

# Faculty Buy-In Starts Here

A Guide to Engaging Instructors and  
Evaluating Online Courses Effectively



# FACULTY BUY-IN STARTS HERE

## A Guide to Engaging Instructors and Evaluating Online Courses Effectively

When it comes to building high-quality online courses, faculty engagement isn't a nice-to-have. It's the essential first step. Courses that reflect **faculty voice and expertise** consistently see stronger student outcomes, smoother adoption, and longer-term sustainability.

But too often, institutions face the same challenges:

- Top-down mandates that leave faculty feeling sidelined
- Unclear expectations or processes
- Limited time and capacity for faculty to contribute meaningfully

This guide is designed to help. Inside, you'll find:



**A clear, practical framework for fostering faculty collaboration**



**Tools to simplify onboarding and alignment**



**Evaluation strategies that maintain course quality with strong support from instructors**

Whether you're launching a new program or refreshing existing courses, use this guide to set your team and faculty up for lasting success.



# Laying the Groundwork for Faculty Collaboration

The foundation of any successful instructional design project is trust. Faculty need to know their expertise is valued and their time is respected.

## 3 CORE PRINCIPALS OF FACULTY ENGAGEMENT



### TRANSPARENCY

Clearly explain timelines, expectations, and decision-making processes.



### SHARED OWNERSHIP

Faculty should feel they have agency over content and instructional decisions.



### RESPECT

Acknowledge expertise, workload, and other competing priorities and streamline the process where possible.



# Laying the Groundwork, ctd.



## Sample Collaboration Timeline:

- Week 1: Faculty kickoff meeting + project brief shared
- Weeks 2–14: Draft development + check-ins
- Weeks 15–16: Review cycles + feedback
- Weeks 17: Final sign-off + course handoff



## Tips for Setting Expectations:

- Always start with a kickoff meeting
- Provide a written project brief outlining deliverables
- Keep review cycles tight. Limit to 2–3 rounds max

## ENGAGEMENT KICKOFF CHECKLIST

### Stakeholder alignment confirmed

Who's involved? Confirm all key decision-makers, faculty, and support staff are identified and agree on project goals.

### Faculty onboarding session scheduled

Has a kickoff meeting been scheduled to review process, timelines, and expectations with faculty?

### Roles and timelines documented

Are clear roles assigned (e.g., instructional designer, faculty lead, reviewer)? Is there a timeline with review checkpoints?

### Instructional goals defined

Are course learning outcomes and high-level instructional goals established and agreed upon by all?



# Faculty Onboarding Toolkit

Bringing faculty into a course development project shouldn't feel like extra work. When done right, onboarding sets clear expectations, respects instructors' time, and creates the foundation for a successful collaboration.

## Here's what to include in your onboarding process:



### Faculty Invitation Email

Friendly, concise, clear next steps

Your kickoff email sets the tone for collaboration. Keep it concise and friendly. Be sure to cover:

- What the project is
- Why their input matters
- What happens next (kickoff meeting, timeline, and key contacts)

### Sample Email

Subject: Join Us in Shaping Your Course: Quick Kickoff Info

Hi [Faculty Member],

We're excited to begin working with you on updating and enhancing [Course Name]. Our goal is to make sure your course is clear, consistent, accessible, and aligned with both your goals and student needs.

Here's what to expect:

- A brief kickoff meeting to align on course goals and timelines
- Collaborative checkpoints for your feedback during the process
- Resources to make this as smooth and efficient as possible

We'll follow up soon to schedule our first meeting. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please reach out.

Thank you for your expertise and partnership. We're looking forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

[Your Signature]



# Faculty Onboarding Toolkit, ctd.

Here's more of what to include in your onboarding process:



## Instructional Design Overview Outline

Instead of sharing a long presentation or internal document, provide faculty with a one-page or single-slide visual that explains:

- **Project phases** (e.g., Kickoff → Development → Review → Launch)
- **Faculty checkpoints** (where their input is needed)
- **Points of contact** for questions or support

**Pro Tip:** When partnering with Six Red Marbles, our team provides customizable onboarding documentation and supports you in creating faculty-friendly resources.



## Faculty FAQ Sheet

Eliminate common barriers and misperceptions by answering these up front. An example is provided below:

### **Who controls content?**

Faculty always maintain subject matter ownership. Our role is to help structure and deliver it effectively.

### **What's the timeline?**

Most projects follow a 6–8 week cycle with scheduled review checkpoints.

