

Pre-Planning

Before You Start

Upfront preparation is key to the organization of your course. Students should be able to see your course structure, timelines, expectations, and any other important information at their first login.

- Consider the big-picture organization of your course
 - Create a [communication plan](#)
 - Plan the course structure
 - Decide on the main groupings you will use to organise your course (weeks, modules, themes, etc.) UDL
 - Consider the learning paths you would like students to take (e.g. scaffolding)
 - Plan for course consistency
 - Due dates are clearly communicated and consistent throughout the course (i.e. in discussion boards, assignments, and course outline)
 - Same terminology is used throughout the course
 - Decide on [naming conventions](#), content, and assessments
- [Integrate UDL principles](#) in your course plan UDL
- Consider opportunities to include [diverse and inclusive perspectives](#) UDL
- Technology choices support the intended learning outcomes and student experience
- Ensure students have time to obtain required resources such as readings, software, and other course requirements prior to the course start date


For a deeper dive into course planning, see the [Organising Your Course in D2L: The 5 C Checklist](#).

Building Your Course

Create Orientation or Start Here Module

- Post your course outline /syllabus and include any specific course delivery information (i.e. synchronous sessions, blended components etc.)
 - Course outline/syllabus is [accessible and learner-centred](#)
 - Policy information is updated according to MRU and your department
- Post an instructor welcome page/section. Include things such as:
 - Video/message introduction
 - Contact information
 - Office hours
 - Preferred method of communication & parameters around response time
 - Description of the [instructor's role](#) in supporting student learning
 - Description of the learner's role, noting the level of independence required in online learning, the importance of communicating online with the instructor and other learners/peers, and any other expectations the instructor has of learners
- Create a "Support and Resources" section that includes any special technology and who to contact for help (i.e. [Library D2L student support website](#))
- Include a calendar overview of important dates such as:
 - In-person blended and online synchronous sessions
 - Assignment due dates
 - Exam dates
- Include an Indigenous land acknowledgment

Organize Your Content

- Content is organized in sections such as topic or week and is intuitive to navigate (according to the course structure you pre-planned) 

- Each section lists associated learning outcomes
- Include specific details to help learners estimate time commitments for content like: video duration, page count for readings, length of practice quizzes etc.
- Use your pre-planned naming conventions to ensure consistency
- Include full citations or meaningful credits for external materials, so they can be easily searched and found if links are broken or files become corrupted
- Course materials use a variety of methods and media to present and engage with content (i.e. text, images, videos)
- Content is accessible to all learners UDL
 - Include [alt text](#) on images or mark as decorative
 - Videos have captions or transcripts/notes
 - Use accessibility checkers on your content (e.g. Ally for D2L content, [MS Office Accessibility Checker](#))
 - Written content is [audience/learner-centred](#)
- Review copyright policies at [Mount Royal University's Copyright Office](#)
- Preview the course as a student to ensure students are seeing what you intend them to see (D2L has a student preview option)
 - Check all links function properly

Create a Space for Community and Diversity

- Create virtual spaces and activities for students to interact. Examples include:
 - An introductory activity at the beginning of the course for students to introduce themselves to you and each other
 - Small groups for more in-depth interactions
 - Discussion boards for class interactions, including those beyond graded activities
 - Create a Virtual Café discussion board as a social place for students to interact outside the course requirements
 - Create a 'Dig Deeper' discussion topic for students to share additional resources they find

Assessments

Important Information

- Due dates are clearly communicated
- Assessment descriptions and instructions are provided, including the learning objectives and assignment parameters
 - Inform learners which activities are graded and which are not
 - State submission/completion requirements, including required learning technologies, word count, and other criteria
 - Include easily accessible rubrics or grading criteria for all graded assessments with ample time before the due date
 - Provide examples when appropriate
- Policies and expectations regarding late or missed submissions are clearly stated in the course outline

Assessing Student Learning

- Use a [variety of assessment methods](#) throughout the course to provide student opportunities to demonstrate learning with multiple modalities and weightings UDL
- Provide formative self-tests to promote engagement and to check for student understanding of course material UDL
- Assessments follow best practices for ensuring academic honesty and integrity
 - If using text-matching software, such as Turnitin, be sure to follow text-matching policies

Teaching Your Course

Facilitation

- Review the outline/syllabus with learners at the beginning of the course (e.g., in an asynchronous or synchronous discussion, presentation, etc.)
- Provide an orientation to delivery technologies that are used in the course (e.g. Google Meet)
- Encourage student interactions and provide a safe space for students to offer their unique perspectives UDL
- Maintain instructor presence and student engagement through communication (refer to your communication plan)
- When appropriate, direct students to available learner resources—this could mitigate the emails you receive from students

Time Management

- Post strategically to the discussion board so you are not replying to all posts throughout the course
- Set boundaries on your work time and communicate them to students (i.e. email reply time)
- Use an FAQ-style discussion board to provide answers to common questions and class-wide feedback
- Use the D2L Brightspace Announcement tool to post important info to all students
- Schedule time in your calendar for asynchronous online instructional time



Adapted and remixed from [Blended & Online Course Rubric](#) by [Centre for Teaching Learning and Innovation](#), Lethbridge College, [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#) AND [Online Course Design Checklist](#) by [Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning](#), University of Calgary, [CC BY-NC-SA 4.0](#).

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