

Online Instructor Facilitation Guide: Course Readiness Checklist

In preparation of the beginning of your course, there are several housekeeping tasks that must be accomplished. Please complete the following checklist 1-2 weeks prior to the start of each new semester.

Copy Your Course
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Download and follow the Course Copy Instructions (PDF) and Semester Prep guide for setting dates and restrictions. Both documents can be found in the "Faculty Resources" widget on the left side of your D2L home page.<input type="checkbox"/> Correct broken links, and spelling/grammar errors throughout the course content.
Update Course Home Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Delete old news items or update existing items with new release dates (clicking the "x" on the right side of the news item only dismisses it from <i>your view</i>).<input type="checkbox"/> "Welcome" message is visible and includes instructions on how to view content and get started.
Update Overview Page
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Instructor's contact information is easy to find and accurate.<input type="checkbox"/> Course information, including office hours, communication policy, and turnaround time on email/feedback, is clear and relevant.
Update Files in Getting Started/Course Resources Module
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Upload new syllabus as a PDF (download the template).<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure all links and resources are relevant and working (virtual office, rubrics, exam info, etc.).
Update Module Settings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Module restriction dates are adjusted for new semester and set to open Sunday at 12:01 AM.<input type="checkbox"/> Module description includes brief introduction to the topic and module objectives.<input type="checkbox"/> All links (assignments, submissions, documents, external sites, videos/media) are relevant and work.
Update Discussion Forums and Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Adjust start/end date restrictions (check "displayed in calendar").<input type="checkbox"/> Group restrictions updated (if applicable).<input type="checkbox"/> Topics linked to correct grade item; points match syllabus.
Update Dropbox Settings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Adjust start/end/due date restrictions (tip: adding due date populates the calendar).<input type="checkbox"/> Link to correct grade item; points match syllabus.
Update Quiz Settings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Properties: Questions added; Description/Instructions set to "ON."<input type="checkbox"/> Restrictions: Quizzes set to Active; Adjust start/end dates (select "display in calendar")<input type="checkbox"/> Assessment: Linked to correct grade item; Allow Auto Export to Grades and Automatic Grade<input type="checkbox"/> Submission Views: Dated after quiz closes
Update Grades
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> All grade items associated to activity; points match syllabus.<input type="checkbox"/> Organized into categories (Module or Assignment type).
Update Groups (Under "Course Tools")
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Update groups and students' names.<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion forums, if used, have appropriate group restrictions.
Request Additional Services
Contact London Weathers (london.weathers@mercycollege.edu) to make a request(s) for Adobe Connect sessions (include date, time, duration, and corresponding module), proctored exams , and student access for VoiceThread .

Online Instructor Facilitation Guide: One week before class

In addition to copying and updating your course, there are a few more things you can do before your course opens to ensure you are setting your students up for success in the weeks to come. Here are some distance education best practices:

Send your students a welcoming email.

Include information like:

- A brief description of the course and its purpose
- PDF copy of your syllabus
- Instructions for logging in and getting started/viewing content
- How to obtain course materials
 - books and e-books (required and suggested)
 - software downloads
 - online accounts needing prior registration (i.e.: LinkedIn)
- Who to contact for technical assistance
- Words of encouragement

Tips to ensure student success:

- Provide a personal and welcoming introduction to the course in the “Course News”.
- Provide detailed tutorial links and/or instructions on using any technology within the assignment information to help the students feel comfortable with the technology.
- Reduce student anxiety and resolve technical issues by providing practice activities before a graded assignment is due (i.e.: MoveNote or VoiceThread quickie)

Contact us if you need assistance correcting any issues!

Online Instructor Facilitation Guide: First week of class

The first week of class is make-it or break-it for the student. Checking in with students and offering assistance demonstrates a clear online presence and will go a long way in garnering student engagement. Don't forget to direct students to the D2L help desk when technical issues arise (877-325-7778).

Use the checklist below as you progress through Module 1. At the end of the week, reflect by taking notes on what is working, what is not, and new ideas based on student feedback. These notes are particularly important if this is a new course or your first time teaching the course, and will assist in the decision-making process as you review the course before it runs again.

Check in with your students.

- Use the "Course News" to ask students if they have received their textbooks.
- Contact students who have not logged into the course by the end of Module 1. Access "User Progress" from Grades or the Course Tools menu.
- Send the "welcome" email to new students added to your course.
- Be prepared to provide a PDF of the first week's reading to assist those who have not yet received their materials.
- Reiterate important information when needed:
 - publisher's materials
 - remote access to the library
 - technical assistance: the D2L help desk (877-352-7778)

Model good communication practices.

