



# MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE (MOOC) GUIDELINES

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# Introduction

These standards are intended to serve as guidelines for partners to ensure that content and materials used in massive open online courses (MOOCs) meet the requirements and support the goals of the Online Professional English Network (OPEN). The standards are divided into five (5) major categories, or domains: **Access, Communication, Format, Open Educational Resources, and Assessment**. Each domain is further divided into one or more specific standards that describe OPEN Program expectations for MOOC design.

These standards have been created to reflect the specific accessibility needs of OPEN participants and are meant to be used in conjunction with the OPEN TESOL, IDOL, and CC BY standards. Use of these standards does not preclude the use of other commonly used standards related to the field of TESOL, Applied Linguistics, instructional design, or online learning.

## What is a MOOC?

A massive open online course, or MOOC, is an online course that is designed to be larger, broader in scope, and more accessible than standard online courses. They are usually offered on browser-based platforms such as Canvas Network, Coursera, or Udemy, and can have tens of thousands of students enrolled. Facilitated MOOCs feature active participation by instructors and facilitators and operate on a specific course schedule. Non-facilitated, or stand-alone MOOCs do not feature active instructor participation or facilitation, and usually feature open enrollment, with the course running independent of a specific schedule or timeline.

## How will OPEN MOOCs be developed and delivered?

OPEN MOOCs will use the Canvas Network platform. Canvas Network is identical in design to the Canvas LMS currently used by the program and is structured specifically for the unique space and size challenges presented by MOOCs. Course providers will develop MOOC content using the OPEN Canvas LMS. When course development is complete, FHI 360 will provide the course cartridge to Canvas Network for publication. FHI 360 will manage all communication with Canvas Network and will adjust deadlines as necessary to meet Canvas Network requests.

## Assessment and Evaluation

A rubric is included for each standard. These rubrics contain performance indicators and are meant to serve as course assessment tools. The performance indicators are intended to provide guidance and examples but are neither comprehensive nor exclusive.

## DOMAIN 1. ACCESS

MOOCs are housed entirely within the Canvas Network learning management system (LMS), negating the need for external links or document repositories, such as Google Drive and Dropbox. Accessing course content, including assessments, requires little to no external linking, downloading, or specific software suites. Videos should be hosted on the OPEN Amazon browser, so they are accessible to participants in all countries.

### Standard 1. Course Hosting

MOOCs are hosted on Canvas Network, a mobile-responsive, accessible LMS.

#### *Supporting Explanation*

MOOCs with external links, plugins, or download requirements can present a number of challenges for participants. These include the potential for confusion resulting from a broken link or misinformation from an outdated webpage, as well as the threat of viruses from compromised websites or plugins. To ensure that the MOOC is safe and easy to use, OPEN MOOC content should be housed entirely within the Canvas Network LMS. Hosting videos on the OPEN Amazon browser avoids issues of access for participants in countries where YouTube and similar video-sharing sites are blocked.

#### Rubric for Standard 1. Course Hosting

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
MOOC materials and resources are fully housed within the Canvas Network platform.	MOOC materials, resources, and assignments do not require additional plugins, downloads, specific external software, or applications for participants to satisfactorily complete their work.
Participants can access all materials regardless of bandwidth, loading, or connectivity challenges.	Materials are presented in numerous ways, as appropriate, including but not limited to: providing “alt” tag descriptions in the event images won’t or can’t load; providing captions for videos; and providing scripts for audio files.
MOOC elements are designed for multimodal viewing/access to accommodate variances in learning and physical abilities.	MOOC elements are presented in multimodal formats for all participants, and not solely by request.
Links to the videos hosted on OPEN’s Amazon S3 browser are provided under YouTube-embedded videos.	Video files are shared with the OPEN Program during the course development process, so the program can upload them to the OPEN Amazon browser and add a link in the Canvas Network course.

## Standard 2. Technology

Online learning requires technology, but technology should not supersede the needs of the student. The use of certain technological tools or devices to access course resources or materials or to complete assignments should be avoided.

