving, discussion board interaction, Powerpoint presentations, web page creation, small-group reports to the class.

- The course offers simple and reliable means for students to submit assignments and for instructors to return them.

- The instructor provides links to capitalize on rich website content, archives and other online information resources.

- Instructions for assignments are explicit; assignment parameters are explained; rubrics or guidelines are provided for assignments.

ACCESS: The instructor ensures that students can easily access online materials.

- Provide access to the course through password/registration process to authenticate student identity.

- The course website/syllabus includes the university’s disability statement.

- The website/syllabus lists the technological requirements for the course: hardware, software, level of access to the internet, student skill levels.

- The course demonstrates sensitivity to readability issues (i.e. avoids the uses of colored text or other bright colors).

ONLINE COMMUNICATION: The online course offers frequent and personal student-instructor interaction.

- The course website/syllabus provides a welcome to the course and a self-introduction by the instructor.

- Clear standards of realistic timelines are set for instructor response and availability.

- The instructor responds reliably and promptly (within 24 to 72 hours) to student questions and requests for assistance.

- The instructor is available as stated in the syllabus to students via email, course chat room, discussion board and/or such free web systems.
COMMUNITY BUILDING: The online course fosters a sense of community.

☐ The requirements of course interaction are clearly stated.

☐ Faculty give students the opportunity to meet each other online through discussion board postings and other presentations.

☐ Students are provided with opportunities to interact with each other via frequent asynchronous postings addressing course content, monitored by their instructor.

☐ The course website/syllabus includes a course netiquette statement or links to netiquette web pages.

☐ Students are provided with opportunities to participate in small group discussions and team projects, presenting the results to the class on the course website.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION: Through the assessment and evaluation of student learning, the instructor is systematically and regularly assessing learning.

☐ Assessments and evaluations are tailored to the learning outcomes described within the course.

☐ The instructor provides fast, focused, and frequent feedback on student assignments, quizzes and exams.

☐ Instructor develops simple, appropriate grading rubrics or guidelines so students know how they are being graded.

☐ Instructor returns assignments with comments (via connecting within the Assignment tool, Word “insert comments”, or other commenting capabilities.)

☐ Best performances are posted (with student permission) on the course website.

LEARNER SUPPORT: Course provides information and resources to promote learner success.

☐ The instructor provides links to technology tutorials and other aids.

☐ The instructor provides instructions on where students can obtain technical support.

☐ Welcome email and syllabus provide instructions on how to get access to library databases for those courses in which databases are used. A link to the UHWO is provided. http://guides.westoahu.hawaii.edu/library_resources_dist_ed