

Course Evaluation Checklist v2.0

We've combed through the research and collaborated with outside experts to make the original even better. This updated version of the Course Evaluation Checklist now includes the **top 10 Foundational** items (think of this list as your quick start), improved examples, and more articulate verbiage. Members of the Learning Services department loved collaborating, sharing our knowledge of Canvas and Universal Design for Learning principles, and applying our deep understanding of pedagogical best practices to help Canvas users elevate the quality of Canvas courses.

How To Use: The legend within each header references what type of criterion is demonstrated. A ★ (1-star) rating indicates an **Essential** and standard design component to online learning (including the top 10 **Foundational** items); a ★★ (2-star) rating is considered **Best Practice** and adds value to a course; and a ★★★ (3-star) rating is **Exemplary** and elevates learning.

We know each institution has unique requirements for its 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](#).* Visit the [Mobile App Design Course Evaluation Checklist](#) blog post to access an additional resource!

Course Information		★ Essential	★★ Best Practice	★★★ Exemplary
Yes ✓	Criteria			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	1.1 Home Page provides a visual representation of course; a brief course description or introduction; clear instructions for students (e.g., where to begin) and quick and easy navigation to current content. 📍 UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	1.2 Course Navigation is clear and consistent (unused items are hidden). Canvas Guide: Navigation Links 📍 Mobile Design Consideration 📍 UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	1.3 Instructor has provided key learning information such as goals, learning objectives, and/or standards as well as course materials, supplemental textbooks, and reading lists. 📍 UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	1.4 Instructor has provided class expectations such as participation rules, etiquette expectations, code of conduct; policies for grading, late work, and make-up work; and technology requirements . 📍 UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives → 8.3 Foster collaboration and community			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	1.5 Instructor has provided contact information which may include a biography, availability information, communication preferences, response time, and picture. 📍 8.3 Foster collaboration and community			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	1.6 Course card provides a visual representation of the subject by adding an image in Course Settings. Canvas Guide: Add Image to Course Card 📍 UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	1.7 Course contains information and links to institutional resources (e.g. library, institutional services, school's website). 📍 8.3 Foster collaboration and community			

Course Content		★ Essential	★★ Best Practice	★★★ Exemplary
Yes ✓	Criteria			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	2.1 Copyright law is followed. Course breaks no copyright considerations. Canvas Guide: Copyright Resources			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	2.2 All links, files, videos, and external URLs are active and working. Canvas Guide: Link Validation 📌 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	2.3 Learning activities include student-student interaction to foster a sense of community (e.g. discussions, constructive collaboration, and peer reviews). 📌 UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	2.4 Learning activities include student-teacher interaction (e.g. teacher is actively engaged in authentic conversations and provides quality feedback). 📌 UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	2.5 Learning activities include student-content interaction (e.g. students interact with engaging content and resources) and provide opportunities for self-assessment. 📌 UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community → UDL 9.3 Develop self-assessment and reflection			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	2.6 Content is "chunked" into manageable pieces by leveraging modules (e.g. organized by units, chapters, topic, or weeks). Canvas Guide: Modules 📌 Mobile Design Consideration 📌 UDL 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★	2.7 There is a "Welcome" or "Let's Get Acquainted" discussion designed to build a sense of community and establish rapport. 📌 UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★	2.8 Personalized learning is evident through opportunities for student choice. 📌 UDL 7.1 Optimize individual choice and autonomy			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★	2.9 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			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★	2.10 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			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★	2.11 Text headers and indentation are included within modules to help guide student navigation. Canvas Guide: Add Text Header 📌 Mobile Design Consideration 📌 UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★★	2.12 Opportunities for course feedback are present and available to students throughout the duration of the course. The instructor uses formal and informal feedback to improve subsequent course revisions. 📌 UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★★	2.13 Module completion requirements and/or prerequisites are utilized to provide course structure, pacing, and flow. Canvas Guide: Adding Prerequisites 📌 UDL 3.3 Guide information processing and visualization			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★★	2.14 External tools (e.g., Quizlet, Khan Academy, Padlet, Nearpod, CK-12) are relevant to course content and support active learning techniques. 📌 UDL 5.2 Use multiple tools for construction and composition			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★★	2.16 MasteryPaths are included. Canvas Guide: MasteryPaths 📌 UDL 7.2 Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity			

Assessment of Student Learning		★ Essential	★★ Best Practice	★★★ Exemplary
Yes ✓	Criteria			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	3.1 Detailed instructions are clearly written to ensure understanding to support student actions. 📌 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	3.2 A variety of assessments is used (e.g., discussions, quizzes, and individual/group assignments) to increase learner engagement and promote active learning. 📌 UDL 4.1 Vary the methods for response and navigation			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	3.3 Low-stakes (formative) assessments occur frequently throughout the course to measure knowledge, skills, and attitude and occur before high-stakes assessments. 📌 UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	3.4 High-stakes (summative) assessments are clearly aligned with stated goals, learning objectives, and/or standards. 📌 UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	3.5 Assessments support instructors' use of SpeedGrader to score and provide prompt and high-quality feedback. Canvas Guide: SpeedGrader 📌 UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★★	3.6 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"/> ★★★	3.7 Rubrics used to evaluate assignments and/or discussions. Canvas Guide: Rubrics 📌 UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★★★	3.8 Canvas Outcomes are tied to assessments. Canvas Guide: Outcomes 📌 UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives			
Course Accessibility		★ Essential	★★ Best Practice	★★★ Exemplary
Yes ✓	Criteria			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★ Foundational	4.1 Web tools and/or software are utilized to identify and correct accessibility issues within the course (e.g. Accessibility Checker.) Canvas Guide: Accessibility Checker 📌 UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	4.2 Accommodation Statement is present and easily located (e.g., on Home Page or Syllabus). 📌 UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	4.3 Color enhances the aesthetic appeal and effectiveness of the course; sufficient contrast between text and background makes information easy to read; and color is not used in isolation to convey meaning. Canvas Guide: Accessibility Checker 📌 UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	4.4 Images are used to support course content (e.g., banners, headings, and icons) and are 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"/> ★	4.5 Styles (e.g. Paragraph, Heading 2, etc.) are used to format text. Canvas Guide: General Accessibility Design Guidelines 📌 UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies			
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	4.6 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 📌 UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies
📄 ★	4.7 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
📄 ★★	4.8 Tables are used appropriately and are accessible. WebAim: Creating Accessible Tables 📌 Mobile Design Consideration 📌 UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies

The Learning Services department is always ready to help your organization create a cycle of success with Canvas through Training, Content, and Learning & Strategy Services! If you would like to learn more about our offerings, please contact your CSM or Learning Services at learning.services@instructure.com.

Resources

- Baldwin, S., Ching, Y.-H., & Hsu, Y.-C. (2018). Online course design in higher education: A review of national and statewide evaluation instruments. *TechTrends*, 62(3), 46-57. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-017-0215-z>
- Baldwin, S., & Ching, Y.-H. (2019). Online course design: A review of the Canvas course evaluation checklist. *International Review of Research in Open & Distributed Learning*, 20(3), 268-282. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v20i3.4283>
- Best practices for building Universal Design principles into your Canvas courses. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.sfu.ca/canvas/instructors/universal-design/building_udl_into_canvas.html
- CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>
- Moore, E. (2017, October 16). Implementing Universal Design for Learning on Canvas. Retrieved from <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Instructional-Designer/Implementing-Universal-Design-for-Learning-on-Canvas/ba-p/271887>
- Online Course Best Practices Checklist. (2012). Retrieved from <https://www2.palomar.edu/poet/BestPracticesChecklistSP1>

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