



Course Set-Up Recommendations

This resource can be used to help create inclusive online learning environments through incorporating [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) guidelines, [student wellbeing practices \(SW\)](#), and [web content accessibility guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) when creating course materials in Canvas. For additional information, view this resource with additional linked resources and detailed recommendations at https://wiki.ubc.ca/Documentation:CTLT_Resources/Course_Set_Up_Recommendations

Course Home

Goal: Create an informative homepage and course navigation that is easy to use.

Criteria	Yes
<p>Course image on the Dashboard (the first screen when you login to Canvas) provides a distinct visual representation of course. Canvas Guide - Add an image to a course card → <i>UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media</i></p>	
<p>Home Page provides key information (or links), including: <input type="checkbox"/> a course banner, a visual representation of course; <input type="checkbox"/> a brief course description or introduction; <input type="checkbox"/> clear indicator on where to begin (e.g., course overview and introduction module); <input type="checkbox"/> contact information for instructor(s), teaching assistant(s), and technical support Canvas Guide - Selecting home page → <i>UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media</i> → <i>UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Structuring the course effectively</i></p>	
<p>Navigation menu is customized by minimizing the number of menu items and prioritizing their order. Canvas Guide - Course navigation → <i>UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</i> → <i>WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are</i></p>	

Course Overview and Introduction

Goal: Welcome students to your course by providing information about your course.

Criteria	Yes
<p>Syllabus provides complete and descriptive information about the course (UBC Senate syllabus policy) <input type="checkbox"/> information about course including course name, course format, class time and location, course requirements (e.g. prerequisites), and instructor contact information; <input type="checkbox"/> detailed information about course content including course objectives, learning outcomes, reading materials, course schedule, learning activities, methods of assessments and due dates, and their weightings in the final grade; <input type="checkbox"/> course-level policies such as participation, late penalties, and communication; <input type="checkbox"/> University policies (e.g. academic integrity, accommodation for disabilities); <input type="checkbox"/> a guideline on how to succeed in a course Recommend including the following resources:</p>	





<p>() resources on student wellbeing information</p> <p>() centre for accessibility</p> <p>() academic integrity</p> <p>() land acknowledge statement</p> <p>() early alert</p> <p>() equity and inclusion</p> <p>Canvas Guide - The syllabus can be created using a page in a module or the built-in syllabus feature.</p> <p>Resources: UBC Syllabus Template, Learner-Centered Syllabus</p> <p>→ UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies</p> <p>→ UDL 6.2 Support planning and strategy development</p> <p>→ UDL 8.1 heighten salience of goals and objectives</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Structuring the course effectively</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Fostering instructor student relationship</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Recognizing that students have lives outside of academics</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Openly discuss wellbeing related topics</p>	
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Course Content

Goal: Create course content that is structured, organized, and incorporates accessibility guidelines

Criteria	Yes
<p>Content is organized into manageable pieces by leveraging modules (e.g. organized by topics, weeks, units) and the organization across modules is consistent Canvas Guide - Modules</p> <p>→ UDL 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Delivering the material effectively</p> <p>→ WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are</p>	
<p>Modules are organized using text headers and indentation Canvas Guide - Add text header</p> <p>→ UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure</p>	
<p>Modules and items within modules describe the content and have a clear naming convention (e.g. name the module “Chapter 1: Introduction to Design,” not just “Ch. 1”).</p> <p>→ UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Delivering the materials effectively</p>	
<p>All course activities (e.g. assignments, discussions, quizzes) are linked in the related module</p> <p>→ UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</p>	
<p>All links, files, videos and external URLs are active and working. The link validator in Canvas can help verify all external links. Canvas Guide - Link validator</p>	
<p>All course materials are current, and free from typos and grammatical errors.</p> <p>→ UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</p>	
<p>All materials and resources are appropriately cited and adhere to copyright guidelines.</p>	
<p>Accessibility standards (e.g. text, colors/contrast, alt text for images, captioning or transcripts for</p>	





<p>videos) have been checked for content created in the Rich Content Editor using UDOIT. Canvas Guide - Accessibility checker</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UDL 1.2 Offer alternatives for auditory information → UDL 1.3 Offer alternatives for visual information → UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions → WCAG 1.1 Provide text alternatives for any non-text content → WCAG 1.2 Time-based Media: Provide alternatives for time-based media → WCAG 1.4 Distinguishable: Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background 	
<p>The file type of linked non-HTML files (e.g. Microsoft Word or PDF files) is identified; ensure linked files also follow accessibility guidelines. (Make your Word documents and PowerPoint files accessible)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → WCAG 2.0 guidelines → PDF/UA (Universal Accessibility) 	
<p>Page and section headers are formatted using heading styles (not font sizes) and content is organized in a hierarchical and logical fashion. Canvas Guide - General Accessibility Design Guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies → WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are 	
<p>Hyperlink text uses phrases that describe the content of the linked page (i.e., avoid generic phrases like “Click here” or using a raw URL such as https://www.ubc.ca).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies → WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are 	
<p>Flashing/flickering text and/or animated text is not used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → WCAG 2.3 Seizures: Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures 	
<p>Tables are only used for tabular data, not the design of the course. If tables are required for design, accessibility guidelines are followed (e.g. incorporate caption, headings).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are 	
<p>File names do not contain spaces and/or special characters (like % * & #). The document file name is concise, generally limited to 20–30 characters, and makes the content of the file clear.</p>	
<p>A separate accessible version of content is provided when there is no other way to make the content accessible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies 	

Interactions / Communication / Discussions

Goal: Build student engagement and nurture a safe and supportive learning environment

Criteria	Yes
There is a “Welcome” or “Let’s Get Acquainted” discussion and students are encouraged to introduce themselves to their classmates to make connections.	





<p>Your information has been entered in your Canvas profile Canvas guide - Instructor profile → <i>Student Wellness: Fostering instructor-student relationship</i></p>	
<p>Students are asked to complete their profiles, including a short biography and profile picture. Canvas Guide - Student profile → <i>UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Fostering peer-to-peer relationships</i></p>	
<p>Throughout the course, the following interactions are structured in a way to support learning: <input type="checkbox"/> student-instructor interaction (e.g. announcement, quality feedback, discussions) <input type="checkbox"/> student-student interaction (e.g. discussions, collaborative projects and/or peer feedback) <input type="checkbox"/> student-content interaction (e.g. engaging content and resources with which students must interact and not just read or watch) Canvas Guide - Peer review assignments, Canvas Guide - Peer review discussions → <i>UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Fostering instructor-student relationship</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Fostering peer-to-peer relationships</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Delivering the material effectively</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Creating a safe classroom environment</i></p>	
<p>A monitored discussion board is provided and its use is encouraged for course support issues. → <i>UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Fostering instructor-student relationship</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Fostering peer-to-peer relationships</i></p>	

Assessments & Activities

Goal: Provide students with information about activities and assessment requirements and set-up assessment weighting in your course

Criteria	Yes
<p>Each activity and assessment (e.g. discussion, assignment, quiz) has a detailed description, assessment criteria (if applicable), due date(s) and instructions of how to submit the assessment within the activity page. → <i>UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies</i> → <i>UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Structuring the course effectively</i></p>	
<p>Samples of completed assignments are provided to illustrate instructor expectations. → <i>UDL 5.3 Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance</i> → <i>Student Wellbeing: Structuring the course effectively</i></p>	
<p>Assessment weighting is based on your assessment plan (for example, quizzes, essays, homework). Canvas Guide - Assignment Groups, Weighted Grading</p>	
<p>Rubrics are used to help students understand how they will be assessed. Canvas Guide - Rubrics → <i>UDL 6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress</i></p>	





References

Accessibility, Student Wellbeing, Universal Design for Learning

[\(Accessibility\) Cheatsheets](#) by the National Center on Disability and Access to Education (NCDAAE)
[Accessibility Guidelines for Learning Designers](#) by Rosado, J & Chen, H., CTLT, University of British Columbia
[Accessibility Toolkit - 2nd Edition](#) by BC Campus
[How Teaching Practices Influence Student Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) by University of British Columbia
[Links to Non-HTML Resources](#) by WebAIM
[Universal Design for Learning](#) (UDL) principles by CAST
[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) by W3C

Course Evaluation Checklists: External Resources

[Course Evaluation Checklist](#) by Johnson, D., Keefe, E., & Philips, L, Instructure.
[Checklist: Creating Your First Canvas Course](#) by CAT, Temple University
[Checklist for Online and Blended Course Development](#) by ETS, University of British Columbia
[Online/Blended Learning Course Quality Checklist](#) by Sharif, A., University of British Columbia

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