

These questions have been received from different providers regarding the 2010-2011 USPAP Equivalency Criteria for Online Courses. Additional questions or clarification can be submitted to [info@idecc.org](mailto:info@idecc.org).

Revised June 15, 2009

<b>Category</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Response/Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Bookmarking	Page 12, General Requirements	Bookmarking feature	It appears that returning students are given an option to return to the page from which they exited or restart the lesson/module, while the specs simply indicate a bookmark feature must be included. Must an "equivalent" course provide students with this option?	It is acceptable to implement solely as written in the criteria. If you like the example in the functional model better, that meets the requirements as well.
Content Components	Page 9, Section 2	Pass with a storyboard and a pass without a storyboard	What are the criteria to determine when you can have a pass with a storyboard or a pass without a storyboard? Why would you want to have these two different options? What is the purpose of these two different options?	A story board is just what is sounds like, a "story" that usually requires an order of presentation. Why would you want to have both? Because sometimes you'll want to teach the concepts without having the supplemental material in a section including a storyboard. In a teaching lesson, you may have a pass with a story board, where in a review lesson, you may have a pass without storyboard.
Content Components	Page 9, Section 2	Presentation Slides Only	Are modules with presentation slides only primarily used for course introductions? Just to confirm, are presentation slides always presented in the order in which they were developed?	Yes.

<p>Content Components</p>	<p>Page 9, Section 2</p>	<p>Question Slides Only</p>	<p>What are the criteria for when and how question slides only are used? Is the student required to answer each question correctly only once (as opposed to twice in mixed storyboards/modules)? Is the particular functionality required to be duplicated, or is this simply the course provider's method for showing mastery?</p> <p>For example, in the current USPAP update course, it appears as though at the end of the last presentation/question storyboard of a module, question-only storyboards (called "reviews" are presented that repeat the questions from the storyboards in the previous module (and perhaps the storyboards in the current module?). What model of content flow will be required to be considered "equivalent," or will content criteria from the Appraisal Foundation dictate that?</p>	<p>Questions slides are used for assessment. They should be placed at logical intervals. Intervals are usually appropriately identified in the course outline. The online course demo provides a good example of how often questions slides are presented.</p> <p>If students achieve perfect scores on all assessments, they'll have to answer each question twice, once for each pass.</p> <p>In some modules, the student is required to answer each question correctly only once (mastery level 1). For example, in the course demo, mastery level 1 has been used in the review or assessment modules, in which the student is presented with questions over content that has he/she already mastered in a previous module in the course.</p>
---------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------------	---	--

Category	Reference	Topic	Response/Question	Answer
Content Components	N.A.	Terminology	The term “review” is used for multiple functions (title of the question-only storyboard/module AND the mode the student chooses when re-examining a completed component). Is that specific terminology required to be maintained for both?	Not necessarily. Precise nomenclature will be unique to a provider. The general instructional design framework must be consistent with the criteria not necessarily the labeling system you use.
Content Components	N.A.	Terminology	Are we required to utilize the CompuTaught terminology for our course design (e.g., modules, storyboards, reviews) or can we use our existing terminology (e.g., units, quizzes, final assessment)?	Nomenclature will be unique to a provider.
Content Components	Page 9, Section 2	Mixed Slides (Presentation and Question)	Is it safe to assume that every mixed module (i.e., presentation and question slides) would be storyboarded into subtopics within a module? Will the Appraisal Foundation mandate a specific course flow?	We will be examining general instructional design, not content. However, this will be an instructional design call that we will not scrutinize. CAUTION: if this translates to a content issue (in that the way you instruct causes WHAT you instruct to be deficient) it could cause issues within CAP. I think the USPAP manual or other content development materials should help guide in this.
Course Content	N.A.	Application-based questions	After reviewing the online sample course, it is unclear what the definition of application-based questions is. Are these types of questions required? Will criteria for assessments come from the AQB?	I’m not sure where you are finding the term “application-based question” to be defined. It doesn’t appear in the criteria from my review. Can you provide more information?