### *Supporting Explanation*

The diversity of OPEN participants extends to their financial resources. Therefore, course providers should design course activities and assignments to limit the mandatory use of any online tool or technological device that may not be available in all areas, or to all participants. These include but are not limited to microphones, cameras, and applications.

### Rubric for Standard 2. Technology

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants can complete activities and assignments without additional equipment other than a device for access.	Participants may choose to use an additional technological device (e.g. recording or video equipment) if they so choose, but the use of such equipment is not mandatory.
Courses are optimized to function in low bandwidth environments.	Alternative materials such as transcripts and module packets are presented alongside primary materials throughout the course, so participants in low bandwidth environments can access them at any time without prior request. Videos are kept to a 5-minute maximum.

### Standard 3. Open Environments

The MOOC learning environment should be open and accessible to all, regardless of location.

#### *Supporting Explanation*

The OPEN Program is a global program, with participants from countries where access to certain websites, programs, and platforms may be limited. Therefore, MOOC providers should limit the mandatory use of any program or application that may not be available in all areas, or to all participants.

#### Rubric for Standard 3. Open Environments

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
MOOC content and assignments are independent of required programs.	Participants can submit assignments in multiple formats, including word processing (e.g. .doc, .txt) and freeform essay writing spaces provided on the Canvas Network platform. Using popular programs such as Microsoft Office Suite and Adobe PDF are not obligatory for materials, resources, or assignments.
MOOC resources can be accessed by all participants regardless of location, and are independent of required applications and platforms; previously or currently blocked websites (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter) are used sparingly, if at all.	Participants are provided alternatives to material on blocked or censored websites, either in the form of static content (screenshots) or dynamic content (videos) uploaded to the course. Course videos are saved to FHI 360's Amazon S3 Browser so they may be hosted independently of platforms like YouTube.

## DOMAIN 2. ENGAGEMENT

Participant engagement is crucial in all courses. MOOC engagement provides unique challenges that can be mitigated through robust communication methods designed to reinforce engagement.

### *Supporting Explanation*

Providers will engage participants by utilizing regular and consistent communication through the use of branding, lead MOOC facilitators, high-performing alumni facilitators, and an instructor support discussion board.

### **Standard 1. Branding**

Canvas Network requires external-facing branding for courses hosted on their platform, including but not limited to logos, institution names, and headshots of instructors.

### *Supporting Explanation*

Providers will allow the use of institutional logos and headshots on Canvas Network-hosted MOOCs and for MOOC promotion.

### **Rubric for Standard 1. Branding**

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Meets Standard</b>
Future participants and interested parties are able to quickly identify MOOC course providers, institutions, and instructors when browsing courses.	Providers explicitly allow the use of institutional logos, names, and headshots to be used on Canvas Network.

### **Standard 2. MOOC Facilitation by Lead Facilitator**

Facilitated MOOCs benefit from consistent, reliable facilitation. Lead facilitators work to engage, encourage, and motivate participants. They also serve to mitigate issues by communicating frequently and clearly with participants.

### *Supporting Explanation*

Providers will designate and train a lead facilitator for MOOC delivery to interact with participants, provide course support when needed, and send updates and summaries to participants in facilitated MOOCs. The lead facilitator will also participate in training, mentoring, and interacting with any alumni facilitators, making sure that alumni facilitators are meeting their goals and reaching their full potential. Alumni facilitators are used for MOOCs that were previously OPEN global online courses (GOCs). Indicators related to alumni facilitators do not apply to other kinds of MOOCs.

### Rubric for Standard 2. MOOC Facilitation by Lead Facilitator

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants have an in-course resource who interacts in discussion boards, answers questions in the content support discussion board, responds to Canvas inbox messages, and sends updates and summaries in the form of weekly announcements.	Providers designate and train a lead MOOC facilitator.
MOOC facilitators do not adjust course settings in Canvas Network.	Lead facilitator communicates with any alumni facilitators during training that they should not adjust course settings.

