Distance Education Handbook Checklists

Organization Checklist

For examples and tips regarding the items in the checklist below, see Appendix B: Organization Checklist Resources.

Class Structure

- ☐ Organize content into Modules
    - ☐ Construct a logical flow of content that aligns with SLOs
    - ☐ Design modules in alignment with Calendar/Schedule
    - ☐ Include learning objectives for each Module
- ☐ Incorporate non-automated, instructor graded activities and assignments that encourage participation (e.g., Discussions)
- ☐ Identify places to include technology and resources that enhance learning (e.g., videos, readings, apps)

Communication

- ☐ Develop clear expectations regarding:
    - ☐ Attendance and drop policy
    - ☐ How the instructor will communicate including response times regarding:
        - ☐ Email responses
        - ☐ Feedback
        - ☐ Classwork and grading
        - ☐ When communication cannot be expected (holidays/weekends)
    - ☐ Required manner of communication for student-initiated contact, including preferred communication modes
    - ☐ Participation v. non-participation and a rubric showing grading impacts of participation
- ☐ Create a detailed Communication Plan
- ☐ Craft and deliver a Welcome Letter via email prior to the start of class. Include the following:
    - ☐ Name of class, class dates, and CRN
    - ☐ Instructions on how to find DE class on Canvas LMS
    - ☐ Instructor introduction and contact information
    - ☐ Notification of when class will be published
    - ☐ Comprehensive orientation and all above listed expectations

- How to navigate the specific instructor's Canvas page (Modules, Calendar, etc.)
- First steps, week one expectations, and where to find the syllabus (attaching syllabus is recommended)

Syllabus

Assemble a clear and detailed syllabus using the following requirements:

Class
- Class title
- CRN and Section Number
- Class location (Canvas/Zoom/Physical location if Hybrid)
- Instructor's information: BC email address, phone, office location, and office hours
- Department Chair contact information: BC email and work phone
- Expected response rate with non-workdays; note when communication cannot be expected
- Office hours: days, times, and modality (physical or virtual) per contract

Class Requirements
- Required and recommended class books and materials
- Required access to internet, software, hardware
- Required use of Canvas and any other LMS, digital resources (e.g., GoReact)
- Unique class needs and requirements (e.g., camera use in Zoom sessions)

Class Description
- Course Outline of Record (COR)
- Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

Important Dates: for the semester (official for the college and those for the class)
- Add, drop, and withdraw dates and information
- Census date for specific CRN
- Final examination schedule information

Attendance Policy and Expectations
- Official BC attendance policy
- Class-specific attendance/participation/academic engagement policy

Grading Policies and Expectations
- ☐ Grading expectations

- ☐ Performance evaluation methods

- ☐ Percentage and point breakdown of all categories of required coursework

Classroom Behavior Expectations
- ☐ [BC Standards of Student Conduct](#)

- ☐ Instructor's behavior expectations of students

Communication and Interaction Expectations
- ☐ What students can expect from the instructor

- ☐ What the instructor can expect from the student

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- ☐ Institutional expectations of students

- ☐ Instructor expectations of students and process regarding academic integrity and eIntegrity (e.g., plagiarism, use of AI)

Student Services Statements
- ☐ DSPS statement exactly as provided by the institution for that year

- ☐ Availability and location of class relevant tutoring services

Weekly Schedule
- ☐ Include all required classwork

  - ☐ Use descriptive titles (Quiz: Plato's *The Republic* v. Quiz #1*)*

  - ☐ Show where to find assignment information and associated lesson content

  - ☐ State clear due dates for current term

- ☐ Explicitly detail the final examination schedule (must align with BC's set days, times, and location)

Link(s) to Resources
- ☐ Informational links (e.g., How to be a DE Student Canvas Template, Canvas basics, Netiquette agreement, Student Success Lab)

- ☐ Validate all links before including

Other
- ☐ Additional information as preferred by the instructor that facilitates student success and RSI

Preparation Checklist

For examples and tips regarding the items in the checklist below, see Appendix C: Preparation Checklist Resources

