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# 14 Elements for Canvas success

May 2020

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# ELEMENT 1:

## Course Home Page Information & Banner

**Rationale:** This element is intended to ensure all courses have a quick visual reference point (banner), as well as a quick contextual blurb to help students get started. Overall, the aim is to ensure RMIT courses have a distinct look and feel in the LMS that students will become familiar with.

**Essentials:** The home page text includes the following:

- » One sentence on how the course is conducted
- » One sentence course description tagline
- » One sentence explaining how to get started

Banner should be 1100px wide and display the following information:

- » Full course title (as per the Course Guide)
- » Course code (as per the Course Guide)
- » Relevant image to course

**Guidance:** For the three sentences of home page information:

- » Basic information about how the course is conducted – online, lectures, theory/practical split, major project, studios/workshops. Or could make a brief comment on the use of Canvas with on-campus activity.
- » Brief course description tagline (can use information from the course guide to help formulate a one-sentence tagline).
- » How to get started (e.g. completing welcome and orientation module if beginning course, or heading to relevant module)  
e.g. “Welcome to Metalwork 101! This course will be delivered through face-to-face classes and by accessing materials and resources here in Canvas. In this course you will learn basic metalworking theory, but also put into practice metalworking skills in the workshops. To get started, please review the ‘Welcome and Orientation’ module, then access the relevant week/topic as needed during the course.”

**Resource:** Use the Banner Generator (<http://www.rmitstudios.com.au/banner>) to create an automatic banner for your Canvas Course. Any customised banner used, should be 1100px wide including the above course information, and should use an image relevant to course.

# ELEMENT 2:

## Introductory Announcement

**Rationale:** This element is intended to foster teacher presence in Week 1 ahead of classes and establish the use of announcements as a means to communicate key information to students.

**Essentials:** The Introductory Announcement should be set to publish in Week 1, and include details about the course for the current cohort, such as:

- » Welcome to Week 1
- » Refer to relevant websites or systems to get organised for Week 1 and locating classes (e.g. myRMIT and myTimetable)
- » What areas of the Canvas course to look at first, such as 'Welcome and Orientation' module, the schedule, assignments area and other essential course specifics.

**Guidance:** Think about Semester specific details and use the announcement to direct to existing information in areas of the course.

# ELEMENT 3:

## The Course Welcome & Orientation Module is Present

**Rationale:** This element is designed to provide students with a consistent 'orientation' to their courses. The orientation will include information about how a course is organised, who is teaching the course, any essential materials, how Canvas is to be used, and relevant RMIT resources to support learning.

**Essentials:** The module should include the following pages, ordered according to your preference but with logical consistency across a program:

- » Welcome to the course page
- » Teaching team
- » Canvas in this course
- » Course queries - Discussion thread
- » RMIT resources/Library and Study Support (can be at program shell level, where appropriate)
- » Policies and guidelines (can be at program shell level, where appropriate)

# ELEMENT 4:

## Welcome to Course: Video & Course Guides

**Rationale:** This element is intended as a key 'connection' point in the course for information and context. The video provides the opportunity for teaching staff to 'showcase' the course in a video, providing personality, subject insight, and key information that makes a student want to come to class. This is also where students can easily and consistently navigate to a course guide in all courses.

**Essentials:** This page must include the following information:

- » A welcome video, which includes visual and voiceover
- » A link to the course guide (Part A, B OR both)

A Welcome video introduces the course and connects with students before they attend class. It must include:

1. What the key concept/ideas of the course are
2. Why these concepts/ideas are important and why they need to know them
3. Who you are and your interest in the course
4. How students will benefit from the course
5. When to be present (this is the call to action – encourage them to engage online/in class)

The Welcome video can be generic and reusable across multiple deliveries if desired. Semester specific information goes in the Introductory Announcement.

**Guidance:** If you do not wish to appear in a Welcome video due to religious or cultural reasons, you can ask another teaching member involved in course design appear in the video. You may wish to explore other types of Welcome video formats – such as animation – and simply provide a voice-over.

Best practice includes providing a link to course guide (Part B) once published and specifying whether the course has a set text or essential materials.

