

Online Course Development Checklist

Purpose

This Checklist can be used to assess your online course presence. Whether you are using Blackboard to enhance your face-to-face course or you are teaching fully online, this checklist will facilitate your online course design.

Please also see the *eCampus Quality Standards 2.0 Rubric* for additional standards to make your course exemplary. All Checklist items presented here will help your course meet Essential to Excellent eCampus levels.

Before It Goes Live

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
Piloted or beta tested using Demo Student.		
For F2F, have students try out components.		
Proofread for accuracy and typographical errors by a third-party (not the person who built the course).		

Design Standards: Learning Modules

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
Course uses Learning Modules (not folders and files).		
Learning Modules are organized consistently using schedule, topics, or themes as necessitated by course.		
Each Learning Module has a description that gives an overview of that Module and lists the connecting Learning Outcomes.		
All modules open in the same manner (to Table of Contents or first page of content).		
Learning Modules are organized hierarchically if appropriate (using numbers or letters).		
Bullets are used to list items that are not prioritized or sequential. Same bullets used throughout course.		
The time needed to complete a Learning Module is clearly communicated.		
Student activities and the time to complete them are clearly communicated within each Module.		

Before You Start/Start Here Module

The Start Here Module should be the first Module in the Course Content area. It should contain the important information that students need to be able to access at any point during the course (course structure, contact information, course schedule, deadlines, lists of assignments, course outline, etc.). In the Course Template, there are two modules:

1. Before You Start: contains all technical support for students related to Blackboard
2. Start Here: Course Outline and Information: contains all information specific to your course that students need to start

Checklist	☑ ☒ NA	Comments
Course Outline as PDF (Start Here module).		
Specific dates and times are in the course calendar or a schedule in the Start Here module (dates and times are not buried in course content).		
Various ways used to communicate (with the instructor and other students) are explained in Start Here module.		
Instructor contact information, office hours (virtual or f2f), photo, and response times are listed.		
An Explanation of how to navigate the course is provided.		
An Overview of tools used in the course is provided.		
Netiquette information included in Start Here module.		
Information is provided to students on how to contribute peer feedback and support, discussion postings, etc. Samples of each are provided.		
Information on student involvement (role of student, responsibility, synchronous class times) is provided.		
Checklist for students to track all assignments and activities is provided. See Assessment for setting up Grade Centre so students can track their progress.		
FOIPP and copyright statements are listed in the Start Here module with link to Copyright Guide: http://rdc.libguides.com/copyright		
Consent for Use of Online Student Coursework form in Start Here module and also instructions if needed.		
RDC, eCampus, or CAC support information included in Start Here module as appropriate (or in separate content area—see template).		
eCampusAlberta information included in Start Here module (for eCampus courses).		
System Requirements and Blackboard Browser Check are provided.		
Required Plug-ins are identified with links to download them (additional plug-ins are kept to a minimum and are open source/free).		
Criteria for all evaluation are stated. Rubrics, examples, samples, etc. in Start Here module or Assignments.		
Course is made available to students a minimum of 1 week prior to the start of the course so that they can access help resources and Course Outline.		
A Welcome Announcement, Email, and/or Video is posted.		
A synchronous or asynchronous session allows learners to meet the instructor.		

Learner Engagement

Learner Engagement relates to how the learners interact with the course, the content, the instructor, and with each other. The course should be designed so that students need to enter the course site at least once per week. Please also refer to the *Start Here* checklist for additional items related to Learner Engagement.

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
Interactivity – teacher to student.		
Interactivity – student to content.		
Interactivity – student to student.		
Students are informed of their role in the course and the additional responsibility held by students in online courses.		
Students are given clear expectations of their involvement in the course (discussion boards, peer evaluation, communication, synchronous classroom).		
Guidelines for interactivity are provided.		
Tools for collaboration (that will be used) are explained (discussion boards, email, chat room, telephone).		
Individualized instruction, remedial activities, or resources for advanced learning activities (integrated publisher content) are provided.		
Design prompts the instructor to be present, active, and engaged with students.		