<b>Category</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Response/Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Course Content	Page 5	Learning objectives	Our assumption is that we should use the exact learning objectives provided by USPAP and map questions to those objectives using Bloom's Taxonomy. Will criteria for content come from the AQB, as it has in the past?	I believe your assumption is safe. The latter part of your question will be for TAF staff to answer.
Course Content	Page 6, Requirements	Narration	Is narration completely off the table as a legitimate method of presenting content? If allowed, what criteria would be used to judge whether or not its use has appropriate instructional value or is being used simply to gain time?	It is off the table for controlling time. I would also consider/recommend it as an ancillary learning strategy, not a primary staple of the course/content presentation. It can certainly be used to enhance certain modules as necessary.
Course Content	Page 10, Section 2.5	Order Types	What determines when a content order type can and should be used?	When questions require a certain presentation order determines this. Often times, scenario type questions that require one portion be answered before another. Questions then must be offered in logical progression.
Course Content	Page 10, Section 4.5	Reference materials	Are reference materials required for a course? Are there any guidelines/criteria that dictate what materials must be made available to students? Will the course content guidelines coming in June provide clear directions on issues such as these?	This is section is describing the Interface not the materials/content included. I recommend contacting TAF with that questions since it is beyond our scope.
Cycles	Appendix B, Section 3.2.2.1	Cycle 1	When students start a PQ module in Learn Mode, will they always be presented material in the form of a PQ module? Are we given the flexibility to determine when a module type is selected or will that be provided to us from Appraisal Foundation?	There is no 3.2.2.1. I think you mean 3.2.1.1  I would not expect guidance from TAF on what module to use when. I believe it is the intent of the Criteria to allow the provider to determine what module type is used when.

Category	Reference	Topic	Response/Question	Answer
Cycles	Appendix B, Section 3.2	Cycles 1 and 2	<p>Can the relationship to Cycles and Passes be explained better? In the sample course and the current USPAP course, it appears that the same questions are presented during the first pass through the content as are presented during the second pass through the content but in a different order. What is the difference between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2? Is Cycle1 simply where the questions are checked for "completion," not mastery, and Cycle 2 allows "completed" questions to be counted toward "mastery"? We've observed that students who successfully answer all questions during the first pass are still required to review all content and questions for a second pass. Is this the required model? Is this dependent on the number of questions that you answered incorrectly in Cycle 1? If they have answered all questions correctly twice within an acceptable time frame, is the module marked complete?</p>	<p>Pass = passage through the content of the module. Two passes are required which also equal the first two cycles.</p> <p>Cycles = (the first two "passes" plus) cycle three starts if the student has not achieved 100% on the assessments. Students that do not answer questions correctly continue through cycles which contain questions that remain to be mastered plus a number that have. These "cycles" are continued until the student has scored appropriately on all assessment items.</p> <p>Yes, students must pass each assessment at least twice (two cycles). If a student fails one question in the whole module, he can expect at least three cycles.</p> <p>If student completes both passes with 100% on each question, there is no need to proceed to cycle three and the module is marked as complete.</p>

Cycles	Appendix B, Section 3.3	Cycle 3	<p>Is Cycle 3 only required if students have not mastered all of the questions during the first two cycles? After reviewing the sample online course, it appears that Cycle 3 is only questions. Is that correct? If the number of questions not mastered is less than 5, additional questions (already mastered) are added to equal a total of 5 questions. Is this correct? What are the criteria used to determine which questions are added to the bank of questions presented?</p>	<p>Yes as mentioned above. Cycle three is only questions.</p> <p>There is no set criteria for determining which questions get "reasked". This can be as complex as you want to make it. Random questions would be sufficient.</p>
--------	-------------------------	---------	---	---