Instructional Materials

☐ Post syllabus in Syllabus section of Canvas shell

☐ Create page with links to Canvas Student Guides, BC Student Chat with Canvas Support, BC Technology Support Services, and Online Student Resources

☐ Create individualized content rather than relying on publisher content

☐ Incorporate culturally competent strategies

☐ Save class materials in common file types (.doc, .ppt, .jpeg, .pdf)

☐ Present content on Canvas and materials in a logical manner to facilitate navigation:

    ☐ Use Heading styles consistently across Canvas Pages and Modules

    ☐ Give headings and titles unique labels – avoid duplicating language

    ☐ Avoid using fonts, colors, and formatting in place of heading styles

    ☐ Ensure the navigation order of links is logical and intuitive

    ☐ Verify that any content using drag and drop, pinching, or swiping can also be accomplished by a single control

    ☐ Provide directions that do not rely upon visual location, shape, sound, or size (e.g., "the star in the corner" or "proceed at the beep")

    ☐ Label Canvas Pages with descriptive and informative page titles

    ☐ Confirm fillable text fields support multiple input options (physical keyboard, keyboard on a mobile device)

☐ For written content on Canvas or embedded documents ensure the following:

    ☐ Verify educational material is readable and functional when zoomed to 200%

    ☐ Confirm contrast between background and text passes the Color Contrast Checker

    ☐ Set adequate line and paragraph spacing and review overall use of white space

    ☐ Align text to the left, not justified or to the right

    ☐ Utilize underlining for hyperlinks only

    ☐ Create lists using "Numbered List" (for ordered lists) and "Bullet" tool (for unordered lists)

    ☐ Ensure visual text formatting is not used as the only method to convey importance or meaning (e.g., using bold, italics, and font size or color for emphasis)

- Include tables sparingly and only for presenting data
    - Add alt text for all tables used
- Designate distinctive row and column headers when tables are used
- Provide detailed labels with accompanying textual descriptions of trends and totals shown in any charts, in and out of spreadsheets
- Assign unique titles to each slide in PowerPoint (PPT) presentations
- Confirm logical and intuitive reading order on all education materials (e.g., PowerPoint, Word)
- Check that Alt Text is visible in "Outline View" so it can be read by screen readers (e.g., PowerPoint, Word)
- Run and pass Adobe Accessibility Checker for all PDFs
- Use images wisely:
    - Exclude visual images of text (e.g., memes) unless the context of the text is imperative to the understanding, which would then require an alternative text description
    - Test for the required contrast ratio of 7:1 for visual texts, if used ([Color Contrast Checker](#))
    - Write appropriate equivalent alt text for all images, buttons, and image map hot spots
    - Mark images that do not convey content as "decorative"
    - Provide equitable descriptive content for complicated images in alt text or a separate linked page
- Include links to relevant additional content or resources:
    - Share links to needed resources where they will be used in the class
    - Embed links instead of displaying URLs
    - Use descriptive link text (Avoid redundant and non-descriptive wording such as "click here" or "link")
    - Differentiate link text so links that go to different locations are easily discernable from each other
    - Ensure linked images contain appropriate and equivalent alternative text
    - Guarantee web content is visible in portrait and landscape mode
- Offer individualized learning opportunities (e.g., remedial activities, resources for advanced learners)
- Include collaborative activities (graded or nongraded)

- ☐ If supplementary publisher-created content is included:
  - ☐ Ensure content enhances student learning and engagement
  - ☐ Verify content does not supersede instructor-led education
- ☐ Embed all materials, assignments, and instructions for how the students are expected to engage with materials

Media

- ☐ Include a wide variety of delivery media (video, lectures, podcasts, forums, etc.)
- ☐ Incorporate multimedia responsibly. Canvas does not have the capability to allow students to stop or pause media that auto-plays. Avoid using media that plays automatically (animations, gifs, etc.) on Canvas pages
- ☐ Confirm embedded or linked media is used correctly:
  - ☐ Verify multimedia is not set to auto-play
  - ☐ Exclude multimedia that blinks or strobes (including, but not limited to, GIFs, animations, banners, and images)
  - ☐ Ensure there is a pause or stop button for any automatically moving, scrolling, or flashing content. Avoid red flashing content.
  - ☐ Eliminate flashing content that flashes more than three flashes per second
  - ☐ Identify multimedia via accessible text
  - ☐ Limit background noise to low or none with audio and video
  - ☐ Include accurate transcripts for audio content with both spoken audio and audio descriptions
  - ☐ Guarantee Closed Captioning (CC) and audio descriptions are included and synchronized
  - ☐ Include real-time, synchronized, and accurate captioning for live videos/broadcasting

