

Suggested Effective Practices for Online Courses

Essential Components

Syllabus

- Learning objectives or [student learning outcomes](#)
- Explanation about what students must do to avoid being dropped for non-attendance
 - [Attendance documentation](#) of weekly participation by students in an academically related activity (e.g., discussion forum posting, online quiz, reflection, assignment, exam, email, field trip, telephone call or electronic communication)

Course Materials

- Information about [course readings and/or textbooks](#) (e.g., provide in Syllabus, Modules, and/or Discussions)

Course Outline of Record

- Adherence to [Course Outline of Record](#) (COR)

Grading

- Grading criteria clearly stated and aligned with objectives
- Grading [rubrics](#) for each assessment

System and Software Requirements

- Links to downloadable software (e.g., if plugins are necessary for the course such as [Flash Player](#) or [PDF Adobe Reader](#); for Firefox, see [Check Your Plugins](#))

Student Authentication

- Means must be taken to ensure that the person completing the course work is the same person who receives the course grade.
- Secure and password-protected access to the course site can be used to ensure [student authentication](#) under federal requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act.
- Other means for student verification include proctored testing, frequent assessments, assignments that build upon one another, assessments that rely on students' personal experience or characteristics

Accessibility

- Compliance with [ADA Section 508](#) for [accessible content](#) ([2011 Distance Education Accessibility Requirement Guidelines for Students with Disabilities](#))
 - Closed captioning for videos and transcripts for audio presentations
 - Alternative text descriptions of images
 - Name hyperlinks descriptively (don't use "click here")
 - Use of Heading Styles for hierarchal organization of content & use bullets/numbers for lists
 - Tagged PDFs (do not use PDFs that are scanned images)

Student Privacy

- Compliance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) and [protection of student privacy](#)
- Do not allow sensitive student information to be publicly available

Copyright

- Compliance with [copyright](#) and [fair use](#) (District Board Policy 4185 and AP 3250)
- Only use copyrighted materials with permission or in a very limited fashion

[Regular and Effective Contact](#) (REC)

Communication **must include** but is not limited to:

- **Relevant Dates, Course Schedule, and Deadlines**
- **Faculty Expectations and Requirements** for minimum student participation (quantity and quality) for all sections of the course.
 - Criteria and standards for student participation and drop for non-attendance in terms of quality, quantity, and time frame
- **Student Evaluation/Assessment Process**
 - Including the timeframe for faculty feedback on student performance such as discussion posts, and assessments (quizzes, exams, assignments, projects, surveys) so that the students can gauge their progress
 - Faculty must provide substantive feedback within a reasonable time as outlined in the course syllabus.
- **Faculty/Student Communication Process including the timeframe for faculty response to student communications**
 - A response time of 24-48 hours, Monday through Friday is desirable but may vary based on course requirements and extenuating circumstances.
 - Be clear whether or not the instructor will be available after hours or on weekends and holidays.
- **Contingency Plans**
 - For when the instructor is unavoidably unavailable for a specific period.
 - Faculty must provide the students with a plan for instances when they may not be available due to personal or technical emergencies.
 - Announce (in advance if possible) any absence of greater than two working days and providing clear instructions for students to continue their progress in the class until the instructor returns is essential.
 - If, for whatever reason, a faculty member is unable to comply with the regular, timely, and effective contact guidelines set forth in the Addendum to the Course Outline of Record and the course syllabus, students must be informed via e-mail or high priority announcement as to when they can expect regular, timely, and effective contact to resume.
- **Method(s) of regular, timely, and effective student/faculty contact that will be employed in the course (examples listed below):**
 - Private messages using Inbox within Canvas
 - Personal e-mail outside of Canvas

- Telephone Contact
- Weekly Announcements in the Canvas
- Chat Room within Canvas
- Timely feedback and return of student work (assignments, quizzes, and discussions) in Canvas by methods clarified in the syllabus.
- Discussion forums with appropriate facilitation and/or substantive instructor participation
- E-Portfolios/blogs/wiki for sharing student works in progress; provide feedback from fellow students and faculty in a collaborative manner, and to demonstrate mastery, comprehension, application, and synthesis of a given set of concepts.
- Group or individual meetings
- Orientation and review sessions
- Supplemental seminar or study sessions
- Field trips
- Library workshops

Checklist of *Recommended* Components

<i>Recommended</i> Components	Check if present
Policies and Procedures	
Policy on plagiarism and cheating; provide examples and tutorials (e.g., Tutorial , Student Tutorial: Strategies to Avoid Plagiarism , You Quote It, You Know It! , Academic Integrity)	
Policy on late submission of assignments	
Policy and procedure in case of technical problems (e.g., with Assessments and Quizzes)	
Course Content	
Sequentially organized content in Modules to control flow of students through course site	
Accurate and error-free text in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation, working links, and inclusive language	
Size of files for downloading limited to 10 mb	
Rich multimedia and teleconferencing (e.g., Canvas Conferences , ConferZoom , CCC Confer , Camtasia , VoiceThread , Jing , Screencast-o-Matic)	
Communications	
Instructor's introduction to self and course	
Posted office hours (e.g., via email, phone, or Chat)	
Welcome message to students BEFORE term starts, includes login and tech support info (e.g., via MyPortal or Announcement in Canvas)	

<i>Recommended Components</i>	Check if present
Discussion forums and topics logically organized and aligned with objectives	
Minimum standards or expectations for Discussion postings along with examples of appropriate and inappropriate postings	
Assessments	
Assessment of students' readiness to be an online student (e.g., ungraded)	
Practice tests/quizzes (ungraded)	
Clear instructions for each assignment and quiz	
Examples of acceptable student work	
Gradebook	
Ongoing anonymous student feedback opportunities (formative assessment, polls or surveys)	
End of quarter anonymous student evaluation of course (summative assessment)	
Student Support and Tech Help	
Info about Reality Check: Are You Ready to Be an Online Learner? self-assessment	
Information about Student Help Center at Foothill Online Learning or other tech support resources (e.g., Canvas Support)	
Access to relevant Library databases and services (look for “Library Resources” on Canvas navigation)	
Information about requesting accommodation via the Disability Resource Center	
Instructions on how to use and navigate Canvas or other sites for this course (e.g., link to Orientation to Canvas and Canvas tour videos)	
Information about access to tutoring services For NetTutor - click on Help link in Canvas navigation	
Information about access to academic counseling services	
Computer system requirements and browser settings (e.g., link to Canvas Browser Guide)	
Optional remedial or supplemental tutorials (e.g., Online Student Readiness Tutorials , NoRedInk , StudentLingo , GFClearingfree , Learning and Study Aids)	