# Canvas Baseline Checklist

## Course specific notes
Special features/design rationale

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## 1. Structure and navigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Baseline</th>
<th>Benefits (Why)</th>
<th>Related Guides (How to)</th>
<th>UDL Checkpoint</th>
<th>(Yes/Customised/comments)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1</strong> The course <strong>home/front page</strong> provides clear and consistent wayfinding to help students navigate the course. It:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Signals clearly what course it is</td>
<td>A well structured home page enables students to easily locate information about the course, the teaching team and where to find support. Students are able to orient themselves to the Canvas experience, making for a positive first impression.</td>
<td>How to change the home page</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gives a brief description/intro into the course</td>
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<td>• Gives brief information on how to get started</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gives quick and easy navigation to current content</td>
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| **1.2 Using modules** provides students with an overview of the course structure.  
- Content is organised into manageable pieces and logically segmented (e.g., organised by units, chapters, topics, or weeks).  
- Modules and text headers are consistent and follow a clear naming convention to help guide the navigation.  
- There are appropriate visual cues to organise information and demonstrate hierarchy. | A well-structured course provides a better online experience for students. |  
- Canvas Video Guide: Modules overview  
- About modules  
- How to add a text header to a module |  |  |
| **1.3 Using pages** provides a narrative/context for course content.  
- Learning materials are given context; explanations/instructions are provided for videos, images, and links to files and external websites.  
- Activities and resources are presented inline wherever possible. | Pages in Canvas provides a central place for course content, enabling teachers to create a hierarchical course structure through embedding them within modules. Context can be provided for linked documents, external resources, and media, through describing their purpose and including background information to the various resources.  
Links to pages can be easily shared with students, when questions arise about a subject, to review the course material. |  
- Canvas Video Guide: Pages overview  
- About pages |  |  |
| **1.4 Headings and text styles are used effectively to structure and organise content.**  
- They use appropriate module numbering, heading levels and sub-sections.  
- Heading levels are not skipped e.g., (H1, H2, H3) not (H1, H3, H2).  
- Topic relationships are conveyed through presentation. | Using headings (rather than simply making the text larger, bold, or underlined) enables users who rely on assistive technologies (screen readers) to quickly understand how the page or document is organised. This makes it easier to navigate to specific sections. |  
- How to add a text header to a module  
- Canvas Video Guide: Rich Content Editor |  |  |
Expected Baseline | Benefits (Why) | Related Guides (How to) | UDL Checkpoint | (Yes/Customised/comments)
---|---|---|---|---
1.5 The **course navigation menu** is:
- Functional and consistent between courses.
- Unused items are hidden from the students’ view.
- “Files” menu is hidden.
Note: The Files section of Canvas is often a cluttered repository of decontextualised course assets. Therefore, links to documents are better positioned (and contextualised) within pages.

An uncluttered course menu makes it easier for students to find the content they are looking for, leading to increased engagement.

- [About course navigation](#)
- [How to show or hide navigation menu items](#)

1.6 **Naming Convention**: Modules, pages, videos and files have clear, meaningful names. For example:
- Name a module “Week 1: Pandas in the Wild”, not just “Week 1.”
- Prepend lecture recording names with associated information, e.g., “Week 3, lecture 6 - Dietary requirements.”

Students can see at a glance what purpose a resource serves and how it aligns within the topic structure. A well-structured course provides a better online experience.