**Resources:** For a guide on how to create a Welcome video see:

[Creating Welcome Videos](#)

<<http://rmitstudios.com.au/creating-welcome-videos>>

[Audio and Video Standards](#)

<<http://rmitstudios.com.au/teaching-resources>>

# ELEMENT 5:

## Teaching Team Details

**Rationale:** This element is intended to establish authenticity between teaching staff and students. Students value learning from someone with experience, interest in the subject, and who they can connect to and see as a mentor. They also need to know when it is appropriate to contact you and by what methods.

**Essentials:** Teaching team contact details must include:

- » Photo
- » Position Title and name
- » Location
- » Contact Details (including at minimum an e-mail address, but could also include phone number or office location)
- » Clear instructions on how to communicate with staff members and availability details (i.e. working days and hours, expected response time, how to make an appointment)
- » Brief bio (can be contextualised link to webpage, if appropriate information is present for students)

**Guidance:** A photo of yourself that allows your face to be seen is best practice as this drives human connection in blended delivery between physical and digital spaces where student engagement occurs. Alternatively, a drawn representation (has a resemblance) can be provided, such as those that can easily be created using Bitmoji or Memoji. Abstract imagery is not a suitable alternative.



# ELEMENT 6:

## Canvas in this Course

**Rationale:** The purpose of this page is to give students a holistic understanding of the learning environment and how best to utilise its functionality for the course context and objectives.

**Essentials:** Identify if the course is:

- » fully online
- » a blend of online and face-to-face, where students will be actively communicating and/or learning in Canvas
- » largely face-to-face, where Canvas is primarily used as a place for students to retrieve resources (and submit assessments).

Also, explain:

- » the relationship between Canvas and any other locations of learning in the course (e.g. lecture, workshops, other online technology e.g. WordPress).
- » the ways in which Canvas use is essential.

**Guidance:** Some Academic Development Groups (ADGs) have developed this page to include guides for Canvas or link to additional resources that assist students. Additionally, some program managers have created customised materials that assist students in Canvas in the context of the program. These are good instances of utilising the page to achieve the rationale of this element.



# ELEMENT 7:

## Course Queries: Discussion Thread

**Rationale:** This element is designed to provide a space for students to support each other and also to reduce individual student email queries during Semester. A discussion like this can foster a learning community. Its presence in the LMS allows teaching staff to monitor discussion patterns and encourage, affirm, and correct to promote a strong community and professional communication.

**Essentials:** A ‘pinned’ course queries discussions thread is available (published), and explains to students its purpose and how to participate.

**Guidance:** The following example requires you to enable ‘liking’ and ‘sort by likes’ in the discussion settings:

*This discussion is a space for students to ask, answer or share general questions, observations or concerns relating to [course title]. This discussion is open to the entire cohort and will be monitored by [course coordinator/teaching staff] who will generally respond within [48 hours].*

*Some helpful tips before contributing to the discussion, please:*

- » *Read the Course Welcome and Orientation for answers before posting*
- » *Review our pre-populated FAQ document for common answers to previously asked queries from students in this course [document link]*
- » *Email your course coordinator or teaching staff directly regarding confidential questions or personal matters*

*Etiquette to make this discussion successful:*

- » *‘Like’ questions that you also want to know the answer to instead of duplicating, these will promote them to the top of the discussion for visibility and answering*
- » *‘Like’ helpful responses from other students or teaching staff, these will promote them to the top of the discussion for increased visibility*
- » *Contribute to the discussion if you find resources or answers to help each other - sharing is caring!*
- » *Take the opportunity to connect with fellow students for study group opportunities or to help solve issues together!*

**Please note this discussion is not compulsory and will not be assessed.**

**Resources:** FAQ discussion

[Webpage](#)

<<https://sites.rmit.edu.au/projectwire/course-queries-discussion>>

# ELEMENT 8:

## Course Schedule

**Rationale:** The course schedule contains a summary of the learning structure, including activities and milestones, which will help students check they are on-track and anticipate busy periods during the Semester across their program of study, with a view to managing their time well.

**Essentials:** This should include:

- » when classes are held
- » what learning materials and activities need to be completed; and,
- » what assessments are due

or a schedule of F2F and other events (e.g. weekly topics, assignments, studios, labs, quizzes) are supplied as a table or as a downloadable document in the Syllabus page or the Course Welcome and Orientation module (may be from the Course Guide, with additional info).

