

Checklist for Online/Hybrid Courses

Online and hybrid courses should be academically rigorous, encourage critical thinking, exhibit strong instructor presence, and develop a sense of academic community. Online courses should encourage interaction and collaboration, key components that distinguish them from “correspondence courses.” The following list of components is essential in online and hybrid courses and derived from research-based standards to offer the optimal environment for student success.

The Checklist for Online/Hybrid Courses is the first step in a two-part process for continuous quality improvement in online or hybrid courses. The course must pass the Checklist for Online Courses before the course is taught for the first time. Many of the components included in the Checklist for Online Courses are built into the UCA Online Interface.

Essential Components

1. A customized welcome statement appears in the course landing page when the course begins. This statement includes instructions for accessing “Module 0: Getting Started”.
2. The “Module 0: Getting Started” section contains:
 - Customized course introduction/overview
 - The structure of themes/units/modules within the course
 - Student and instructor expectations
 - Technical requirements and support
 - Clearly stated online etiquette expectations
3. A statement lists clear standards for instructor response and availability (virtual office hours, turn-around time for email, grade posting, etc.).
4. Expectations for students (how often expected to check Blackboard, email, professionalism in communication, etc...) are clearly articulated in terms of how to succeed in the course.
5. The grading policy is clearly articulated. Any rubrics or other measures used for assessment are easily located by students.
6. Navigational links/buttons in the left navigation panel reflect the UCA Online interface (with two Optional buttons as needed):
 - Home Page
 - Syllabus
 - Online Classroom (course content & assignments)
 - Discussions (link to discussion topics)
 - My Grades
 - My Instructor
 - ResourcesAdhering to the UCA interface structure minimizes confusion for students taking multiple online courses. The UCA Online interface assists with this structure.
7. Content is divided into themes/units/modules and stored in separate folders inside the “Online Classroom” area.
8. Each theme/unit/module includes visible, clearly stated, and measurable learning objectives. (These are separate from course learning goals or objectives.)



9. For each learning objective, corresponding instructional materials (and the location of the content within) are clearly indicated.
10. As the subject matter expert, the instructor is present in most of the modules that contain instructional materials (via recorded lecture, interactive notes, etc.).
11. The instructional materials are consistent in organization and presentation.
12. A variety of learning activities that foster instructor-student, content-student and student-student interaction are included in each unit/module. These learning activities must align with the learning objectives and assessments to create an active learning environment.
13. Methods for submitting student work are appropriate for current online environment (e.g., projects submitted via Blackboard “Assignment” and not in person).
14. The course design prompts the instructor to be present, active, and engaged with the students in multiple ways.
15. Course material and assignments are accessible to students with disabilities. Alternatives are provided for auditory or visual content.
16. The instructor has completed and utilized an online planning grid that indicates the course learning objectives, assessments, activities, and resources.

Important Components

- Instructor proactively fosters community among themselves and students throughout the course.
- The self-introduction by the instructor creates a sense of community between the instructor and the students. It presents the instructor as professional and approachable.
- Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class or other “ice breaker” activity.
- Minimum technology requirements, minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline, are clearly stated.
- Self-check” or practice types of assignments are provided for quick student feedback.
- The purpose of the course elements (content, instructional methods, technologies, and course materials) is evident.
- The instructional materials are accessible to students regardless of Internet connection speed. Links and instructions are provided for any required plug-ins.
- All resources and materials used in the online course are appropriately cited.
- The requirements for course interaction and learning activities are clearly articulated.
- The tools and media enhance student interactivity and guide the student to become a more active learner.
- The course takes advantage of current course technologies.
- The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to access such support.