



Canvas Course Design and Accessibility Checklist

[Contents](#)

1. Course Information & Expectations.....	2
2. Course Structure	3
3. Course Content	4
4. Student Activities & Interaction	4
5. Assessments.....	5
6. External Resources.....	6
7. Course Accessibility	7
8. Instructor Supports	7
9. Mobile App Considerations	8

How to Use:

- ★ (1-star) rating indicates an **Essential** and standard design component to online learning (including the top 10 Foundational items).
- ★★ (2-star) rating is considered **Best Practice** and adds value to a course.
- ★★★ (3-star) rating is **Exemplary** and elevates learning.

1. Course Information & Expectations

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★ Foundational	1.1 The Home Page provides a visual representation of the course, a brief course description or introduction, clear instructions for students (e.g., Meet the Instructor, Course Orientation, Modules...), and quick and easy navigation to current content.	How Do I Change the Course Home Page?
☐ ★ Foundational	1.2 Course Navigation is clear and consistent (unused items are hidden).	How do I manage Course navigation Links?
☐ ★ Foundational	1.3 Course Outcomes are clearly stated and measurable. Module/Unit learning outcomes are measurable and aligned with Course Learning Outcomes. Learning Outcomes, learning activities, and assessments are aligned.	Faculty Guide: Aligning Course Outcomes with Assessments
☐ ★	1.4 A course Syllabus is available and includes Instructor Information and Communication Guidelines; Course description, purpose, and structure; Course Learning Outcomes; Attendance and Participation Policy; Grading Policy; Schedule of assignments, activities, and assessments; The minimum technology requirements for the course are clearly stated; Technical skills and digital information literacy expected of the students are clearly stated; Accessibility Policies; Link to the Accessibility Services website.	How do I use the Syllabus as an instructor?
☐ ★	1.5 Instructor has provided contact information which may include biography, availability information, communication preferences, response time, and picture.	
☐ ★	1.6 Course card provides a visual representation of the subject by adding an image in Course Settings.	How do I add an image to a course in the Dashboard?
☐ ★	1.7 Course contains information and links to institutional resources (e.g., HC Campus Resources on the Home Page and Library Resources in the Course Navigation Menu).	HC Campus Resources Library Resources
☐ ★★	1.8 The course includes instructions (or links) for all required technologies and tools used (e.g., Instructions on how to enroll in MyMathLab on Pearson).	
☐ ★★★	1.9 Students have opportunities for course feedback throughout the course. The instructor uses formal and informal feedback to improve subsequent course revisions.	

2. Course Structure

Yes ✓	Criteria+++++	Resources
☐ ★ Foundational	2.1 All links, files, videos, and external URLs are active and working.	How do I validate links in a course?
☐ ★	2.2 Content is “chunked” into manageable pieces by leveraging modules and pages (e.g., organized by units, chapters, topics, or weeks). When possible, Canvas Pages are used to present content instead of linking to external URLs or files in the module’s flow.	What are Modules?
☐ ★	2.3 Each content item type is formatted consistently to make expectations predictable (e.g., all assignments, discussions, and quizzes are formatted to include the directions, followed by the guidelines, and a technical support area that links to help guides).	Refer to the Helena College Template in Commons
☐ ★	2.4 Course files needed for learning activities are available for download and meet accessibility guidelines.	How do I upload a document in the Rich Content Editor?
☐ ★★	2.5 Students can introduce themselves (e.g., Discussion: Self-Introduction/Getting to Know You Survey), which is designed to build a sense of community and establish rapport.	Refer to the Helena College Template in Commons
☐ ★★	2.6 Modules and items within modules have a thoughtful naming convention (e.g., name the module “Week 1: Constitutional Law,” not just “Week 1”).	Mastering Modules: A Guide to Organizing Your Content in Canvas
☐ ★★	2.7 Modules begin with an Introduction/Overview to activate knowledge and end with a Wrap-Up page summarizing each module. (e.g., Overview & To-Do List and Wrap-Up & Looking Ahead).	Refer to the Helena College Template in Commons
☐ ★★	2.8 The modules include Text headers and indentation to help guide student navigation.	How do I add text header as a module item?
☐ ★★★	2.9 Module completion requirements and/or prerequisites are utilized to provide course structure, pacing, and flow.	How do I add prerequisites to a module?
☐ ★★★	2.10 Students may choose from options for differentiation to demonstrate mastery in MasteryPaths .	How do I use Mastery Paths in course modules?