**Guidance:** School templates include an example course schedule that you can edit which will make populating the essential components easier for this element.

**Resources:** See Appendix A (end of document).

# ELEMENT 9:

## Required Navigation: Menu Items

**Rationale:** This element is intended to ensure that students have a consistent navigation method in the LMS, and these required menu items indicate the basic navigation expected to access key components.

**Essentials:** The following must be active in the course navigation pane:

- » Home
- » Announcements
- » Assignments
- » Grades

# ELEMENT 10:

## Additional Navigation: Menu Items

**Rationale:** This element is intended to provide additional guidance on consistent navigation in the LMS when other menu items are active/used in the course.

**Essentials:** The navigation menu has been structured in the following order (if and when relevant content areas are to be active and displayed to students):

- » Home
- » Announcements
- » Syllabus
- » Modules
- » Discussions
- » Collaborations
- » 3rd Party Links
- » Assignments
- » Quizzes
- » Grades
- » Conferences
- » Collaborate Ultra
- » People
- » Studio

**Guidance:** Hide any unused menu items from students.

You may have additional items added in your course; if so, add them to the bottom of this structure.

# ELEMENT 11:

## Copyright & Active Links

**Rationale:** This element is intended to ensure that courses demonstrate required copyright attribution that students are also expected to demonstrate during their study. Link checking ensures correct functionality and access.

**Essentials:** Ensure that in the course:

- » All links are active and direct to the correct resource
- » All images and videos have copyright attribution (source and permission to use)

**Guidance:** Refer to the [RMIT Library resources and services guide](https://tinyurl.com/ydxd4c58) <https://tinyurl.com/ydxd4c58> and the [Checklist Library Resources and Copyright](https://tinyurl.com/ybypu6om) <https://tinyurl.com/ybypu6om>

**Resources:** Use the [link validator tool in Canvas](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-12770) <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-12770>

# ELEMENT 12:

## Assessment Tasks: Present & Consistent with Course Guide

**Rationale:** This element is intended to ensure that students have a fair opportunity to succeed in your course by being able to plan for assessment requirements ahead of time, and identify potential ‘busy’ periods of assessments across all courses they are enrolled in, and therefore begin assessment work earlier if they wish.

**Essentials:**

- » Must be consistent to those in the Course Guides (current course guide documents linked-to from Canvas). The items needing to align between the Assignments area in Canvas and the Course Guide documents are: 1. The type of tasks, 2. the weightings, 3. the CLOs and 4. the number of assessments. Assessment task details are to be uploaded or populated in the assignments area of Canvas and published by Week 0 (OUA) and Week 1 (on campus).
- » Assignments area should only include current assessable items for the teaching period (including unpublished items).

**Guidance:**

- » If adaptive release is used, ensure it is used to support the purpose of assessment.
- » Assignments area should only include assessable items, in instances where non-assessable items cannot be removed (e.g. SCORM content) place this at the bottom of the Assignment area within a group called ‘Activities’ or ‘Graded interactives’.
- » If you wish to add non-assessable items to the Syllabus page and calendar, please add them as ‘Events’ in the calendar.

**Resources:** [Program course approval process](#)

<<https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/documents/about/policy/program-course/program-and-course-approval-processes.pdf>>

# ELEMENT 13:

## Assessment Tasks: Essential Information & Submission

**Rationale:** This element is designed to ensure that all assessments have essential information needed for students, such as how they will be graded and how to submit.

**Essentials:**

- » Each assessment item conforms to RMIT Assessment policy and processes [Section 1.8](#) including the requirements for using Assessment Rubrics.
- » Each assessment item and has essential assessment information and submission details built into Canvas or attached as text/file.
- » Each assessment item has due dates (specific date or week due) and are consistent wherever they are mentioned in the course
- » Submission option is correct for the type of assessment (e.g. an essay is setup as a Turnitin or Canvas submission, and not an assessable discussion).
- » Assessment submission types (e.g. Online (Canvas)/ External Tool (Turnitin)) have been correctly set up to suit the assessment as per the instructions given to students
- » VE assignments should either use, or ensure they cover all items listed in, the templates found on the VE essentials site. This includes the following: VE assessment template header, summary and purpose of assessment, task instructions, assessment criteria, feedback and grades.
- » HE assignments should cover the following items: assessment name and course code, summary and purpose of assessment, task instructions and assessment criteria.