### Standard 3. MOOC Facilitation by High-Performing Alumni

**This standard only applies to OPEN MOOCs that have been adapted from OPEN GOCs.** High-performing GOC alumni are excellent resources for MOOC facilitation, in addition to the lead MOOC facilitator noted in Standard 2. They are familiar with course content and Canvas from the participant perspective, have demonstrated leadership, and are interested in furthering their professional development. They can support MOOC participants as well as be an inspiration or motivation for them. However; they will need appropriate training to ensure that they have the knowledge and tools to properly facilitate a MOOC. For example, while alumni facilitators will have access to course settings, the lead facilitator must work with them to ensure that they do not adjust these settings at any time during or after the course. This standard will not apply to stand-alone MOOCs.

#### *Supporting Explanation*

Providers will designate and train high-performing GOC alumni to interact with MOOC participants in discussions, providing encouragement and motivation. FHI 360 will award active alumni facilitators with certificates and digital badges after the MOOC ends to acknowledge their contributions. Therefore, providers must make a list of alumni facilitators and their contact information available to FHI 360 and communicate with FHI 360 regarding any alumni facilitators who do not meet expectations.

### Rubric for Standard 3. MOOC Facilitation by High-Performing Alumni

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants have access to and can interact with high-performing GOC alumni, who can encourage and motivate participants towards successful MOOC completion.	Providers designate and train high-performing GOC alumni to act as alumni facilitators in facilitated MOOCs.
FHI 360 has access to a list of alumni facilitators who met expectations for the purposes of awarding certificates and badges.	Providers communicate with FHI 360 regarding alumni facilitators and their performance at the end of the MOOC.

## Standard 4. Content Support

MOOCs are designed to be larger courses that provide educational opportunities to hundreds, potentially thousands of participants at once. This inherently distorts normal communication in online learning, particularly communication for participant support and engagement. Therefore, it's important to provide a forum for participants to ask questions to the instructors, facilitators, and alumni facilitators.

### *Supporting Explanation*

Providers will create, monitor and post replies in a support discussion board for all MOOCs. They will also monitor the Canvas inbox on a daily basis while the course is active and provide answers to participants in a timely manner. While FHI 360 will be responsible for providing technical support, the instructor and/or facilitators will provide answers to course-related questions.

### Rubric for Standard 4. Instructor Accessibility

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants have open access to MOOC facilitators and a forum to ask course-related questions.	Providers create a content support discussion board for all MOOCs and provide and train a lead facilitator to monitor the discussion board and support alumni facilitators.
Participants who send messages to instructors in the Canvas inbox receive responses in a timely manner.	Instructors and/or facilitators monitor the Canvas inbox daily and coordinate among themselves to answer each course-related question.
Participants encountering technical difficulties are forwarded to FHI 360's support team.	If technical support questions are posted in this forum or sent through the Canvas inbox, instructors and/or facilitators respond with information on how to contact FHI 360's support team.

## DOMAIN 3. COURSE DESIGN AND NAVIGATION

In addition to being accessible, MOOCs should offer a unified presentation to all participants regardless of location. Course requirements and expectations should be easy to navigate and understand. Formatting should be consistent and reliable throughout the course. All module prerequisites and requirements should be set to give participants visual cues throughout the MOOC. Prerequisites and requirements will tell participants if they are missing required content, display checkmarks as participants move through the course, and allow the course to award a digital badge for successful completion.

### Standard 1. Consistency

Consistency is important to every course, and especially important in MOOCs specifically designed for global, non-native English-speaking audiences. Spelling, formatting, and references should be accurate and consistent in all content pages and assignments.

#### *Supporting Explanation*

Inconsistent spelling and references create confusion for participants, particularly for global, non-native English-speaking audiences. It is crucial to use correct American English spelling and consistent references in OPEN MOOCs. It is also important that formatting is consistent throughout the modules, for ease of navigation.

