

# Canvas Network Course Design and Review Checklist

## PLEASE READ

Your Canvas Network course will undergo a complete review before it is added to our public course catalog at canvas.net. We do this to ensure participants in your course will have a pleasant and engaging experience and to address any problems before we open it up for enrollment.

You do not need to have the entire course ready for the first review, but you do need to have the **homepage, course 'startup' or orientation materials for participants and at least one complete unit of course content (usually one week of content)**. A second review before the course begins ensures the course is complete and ready for the start date. Use this checklist as a guide to design your course and to prepare for your course review.

## The Front Page of Your Course

- At least one image (optimized for web browsers) that is representative of the course
- Brief course description or introduction (link to a page with a longer description if needed)
- Clear instructions for participants: where to begin and what to do first. Also, how they will find their day-to-day activities from the front page as the course progresses.
- Copyright license for the course (select it in Course Settings, found in the course menu). By default all courses are set to CC-BY. Courses with CC-BY licenses will be shared to [Canvas Commons](#).

### For instructors/Designers - Front Page Help and FAQ

[How do I change the Course Home Page?](#) | [Snazzy Course Home Pages](#) | [HTML Design Tips for Tables](#) | [What types of content licenses are available?](#)

## The Course Overview: General Course Information for Participants

- Create a page called 'Start Here' or 'Course Information'. Link to this page from the home page and include this page in your first course module. This page should include all the information participants need to be successful in the course (what, when, how, why)
  - Course learning objectives or outcomes (in brief! create a second, detailed Page with more info if needed)
  - Outline of course activities required for successful completion of the course
  - Define the time expectations for the participants (example: "To be successful in this course, you should plan to spend approximately 3-5 hours each week working in the course.")
  - Explain prerequisite knowledge and/or admissions requirements
  - Explain costs to the participant (if there are no costs, say so)
  - Explain what to do if they have a question regarding course content and Canvas features (hint: include a Help Forum)
- Describe what participants can expect from the Instructor
  - Will the instructor be personally grading assignments? or posting in discussions?
  - Will the instructor post a video overview every week? or daily lectures?
  - Will there be other people involved in the course? Guest speakers? TAs? Moderators?
  - Link to the instructor's Canvas Network Profile, where there should be a bio and picture
- [Optional] Add a video welcoming participants with a short video (this can easily be done with the [rich media commenting tool](#) right inside Canvas)

### For Instructors/Designers: General Course Information

[How do I edit my profile?](#) | [Example Start Here Page](#)

## Participant Course Orientation

When we set up your course we included a Get Started module which includes a Canvas Orientation page. The following Orientation items must be left in your course:

- [How do I edit my Profile?](#)
- [How do I set my Notifications Preferences?](#)
- [How do I search Canvas Guides?](#)
- Accessibility Statement
- Web browser and mobile apps information

If you wish to add additional Canvas information, you can choose from the [Canvas Guides](#)

- Link directly to the guides so that if the experience changes between now and when your course launches, the information will remain up-to-date.

If your course contains unique resources such as special media files or interactive content

- Describe the content and advise participants what to do if they need help with the special content.

## For Instructors/Designers: Canvas Orientation Help in the Lounge

[Canvas Student Orientation](#)

## Curricular Content Best Practices

- Use consistent and descriptive naming conventions for Modules, Pages, Discussions and activities (example: name the Module 'Week 1: Pandas in the News', not just 'Week 1').
- Use consistent heading formats and paragraph styles when adding and editing text. For best results and consistency as well as improved accessibility, use the default styles included in the Canvas rich content editor. Avoid using only color only to distinguish key elements in the course.
- Instructional material should be current and include appropriate citations where applicable.
- Images can be included for visual appeal and should be relevant to the course.
- The course menu should be adjusted to include only the features that are appropriate for your course. (Example: if you are not using Collaborations, hide it in the Course Menu).
- Avoid using raw URLs that begin with 'http://' or 'http://www' on the pages (this includes video links).
- Publish content when finished to make sure it will be available when the course opens.

