

Beginning of the Semester Check List

(Source: Kevin Reeve, Utah State University)

The start of the semester is just days away. Time to get those online courses ready to roll for the new term. Here is a checklist that you can use to get your course ready after copying the content over from the last time you taught it.

1. Update the Syllabus

- Make sure text book information is accurate
- Update all due dates
- Double-check point system and assignments
- Review office hours and contact information

2. Assignments

- Update due dates in assignment tool
- Tweak instructions if needed
- Update points possible in assignment tool

3. Assessments

- Update due dates in assessment tool
- Update questions/add new questions as needed
- Update points possible in assessment tool and individual questions if needed

4. Grade Center

- Update calculation and formulas if assignments, assessment or others added or removed.
- Hide letter grade column and other columns from students as needed

5. Discussions

- Create a new welcome message to students and invite them to respond and introduce themselves.

6. Course content

- Check video clips, slide decks, PDF files and links. Make sure they all work.

First week success

Research shows that students will be more successful in your online course if you do something to engage them the first week. Be creative and think of something that will get them going the first week. Have them use the discussion tool to introduce themselves, respond to other students, and take a sample quiz. Consider a homework assignment to give them an opportunity to learn your style and relive any apprehension they may have.

Set Expectations

Let students know what you expect, and how often and soon you will respond. Make sure they know what contact method to use to contact you.

Reflection

Can you recall any issues with the course content from last time you taught this course? Was there any content that was not clear? What questions did students have? Is there any new content or activities you want to try?

Update and Enhance your skills

What workshops, training, and assistance does your university offer you to help you learn new tools, ideas, and best practices to improve your online course? Take advantage of them.

Spend the time upfront and enjoy a very successful course.