

Course Design Standards

My standards for clear, consistent, and accessible eLearning

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These are the standards I apply across every course so that learning is consistent, high quality, accessible by default, and faster to build. They are written to scale across a team, not just a single project.

Writing and voice

- Plain language, short sentences, and a conversational second-person voice.
- Active voice and concrete examples over abstract description.
- Objectives written as observable, measurable actions the learner can perform.
- One idea per screen; cut anything that does not serve the objective.

Structure and sequencing

- Chunk content into short lessons that respect the learner's time and attention.
- Lead with recognition and relevance before formal definitions.
- Separate low-stakes practice from graded assessment so learners can try and fail safely.
- Design for the smallest reasonable seat time that still meets the objective.

Visual design

- A limited, consistent palette and type system across a course and a program.
- Generous white space and a clear visual hierarchy.
- Real, relevant imagery over decorative or synthetic visuals, especially for human topics.
- Visuals carry meaning; they are not filler.

Interaction

- Interaction variety with a purpose; each pattern matches the content it carries.
- Every interaction gives feedback that explains the reasoning, not just right or wrong.
- Scenarios use realistic situations and distractors based on common real mistakes.

Assessment

- Assessment maps directly to the stated objectives, not to trivia.
- Questions favor application and judgment over recall where the skill allows.
- Clear pass criteria, explanatory feedback, and a retry path on graded checks.

Accessibility and quality

Accessibility is a standard, not an option: alt text, captions, contrast, keyboard operability, and logical focus order on every course. Full detail and the per-course checklist live in my Accessibility Standards document. Every course passes a QA review before it ships.