#### Rubric for Standard 1. Consistency

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants can clearly understand the content and are not confused or distracted by incorrect spelling or the use of other types of English in the MOOC.	All course content uses correct spelling for American English words and phrases.
Participants can easily understand how to navigate the course.	Formatting is consistent throughout all the modules, and the modules are set up in such a way that it is easy to see one's progress through the course and its requirements.

## Standard 2. Module Prerequisites and Requirements

Canvas provides tools that allow instructors to set the requirements and prerequisites for each module.

Module requirements are set within each module. They indicate to participants that there is a process, or series of requirements, to complete the module, and that they must complete the mandatory module elements (e.g. view content pages, contribute to discussions, complete assignments, complete quizzes) in the sequential order designed by the course developer. When participants complete a requirement, they will see a green check mark next to that content page, discussion, assignment, or quiz. Requirements should never be set for optional activities. Setting a requirement for an optional activity could prevent participants from moving forward in the course or earning a badge.

Module prerequisites force participants to complete modules in a sequential order set by the course developer. This prevents participants from advancing into future modules before they have completed the prerequisite modules. Prerequisites are required for course badging.

### *Supporting Explanation*

Setting module requirements provides participants with a clear roadmap to course completion. Utilizing prerequisites prevents participants from advancing into future modules before they have completed all the required activities of previous modules and allows them to receive digital badges for successful MOOC completion. Badges will be set up by FHI 360 to be awarded automatically upon completion of all required activities in the final module.

### Rubric for Standard 2. Module Prerequisites and Requirements

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants have a roadmap to successful course completion.	Module requirements are set for each required course element (content pages, discussions, assignments, quizzes).
Participants complete the MOOC in sequential module order.	Module prerequisites are set for each required course module.
Participants who complete all the required activities before the course end date are automatically awarded a digital badge.	Module prerequisites are set up so that participants who complete all required activities automatically earn a badge upon completion of the last module. No optional activities are marked as required in Canvas.

### Standard 3. Interaction

The MOOC learning environment should be engaging, incorporating a student-centered approach to technology as much as possible while accounting for participant volume. Therefore, discussions should be used sparingly, with no more than two (2) discussions per module, in addition to the support discussion board.

Discussions should be ungraded, as there is no automatic grading in discussion boards, even on the Canvas Network platform. They should also be optional, and not included in module requirements.

#### *Supporting Explanation*

Keeping participants interested is especially important in an online course where ascertaining engagement is difficult, attrition is high, and withdrawal is relatively easy. Facilitators can be utilized to make discussions educational and engaging. However, discussions should be optional to prevent the boards from being cluttered with low-quality posts and challenging to load in low-bandwidth environments.

#### Rubric for Standard 3. Collaboration

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants are regularly engaged in discussions.	Student discussion occurs in discussion boards. Discussion boards are limited to no more than two (2) per module, not including the support discussion board.
Discussion settings optimize quality of posts and do not prevent participants in low-bandwidth environments from meeting requirements.	Discussions are ungraded and optional. They are not included in module requirements. Instructions for discussion assignments clearly indicate that they are ungraded and optional.

## DOMAIN 4. OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Open Educational Resources (OER) are a cornerstone of the OPEN Program. All GOCs and MOOCs must adhere to the OPEN CC BY Guidelines and Manual for the creation and adaptation of courses and course material.

As all MOOCs will be uploaded and shared to Canvas Commons, OPEN OER requirements will be strictly enforced for MOOCs.

### Standard 1. OER Content

All content in OPEN MOOCs must meet the definition of OER in the supporting explanation of Standard 3 of Domain 2 of the OPEN Program Creative Commons Guidelines. This means that all provider-created material must be licensed CC BY 4.0. All inputs, including resources and multimedia must be CC 4.0, CC 0 (zero), or public domain resources. Non-CC BY-compliant sources may be referenced, with a disclaimer explaining that they are not Creative Commons licensed and may not be reused or redistributed.

