



Evaluating Your Online Communication & Engagement Platform

Selecting educational technology requires an interdisciplinary approach across the institution to determine if the application is the right fit. This team approach should include the Chief Information or Technology Officer (CIO), Central IT, Academic Affairs (the Dean's or Provost's office--AA), the instructional or educational technology office (ETO), faculty, and students.

This checklist provides evaluation criteria that should be addressed and indicates who on the team should be focused on that criteria. This checklist will help you evaluate your current online communication and engagement platform and helps you compare that with new platforms more consistently and equitably.

Institutional Level Criteria	Individuals or Department Involvement	Meets Criteria	Notes
Accessibility compliance with WCAG 2.0 standards	Accessibility office, CIO, Central IT	Y N	
Level of support required internally	CIO, ETO, Central IT	Y N	
Level of support provided by the company	CIO, ETO,	Y N	
Does the application meet the needs of the course, department, or institution?	AA, ETO, faculty	Y N	
Does the application follow policies and procedures set forth by the department, school, or institution?	AA, CIO	Y N	
Does the application support pedagogical approaches and learning theories identified by the institution's instructional goals?	AA, CIO, faculty	Y N	
Who owns the analytics and data within the system?	CIO, AA	Y N	
If you leave the Institution, where does the information within the application go?	CIO, AA	Y N	
		Y N	

Security, Privacy, and Networking	Individuals or Department Involvement	Meets Criteria	Notes
Integration or single sign-on capabilities	CIO, Central IT, ETO	Y N	
Can the application be used within any standard up-to-date operating system?	CIO, Central IT, ETO	Y N	
Can the application be used within any standard up-to-date browser?	CIO, Central IT, ETO	Y N	
How does the user access the application – is it browser based, does it need a plugin, or do you access it through another application (i.e. LMS)?	CIO, Central IT, ETO	Y N	
Does it work inside of your existing LMS mobile application or does it require a separate mobile app install?	CIO, Central IT, ETO	Y N	
Do they have a security and data protection policy?	CIO, Security office	Y N	
Does the product have a VPAT?	CIO, AA, Security office, ETO	Y N	
Is the application FERPA compliant?	CIO, AA, Security office, ETO	Y N	
Is the application compliant with LTI 1.3?	CIO, AA, Security office, ETO	Y N	
Is the organization active with the IMS Global Learning Consortium?	CIO, AA, Security office, ETO	Y N	
		Y N	

Cost	Individuals or Department Involvement	Meets Criteria	Notes
How is cost determined for the institution and what does that include?	ETO, AA, CIO	Y N	
What is the cost of base support and what does that provide?	ETO, AA, CIO	Y N	
		Y N	

Course Level Criteria	Individuals or Department Involvement	Meets Criteria	Notes
Does this application support faculty in meeting their course objectives?	AA, faculty	Y N	
Are training and support offered to onboard faculty?	AA, faculty, ETO	Y N	
Is the implementation of the application documented and easy to follow?	AA, faculty, ETO	Y N	
Is the application user friendly/intuitive?	AA, faculty, ETO	Y N	
Why is the application being used within the classroom?	AA, faculty, ETO	Y N	
Does the application has the potential to support collaborative, participatory, and open pedagogies	AA, faculty, ETO	Y N	
Does the application allow for an iterative approach to course development?	AA, faculty, ETO	Y N	
Does the application have interoperability with the gradebook the faculty is using?	AA, Faculty, ETO	Y N	
Is the organization active with the IMS Global Learning Consortium?	CIO, AA, Security office, ETO	Y N	
		Y N	

Reviews and Feedback	Individuals or Department Involvement	Meets Criteria	Notes
Are there reviews or case studies available?	ETO, AA, CIO	Y N	
Do you know other schools that are using the application and what is their review?	ETO, AA, CIO	Y N	
Is the company open to feedback on the product?	ETO, AA, CIO	Y N	
Does the company share their roadmap of the product ? How accurate has that roadmap been over time?	ETO, AA, CIO	Y N	
		Y N	

Features	Individuals or Department Involvement	Meets Criteria	Notes
Mobile Friendly	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
LMS Integration	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Plagiarism Integration	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Caliper Integration	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Web Conferencing Integration	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Intuitive Interface for Students & Faculty	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Graded discussions	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Non-graded discussions	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Multiple Due Dates	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Image and Video Annotation	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Grade a discussion as a participation grade with word count	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Allows for anonymous posting	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Easily upload multimedia	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Allow students to chat within the discussion	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Search within the discussion threads	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
View version history	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Live and On-demand training available	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Notifications	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Ability to Embed Links	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Student Facilitation	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Reporting & Analytics	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Auto Captioning	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Equation Editor (MathQuill & La Tex)	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Tagging Students and Instructors	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Public & Private Visibility Settings	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
Record Video in the application	ETO, AA, Faculty, Students	Y N	
		Y N	
		Y N	
		Y N	
		Y N	

As a selection committee you will need to determine what criteria are mandatory, wanted (important, but not necessary), or wished for (nice-to-haves). This is a critical step, so the committee can weigh the criteria to make sure the right application is chosen. During the selection process, make sure key stakeholders have the opportunity to try out the application in a real-world situation. Ask for an evaluation timeline

that allows you to truly test out the application. During this time, consider conducting focus groups with various stakeholders--you may also want to survey them to gather feedback about their usage and preferences. Schedule demonstrations of the product so that faculty can understand how the platform works. And give this checklist to users so that they can evaluate each solution using a consistent scale.