3. Course Content

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★ Foundational	3.1 Copyright law is followed. Course follows Copyright, Fair Use Guidelines, and Creative Commons licenses. Resources are appropriately cited.	Canvas Guide: Copyright Resources
☐ ★ Foundational	3.2 Course materials are clearly stated, current, diverse, and supportive of the learning outcomes content. They are built logically and increase understanding and difficulty.	
☐ ★	3.3 Content is at the appropriate reading level.	
☐ ★	3.4 Uses inclusive language respecting student identity, experience, and background (heritage, family, socioeconomic).	
☐ ★	3.5 Content is appropriate for the students and permitted by the program to use the content. Content adheres to state laws and regulations if applicable.	
☐ ★★★	3.6 Personalized learning is evident through opportunities for choice.	
☐ ★★★	3.7 Content utilizes various instructional tools and media types (e.g., text, video, and images) to engage different learning styles.	
☐ ★★★★	3.8 Includes additional vocabulary specific to assist English Students and readers below reading level in gaining a more complete understanding (e.g., perjury is a term that would be used in a history course but not always defined. English Students and readers below grade level would benefit if it were defined).	
☐ ★★★★★	3.9 Readings have multiple supports for readers who are at a higher or lower level.	

4. Student Activities & Interaction

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★ Foundational	4.1 Learning activity descriptions and instructions are clear and detailed, including instructor expectations and clear expectations for creating the learning product. Instructions are platform-neutral (mobile and browser friendly) to minimize student confusion.	
☐ ★ Foundational	4.2 Students are provided detailed directions on how and where to submit work . Instructor availability and response time are clearly communicated.	

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★	4.3 Expectations for student engagement are clearly stated.	
☐ ★	4.4 Task matches the submission type — discussion, assignment, quiz, audio or visual recording, handwritten or typed, etc.	
☐ ★	4.5 Task and submission requirements are appropriate for teaching methods – synchronous, asynchronous, or blended.	Course Formats at Helena College
☐ ★	4.6 Activities include student-student interaction to foster a sense of community (e.g., discussions, constructive collaboration, and peer reviews).	
☐ ★	4.7 Activities include student-instructor interaction (e.g., instructor actively engages in authentic conversations and provides quality feedback).	
☐ ★	4.8 Activities include student-content interaction (e.g., students interact with engaging content and resources).	
☐ ★★	4.9 Activities include student-self interaction for opportunities for low-stakes self-evaluation and self-assessment of mastery (e.g., pre-assessments, self-assessments, and reflections on learning).	
☐ ★★★	4.10 Videos or animations are included in the directions to model and clarify the expectations of an activity. (e.g., use Canvas Studio to create instructional videos).	
☐ ★★★★	4.11 Sample assignments are provided to assist students in understanding expectations.	

5. Assessments

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★ Foundational	5.1 Learning activities directly tie into a learning outcome , or the tasks provide scaffolding to reach the outcome.	Faculty Guide: Aligning Course Outcomes with Assessments
☐ ★	5.2 Formative and summative assessment forms are consistently used throughout the course .	
☐ ★	5.3 Various assessment formats (e.g., discussions, quizzes, and individual and group assignments) are employed to enhance student engagement and foster active learning.	