## For Instructors/Designers: General Course Design Lessons

[Page Design Tips](#) | [HTML Design Tips](#) | [Module Design Tips](#) | [Create a Hyperlink](#) | [Draft State](#)

## If importing content from a pre-existing course:

- Review course materials to make sure you are not referring participants to campus resources such as the student center, accessibility office, or tutoring services. Also, make sure there are no references to another course that does not apply to the Canvas Network course.
- Review course content and design to ensure the content and activities are appropriate for a large public open enrollment course.
- Check all hyperlinks to ensure they are correct.

## Curricular Activities (Assignments, Projects, Discussions, Quizzes)

Participants should have the opportunity to measure their own learning where possible and appropriate. Quizzes should only include self-graded question types (not essay questions).

- Create activities that do not require grading, like Discussions. Use traditional Assignments with

submissions only if you plan to grade them (not recommended for extra-large courses).

- If using the Peer Review feature, that Assignment must include a Rubric.
- Provide clear instructions on how to conduct a peer review (assume they don't know how).

□ Discussion, Quizzes, and Assignments must be assigned an "Available Until" date (enter the scheduled course end date). (updated April 27, 2017)

- Discussions should be monitored regularly by the instructor or TA. Each discussion should have an appropriate prompt to spark a conversation or guidelines for a Q&A forum.
- If you are using the Groups feature, wait until the second week to launch them. Use self-sign-up groups.

For Instructors/Designers: More Course Design Lessons

[Working with Groups](#) | [Using Peer Review](#)

### Organizing Course Content Using Modules

- Include a module overview or unit introduction page at the beginning of each module. Include learning objectives, a list of tasks and links to those activities and resources.
- Provide multiple ways to engage with learning materials (e.g. text from multiple sources, links to reference materials, embedded video).
- Use Module Requirements as a way for participants to see their own progress in a course.
  - Module introduction should be a "Must View" item
  - Surveys and Quizzes should be a "Must View" item
  - Requirements are best used throughout the course or not at all.
  - Module Requirements help participants track their progress in the course and in the Canvas dashboard

For Instructors/Designers: Modules and Participant Progress

[How do I add requirements to a Module?](#) | [How do I use the catalog dashboard?](#)

### Certificates and Badges

Instructors or institutions interested in offering a course certificate or badge may do so. Certificates may be a simple PDF form in a locked Module. Badges can be issued via LTI tools. We recommend the following:

- Include requirements for certificates or badges with general course information.
- Organize course content using Modules with Module Requirements and Prerequisites
  - For certificates - create a "Certificate Module" and add prerequisites to the Certificate Module. The certificate will unlock once the required Modules are completed. Incorporate either a generic course certificate that can be downloaded and printed, or plan to personalize\* certificates by collecting names and email addresses using a Google Form.
  - For badges - use an LTI tool to create the badge(s) you want to award and select the appropriate badge configurations via Modules.

\* Canvas Network is not responsible for creating or disseminating course certificates or badges. Please plan accordingly!

For Instructors/Designers: Certificates and Badges

[Introduction to Certificates and Badges](#) | [How do I add requirements to a Module?](#)

## **Mobile Friendly Design**

Canvas Mobile Apps are free. Canvas is accessible on most mobile browsers.

- When adding links to Modules from the home page or the course overview or syllabus, link directly to the first page in the module.
- Do not use Flash content.
- Do not use tables with fixed widths.

If your course content is not mobile-friendly

- Provide a statement on the Front Page that says so. Example: “This course is designed to be accessed from a web-browser. Please plan accordingly.”

## **Your Canvas.net Listing Page**

Canvas Network will do most of the heavy lifting when it comes to building out your course listing page on Canvas.net. We will select the course image, create and edit the listing page, and then list it. Once your course passes your first course review, Jane Esco, our Catalog Coordinator, will reach out to you via email to gather your listing information. If you do not respond within 3 days the listing date may be delayed.

Contact us at [coursedesign@canvas.net](mailto:coursedesign@canvas.net) with questions.