Category	Reference	Topic	Response/Question	Answer
Cycles	Appendix B, Section 3.3	Additional Cycles	If mastery has not been met at the end of Cycle 3, it appears that additional cycles are seamlessly started. What determines when Cycle 3 has ended and another cycle has begun? Are questions simply randomly generated until you have mastered your unmastered questions?	Questions unmastered is the key. If during cycle three a question (that has not been mastered) is answered incorrectly, there is subsequently a cycle four in which unmastered questions (plus additional randomly selected questions if the total is less than 5 questions) are presented until full mastery of all questions is achieved.
Cycles	Appendix B, Section 3.7	Module Completion	Once mastery of all questions in a module has been achieved, does the module terminate at that point as indicated in the specifications? It appeared to not always have been our experience. Is this functionality a requirement for all modules in Cycle 3?	Yes, the module is complete when questions have been answered correctly after two passes.
Cycles	Sample Course	Cycles	The instructions at the beginning of the online sample include the following statement: "If the percentage of correct answers is less than 50 percent at the end of a presentation of the lesson, you will be required to complete the entire lesson again." This is not discussed anywhere in the specifications document and does not appear to reflect how the sample course actually behaves. Is this a requirement? If it is, when does it apply?	This would be an anti guessing strategy. Essentially, if a student makes less than a 50% they aren't eligible for that "pass" to lapse and it must be repeated.
Feedback Slides	Page 9, Section 1.2.3	Feedback slides	The document indicates that feedback slides can occur theoretically at any point in the module, but then goes on to state that the slides currently occur at the end of a pass, cycle, and a completed module. Which is the requirement, for the feedback slides; to occur at any point in the module or as outlined in the current practice? What specific content is	The sample course does a good job of demonstrating this. Feedback slides happen at the end of a pass.  There could be any number of things on this page. I think at minimum you would have what is included in the sample course

			required to be on a Feedback Slide?	which is feedback on the number of items masters/remaining etc.
Mastery	Appendix B, Section 2	Mastery Criteria	Is it possible to define the criteria that determine "Mastery Level 2"?	<p>This is referencing the "2 passes" necessary per module.</p> <p>The student must answer each question correctly at least twice within the allotted time.</p>

Category	Reference	Topic	Response/Question	Answer
Mastery	Page 11, Section 2.2.1.3	Module Modes	In the question only review modules/storyboards, it appears that multiple passes/cycles are not required to obtain mastery. Is that correct?	If in review mode, correct.
Module Interface	Page 10, Section 4	Navigation Requirements	<p>Why are there keyboard equivalent requirements? Is this 508 compliance related? In the sample course, the Enter key does not advance the content on the screen. Does that mean that either the spacebar or the Enter key can be used? It appears that the spacebar is being used only on content slides and not questions. In other words, after reading a question stem, the spacebar does not show the choices for the question. Is that correct?</p> <p>Nor did the left and right arrows seem to work in the online sample course. Are these required? Are there any other key equivalency requirements?</p>	If the features are not listed in the Criteria, it will not be questioned or required. The spirit of this section is that there are multiple ways to navigate through the content and that the student will have a preference for any number of legitimate reasons.
Module Interface	Page 10, Section 4	Navigation Requirements	Must the interface/navigation buttons be identical to the sample course or can course providers use different labels/icons? For example, having a greyed out button that looks as though it should be used to advance to more content yet having no instructions to the student to click anywhere in the presentation area to reveal additional paragraphs is confusing. If a course provider must follow the strategy of revealing multiple paragraphs on the screen with individual clicks, can a prompt of some sort be used to aid the student?	Feel free to improve the graphical appearance of the interface anyway you choose. The main navigation components as listed should however be present. Change the size, color, appearance, graying characteristics however you choose.