- [Canvas Video Guide: Managing files](#)
## 2. Orientation to course

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<tr>
<td><strong>2.1 Welcome message</strong></td>
<td>Provide a video and/or introductory text, designed to build a sense of community and establish whanaungatanga [relationships].</td>
<td>A <a href="#">welcome page</a> is a great opportunity to invite your students into your course and set the tone for their semester ahead. You may like to include a short video introduction of yourself and the course, or simply add a photo and a short welcome paragraph. This can help start establishing the <a href="#">relationship between students and teachers</a> and <a href="#">build whanaungatanga</a>, a sense of community and belonging, in the course.</td>
<td>UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2.2 Introduce the teaching staff (roles &amp; about).</strong> This may include a profile photo, biography or a link to their <a href="#">UoA Discovery Profile</a>. Provide contact information. This may include availability information (e.g., office hours), communication preferences, and expected response time.</td>
<td>Communication between students and teachers is streamlined. Students have access to preferred communication channels with their teachers and their office hours. This can also help to establish a <a href="#">relationship between students and teachers</a> and <a href="#">build whanaungatanga</a>, a sense of community and belonging.</td>
<td>UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community</td>
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| **2.3 An orientation to the course might describe what the expectations are for students, points out how the course is layed out. It provides instructions to help students find essential information (e.g., assessments, course schedule, weekly topics etc.).** You might also describe how this course works, such as a key to common icons used, and a summary of the learning technologies with links to self-help guides. | - [Course calendar](#)  
- [How to insert links to external content](#)  
- [How to insert links within your course](#) | UDL 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation | |
### 2.4 Provide links to student support

**Expected Baseline:** Links are provided to relevant institutional resources (e.g., technology used in course, student support services, library, faculty administrators).

**Benefits (Why):** Students are able to self-help or support each other, reducing the load on teacher-provided support. Adding frequently asked questions eliminates the need for teachers to repeat themselves from one semester to the next.

Linking students to the official information helps to avoid mixed messaging and duplication of effort.

**Related Guides (How to):**
- How to insert links to external content
- How to insert links within your course

**UDL Checkpoint:** UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community

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### 3. Syllabus information

#### 3.1 Course outline

**Expected Baseline:** The teacher has provided key information about the course, so students know what to expect. Content copied from the Digital Course Outline or provide a link. The Digital Course Outline (DCO) provides students with all the essential information for your course (e.g., course prescription, learning outcomes, assessment summary, policies and guidelines, etc.).

**Benefits (Why):** The DCO is 'one source of truth', eliminating duplication of information and inconsistency across various platforms.

**Related Guides (How to):**
- TeachWell: Digital Course Outlines
- UoA Digital Course Outlines database
- Canvas guide: How to edit Syllabus info

**UDL Checkpoint:** UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives

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#### 3.2 The teacher has provided learning objectives, so students know what the course is about.

The teacher has provided learning objectives, so students know what the course is about.
### 3.3 Policies and guidelines

The teacher has provided requirements (use of technology, code of conduct), policies for grading, late work, resubmissions; and expectations for participation (classroom rules, etiquette).

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<td>Listing policies and guidelines relevant to the course helps students become familiar with course policies, rules, regulations to support their learning experience (e.g., copyright, academic integrity, student code of conduct).</td>
<td>From the University of Auckland</td>
<td>TeachWell - Digital citizenship</td>
<td>Customised</td>
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<td>Learning essentials: communicating respectfully and constructively</td>
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<td>Our code of conduct</td>
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<td>Safe computing</td>
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<td>Guidelines on the use of social media</td>
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<td>Bullying, harassment and discrimination</td>
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<td>Top tips for using Zoom and other online meeting platforms</td>
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<td>External resources</td>
<td>Netsafe</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>What is netiquette and why is it important in online courses?</td>
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## 4. Assessment

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| **4.1 All assessments are recorded in Canvas:** Teachers can use Gradebook and/or SpeedGrader to score assessments. | Placing all relevant assessment information in the Canvas assignment helps students find information for their assessments easily. | • Canvas Video Guide: Assignments  
• Canvas Video Guide: New Quizzes  
• Canvas Guide: SpeedGrader / Grades / Grade Filters / SpeedGrader | | |

| **4.2 Detailed instructions** are written to ensure students have a clear understanding of required actions. Assessments are clearly aligned with stated goals, learning objectives, and/or standards.  
• Due dates are published at start of the course.*  
• Weightings are set up correctly.  
• Estimated duration is communicated where possible, e.g., “Part two should take no more than 4 hours.”  
• You can withhold details about the assessment task using the "Available From" date. | Publishing assessment information with due dates at the start of the course helps students plan their workload and keep track of deadlines.  
Providing an estimation of the time to complete an assignment gives perspective with regards to the marking regime – this should be reflected in the applied weighting – and students have a better idea how much effort is required. | Canvas Guide: Due dates vs availability dates | University policy Assessment (Coursework, Tests and Examinations Policy) § 31 and 32 | |

| **4.3 External assessment tools** are set up and working correctly (e.g., Perusall, Turnitin LTI, WirisQuizzes, Inspera).  
Scores that are passed back to Canvas align with the associated ‘points’ added to the Canvas assignment settings. | | | Further reading UDL 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation | |
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| **4.4 Rubrics** (or marking guides) are used so students understand what criteria are being used to evaluate assignments. The more detail provided when setting the marking criteria and grade allocation, the more specific and clear the rubric is. | The assessment will be less contestable and subjective, allowing for greater consistency across a range of markers. Students will have a greater sense of transparency and fairness in how their work is assessed. | - TeachWell: Rubrics in Canvas  
- Canvas Guide: Rubrics | • UDL 6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress  
• UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback |
## 5. Accessibility and copyright

### 5.1 Accessibility

Identify and fix accessibility issues using [UDOIT Advantage](#).

- **Colour** enhances effectiveness and is not used in isolation to convey meaning. There is sufficient contrast between text and background.
- **Images** are used to support course content (e.g., banners, headings, and icons) and are accompanied by text descriptions (alt text) or captions for more complex descriptions. Alt text is not used on purely decorative images. Images are not used in isolation to convey information.
- Hyperlink text accurately reflects the [link destination/purpose](#) and includes words and phrases to provide context for screen-readers. Avoid adding links to ‘raw’ URLs.
- The [Link Validator Tool](#) in Canvas is useful for scanning your course for any broken links.
- Audio materials (mp3, wav, etc.) are [accompanied by a transcript](#) and videos/screencasts are closed-captioned.
- [Tables are used appropriately](#) and are accessible.
- Items above have been checked in the Canvas mobile app, both in light and dark mode.

Accessibility is designed for inclusivity and independence. A universal design approach recognises human diversity and design for people with disabilities to use online learning. The University has legal obligations for accessibility and copyright.

### 5.2 Record or upload all instructor created video content to the Panopto server.

Panopto provides a centralised video management tool that is interactive, searchable and accessible for students, as well as providing a platform for staff to edit and share video content recorded on-campus or remotely.

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| Identify and fix accessibility issues using [UDOIT Advantage](#). | Accessibility is designed for inclusivity and independence. A universal design approach recognises human diversity and design for people with disabilities to use online learning. The University has legal obligations for accessibility and copyright. | - [Teachwell: Design for Accessibility](#)  
- [Teachwell: How to use UDOIT Advantage](#)  
- [Universal Design for Learning](#)  
- [UoA Disability Action Plan](#)  
- [Canvas Guide: Accessibility Checker](#)  
- [Canvas Guide: General Accessibility Design Guidelines](#) | - UDL 1.2 Offer alternatives for auditory information  
- UDL 1.3 Offer alternatives for visual information  
- UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies | |
| Colour enhances effectiveness and is not used in isolation to convey meaning. There is sufficient contrast between text and background. | • Colour enhances effectiveness and is not used in isolation to convey meaning. There is sufficient contrast between text and background. | | | |
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Additional web accessibility resources:

- [WebAIM](#)
- [Canvas Guide: How to use the Link Validator Tool](#)
- [Canvas Guide: Mobile Apps](#)
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| 5.3 Ensure all content is copyright or license compliant and place any course readings sourced from print material **reading list** *(Talis)*, e.g., key learning information such as course materials, supplemental textbooks, and reading lists. | Talis enables the University to meet its financial obligations for provisioning copyright material, thus rewarding the contribution of authors. Other benefits are:  
  • Ensuring the University doesn’t run afoul of copyright.  
  • Enhancing the student experience by contextualising readings within the Canvas environment.  
  • Identifying ‘prescribed’ vs ‘optional extra’ readings.  
  • Enabling teachers to see how students are engaging with course readings. | • [Teachwell: How to create a Talis reading list](#)  
• [Copyright at Auckland](#)                                                                 | UDL 2.4 Promote understanding across languages                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                      |
| 5.4 **Language requirements** are met in elements included in the design option (e.g., a button with te reo Māori). | Promotes understanding across languages. Students from diverse backgrounds feel included.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                          | UDL 2.4 Promote understanding across languages                                                                 |                                                                                                      |