



Using AI to Pre-Review Online Courses

Against the OEE Online Course Audit Checklist

A Resource from the Office of Educational Effectiveness (OEE)

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Purpose

A course export contains far more than any single reviewer can efficiently check by hand: dozens of pages, assignments, discussions, and links across a full term. Many of the issues that come up in an audit are structural and factual rather than judgment calls: content that exists but isn't linked into the week it belongs to, a link that has quietly expired, a syllabus missing one required statement, module titles left over from a previous term. These are exactly the kind of checks an AI tool can perform reliably against a full course export: work that is thorough but mechanical, and easy to miss reading page by page.

Running a course export through an AI tool before submitting for audit will not replace the OEE review or the instructor/designer's own walkthrough of the live course. Some things (profile pictures, live discussion activity, analytics) simply aren't visible in an export and need a direct check in Canvas. But it should catch a meaningful share of the structural and factual issues in advance, so the OEE review can focus on quality and judgment rather than hunting for broken links.

What This Can and Can't Do

- **Can check:** whether content is actually linked into the course's weekly structure (not just present somewhere in the course); broken or expiring links, including pre-signed URLs with a built-in expiration date; whether the syllabus covers each required statement, including the learning outcomes, identity verification, integrity, accessibility, and support statements added in the revised checklist; whether course outcomes are stated and tied to assessments; whether a scheduled interaction design is built in (posted office hours, a weekly rhythm of prompts and announcements, distributed deadlines, a stated feedback turnaround, a monitoring plan); which of the five federal substantive interaction activities are designed into the course; accessibility basics visible in content (captions or transcripts referenced, alt text, structured headings); whether the weekly time map is consistent with the workload the modules actually show; and a real cadence of Mission Focused Learning content.
- **Can't verify from an export:** the instructor profile picture and course card image (account/dashboard-level settings; student photos are encouraged, not required); actual instructor participation, feedback delivery, monitoring, and analytics (live activity data, not exported); textbook price at the LLU Course Schedule (an external system). An export shows what the course is designed to do, not what happens during the term; delivery is confirmed by the live-course check and by OEE's delivery sampling.
- **Must not decide:** the course type. The AI reports the interaction evidence it finds; the OEE reviewer makes the Distance Education vs. Correspondence determination, because that line depends on instructor interaction an export cannot show.

Always confirm the "can't verify" items directly in the live course and treat the output as a preliminary pass, not the completed, signed audit. AI output also varies from run to run; the output you submit is the one that becomes part of the record.

Data Handling

- Use an institutionally approved AI tool. Confirm current approved tools with Information Services before uploading course material.
- Upload course content only, never student records. A design-stage export should contain no student submissions, grades, or rosters; if the export comes from a previously taught section, confirm the trimmed folders are free of student work and names before uploading.
- The trimming step below also keeps uploads small and limits what leaves Canvas to the files the checklist actually needs.

Recommended Workflow

1. Export the course: in Canvas, go to Settings → Export Course Content → Create Export, and download the file once it's ready (Canvas will also email you when it's done).
2. If the export is large (Canvas exports can easily run 100+ MB), unzip it (rename .imsc to .zip if needed) and set aside the web_resources folder, which is typically the course's uploaded Files and the main source of large media. The course_settings, wiki_content, non_cc_assessments folders and the root manifest/xml files carry almost everything relevant to the checklist and are usually only a few hundred KB to a few MB combined.
3. Re-zip the trimmed folder and upload it to the approved AI tool along with the revised LLU Online Course Audit Checklist.
4. Use the sample prompt below or adapt it.
5. Review the output, confirm anything marked "cannot verify" directly in the live course, and address findings before the term begins.
6. Attach the AI output to the signed checklist when submitting for the OEE audit. OEE retains the checklist, the AI output, and the decision by term, and re-runs the check on a sample of submissions.

Sample Prompt

Copy and adapt the text below. Attach the trimmed course export and the revised LLU Online Course Audit Checklist before sending it.

I'm preparing for an OEE online course audit and want a preliminary check first. Attached is a Canvas course export (course_settings, wiki_content, non_cc_assessments, and manifest files) for [course number/name], along with the revised LLU Online Course Audit Checklist.

Please review the export against the checklist and check for:

1. Whether pages, assignments, and discussions are actually linked into each week's module, not just present somewhere in the course.
2. Module or page titles that still show dates from a previous term.
3. Broken or expiring links, including pre-signed URLs with a built-in expiration date, and fragile forwarded/tracking-style links.
4. Whether the syllabus covers each required statement: assessments, assignments, a dated schedule, learning activities, the communication plan with a response time, textbook ISBN and price, course learning outcomes, academic integrity and identity verification, and accessibility and support information.
5. Whether course learning outcomes are stated and each one is assessed by at least one assignment, exam, or project.
6. The regular interaction design (checklist items R1 to R5): posted scheduled office hours (not "by appointment"), a weekly rhythm of prompts and announcements across the whole term, distributed deadlines, a stated feedback turnaround, and a monitoring-and-outreach plan.
7. Which of the five substantive interaction activities under 34 CFR 600.2 are designed into the course, with the evidence for each; at least two are required.
8. Accessibility basics visible in the export: captions or transcripts referenced for video and audio, alt text on images, structured headings.
9. Whether the weekly time map in the submission is consistent with the workload the modules actually show.
10. A real cadence of Mission Focused Learning content, not just a boilerplate paragraph in the syllabus.