- Post your personal introduction/bio and participate in the "Introduce Yourself"/"Icebreaker" discussion activity. Respond to each student's introduction.
- Communicate regularly to develop and maintain a positive rapport.
- Encourage students to post pics or avatars to their account settings.
- Set the tone of the discussion activities by using a conversational style, creating responses that are inviting, personal, friendly, and encouraging. Use humor and emoticons carefully, where appropriate.
- Invite and encourage students to use online office hours or make appointments.
- Add a social discussion forum for non-class related topics (i.e. Student Lounge, Virtual Cafe).
- Assist students with log-in difficulties.

Comments on the first week of class:

Working:

Not working:

Technology difficulties:

Other thoughts or new ideas:

Online Instructor Facilitation Guide: Throughout the course

As the course unfolds, this section will help you help your students on different levels at different points in the course. The key is to maintain a presence by establishing and keeping open lines of communication.

Help students:

- Remind students often you are there to help them and be there to help them.
- Provide timely, concise, and constructive feedback on graded assignments.
- Send mini progress reports to a few different students each week.
- Stick to the course schedule whenever possible.
- Notify students as to any changes to the course schedule in advance.
- Use the “Course News” for assignment due date reminders and weekly summaries.
- Check “User Progress” to see which areas of your course get the most traffic, which students need more motivation, or to figure out the best days/time to schedule live activities.

Enrich the students' experience:

- Add local and global events to the “Course News” (news links, pdf's, etc.).
- Suggest time management techniques and tools.
- Provide correction and encouragement.
- Respect and facilitating diverse talents and ways of learning.
- Utilize specific teaching/learning strategies that promote self-directed learning.

Monitor email, Virtual Office and discussion forums:

- Respond promptly to student questions in the Virtual Office and module discussions.
- Address **common/repeated questions** in a general discussion forum or group email instead of posting the same answer to each student individually.
- Encourage students to help each other.
- Jump-start a stale discussion by asking leading questions or playing devil's advocate. Be careful not to dominate the discussion.
- Take corrective matters to ensure respectfulness and adherence to the college netiquette standards.

When offering group work opportunities:

- Organize collaborative projects (small or large) to achieve strong social interaction.
- Assign groups or create a method for students to select groups before beginning group projects.
- Post group rosters before group project begins.
- Create areas for group members to work on group projects.
- Invite and encourage students to complete a peer review of individual and group projects.

Help yourself:

- Practice good time management. **Prioritize tasks** (daily, weekly, infrequently), block out time on your calendar, and set reminders as needed. Stagger AM/PM hours to fit your schedule.
- Announce absences to students with guidance on what to do during absence.
- Monitor attendance in class and following up on missing students.
- Give reasonable accommodations due to technical difficulties beyond the student's' control that are consistent with policies in the syllabus.
- Use technologies for the course appropriately.
- Provide handouts in easy-to-use formats and providing details for successfully downloading if necessary.
- Direct students to links and information on technical support (Distance Education Division, D2L help desk).
- Inform students on availability, and encourage completion of the end of course evaluation (the week before the last module).

Online Instructor Facilitation Guide: Take notes each week

Thinking ahead for the next time you teach this course, leave yourself some comments on each week of class.

Working:

Not working:

Technology difficulties:

Other thoughts or new ideas:

Use this as a place to record your activities that may or may not be course related, but involve time spent with students (things that are not captured in Brightspace like advising, email, support, etc.):

Online Instructor Facilitation Guide: Final week of class

Some final housekeeping items...

Help your students:

- Provide general information concerning the nature and format of the final assessment(s).
- Ensure feedback on Final Projects is available for students to review before the class is over through email or in Brightspace.
- Post a closing personal message to the students in the Course News.
- Encourage students to share how they will apply their knowledge on the job, and say good-bye in a closing forum.

Help yourself:

- Post final grades in Empower by noon on Monday (the day after the course closes).
- List technical aspects that worked well and those that need improvement.
- Make an appointment with the Distance Education Division for upcoming course revisions.

Final Comments

As the course winds down, reflect on how things went for you overall. Look back to your notes and identify you and your course's strengths and weaknesses. Are there adjustments you want to make to the course before it runs again? This is a good time to record what you are thinking, especially if the course only runs once a year.

Working:

Not working:

Technology difficulties:

Other thoughts or new ideas: