

DIAGNOSTIC TOOL FOR ACADEMIC LEADERS
& INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS

Accelerated Course Review Checklist

Designing Rigorous, Workforce-Aligned Courses
in 5–8 Week Formats

FIVE AREAS OF REVIEW

I

Structural Integrity

Outcomes, workload, pacing, cognitive load

II

Assessment & Academic Rigor

Rubrics, feedback cadence, authentic performance

III

Learner Experience in Compressed Formats

Navigation, orientation, media, weekly clarity

IV

Workforce Alignment

Competencies, employer skills, transferability

V

Faculty Sustainability

Workload, QA process, revision loops

USE THIS TOOL

- During course development
- Before program launch
- As part of a QA or peer review process
- After first delivery to guide iteration

WHY THIS CHECKLIST EXISTS

Acceleration Requires Redesign

Shorter timelines do not automatically produce stronger outcomes. When courses move to a 5–8 week format, structure, cognitive load, and assessment strategy must shift intentionally. Compression alone often leads to learner overload, unclear expectations, and weaker outcomes.

This checklist helps institutions determine whether an accelerated course has been intentionally redesigned—or simply shortened.

COMMON PATTERN

Many accelerated courses struggle when content is compressed without redesigning structure, assessment, and pacing. The strongest programs intentionally rework how learning happens within a shorter timeframe.

I Structural Integrity

Strong accelerated courses are built on structure, not speed.

- Learning outcomes are realistic and achievable within the compressed timeframe
- Weekly workload aligns with credit-hour expectations and adult learner capacity
- Content is intentionally redesigned for flow, not simply reduced
- High-stakes assessments are introduced and scaffolded earlier in the course
- Cognitive load is distributed intentionally across weeks—no "spike" weeks

II Assessment & Academic Rigor

Rigor comes from precision, not volume.

- Assessments prioritize application, analysis, and authentic performance
- Instructions are exceptionally clear to support faster student turnaround
- Rubrics are streamlined, transparent, and aligned to outcomes
- Feedback cadence enables meaningful iteration within shortened cycles
- Assessment volume reflects depth and mastery—not redundancy

III Learner Experience in Compressed Formats

Working adults experience time differently—design must reflect that reality.

- Course orientation is simplified and front-loaded in Week 1
- Navigation is consistent and predictable across all weeks
- Discussion prompts are designed for depth within limited timeframes
- Media assets are purposeful, concise, and directly tied to outcomes
- Weekly expectations are explicit, realistic, and easy to track

IV Workforce Alignment

Acceleration should increase relevance

- Course outcomes clearly map to program-level competencies
- Assessments reflect authentic, job-relevant tasks
- Employer-facing skills are explicitly named and reinforced
- Learners can clearly articulate transferable skills gained in the course

V Faculty Sustainability

Acceleration must work for faculty *and* learners.

- Faculty workload is realistic for grading and feedback timelines
- Structured touchpoints are built in to support student progress
- Facilitation expectations are clearly defined and supported
- A formal QA review process is in place before course launch
- A revision loop exists after first delivery to improve future iterations

INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

Final Reflection

If multiple boxes remain unchecked, the course may require further redesign before delivery. Use this checklist as a starting point for targeted conversation, not a pass/fail judgment.

Acceleration succeeds when these four elements work together to produce stronger outcomes

- 1 Structure is intentional
- 2 Workforce alignment is explicit
- 3 Assessment is purposeful
- 4 Faculty are supported

NOTES & NEXT STEPS

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Want to evaluate your programs at scale?

Six Red Marbles partners with institutions to audit, redesign, and build workforce-aligned programs that meet the needs of today's learners and tomorrow's expectations.