



Course Set-Up Recommendations

This Course Set-Up Recommendations is a resource that can be used to help incorporate [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) guidelines, [student wellbeing practices \(SW\)](#), and [web content accessibility guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) when creating courses and course materials in Canvas.

Course Home

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

Criteria	Yes
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 → UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media	
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) and teaching assistant(s) including email, office hours, and virtual office hour link; <input type="checkbox"/> resource links for students including A Student's Guide to Canvas , Keep Learning , Chapman Learning Commons , Student health and wellbeing , Browser and Computer Requirements , and Technical Support . Canvas Guide - Selecting home page → UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media → UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions → Student Wellbeing: Structuring the course effectively	





<p>Course navigation menu is customized by minimizing the number of menu items and prioritizing their order Canvas Guide - Course navigation</p> <p>→ UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</p> <p>→ WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are</p>	
---	--

Course Overview and Introduction

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

Criteria	Yes
<p>Course Overview and Introduction (syllabus) provides, in general, Information about your course (UBC Senate syllabus policy)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> () information about the course including course name, course format, class time and location, course requirements (e.g. prerequisites), and instructor contact information; () 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; () course-level policies such as participation, late penalties, and communication; () University policies (e.g. academic integrity, accommodation for disabilities); () a guideline on how to succeed in a course <p>Recommend including the following resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> () resources on student wellbeing information () centre for accessibility () academic integrity () land acknowledge statement () early alert () equity and inclusion <p>Canvas Guide - The syllabus can be created using a page in a module or the built-in syllabus feature.</p> <p>Resource: UBC Syllabus Template</p> <p>→ UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies</p>	





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UDL 6.2 Support planning and strategy development → UDL 8.1 heighten salience of goals and objectives → Student Wellbeing: Structuring the course effectively → Student Wellbeing: Fostering instructor student relationship → Student Wellbeing: Recognizing that students have lives outside of academics → Student Wellbeing: Openly discuss wellbeing related topics 	
---	--

Course Content

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

Criteria	Yes
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 → UDL 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation → Student Wellbeing: Delivering the material effectively → WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are	
Modules are organized using text headers and indentation Canvas Guide - Add text header → UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure	
Modules and items within modules have a thoughtful naming convention (e.g. name the module “Chapter 1: Introduction to Designing Courses in Canvas,” not just “Ch. 1”) → UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure → Student Wellbeing: Delivering the materials effectively	
All course activities (e.g. assignments, discussions, quizzes) are linked in the related module → UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions	
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>All course materials are current, and free from typos and grammatical errors. → 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 test for images, captioning or transcripts for videos) have been checked for content created in the Rich Content Editor using UDOIT Canvas Guide - Accessibility checker → 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>	
<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) → WCAG 2.0 guidelines → PDF/UA (Universal Accessibility)</p>	
<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 → 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>	
<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.canvaslms.com) → 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>	
<p>Flashing/flickering text and/or animated text is not used. → WCAG 2.3 Seizures: Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures</p>	
<p>Tables are only used for tabular data, not the design of the course. If tables are required for design, accessibility</p>	





guidelines are followed (e.g. incorporate caption, headings). → WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are	
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.	
A separate accessible version of content is provided when there is no other way to make the content accessible. → 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.	
Your information has been entered in your Canvas profile Canvas guide - Instructor profile → <i>Student Wellness: Fostering instructor-student relationship</i>	
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>	
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	





<p>→ UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Fostering instructor-student relationship</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Fostering peer-to-peer relationships</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Delivering the material effectively</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Creating a safe classroom environment</p>	
<p>A monitored discussion board is provided and its use is encouraged for course support issues.</p> <p>→ UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Fostering instructor-student relationship</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Fostering peer-to-peer relationships</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 of requirements, assessment criteria (if applicable), due date(s) and instructions of how to submit the assessment within the activity page</p> <p>→ UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies</p> <p>→ UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Structuring the course effectively</p>	
<p>Samples of completed assignments are provided to illustrate instructor expectations</p> <p>→ UDL 5.3 Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance</p> <p>→ Student Wellbeing: Structuring the course effectively</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</p> <p>→ UDL 6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress</p>	





Appropriate grade posting policy has been chosen. | [Canvas guide – Grade posting policy](#)

Additional Resources

Teaching Online Resources at UBC

[Keep Teaching Site \(for instructors\)](#)

[Keep Learning Site \(for students\)](#)

[UBC's Learning Technology Hub – Tool Guides](#)

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 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

Contact Information

Marie Krbavac (marie.krbavac@ubc.ca), Educational Consultant, CTLT, UBC

Bosung Kim (bosung.kim@ubc.ca), Educational Consultant, CTLT, UBC

