



Taylor Institute
for Teaching and Learning
Online Series

Online Course Design Checklist



Use the following checklist as a guide before your online course is opened to students, as reminders for you throughout the semester, and as a review at the end of the course.

Course Information	
Start Here module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Post the course outline and include any specific online information (i.e. software requirements, synchronous sessions). <input type="checkbox"/> Post an instructor welcome video/message introduction. <input type="checkbox"/> Create a Support and Resources section that includes any required software or technology and who to contact for help (i.e. will students be required to have a headset for synchronous sessions). <input type="checkbox"/> Include a calendar of important dates and times with time zone. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a list of scheduled synchronous sessions and state dates and times. <input type="checkbox"/> Create an overview of where to find key information (i.e. such as due dates, assignments). <input type="checkbox"/> Include an Indigenous Land acknowledgement.
Course Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Modules are organized by topic or week, with clear start and end times and are intuitive to navigate. UDL <input type="checkbox"/> Each module lists associated learning outcomes, with clear connection to associated learning activities and assessments. <input type="checkbox"/> Due dates are clearly communicated and consistent through-out the course (i.e. in discussion boards, assignments, and course outline).
Instructor information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> List the instructor contact information. <input type="checkbox"/> State communication expectations for both weekdays and weekends, including email response time. <input type="checkbox"/> Post online synchronous office hours (using Adobe Connect or Zoom). <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate any expectations for both students and the instructor (i.e. check-in daily, not all posts will be responded to)

Interactions and Community	
Facilitate introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create an Introductions discussion board and post an introduction video or message. <input type="checkbox"/> Provide an introductory activity at the beginning of the course for all students to introduce themselves and share their learning goals.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ For large-enrolment courses consider breaking students into smaller groups.
Encourage connections & diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Provide course materials and learning activities that encourage student interactions and different perspectives. (UDL) ❑ Provide opportunities for culturally inclusive interactions and self-development. (UDL) ❑ Create a Course Café discussion board as a social place for students to interact outside the course requirements. (<i>note that students might use their own preferred method of communicating outside the LMS for social interactions and collaboration</i>) ❑ Create an FAQ discussion board to encourage collaborative learning and to post answers to common questions. This strategy can also reduce emails to the instructor. ❑ Create a 'Dig Deeper' discussion topic for students to share additional resources they find.

Assessments

Assessing student learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Assessments are connected to associated learning outcomes, and encourage engagement with the content and higher order thinking. ❑ Include rubrics or grading criteria for all graded assessments. ❑ Provide examples to ensure students understand the task. ❑ Use a variety of assessment methods throughout the course to provide student opportunities to demonstrate learning in multiple modalities and weightings. (UDL) ❑ If using online quizzes/test, create a practice test to familiarize students with the technology and testing environment. ❑ Provide formative self-tests to promote engagement and to check for student understanding of course material. (UDL)
Important information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Due dates are clearly communicated where appropriate and are consistent throughout the course. ❑ Assessment descriptions are clearly communicated and state the learning objectives and assignment parameters. ❑ Submission/completion requirements are clearly stated, including required learning technologies, word count, and other criteria.


Instruction

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Select course learning activities that support student learning towards achieving course learning outcomes.<input type="checkbox"/> Use a variety of activities and assessments to engage students with content, each other, and to encourage meaningful learning (such as narrative, case studies, tutorials, peer feedback). UDL
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Communicate to students the timelines for instructor feedback.<input type="checkbox"/> Inform students where they will find private communication (such as individual grades and feedback in the D2L dropbox).<input type="checkbox"/> Use the discussion board to post class-wide feedback.
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> All course materials, either external or created by the instructor, are accessible to all students. UDL<input type="checkbox"/> Course materials use a variety of methods and media to present and engage with content (i.e. text, images, videos). UDL<input type="checkbox"/> Connect with the library to have an electronic copy of the course text or other materials accessible online.<input type="checkbox"/> Use common file formats such as .doc or .pdf. UDL<input type="checkbox"/> Review copyright policies at https://library.ucalgary.ca/copyright

Technology

- UCalgary supported learning technologies are primarily used (i.e. D2L Brightspace, Adobe Connect)
- Non-supported learning technology required for course completion is justified and vetted for any additional student expenses, account creation, storage of personal information, and accessibility. The instructor is willing to support student use of such technology.
- Technology choices support the intended learning outcomes and the student learning experience.
- Students and instructor are aware of the support resources available on campus and how to access them from a distance.
- Use YuJa (yuja.ucalgary.ca) for creating and hosting video content. YuJa has a closed captioning function, or include a transcript if you record an audio/video. UDL
- Include captions or alt text on images for screen readers (D2L has these options). UDL

Tips for success

- Preview the course, content, activities, and assessments as a student to ensure students are seeing what you intend them to see (D2L has a student preview option).
- Check in frequently. Students can't see you so be visible regularly, such as posting weekly reminders or frequent discussion board contributions.
- Ensure students have time to obtain required resources such as readings, software, and other course requirements prior to the course start date.
- Offer regular opportunities for student feedback and schedule an optional synchronous session if needed.
- Upfront preparation is key. Have the course ready to go so students can see the structure, timelines, expectations and any other important information at their first login.
- Send weekly summaries that connect to course learning outcomes, include reflective questions, and reminders to help keep students on track (*hint: put reminders into your calendar to keep yourself organized*). 

Time Management

- Post strategically to the discussion board so you are not replying to all posts throughout the course.
- Be present by reading all posts. Post when appropriate to be visible, direct the conversation, and to provide feedback.
- Set boundaries on your worktime and communicate them to students (i.e. email reply time).
- Use the discussion board to provide answers to common questions and class-wide feedback.
- Use the D2L-Brightspace **Announcement** tool to post important information to all students. As not all students might check into the course daily, send this information as an email as well (i.e. Grades are posted, reminders of upcoming events).
- Block off time in your own calendar for online instructional time.

 Universal Design for Learning

Additional Resources:

- Online Assessment in Higher Education guide: <https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/online-assessment-in-higher-education>
- Universal Design for Learning: <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>
- University of Calgary Copyright Office: <https://library.ucalgary.ca/copyright>
- University of Calgary eLearn: <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/>

References:

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