Required Elements of an Online Course

When designing or editing an online course, you have a great deal of flexibility. For example, you have several format options for presenting course content, including HTML pages, Books (like you are reading right now), PDF, and video. In addition, you may choose whether or not to utilize discussion forums, assignments, quizzes, and other features available through EduCat. However, NMU online courses also have several basic required elements.

Elements Required in All NMU Courses

The following elements must be included in all courses at NMU, both online and traditional:

Syllabus - You can upload a syllabus to EduCat or create one using integrated tools. We will discuss adding and updating files in Topic 3 of this course.

Course evaluation - Evaluations for online courses are conducted through the university's MyWeb Course Evaluation Services. Evaluations must be completely anonymous and not controlled by the faculty member, so EduCat tools may not be used for this. A link to the evaluation system is part of the standard EduCat course template.

- **Faculty contact information** You must specify how and when students can contact you with questions. Because at least some students in online courses are are likely to live a considerable distance from NMU, this should include at least one method of contacting you other than visiting your office. You should provide, at minimum, your e-mail address and office phone number. You may also consider holding "online office hours" using Zoom web conferencing tool.

Additional Requirements for NMU Online Courses

In addition to the requirements for all NMU courses, NMU online courses must have:

A course shell in EduCat - As mentioned previously, EduCat is NMU's Learning Management System, and is the primary service for delivering online courses. Some faculty elect to use supplemental tools, such as those supplied by textbook publishers, to deliver large parts of their courses. If you choose to do that, you still must maintain an EduCat shell with basic elements. This provides students with a common starting point for all of their online courses.

A faculty introduction - Because you will not be meeting your students in person, provide a brief introduction to yourself in the online course. An introduction helps immediately reassure students that their course is being facilitated by a genuine NMU faculty member, not a faceless computer program. Some faculty choose to create a video introducing themselves. Others use a written introduction, often including a picture. The introduction should inform students about your general background, your position, and your academic interests. You may tailor your introduction to include information specific to a particular course, or you may choose to create a more general introduction that you can use in multiple courses.

Links to student support resources - It is important to provide students with easy access to information such as reference materials for using EduCat and links to services such as Disability Services, the NMU Writing Center and Olson Library,

These NMU requirements are consistent with standards specified by the Quality Matters rubric and help ensure that online students can easily access the same level of service available to face-to-face students.