Design Standards: Format, Legibility, & Accessibility

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
High contrast between text and background.		
Accessible to learners with visual or auditory challenges.		
Alt tags for screen readers are used for images, boxes, and links.		
Alternative media options are presented (e.g. PDFs that can be downloaded as Word; Videos have closed captioning or transcripts).		
Blackboard theme is Universal Design compliant.		
Choice of theme in Blackboard follows recommended list in order to comply with Universal Design and printing.		
Colour and texture of the theme do not overpower the course content.		
No underlining for emphasis (for links only). Bold or Italics are used for emphasis.		
Consistent design (colours, fonts, font sizes, headings, body text, icons, templates, formatting of images, etc.).		
Sans Serif (Arial, Tahoma, Verdana) font is used consistently in minimum 12pt size (exception: footnotes, credits, references can be smaller).		
A course banner is used to identify the course and department (at departmental discretion).		

Technology Standards

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
All links work. Links should be checked at the beginning of each term.		
Multimedia elements do not exceed minimum hardware/software requirements (as stated in the Start Here Module).		
Audio/Video requirements do not exceed basic system requirements and are compatible with multiple platforms (PC/Mac).		
Required Plug-ins are identified with links to download them (additional plug-ins are kept to a minimum and are open source/free).		
Abbreviations and symbols are defined.		
The function of each icon or button is explained.		
Nonstop animation elements are avoided.		
Check all graphic elements for look and consistent use.		
Alignment of text and graphic elements checked.		
Videos are produced and used for greatest benefit for students.		
Videos are hosted on a streaming site such as Vimeo or YouTube and embedded in Blackboard.		
Audio files are replaced by streamed video files for multi-platform usability.		
Video and Audio files have Closed Captioning or Transcript.		
Terms are used consistently.		
Underlining is only used for hyperlinks.		
Format is uncluttered and includes white space.		
Ragged right margins are used.		
Scrolling is minimized.		

Curriculum

This set of Checklists relate to adapting your Curriculum for an online environment (whether web-enhanced or fully online). Examining your curriculum will help you focus on the key elements before moving into the online design environment.

Outcomes & Content

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
Outcomes are achievable, measurable, relevant, clearly stated and concise.		
Outcomes include critical thinking, creativity, reflection, and problem-solving skills (the higher end of Blooms Taxonomy, the cognitive domain).		
Outcomes relate to knowledge, skills, competencies, behaviours and/or attitudes.		
Outcomes relate to real world applications.		
Course outcomes align with program outcomes and RDC		

Board Ends.		
Threading, laddering and alignment have been addressed throughout discipline/program.		
The Course is equivalent to the face-to-face version.		
The content is directly related to learning outcomes.		
Content is appropriate for learners' levels and also accessible to all students on home computers.		
Content is "chunked" into manageable sections in distinct learning modules/units.		
Units of instruction or topics are divided into sub-units or sub-topics (indentation feature in learning modules).		
Content flows in a logical progression (thematic, sequential, and chronological) and this is explained in the Start Here module.		
Numbers are used to identify sequential steps in a task or process.		
Content is enhanced with visual and auditory elements.		
The expected range of time to cover a chunk of content is identified for students.		
Reasonable timelines (clearly outlined).		
Explanation regarding group work and/or collaborations.		
Clarity: It is clear to students how the instructional strategies will enable them to achieve the Course Outcomes.		
Learners are guided in how to work with the course content in meaningful ways.		
Navigation scheme is clear and consistent.		
Material is organized so learners understand relationships between parts of the course.		
Headings and subheadings are used to organize content. (and used consistently throughout course).		
Components organized consistently throughout course.		

Course Learning Resources

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
Content is accurate, relevant, and current.		
Resources are a maximum of 7 years old (a rationale for older resources is given).		
At least three additional resources (beyond required resources) are provided with information on how to use these.		
Supplementary resources are made available and are well-integrated with other course materials (integrated publisher resources, e-textbooks, course manuals, RDC Library Subject Guides, etc.).		
Links to supplementary information is included.		
Learning Resources reflect different points of view.		

Learning Resources come from credible and authoritative sources (if otherwise, rationale for use is included and indicated to students).		
Learners are provided with an opportunity to add to learning resources and help build content.		
Bibliography or reference list or links to appropriate RDC Library Subject Guides (web links, books, journals, CDs, and videos) is provided when required.		
Resources identified as optional or required.		

Learning Activities

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
Variety of activities to address different learning needs, interests, and abilities (optional activities). Optional activities are identified as such.		
Interactivity and High Impact Practices (using Discussion, online conferencing, collaborative assignments and listserv participation).		
Timeline for feedback is stated and how it will be given.		
Activities identified as being in chronological order or from simple to complex.		
Activities include higher order thinking skills.		
Learning activities identified as sequential or completed in any order.		
Learning activities are not trivial tasks. Include high impact activities.		
Learning activities are chosen to provide learning opportunities to reach outcomes.		
Activities are titled to clearly indicate what they are.		
Instructions for each activity are clear and logical.		

