

Course Evaluation Checklist

The Course Evaluation Checklist is a collaborative creation from members of the Education Services department at Instructure. By combining our expertise in Canvas, sharing our knowledge of Universal Design for Learning principles, and applying our deep understanding of pedagogical best practices, we've created a tool that will elevate the quality of Canvas courses.

How To Use The legend in the top right corner of each page references what type of criterion is demonstrated. A ★ rating indicates an expected and standard design component to online learning; a ★★ rating is considered “Best Practice” and adds value to a course; and ★★★ is exemplary and elevates learning.

We know each institution has unique requirements for their courses and we hope this document will serve as a great resource or starting point. *We'd love to hear how you're using this checklist. Please leave comments in the [Canvas Community - Course Evaluation Checklist blog post](#).*

Course Information	
Yes ✓	Criteria
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Home Page provides visual representation of course; a brief course description or introduction; clear instructions for students (e.g., where to begin) and navigation to current content in less than three clicks <i>→ UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★	Home Page utilizes a course banner with imagery that is relevant to subject/course materials <i>→ UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Course card provides visual representation of subject by adding an image in Course Settings Canvas Guide - Add Image to Course Card <i>→ UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Items not used are hidden from Course Navigation Canvas Guide - Navigation Links <i>→ UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Instructor has provided learning objectives; policies for grading, late work and make-up work; communication instructions, guidelines and contact information <i>→ UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Student is made aware of participation expectations; technology requirements; and supplemental textbooks, reading lists, and course materials
Course Content	
Yes ✓	Criteria
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Copyright law is followed. Course breaks no copyright considerations Canvas Guide - Copyright Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	All links, files, videos and external URLs are active and working Canvas Guide - Link Validation

☐ ★	Content is "chunked" into manageable pieces by leveraging modules (e.g. organized by units, chapters, topic, or weeks) Canvas Guide - Modules * UDL 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation
☐ ★★	Text Headers and indentation are included within modules to help guide student navigation 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: Pandas in the News," not just "Chapter 1") * UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure
☐ ★★★	Modules begin with an Introduction/Overview page and end with a Conclusion/Summary page to "bookend" each module * UDL 3.1 Activate or supply background knowledge
☐ ★★★	External tools (e.g., Quizlet, Khan Academy, Padlet, Nearpod, CK-12) are embedded within modules or in a page, assignment, discussion, or quiz using the Rich Content Editor Canvas Blog - Web 2.0 Tools * UDL 5.2 Use multiple tools for construction and composition
☐ ★	Lessons include at least one of three forms: ▸ <i>Student-Student Interaction (e.g. discussions and/or collaborative projects)</i> ▸ <i>Student-Teacher Interaction (e.g. quality feedback)</i> ▸ <i>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
☐ ★★	There is a "Welcome" or "Let's Get Acquainted" discussion * UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community
☐ ★★★	Auto-open Inline Preview used thoughtfully Canvas Guide - Auto-open for Inline Preview
☐ ★★★	Personalized learning is evident (e.g., utilized module completion requirements and/or prerequisites) Canvas Guide - Adding Prerequisites * UDL 6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress
☐ ★★★	Differentiation is evident (e.g. utilized different due dates) Canvas Guide- Differentiation
☐ ★★★	MasteryPaths are included Canvas Guide - MasteryPaths * UDL 7.2 Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity

Assessment of Student Learning

Yes ✓	Criteria
☐ ★	Multiple methods of assessments are used (e.g. discussion, assignments (individual or group) and quizzes) * UDL 4.1 Vary the methods for response and navigation
☐ ★	Detailed instructions and guidelines for completing assignments and discussions are provided * UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies

<input type="checkbox"/> ★★	Sample assignments are provided to illustrate instructor expectations → UDL 5.3 Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	SpeedGrader used to score and provide feedback Canvas Guide - SpeedGrader → UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Rubrics used to evaluate assignments and/or discussions Canvas Guide - Rubrics
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★	Outcomes tied to assessments Canvas Guide - Outcomes → UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★★	Learning Mastery Gradebook enabled for visual representation of Outcome mastery Canvas Guide - Learning Mastery Gradebook

Course Accessibility

Yes ✓	Criteria
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Accommodation Statement is present and easily located (e.g., on Home Page or Course Overview) → UDL Guideline 1: Provide options for perception
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Color does not overpower the course information; sufficient contrast between text and background makes information easy to read; and color is not used in isolation to convey meaning (e.g., color and bold are used to indicate importance) Canvas Guide - Accessibility Checker → UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Images are used to support course content (e.g., banners, headings and icons) and accompanied by text descriptions (Alt text) or captions for more complex descriptions Canvas Guide - General Accessibility Design Guidelines → UDL 1.3 Offer alternatives for visual information
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Styles (e.g. Paragraph, Heading 2, etc.) are used to format text with a preference to use sans serif (e.g., Arial or Helvetica) Fonts Canvas Guide - General Accessibility Design Guidelines
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Hyperlink text incorporates the hyperlink destination/purpose (avoid raw URLs, e.g., https://www.canvaslms.com) and includes words and phrases to provide context for screen-readers (e.g., use “Canvas Guide - Hyperlink” rather than “Canvas Guide”) WebAim - Introduction to Links and Hypertext
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	Audio materials (mp3, wav, etc.) are accompanied by a transcript and videos / screencasts are closed-captioned Canvas Guide - Create Caption Files → UDL 1.2 Offer alternatives for auditory information
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★	Tables are only used for tabular data

The Education Services department is always ready to help your organization create a cycle of success with Canvas through Training, Instructional Design, and Adoption Consulting! Our Instructional Design team offers full Course Evaluations. Course evaluation services provide insight into best practices. Recommendations will focus on aligning course objectives, accessibility, and overall creation of an enhanced user experience. If you would like to learn more about our services, please contact your CSM or Shauna Vorkink at svorkink@instructure.com.



Resources

Universal Design for Learning: External Resources

- [National Center on Universal Design for Learning](#)
- [UDL Guidelines—Version 2.0](#)
- [Best Practices for Building Universal Design Principles into your Canvas Courses](#)

Universal Design for Learning: Canvas Community Resources

- [Design a Mobile Ready Course with Universal Design](#) InstructureCon presentation by Kate Miller, CU Online
- [Share UDL Course Design Tips, Tricks, and Techniques](#)
- [Commons Course: Universal Design of an Online Course](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning Principles in Canvas](#)
- [Implementing Universal Design for Learning on Canvas](#)
- [Canvas Live Presentation: Canvas Mobile Design](#)



Citations

Citations

CAST (2011). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.0*. Wakefield, MA: Author.

Noblesville Schools Quality Course Checklist [Google Doc]. Noblesville Schools.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OWrUISUYVIsD78K4w-nldfnpNrzcqKlaGuo5oRxnMw>

Online Course Best Practices Checklist [PDF]. (2012). Palomar College Academic Technology Department.

<http://www2.palomar.edu/poet/BestPracticesChecklistSP12.pdf>

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