



## Standard 16

# Logical, Consistent, & Uncluttered Layout

### Overview

**“A logical, consistent, and uncluttered layout is established. The course is easy to navigate (consistent color scheme and icon layout, related content organized together, self-evident titles).”**

Whether students learn online or in class, it is critical to have a clear organization of a course to ensure that students can focus on the course materials and not try to locate them. A logical, consistent, and uncluttered layout means consistency across all items: course navigation, the structure of individual modules (for example, your weekly structure would repeat across every week and include weekly overview, reading materials, practice activity, graded assignment, etc.). By consistently sequencing online course overviews, content, learning activities, interactions, learners can routinely access what they need within each module, and anticipate where to find new course materials.

### Practices

1. **Use the CCRI Blackboard Default Menu:** courses throughout CCRI should use the default menu arrangement to reduce the time it takes for students to orient to the course navigation.
2. **Meaningful titles and headings:** Titles and headings that link to learning content, activity, and assessments should detail specifically what the learners will access.
3. **Ensure consistency:** The key factor in organization of an online course is consistency — from the overall page design to the layout and structure of learning modules, assignments, and rubrics (ex., universal course menu).



Weekly Units  
(Mon-Sun)



Content and Assessments  
are in the Same Layout



Content and Assessments  
are Sequenced



Content is Chunked

4. **Ensure redundancy:** Redundancy refers to the same documents appearing in several locations. It is favored, as such repetition helps learners navigate easily to relevant information without having to search extensively.



Discussion Menu Link,  
but also in Each Weekly  
folder



Main Publisher Link on  
Menu, but also in each  
folder



Use Course Links  
Sparingly



Repeat Due Date



Repeat Instructions on  
Assessments



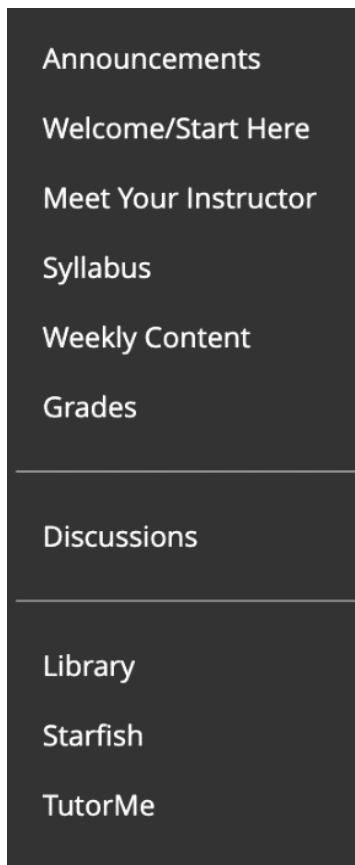
Checklist in the Same  
Order as Items

5. **Group content into meaningful modules:** Avoid putting your content by groups, like only articles or only assignments. Instead, create meaningful modules that would contain key pieces, like overviews, readings, activities, and assignments.
6. **Chunk your content:** Chunking refers to breaking up your content into digestible pieces. This strategy helps increase comprehension of the material, which leads to greater retention.
7. **Avoid using File, Audio, Image, Module Page, Blank Page, and Learning Module in Blackboard.** These types of content containers are incredibly old and are not always accessible. Use ITEM instead.

## Example

### Blackboard Default Course Menu

Your course comes in the default arrangement each semester. Remove all tools from the menu that you will not be using. Keep content and assessments in Weekly Content.



## Additional Resources

- Community of Effective Practice in Blackboard (CCRI): tell us if you do not have access.
- [OSCQR Standard 16](#)
- Bristol, T. J., & Zerwekh, J. (2011). [Essentials of e-learning for nurse educators](#). Philadelphia, PA: F. A. Davis
- Powell, W. (2003). [Essential Design Elements for Successful Online Courses](#). Journal of Geoscience Education, 51(2), 221-230.



Visit <https://www.ccri.edu/onlinefaculty> to learn more about OSCQR rubric and sign up to participate in a course review.

## This standard aligns with the following federal guidelines:



A well-structured and accessible course is a good step toward addressing the requirements for **regular and substantive interaction or RSI** since it provides specific explanations, instructions, and details on interactions, expectations, and ways to request help and feedback. However, to fully meet the RSI requirement, make sure to bring students' attention to individual activities and assignments using Announcements and during office hours. Remember, that RSI is not represented by one single course design component. Multiple elements in your course design and facilitation work together to create sufficient RSI.



The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires colleges and universities to provide equal access to students with disabilities. An inclusive and accessible course helps students intuitively navigate the course.