Assessments

☐ Create assessments of various types, both formative and summative, tied to the SLOs

☐ Schedule frequent assessments at regular intervals throughout the class

☐ Time limits on timed work are adjustable if needed

☐ Incorporate strategies that will yield equitable student outcomes

☐ Write instructions clearly to ensure understanding

Implementation Checklist

For examples and tips regarding the items in the checklist below, see Appendix D: Implementation Checklist Resources

Instructor Responsibilities

Prior to class start:

- ☐ Run accessibility checker on Canvas before publishing
- ☐ Publish Canvas class by 12:00am on Saturday classes begin
- ☐ Post Welcome Letter or video
- ☐ Follow the Communication Plan for the semester
- ☐ List software and technology required for student use outside of Canvas with links to where they can be captured and installed
- ☐ Ensure FERPA requirements in regards to confidential student information will be maintained

For the start of the class:

- ☐ Respond to student communications within 48-hours with detailed information
- ☐ Set norms for communications sent after or before a certain time of day
- ☐ Send reminders of timelines and important class dates
- ☐ Monitor student participation and drop non-participating students by the census date
- ☐ Meet all DSPS accommodations reported at the beginning of the class

For the duration of the class:

- ☐ Meet any new DSPS accommodations as they arise throughout the semester
- ☐ Continue to regularly monitor participation and reach out to students who have not engaged with materials (e.g. Analytics and Insights in Canvas)
- ☐ Maintain an up-to-date gradebook in Canvas (e.g., grade assignments within 48-hours, default to zero for missing assignments)
- ☐ Respond promptly and proactively to students' observed concerns and provide necessary support
- ☐ Provide prompt, personalized, and detailed feedback on student coursework and assignments (e.g., written comments, video notes, detailed rubrics)
- ☐ Create opportunities for students to provide anonymous feedback on the class using Anonymous/Ungraded Survey option under Quizzes

- ☐ Use communication tools in Canvas as stated in Regular Communication and Interaction Schedule (e.g., Announcements, Calendar, Canvas Inbox, Message Students Who, Speedgrader, Zoom)
- ☐ Facilitate and engage in Discussion forums track student engagement and peer-to-peer interaction
- ☐ Schedule and keep consistent office hours, per the CCA contract

Learner Engagement

- ☐ Actively participate in Discussions:
  - ☐ Pose questions
  - ☐ Propose alternative viewpoints
  - ☐ Connect ideas
  - ☐ Encourage struggling students
- ☐ Regularly and effectively ensure at least three of the following five communications each week:
  - ☐ Three class content specific Announcements with RSI
  - ☐ Weekly video posts
  - ☐ Comprehensive feedback in Discussions
  - ☐ Comprehensive feedback on submitted work
  - ☐ Comprehensive use of Comment boxes (video, audio, or written) or use of rubrics
- ☐ Formally structure, explain, and facilitate at least two of the following contact points per week:
  - ☐ Contact linked to specific SLOs
  - ☐ Communication on retention and reflection of content
  - ☐ Collaborative activities
  - ☐ Real world projects
  - ☐ Media or research-based projects
  - ☐ Discussions with consistent and meaningful feedback from instructor
  - ☐ Peer review opportunities
- ☐ Highlight positive connections with class content, assessments, and peers
- ☐ Give students the opportunity to engage in non-required communication weekly

- Facilitate Student-to-Student communication weekly (e.g., Discussions, peer-to-peer feedback, chats, breakout rooms in Zoom, group activities/assignments)
- Use Canvas Speedgrader or Comments section for feedback on assignments
- Utilize Message Students Who and Starfish tools to facilitate communication