

SF College Online Course Design Checklist

This checklist contains a list of design criteria that should be observable in any exemplary online course. It does not look at discipline content, only research-based, best practice design elements that contribute to student success. The third column includes links to examples and resources to help you better understand each criteria.

I. Course Overview Criteria	Comments	Support Resources (CG=Canvas Guides)
a. Homepage gives a brief description of course, faculty information and how to begin.	The course should have a landing page/home page that includes important course information and links, instructor contact information and contact guidelines, and an indication of how to get started.	Set Front Page - CG Course Home Page - CG How to get started custom button Create hyperlink - CG
b. Early in the course students are welcomed and provided an overview of the course.	An overview of the course is important for students to understand the purpose of the course and how it is structured. Information may be found on the homepage and/or the first module.	
c. Course layout is easy to navigate.	Faculty should use the standard Canvas navigation (left menu), place the course content in the “modules” link, and inactivate unused links. When content is organized in modules, it creates a <i>seamless flow</i> that is easy to follow. Placing all content in modules and hiding redundant Canvas navigation links will alleviate confusion.	Course Navigation Links - CG Modules - CG
d. Course syllabus is posted and contains all appropriate information from the syllabus template.	Using the syllabus template ensures all appropriate information is provided: i.e., resources, netiquette, student code of conduct, DRC info, and technical skills needed, etc.	Syllabus template in public Effective Course Design
e. Key information is located in more than one location.	Key information (i.e., required proctored exams, field work, institutional policies, etc.) is found on the syllabus, and in additional modules if needed; but avoid redundant links and be sure all links are consistent and up-to-date.	
f. Course includes an introduction of the instructor.	Faculty should include an introduction on the homepage or in the first module. This can be a video, photo or other image.	Creating a positive presence in an Online course
g. Course includes an opportunity for students to introduce themselves to each other.	Introduction can be a self-introduction to the class, an introductory discussion or something similar. Suggest that students post a picture or other image. Note – this is a good activity for faculty to use to mark “has attended.”	7 tips for successful student introductions in an online class

II. Instructional Material Criteria	Comments	Support Resources (CG=Canvas Guides)
a. Content is divided into separate units.	Place content under “modules” link on the left menu. Arrange content by weekly modules, chapters, or topics as appropriate. Instructional content is organized and arranged in modules so that students can easily move through the course without having to click in multiple places to access materials.	Modules Index Page - CG
b. Unit/course learning objectives are provided and stated in measurable terms.	Use terminology that is measurable such as “ <i>define, explain, and articulate.</i> ” Avoid terminology such as “ <i>know, understand, appreciate.</i> ” (Bloom’s taxonomy)	Writing objectives using Bloom's Taxonomy
c. Both internal content and external links are up to date.	Be sure to remove old content and announcements and check external links each term.	How to validate links in a course - CG
d. A variety of instructional materials are used to enhance the learning experience throughout the course.	Instructional materials can include text, audio, video, and graphics as appropriate for the course learning objectives. Note that all media should be accessible.	
III. Engagement Criteria	Comments	Support Resources (CG=Canvas Guides)
a. One or more methods are provided for interaction and feedback between faculty member and students.	Methods may include email, discussions, phone conversations, Google Voice, homework feedback, or others.	
b. One or more methods are provided for interaction between students.	Methods may include collaborations, discussions, projects, Canvas groups, and the “Big Blue Button” tool for webinars.	
c. Activities are present that require students to interact with the content.	Examples include tests, quizzes, self-assessments, discussions.	
d. Students are informed where notifications can be found.	Notifications should be posted on a regular basis and can include calendar postings, announcements, etc.	Setting instructor notifications Setting student notifications - CG Notifications assignment - CG
e. Expectations for reasonable response times (based on common standards) to student inquiries have been provided.	Information should be included in a clear location such as the syllabus; students should not need to search for this information. Common standards such as 24 to 48 hours may be established by departments.	Syllabus template

IV. Assessment Criteria	Comments	Support Resources (CG=Canvas Guides)
a. A clear and detailed grading policy is presented.	Provide rubrics if appropriate; provide information about how to calculate grades.	How to create a rubric - CG
b. A variety of assessments are used that give students opportunities to receive feedback and track progress.	Examples include tests, quizzes, discussions, written assignments, papers, projects and labs. Students should have numerous opportunities to receive grades, gauge their learning, and make adjustments.	Why is assessment important?
V. Accessibility and Usability Criteria	Comments	Support Resources (CG=Canvas Guides)
a. Text-based materials are screen-reader friendly.	Do not present PDFs as images. Be sure documents (such as Word) are in a format, which can be read by screen-reader software.	View SF guide on accessible documents
b. All audio and video are either close-captioned or a full transcript is provided.	Faculty should prepare a transcript in advance of creating video presentations. Faculty should continuously work toward achieving full course accessibility and cooperate with the DRC to accommodate individual student needs.	View SF guide on captions & transcripts
c. Alternate text is provided for all images.	Describe images in detail so that students with disabilities such as vision impairments or learning disorders can access the descriptions in addition to images.	View SF guide on accessible images
d. Web links include descriptive names.	Provide descriptive names that will be meaningful when read aloud by screen-reader software.	View SF guide on accessible web links
e. The color of text is accessible.	Use high contrast colors. Do not use color solely to convey meaning. Avoid text colors that mimic hyperlinks and text that blinks or flashes.	View SF guide on accessible text
f. Accessible text formatting is used.	Do not underline text unless it is a hyperlink. Use a simple 12 point font or larger.	View SF guide on accessible text
g. Information regarding DRC or a link to the DRC is provided in multiple locations.	DRC services should be described in the course syllabus and elsewhere.	View SF guide on accessibility statement
h. Faculty should use their own content or comply with copyright law.	In order for DRC to convert materials from one format to another, they must be used in compliance with copyright law.	View SF guide on copyright

VI. Course Info Page Criteria	Comments	Support Resources (CG=Canvas Guides)
a. Course information page is posted and relevant to the particular course section (not generic or outdated).	Course information pages should be available at the time at the time students <i>begin</i> registering so that they may make informed decisions about registration.	Info Pages How-to Information page login
b. Course information page includes textbook information and ISBN.	This information provides students adequate time to get textbooks and materials before the class begins.	
c. Course information page includes exam proctoring information (online courses) and attendance requirements (hybrid courses).	This information may be critical to success in the course and should be available in advance to prevent students from enrolling in courses when they are not capable of meeting all requirements.	

Course Learning Outcomes Alignment Grid

It is important for learning outcomes to align with course activities and assessments to ensure you are appropriately measuring the learning that you intended for your students upon completion of your class. The Outcomes Alignment Grid template allows you to list your learning objectives and match them with the activities and assessments that go with them. CT3 will be offering workshops on how to create an Outcomes Alignment Grid, and you should feel free to contact one of the instructional designers, Jason Frank and Andy Sheppard, if you have questions.

Alignment of Learning Outcomes	Comments	Support Resources (CG=Canvas Guides)
1. Instructional <i>materials</i> are relevant and aligned with the stated unit/course learning objectives.	The instructional materials are aligned with the subject matter of the course and support the stated unit/course objectives.	Course Alignment
2. Instructional <i>activities</i> are relevant and aligned with the stated unit/course learning objectives.	The instructional activities are aligned with the subject matter of the course and support the stated unit/course objectives.	
3. Assessments are aligned with the stated unit/course learning objectives.	Assessments are appropriate for the subject matter of the course and indicate if the stated unit/course objectives have been achieved. (For example: a writing course should require an assessment of a student's written work.)	