Category	Reference	Topic	Response/Question	Answer
Module Interface	Sample Course	Navigation Requirements	The sample course includes navigation buttons for functions that the course does not apparently have (Play, Replay, ABC Text). Are multimedia buttons required to be included in the interface even if there are no multimedia elements present in the course?	If you need them there for flexibility, feel free. If not, exclude them.
Questions	Appendix A, Section 2.2.1.3.2	Explanation	Some questions in the current CompuTaught USPAP course appear to have a more generic wrong answer explanation as opposed to explanations specific to each response. Will that strategy be considered acceptable in an equivalent course? Under what conditions would that be acceptable?	Yes where applicable. Answering a complicated question incorrectly should not result in..."sorry, wrong answer." A question where there are only two options and it is a "knowledge level question" then yes, that strategy would suffice.
Questions	Appendix A, Section 2.3.1.2	Presentation Sequence for Timed Questions	Is the presentation of question stems first and separate from the choices a requirement? If so, is there a specific delay interval after which choices appear that must be followed?	Choices should not be rendered until the student has read the question and is prepared to see the options (and indicates such with a click). After the "click" and the options are shown is also when the fluency timer starts.
Questions	Page 10, Section 2.5, Page 11, Section 3.1.2	Question order types/variables	What are the criteria used to determine when an order type can and should be used (whether or not questions within a storyboard are fixed or random)?	Content and instructional design determine that.
Questions	Page 6, Requirements	Question order criteria	Please provide an explanation for the following statement "Don't supply answers and then allow answering the same questions immediately and displaying the questions in the same order."	Don't ask the same questions back to back. This could theoretically happen in cycles 3 and beyond if questions are chosen at random. However, this would be insignificant if it did occur once. The Criteria is saying is shouldn't be standard

				operating procedure as it is with some courses out there today.
--	--	--	--	---

<b>Category</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Response/Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Questions	Page 12, Section 3.1.2.3	Question sources	There are no parameters given as to when questions should be used from different sources, why questions should be used from a different source, nor how many and when questions should be used from different sources. Please provide parameters. We can make some assumptions about the source of questions in looking at the current USPAP course or the sample course, but will those be specifically mandated by the Appraisal Foundation or be up to the individual course provider to determine? What would be the criteria for determining equivalency?	<p>3.1.2.3 discusses sources of questions from WITHIN the course. It has nothing to do with sources like TAF.</p> <p>If you have a 60 unit course it is wise to assess at several places in the course (after several modules, perhaps at a “mid course review” and at a final). This addresses where you pull those review questions from (i.e., from previous modules or new questions that are unique to the assessment module).</p> <p>If the assessment is mandated by TAF, then you have full ability to post the assessment as and where needed.</p>
Questions	Page 9, Section 2.3.3.2	Random order	What does "sampling without replacement from all the questions in the Pass" mean exactly?	When a question has been answered to the mastery criteria, the question is removed from the pool of questions for that module (not replaced) and the remaining, "non-mastered" questions are presented.
Reference Materials	Page 12, Supplemental Materials	Accessing reference materials	The specifications state that PDF documents must be accessible from within the course menu page and from with a module. Are there specific requirements?	Not other than is mentioned.

Review Mode	Page 11, Section 2.2	Review Mode	When you are in the review mode of a module that has already been mastered, based on the online sample course, it appears that the mastery of questions is still being tracked. Is that correct? It is assumed that when the completion status for "Learn mode" is complete, working in "Review mode" does not disturb that status.	That is correct.
-------------	----------------------	-------------	---	------------------

Category	Reference	Topic	Response/Question	Answer
Review Mode	Page 11, Section 2.2	Review Mode	According to our observations in the sample course, once a student has mastered a module and selects it again, a Review Mode menu appears and students can select questions only, presentation only, or questions and presentation. Is this menu a requirement when the module contains only presentation or only questions? (Just a note, when selecting to see presentation in what was apparently a question-only module, we saw only the "congratulations" page, and then the system seemed to lock up, forcing us to exit the course and come back in.)	No.
Portability	N.A.	Portability Requirements	It was our understanding, based on the initial conversations we had with the Appraisal Foundation, that there was an implied requirement for this course to run on any LMS. What standard or standards are being used to ensure this?	Portability requirements may have been part of the original RFP but they are not included in the Criteria.
SCORM	N.A.	LMS Requirements	If SCORM is the standard used for portability (see previous question), what are the SCORM compliant LMS requirements? Is there a specific minimum SCORM requirement for the LMS? Are there specific SCORM data elements that are required?	The Criteria does not impose standards for portability. Therefore, we will not hold providers accountable for such.
SCORM	N.A.	Course Requirements	If SCORM is the standard used for portability (see previous two questions), what are the SCORM compliant course requirements? Is there a specific minimum SCORM	See above.