### **Will I have input?**

Absolutely. Faculty engagement is essential during design and review stages.

### **How much time will this take?**

We recommend setting clear expectations: typically 2–4 hours total across onboarding, reviews, and check-ins.



# Faculty Onboarding Toolkit, ctd.

## Faculty Project Brief Template

**Course Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lead Faculty:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructional Designer / Project Lead:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Course Goals

Clearly define what this course is designed to achieve.

*Example: Prepare students for XYZ certification; cover ABC competencies.*

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### What We Need From You

- Most recent syllabus
- Key content materials (lectures, slide decks, readings)
- Subject matter expertise for review and input
- Participation in scheduled review meetings

### Timeline & Milestones

**Kickoff Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Content Development Phase:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Final Review & Launch Prep:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review Checkpoints** (List when faculty input is expected):

- Initial course outline review
- Mid-development content review
- Final quality assurance review



# Faculty-First Course Reviews

A clear, collaborative review process helps keep courses fresh, effective, and student-centered while respecting faculty expertise and time.

## WHEN TO EVALUATE

**Term-Based** (Every 3–4 Months): Quick checks before each semester or session to ensure content, dates, and links are up to date.

**Annual Review** (Once a Year): A deeper review cycle incorporating student feedback, faculty reflection, and data analysis.

**Programmatic Review** (Every 3–4 Years): Evaluate full programs for consistency, alignment with outcomes, and instructional quality across courses.

**Accreditation Cycle** (Every 5–10 Years): Comprehensive reviews tied to institutional accreditation processes and external quality standards.

## WHAT TO FOCUS ON

- **Structure:** Clear, consistent layout and navigation
- **Accessibility:** All materials meet current standards
- **Engagement:** Opportunities for student interaction
- **Clarity:** Transparent expectations and outcomes

## TIPS FOR CONSTRUCTIVE COLLABORATION

- Pair self-review with instructional design support
- Focus on enhancing student experience through faculty insights
- Use clear rubrics and shared checklists



# Faculty Course Evaluation Checklist

A quick, structured guide for reviewing a course before launch or refresh. Focus on structure, clarity, engagement, and alignment. Use it for self-review, peer feedback, or as part of regular course quality processes.

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Lead Faculty or Team: \_\_\_\_\_

## Structure & Navigation

- Course layout is consistent across modules/weeks.
- Navigation follows LMS best practices.
- Key course information (syllabus, grading policy, instructor info) is easy to find.
- Orientation or welcome materials are included.

## Accessibility & Inclusivity

- All videos have captions.
- All images have alt text.
- Materials meet institutional accessibility standards (e.g., WCAG).
- Course content reflects diverse perspectives.

## Engagement & Interaction

- Opportunities for student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction.
- Activities support community building and applied learning.
- Communication expectations are clearly outlined.

## Clarity & Outcomes

- Learning outcomes are stated clearly in each module/week.
- Assessments align with learning outcomes.
- Instructions for assignments and assessments are clear and complete.

## Assessment & Feedback

- Rubrics or grading criteria are provided for major assignments.
- A mix of formative and summative assessments is used.
- Feedback is timely, actionable, and constructive.



# Faculty Buy-In Quick Tips

## Building Stronger Courses Starts with Collaboration

Here are five essentials to keep in mind as you engage faculty in course design and evaluation efforts:



### Start with Transparency

Clearly outline goals, timelines, and expectations from day one.



### Respect Faculty Time

Use checklists, templates, and structured reviews that make participation easy and purposeful.



### Keep the Focus on Students

Frame reviews around student outcomes and learning experience, not just compliance.



### Make Feedback Two-Way

Create space for faculty input throughout the process, not just at final review stages.



### Celebrate Wins

Acknowledge faculty contributions and course improvements publicly. Small recognition goes a long way.

**With the right support and structure, faculty buy-in isn't a barrier. It's your biggest advantage.**

# Building Better Courses—Together

## TURN IDEAS INTO ACTION WITH SRM AS YOUR PARTNER

Institutions use this framework to:

- Pilot 1–2 course refreshes to test new processes
- Build faculty onboarding resources alongside program launches
- Integrate evaluation checklists into quality assurance workflows

### How Six Red Marbles can support your team:



**Faculty collaboration** and ID co-facilitation



**Custom onboarding tools and templates**



**Semester Prep:** fast, pre-term course reviews



**Tiered Course Development:** refreshes or builds

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