



Online 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.

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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> () a course banner, a visual representation of course; () a brief course description or introduction; () clear indicator on where to begin (e.g., course overview and introduction module); () contact information for instructor(s) and teaching assistant(s) including email, office hours, and virtual office hour link; () 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. <p>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)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> () information about 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; 	





<p>() University policies (e.g. academic integrity, accommodation for disabilities); () a guideline on how to succeed in a course</p> <p>Recommend including the following resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> () Student health and wellbeing () Centre for accessibility () Academic integrity () Land acknowledge statement () Early alert () Equity and inclusion () Keep Learning <p>Canvas Guide - The syllabus can be created using a page in a module or the built-in syllabus feature. Resources: UBC Syllabus Template, Learner-Centered Syllabus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies → 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 	
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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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 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 	
<p>Modules are organized using text headers and indentation Canvas Guide - Add text header</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure 	
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure → Student Wellbeing: Delivering the materials effectively 	
<p>All course activities (e.g. assignments, discussions, quizzes) are linked in the related module</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions 	
<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 files and external URLs open in a new window. → <i>UDL 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation</i></p>	
<p>All course materials are current, and free from typos and grammatical errors. → <i>UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</i></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 videos) have been checked for content created in the Rich Content Editor using UDOIT. Canvas Guide - Accessibility checker → <i>UDL 1.2 Offer alternatives for auditory information</i> → <i>UDL 1.3 Offer alternatives for visual information</i> → <i>UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</i> → <i>WCAG 1.1 Provide text alternatives for any non-text content</i> → <i>WCAG 1.2 Time-based Media: Provide alternatives for time-based media</i> → <i>WCAG 1.4 Distinguishable: Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background</i></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) → <i>WCAG 2.0 guidelines</i> → <i>PDF/UA (Universal Accessibility)</i></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 → <i>UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies</i> → <i>WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are</i></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.ubc.ca). → <i>UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies</i> → <i>WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are</i></p>	
<p>Flashing/flickering text and/or animated text is not used. → <i>WCAG 2.3 Seizures: Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures</i></p>	
<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). → <i>WCAG 2.4 Navigable: Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are</i></p>	
<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. → <i>UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies</i></p>	





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) → <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>	
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>	

Assessments & Activities

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

Criteria	Yes
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>	
Samples of completed assignments are provided to illustrate instructor expectations.	





→ UDL 5.3 Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance → Student Wellbeing: Structuring the course effectively	
Assessment weighting is based on your assessment plan (for example, quizzes, essays, homework). Canvas Guide - Assignment Groups , Weighted Grading	
Rubrics are used to help students understand how they will be assessed. Canvas Guide - Rubrics → UDL 6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress	
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 \(for students\)](#)
[Sample course templates](#)
[Open Teaching Program](#)
[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
[Universal Design for Learning](#) (online module) by University of British Columbia
[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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