Graduation Alliance Curriculum Statement

The source or origin of curriculum and course content

Graduation Alliance's curriculum development team has developed the curriculum and the course content used in its FL VIP programs. Graduation Alliance has made a commitment to providing a differentiated curriculum for students who have had a disrupted educational experience. This means that not only do we align to state standards and national best practices, but also that we design for our specific population of students who are returning to school after a period away or who are on the brink of dropping out. It is essential that students see themselves in this curriculum, that it is relevant and culturally responsive, and that it provides an intrinsically motivating experience for them.

Specific research and best practice used in design

The criteria for developing courses in Graduation Alliance are based on state standards and best practices in instructional design, pedagogy, and content areas to facilitate student learning and engagement. Our instructional design process applies the principles of National Standards of Quality in Online Learning NSQ [formerly iNACOL], 5th Edition of the Quality Matters K-12 Rubric for designing online and blended learning, as well as Universal Design for Learning principles. It includes the assessment of learner needs and relevant state content standards; a comprehensive design plan produced by the design team, comprised of a subject matter expert and an instructional designer; development of high quality, relevant instructional content, including multimedia content by skilled multimedia developers; implementation of the course in the learning environment; and an ongoing evaluation and data-driven revision process.

The basis for and frequency of revisions

Courses are continually monitored by the Graduation Alliance curriculum department for accuracy and efficacy. Minor revisions are made as needed to provide enhancements in lesson presentation, update external links, correct mistakes, or clarify expectations or instructions as identified by teaching or support staff members or students. Major revisions are made when changes in standards requirements, instructional alignment, or learning expectations occur.

Courses are updated on an ongoing basis through teacher feedback, regular course reviews, and when relevant learning standards are revised. Continuous quality enhancements are informed weekly by teacher mentor data and monthly, using student end-of-course feedback.

Learner feedback is continuously collected via student input to instructors and academic staff, which is relayed to the curriculum team for review and course revisions. End-of-course surveys are also conducted biannually. This data is used to inform the practices of instructors and the curriculum team.

Course design and revisions are made according to the ADDIE model of Instructional Design:

- **A**nalysis of student characteristics, needs, and objectives
- **D**esign of the curriculum
- **D**evelopment of the curriculum and learning objects
- **I**mplementation of the curriculum
- ongoing **E**valuation of its effectiveness

Research related to effectiveness of curriculum

Graduation Alliance subscribes to Quality Matters (QM), a national third-party validator of best practices in online learning. In addition to putting its curriculum team through the Quality Matters training and using the rubrics to inform design, Graduation Alliance has contracted with Quality Matters evaluators to review and evaluate both its approach to instructional design and individual courses itself. Graduation Alliance recently passed the Quality Matters 2026 template review based on updated standards.

Quality Matters external evaluators reviewed and evaluated Graduation Alliance's approach to instructional design and individual courses for accuracy, completeness, freedom from bias, and quality of content delivery. All courses scored between 98-100% of points possible.

Choosing an organization with a QM-certified template ensures students experience a highly consistent, intuitive, navigable online course layout across different subjects. This rigorous review guarantees that the structural design of the learning environment meets gold-standard benchmarks for digital accessibility and usability. By eliminating technical and structural confusion, it allows students to focus entirely on their coursework and learning outcomes.

In 2021, Quality Matters recognized Graduation Alliance in the "Outstanding Impact by a K-12 Organization" category of the Making A Difference For Students Award. Being a recipient of both Quality Matters Certification and this award affirms Graduation Alliance's commitment to serving learners who have not seen success through traditional learning and instruction.

Course effectiveness reviews take into account data from a variety of sources including, but not limited to, the sources listed below:

- Variety of presentation types
- A variety of assessment types
- Taxonomic level of final exam
- Lexile Level
- Standards alignment omissions
- Total number of assignments to be completed
- The average grade achieved by students
- Total number of registrations/ total % of registrations in the past 12-month period

- Course completion rate
- Course withdrawal rate
- Course expiration rate
- Average days between start to completing
- Number and type of reported Tasks/Corrections
- Anecdotal feedback from students
- Anecdotal feedback from teachers
- Anecdotal feedback from online mentors
- Anecdotal feedback from school liaisons

Evidence that content and assessments are accurate

Courses are written by subject-matter experts who are high school or college-level educators and they hold advanced degrees in their field. Course content is specifically based on state learning standards. Course drafts are reviewed by subject-matter experts (certified teachers) to ensure the accuracy of content and assessments.

This systematic and cyclical approach in the curriculum design process is driven and tightly aligned to all identified learning outcomes and standards.

Evidence that content and assessments are free of bias

All programs offered by Graduation Alliance are non-sectarian in nature. While it is necessary for some lessons to address the religious beliefs of various peoples in the context of geography and history, for example, these lessons shall only explore religion to the extent that it is reasonable with regard to the standards and objectives of the course. These lessons do not address any particular religion with undue attention and are free of biased language.

Evidence that content and assessments are accessible for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency

Accessibility for learners of all abilities and English proficiency levels is prioritized in courses:

- Courses comply with ADA section 508 accessibility requirements
- Images and videos have alternate text and/or captions included.
- Textbooks, reading assignments, and assessments with images can be provided in alternate formats.

Graduation Alliance's practices as they relate to accessibility for students with disabilities and limited English proficiency and an overview of universal design principles applied in course development includes:

Multiple Means of Engagement:

- Each course includes a Course Success Strategies lesson with support resources and helpful instructions to help students engage with the material and assignments.

- Learning objectives are clearly stated in terms accessible to the students.
- Lessons include various displays of information and auto-graded activities for students to practice for example: flashcards, compare and contrast card sorting, tabbed information, videos, pop-up questions, etc.
- Assignments are written by our teachers to be authentic to our population
- Courses include class discussions for students to reflect and respond to each other
- Students are introduced to their instructor at the beginning of the course

Multiple means of Representation:

- Course content is provided using lesson text, images, videos, and articles
- Images are tagged with alternate text for accessibility with screen readers
- Videos include closed captions or alternate text is made available for students to access information
- Course content is scaffolded for students to build the application of skills
- New terms and concepts are explained in the lesson or with interactive hover-over tooltips.
- Diverse avatar characters and other imagery of diverse learners appear throughout the courses

Multiple means of Action & Expression:

- Lessons include multiple options for navigation between pages
- Students receive immediate feedback for in-lesson pop-up questions as well as auto-graded quizzes
- Students demonstrate various application of skills by completing assignments that include essay writing, presentations, role-playing, audio and/or video recordings, and class discussions