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**
❏ ★	**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 ↠ *UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media*
❏ ★★	**Home Page** utilizes a course banner with imagery that is relevant to subject/course materials ↠ *UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media*
❏ ★	Course card provides visual representation of subject by adding an image in **Course Settings** | [Canvas Guide - Add Image to Course Card](#) ↠ *UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media*
❏ ★	Items not used are hidden from **Course Navigation** | [Canvas Guide - Navigation Links](#) ↠ *UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions*
❏ ★	**Instructor** has provided learning objectives; policies for grading, late work and make-up work; communication instructions, guidelines and contact information ↠ *UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives*
❏ ★	**Student** is made aware of participation expectations; technology requirements; and supplemental textbooks, reading lists, and course materials
Course Content	
Yes ✔	**Criteria**
❏ ★	Copyright law is followed. Course breaks no copyright considerations | [Canvas Guide - Copyright Resources](#)
❏ ★	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 indention 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: ‣ *Student-Student Interaction (e.g. discussions and/or collaborative projects)* ‣ *Student-Teacher Interaction (e.g. quality feedback)* ‣ *Student-Content Interaction (e.g. engaging content and resources with which students must interact and not just read or watch)* ⇢ *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*

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

Course Accessibility

Yes ✔	Criteria
❏ ★	Accommodation Statement is present and easily located (e.g., on Home Page or Course Overview) ↠ *UDL Guideline 1: Provide options for perception*
❏ ★	**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*
❏ ★	**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*
❏ ★	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
❏ ★	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
❏ ★	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*
❏ ★★	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/1OWrUISUYVlsD78K4w-nldfpnNrzcqKIaGuo5oRxnxMw

Online Course Best Practices Checklist [PDF]. (2012). Palomar College Academic Technology
Department.
http://www2.palomar.edu/poet/BestPracticesChecklistSP12.pdf

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