Assessments (Assignments and Evaluations)

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
Criteria for all evaluation are stated (rubrics, examples, samples, etc. in Start Here module).		
Course assignment instructions are clear and complete.		
Students have instructions for submitting online assignments and understand the feedback and marking features.		
Assessments are aligned to learning outcomes.		
Appropriate assessment tools are used to measure learning.		
Feedback to learners is timely, detailed and constructive.		
If feedback is automated, this will be indicated to students.		
Students will be informed of how and when instructors will provide feedback.		

Formative and summative feedback are used.		
Grade Center is set-up before the start of the course so the learner can track his/her progress and see rubrics.		
Instructor understands how to manage feedback so course does not become overwhelming to students or instructor.		
Self-tests are similar to the final evaluation instruments.		
Learners can use self-tests/assessments to evaluate their progress in the course.		
Time limitations are placed on tests (if appropriate).		
Force Completion is turned off.		
Rubrics for evaluations are provided and attached to assignments where appropriate.		
Samples of each assignment or activity are provided with graded models of "good work."		

Student Learning Support

This checklist helps you assess the broader aspects of your online environment.

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
Information is sent to students before the start of the course regarding Supports and resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please see Distance Learning about sending information to students: http://rdc.libguides.com/distancelearning 		
Identify print materials to be sent to students before online course begins.		
Permission granted for all materials and stated within course. Check RDC Copyright Guide for compliance and understanding of the expanded Educational Use: http://rdc.libguides.com/copyright		
Link to Library Student Blackboard Help Guide.		
Link to program homepage.		
Link to college policies (plagiarism, grading).		
CAC Template is used for fully online courses to provide full student resources.		
Glossary of Terms.		
Link to Learning Support Services at RDC.		
Links to Bookstore, Registrar, etc.		
Information on how to log in to Blackboard directly is provided.		
Information on where to find help on campus is provided (e.g. Library, Distance Learning).		

Writing Standards

Checklist	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> NA	Comments
The course has no grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors.		
Proofread (numerous times) and by other people.		
Edited as needed.		
Free from bias (age, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference).		
A variety of societal and cultural groups are represented in images, graphics, examples, and resources as appropriate to content.		
Tone of writing is supportive and encouraging.		
Glossary of technical terms is included or terms are defined.		
Supports for comprehension are included (pre-reading activities, links to additional resources, clarification of vocabulary and symbols).		
Writing style is clear and direct.		
Writing has been checked using a readability checker (such as in MS Word) to ensure appropriate level.		
Instructions are stated simply and are easy to understand.		

References Consulted

- eCampus Alberta Quality eToolkit:
<http://quality.ecampusalberta.ca>
- The eCampus Alberta Rubric is a checklist that you can complete online to rate a course's quality standards. It has three sets of Standards: Institutional/Administrative, Support, and Course.
<http://rubric.ecampusalberta.ca>
- California State University, Chico. This rubric has criteria for evaluating online courses on a spectrum of Baseline, Effective, and Exemplary.
http://www.csuchico.edu/roi/the_rubric.shtml
- Chickering, Arthur and Stephen C. Ehrmann (1996), "Implementing the Seven Principles: Technology as Lever," AAHE Bulletin, October, pp. 3-6.
<http://www.tltgroup.org/programs/seven.html>
- Palomar College. "Online Course Best Practices Checklist." 2012.
<http://www2.palomar.edu/poet/BestPracticesChecklistSP12.pdf>
- 2010 Blackboard Exemplary Course Program Rubric:
<http://www.blackboard.com/getdoc/7deaf501-4674-41b9-b2f2-554441ba099b/2012-Blackboard-Exemplary-Course-Rubric.aspx>
- Blackboard List of Exemplary Courses:
<http://kb.blackboard.com/display/EXEMPLARY/Exemplary+Course+Program>
- Sunal, D.W., Sunal, C.S., Odell, M.R., Sundberg, C.A. 2003. *Research-Supported Best Practices for Developing Online Learning*. Journal of Interactive Online Learning.
<http://www.ncolr.org/jiol/issues/pdf/2.1.1.pdf>