			requirement for the course?	
--	--	--	-----------------------------	--

<b>Category</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Response/Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
System Requirements	N.A.	N.A.	What are the minimum system requirements for the course? What browsers are required to be supported? Should the course be built for a specific default screen resolution and color depth or quality?	This is not specified in the Criteria and is left to the provider to define as necessary.
Timers	Page 12, Section 3.1.2.2	Explanation Review Timer	What does “Explanation Review Timer – the length of the imposed delay for viewing explanations,” mean? What is this? What is its purpose?	When a student answers a question incorrectly, an “explanation” of the correct answer will appear. That explanation should be timed and then the student forwarded on. The purpose of the timer is to enhance the student's learning. Educational research has shown that a brief explanation timer increases the effectiveness of this type of feedback.
Timing	Page 14, Appendix A, Section 2.3.1.2.1	Answer Presentation	The specification states “After minimum delay of X seconds, when left click occurs (or keyboard equivalent), answers are presented.” What exactly is this	This means the student can view the question FIRST without being under the timer, once the click is established, the choices are presented and the

			functionality discussing? Is it the amount of time before the choices are shown? Also, just to note, keyboard equivalents do not appear to be activated in the sample course for questions.	timer begins.
Timing	Page 6, Requirements	Countdown clocks	The specification states “No countdown clocks on screen (not a legitimate method)”. This is confusing since there is a statement about the computer controlling the time. A computer generated timer that prevents a student from moving forward – assuming that the amount of time is appropriate to the text on the page – appears to meet this general requirement for controlling the time spent in the course. Please explain why this is not considered to be a legitimate method.	Because forcing a student to sit a wait for a clock to expire can impede the learning process and flow. The Criteria makes no case for mandating seat time. The course design, in addition to the amount of content presented, will ensure the average student spends the appropriate amount of time in the course.
Timing	Page 12, Section 2.2.1	Elapsed time	The specification states “Record total elapsed time in the course, from the time the Course Menu is	The time spent from the course menu is first accessed until the student exits the program.

			first accessed until the student exits the program". What are the requirements for defining/measuring elapsed time? Do we have to permanently store the recorded total time and report on that time?	
--	--	--	--	--

Category	Reference	Topic	Response/Question	Answer
Timing	Appendix A, Section 3	Fluency Timer	Is the fluency timer required to be activated for every question on every pass? If not, when is it activated?	Fluency timers should be active in the vast majority of cases. There are exceptions such as modules that may be "review" in nature such as exam prep modules or review sections that comprise material over multiple modules.
Timing	Page 6, Requirements	Module and Course Completion	The specification states "Computer must legitimately control when the student completes each Module and the course (average hours controlled by the computer, not the student)." We are unclear exactly how this requirement needs to be met. What is "legitimate" control? Please provide the specific parameters/criteria that need to be followed to meet this functionality.	It means the student can't decide to circumvent instructional strategies to finish the course on their schedule. It means the computer will decide when the student has achieved the objectives.
Timing	Page 14, Appendix A, Section 2.3.1.1	Presentation Sequence	Since the timing issues related to question fluency are based on a "proprietary formula," can IDECC provide guidance as to whether there is specific time allotted to questions based on the number of answer choices, the number of passes, the number of times the student has seen the question, etc.? Or, can IDECC provide an acceptable alternative method of determining fluency?	Providers will be expected to develop their own proprietary formula. IDECC will not scrutinize such unless it is implemented in an unreasonable manner. What is unreasonable? E.g. expecting a student to answer a question in as few as 2 seconds or in contrast, in as many as 5 minutes. These values aren't reasonable. Professional developers are expected to have the competency to devise and effective formula for this.
Timing	N.A.	N.A.	Is there a course timer running in the background that tracks how much time a student spends in a course? What happens if a student has completed and mastered all questions in the	Yes, a course timer should be running as indicated to document how long students are spending in the course, but there is NOT a mandate for seat

			course but has not spent the required time in the course? Are there any specific requirements about this?	time enforcement. There are no requirements for this. If the Criteria is followed, the course design will ensure the typical students spends the appropriate amount of time in the course.
--	--	--	---	--