Report the interaction evidence you find, but do not classify the course type; the OEE reviewer makes that determination. Flag anything unclear or that needs to be confirmed directly in the live course.

Checklist Areas at a Glance

A quick-reference summary of what each section of the revised checklist is really asking for, based on the items that come up most often.

Checklist Area	What to look for
Course Completion	Pages, assignments, and discussions aren't just present in the course but actually linked into each week's Module. Content that exists but isn't linked into the sequence won't be found by students navigating week to week.
Module / content dates	Module and page titles show the current term, not a past offering; leftover dates are a common sign of a copied course shell that wasn't fully rebuilt.
Course Hyperlinks	Dead links, and specifically pre-signed URLs (common with library database and publisher PDF links) that carry a built-in expiration and can expire mid-term even if they work today. Also flag email-forwarded "safelinks" style tracking URLs, which are fragile and can expose the sender's email address.
Syllabus	All required statements, including the new ones: learning outcomes, identity verification and integrity, accessibility and support. The dated schedule and the textbook price are the two most commonly missing.
Learning Outcomes	Outcomes stated in the syllabus and Canvas, mapped to program outcomes, and each assessed by at least one assignment, exam, or project.
Regular Interaction	A scheduled interaction design: routine office hours (not "by appointment"), a weekly rhythm across the whole term, distributed deadlines, a stated feedback turnaround, and a monitoring-and-outreach plan. Delivery of that design is confirmed live, not from the export.
Substantive Interaction	Which of the five federal activities are designed in, with at least two required. A dedicated Q&A/course-questions forum is often missing and is worth checking for specifically; prompts should call for analysis or reflection, not just recall.
Identity & Integrity	The verification method named (a secure login alone is the federal floor; high-stakes assessment pairs it with an additional practice), the integrity statement present, and any verification charges stated. Charge notice must appear with the course listing at registration, an external system the export cannot show.
Credit Hour	The weekly time map is present, direct instruction activities are identified, and the mapped hours are consistent with what the modules actually contain.
Accessibility & Support	Captions or transcripts referenced, alt text, structured headings, the accommodation statement, and support contacts reachable from the course.
Mission Focused Learning	An actual weekly cadence (devotionals, values-oriented framing tied to the discipline itself), not just a general statement in the syllabus.
Course Type	The AI reports the interaction evidence found; the OEE reviewer makes the Distance Education vs. Correspondence determination per 34 CFR 600.2. A course determined to be correspondence is not left designated as distance education: it is revised, re-designated, or removed from the schedule before the term begins.

The Federal Requirements Behind the Interaction Checks

For reference, the interaction items in the revised checklist track the definition of distance education in 34 CFR 600.2, as amended effective July 1, 2021.

- **Regular interaction** has two parts, and the institution must ensure both: (1) providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length and content of the course; and (2) monitoring each student's academic engagement and success, with an instructor responsible for promptly and proactively engaging the student when that monitoring shows a need,

or upon the student's request. The instructor does not have to initiate every interaction; scheduled availability counts even if students don't use it. But interaction that depends only on students reaching out does not satisfy the requirement. The checklist's items R1 through R5 are LLU's evidence standard for these two parts, not a federal enumeration; the regulation itself requires the two parts, not five items.

- **Substantive interaction** means engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment consistent with the course content, and includes at least two of the following five: (a) providing direct instruction; (b) assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework; (c) providing information or responding to questions about the content of the course; (d) facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of the course; (e) other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.
- **Direct instruction** is not defined in the regulation, but Department of Education commentary indicates it means live, real-time instruction with instructor and students present together; a recorded lecture by itself likely does not qualify as direct instruction, though it remains strong course content and supports the other activities. A fully asynchronous course should therefore plan to meet the two-activity minimum through activities (b) through (e) unless it includes live sessions.
- **Computer-graded work alone** does not satisfy the feedback activity; feedback must come from the instructor and direct student learning.

Reference

The revised LLU Online Course Audit Checklist and the LLU Distance Education Instructor Guide are available on the OEE website: <https://llu.edu/academics/office-provost/departments-and-divisions/educational-effectiveness>. Federal definitions: 34 CFR 600.2 (www.ecfr.gov) and the Distance Education and Innovation final rule, 85 FR 54742 (September 2, 2020).

Questions

Contact the Office of Educational Effectiveness with any questions about applying this workflow to your course.