#### *Supporting Explanation*

Open Educational Resources (OER) are a fundamental part of the OPEN Program, ensuring that content can be revised, reused, or redistributed freely by participants.

OPEN MOOCs will be shared to Canvas Commons, Canvas' digital library of searchable, sharable educational content. Since all Canvas Commons content must be adaptable, editable, and sharable, it's important that none of it is subject to a closed copyright.

#### Rubric for Standard 1. Open Educational Resources

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants, providers, and educators worldwide can legally revise, reuse, adapt, and share OPEN MOOC content and courses.	All provider-created material is licensed CC BY 4.0, and providers only use OER inputs in their MOOC.

## DOMAIN 5. ASSESSMENT

Assessment in OPEN courses provides a way to measure knowledge gain, and typical methods of assessment must be altered in an online environment. The size of a MOOC and resulting limitations to instruction must also be taken into consideration when creating assignments.

### Standard 1. Automatic Grading of Assignments and Quizzes

Assignments and quizzes should be designed to automatically grade without requiring instructor feedback or intervention. Quizzes should be designed to incorporate multiple question types but should not utilize free-form text boxes or file uploads.

#### *Supporting Explanation*

Though variation is important in assignment design and structure, the logistical challenges presented by MOOCs make some traditional approaches to variation unrealistic. Assignments and assessments should maximize variety and encourage engagement, while remaining within the constraints of assignment types available for auto-grading.

#### Rubric for Standard 1. Automatic Grading of Assignments and Quizzes

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants complete automatically graded assignments and quizzes, receiving instant platform-generated feedback and negating the need for manual grading and individualized response.	Assignments and quizzes are deliberately structured to avoid input, such as file uploads or free-text entry, that must be evaluated by a human. Instead, auto-graded response types (e.g. buttons, sliders, drop downs, multiple choice, rank order, True/False) should be used.

### Standard 2. Unlimited Attempts on Quizzes

Quizzes should be set to allow unlimited attempts. The only exception is an ungraded pre-course diagnostic test.

#### *Supporting Explanation*

The purpose of OPEN MOOCs is to encourage learning and mastery of material, rather than to enforce strict barriers to course completion. MOOC participants have varying English levels and educational backgrounds and allowing unlimited attempts on quizzes encourages participants to learn through their assessments and improve over time. It also avoids potential requests from participants who experience technical difficulties or need additional opportunities to improve their grades. Additionally, since courses are set up to be moved through linearly, failing a quiz in one module would prevent a participant from moving forward to the next module. The pre-course diagnostic test may limit participants to one attempt, as it is ungraded. The purpose of the diagnostic is to determine participants' level of knowledge at the beginning of the course and limiting the number of attempts provides more accurate data.

#### Rubric for Standard 2. Unlimited Attempts on Quizzes

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
Participants may take any graded quiz as many times as they would like, and the highest score will be saved.	Quizzes are set up in Canvas to allow unlimited attempts and save the highest score achieved.

### Standard 3. Grading Scheme for Badging

Assignments should be graded on a scale of 10 points, or a multiple of 10. Module requirements should be set to require a score of at least 7 out of 10 to move forward in the course.

#### *Supporting Explanation*

OPEN MOOCs are set up to automatically trigger participants' earning a badge upon completing course requirements. To pass a MOOC, a participant must complete all assignments in all modules with a score of at least 70%. Assigning points to quizzes and assignments in multiples of 10 makes it simple to calculate whether or not a participant is passing as they move through the course. It is also easy for participants to understand what is required of them.

#### Rubric for Standard 3. Grading Scheme for Badging

Performance Indicator	Meets Standard
All graded quizzes and assignments are worth 10 points, or a multiple of 10.	All graded quizzes and assignments are set up to be worth 10 points, or a multiple of 10.
Participants must earn at least 7/10 points (70%) on all graded quizzes and assignments.	Module requirements are set to require participants to earn at least 7 out of 10 points on all graded quizzes and assignments in order to move forward in the module.