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★	5.4 Low-stakes (formative) assessments occur frequently throughout the course to measure knowledge, skills, and attitude and occur before high-stakes assessments.	Best Practices for Formative and Summative Assessments in Canvas
☐ ★	5.5 High-stakes (summative) assessments are aligned with stated learning outcomes.	
☐ ★	5.6 Assessments support instructors using SpeedGrader to score and provide prompt, high-quality feedback. Feedback allows for revision and continual improvement of learning experiences.	What is SpeedGrader?
☐ ★★	5.7 Grading criteria are clear, consistent, and available at the beginning of the course. Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of student's work, including grading and rubrics.	Canvas Guide: Rubrics
☐ ★★	5.8 Graded assignments, quizzes, and tests are appropriately weighted to reflect the impact of the assessment.	How do I weight the final course grade based on assignment groups?
☐ ★★★	5.9 Assessments are linked to Outcomes to demonstrate mastery by learning outcomes.	Faculty Guide: Aligning Course Outcomes with Assessments

6. External Resources

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★	6.1 External links are reliable sources and always available (i.e., not behind a subscription paywall or limited to a number of articles per month).	
☐ ★	6.2 External sites are accessible to all students by meeting W3C standards .	
☐ ★	6.3 External tools (e.g., Teams Assignment, Khanmigo Teachers Tools, Lucid, etc.) are relevant to course content and support active learning techniques. LTIs are used when available versus a link to the resource.	MS Teams Assignments Khanmigo Teacher Tools
☐ ★	6.4 Links to external content, documents, or learning resources are relevant to the task and appropriate for student use . Consideration is given to other materials on the site, advertising, and institution firewalls.	How do I validate links in a course?

7. Course Accessibility

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★	7.1 The Accommodation Statement is present and easily located (e.g., in the Syllabus or as an independent document in the Before You Begin...Please Start Here Module).	
☐ ★ Foundational	7.2 Web tools and/or software are utilized to identify and correct accessibility issues within the course (e.g., YuJa Panorama).	YuJa Panorama Accessibility Tool
☐ ★	7.3 Color enhances the aesthetic appeal and effectiveness of the course; sufficient contrast between text and background makes information easy to read, and the color is not used in isolation to convey meaning.	
☐ ★	7.4 Images (e.g., banners, headings, and icons) support course content and accompany text descriptions (Alt text) or captions for more complex descriptions.	
☐ ★	7.5 Styles (e.g., Paragraphs, Headings 1, 2, 3, Bulleted/Numbered Lists, etc.) are used to format text.	
☐ ★	7.6 Hyperlink text incorporates the hyperlink destination/purpose (avoid raw URLs, e.g., https://helenacollege.edu/) and includes words and phrases to provide context for screen-readers (e.g., use “ Helena College Website ” rather than “Helena College”).	
☐ ★	7.7 Audio materials (mp3, wav, etc.) accompany a transcript, and videos/screencasts have accessible captions (e.g., Use Canvas Studio).	
☐ ★★	7.8 Tables are used appropriately and are accessible by having assigned scope (e.g., Table Styles, caption, and/or heading row/table).	

8. Instructor Supports

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★	8.1 Answer keys are provided for instructor-graded assignments.	
☐ ★★	8.2 Specific information is included unpublished in content for the instructor to help teach (e.g., sensitive topics, additional external resources).	

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★★	8.3 Use Student View to ensure a smooth and effective learning experience for students.	How do I view a course as a test student using Student View?
☐ ★★★	8.4 Synchronous session supports are included for courses with blended or synchronous components (e.g., activities that lend themselves to synchronous student actions, outline for a synchronous session).	

9. Mobile App Considerations

If your students use a mobile app, consider the following. Search “Instructure” to find free teacher and student apps available for iOS and Android.

Yes ✓	Criteria	Resources
☐ ★	9.1 Preview your course in the Canvas mobile app to experience it from a mobile user's perspective. Make any necessary revisions or adjustments to improve the mobile experience. Check your course in both light mode and dark mode.	Canvas Teacher App Canvas Student App
☐ ★	9.2 Consider the length of text passages in content and assessments, as they may require excessive scrolling and may not display optimally on smaller screens.	Canvas Teacher Mobile Features