**Guidance:** For the purpose of QA, a criterion referenced rubric or an alternative rubric that shows standards of performance expected at each grade level consists of the following in a Canvas course:

- » A rubric is present for assessments 20% or greater (taking into account the exclusions of the types of assessments written in the Policy document - section 1.8.3).
- » Rubric consist of Criteria, Performance Ratings and Performance Descriptors information
- » Rubric calculates correctly in the Canvas system

The QA process does not make a judgement on the quality of the rubric. For further assistance with rubric quality or calculations, please see appropriate ADG for support:

SEH: [seh-adg-let@rmit.edu.au](mailto:seh-adg-let@rmit.edu.au)

COB: [adg.bus@rmit.edu.au](mailto:adg.bus@rmit.edu.au)

DSC: [andrew.stapleton@rmit.edu.au](mailto:andrew.stapleton@rmit.edu.au) & [mark.smithers@rmit.edu.au](mailto:mark.smithers@rmit.edu.au)



**Resources:** [RMIT Assessment Policy](#)

<<https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/governance-and-management/policies/assessment-policy>>

[RMIT Assessment Processes](#)

<<https://www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/documents/about/policy/assessment/assessment-processes.pdf> >

[VE Essentials](#)

<<https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/teaching-supporting-students/ve-essentials>>

# ELEMENT 14:

## RMIT Style

**Rationale:** This element is intended to ensure students engage with appropriately styled content to assist with accessibility concerns.

**Essentials:** Font and colour use is in-line with RMIT branding.  
As a general rule, it is best to use the predefined heading and paragraph style from the rich content editor in Canvas.

**Guidance:** If you want to apply colours, please see the Cheat Sheet of the RMIT colours (see Appendix 2 in this document).

# APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE COURSE SCHEDULE

## Course Schedule: Example of course schedules for Project Rewire

### Semester 1: 2018

Week	Topic	Readings and Activities	Assessment
Week 1 26 Feb	Introduction to course schedules	<b>Reading:</b> Course text, pp. 45 -55 <b>Activity:</b> Exploring course schedules and discussion	
Week 2 5 March	Why course schedules matter	<b>Reading:</b> Course text, pp. 20-25 <b>Activity:</b> Testing student feedback without course schedules	
Week 3 12 March	Planning course schedules	<b>Reading:</b> “Course schedules lead to student success”, Course Design Journal, Vol 2, Iss 5, pp. 22-34 <b>Activity:</b> Developing plans and peer review	
Week 4 19 March	Content to include in course schedules	<b>Reading:</b> Course text, pp. 60-63 <b>Activity:</b> Content organisation and assessment preparation	<b>Assessment 1:</b> Course schedule plan <b>Due:</b> 5 pm Friday 11 August (online submission)
Week 5 26 March	Structures of course schedules	<b>Reading:</b> Watch ‘Structuring your course’, video – YouTube link <b>Activity:</b> Assisting student study plans (student previews)	
<b>Break</b>			
Week 6 5 April	Customising course schedules to meet your course needs	<b>Reading:</b> Course text, pp. 1-12 <b>Activity:</b> Remixing course schedules (working groups)	
Week 7 16 April	Formats for course schedules	<b>Reading:</b> “Useability design”, UX Australia, Vol 3, Iss 10, pp. 26-50 <b>Activity:</b> 3 formats	<b>Assessment 2:</b> Course schedule analysis <b>Due:</b> 9 am Monday 4 September (online submission)
Week 8 23 April	Making course schedules reusable	<b>Reading:</b> Course text, pp. 77-99 <b>Activity:</b> Course lifecycles	
Week 9 30 April	Tips and tricks for course schedules	<b>Reading:</b> Course text, pp. 35-45 <b>Activity:</b> Tips and tricks showcase	
Week 10 7 May	Developing course schedules: Part 1	<b>Reading:</b> Course text, pp. 120 -136 <b>Activity:</b> Course schedule project: Getting started	
Week 11 14 May	Developing course schedules: Part 2	<b>Reading:</b> Course text, pp. 140-160 <b>Activity:</b> Course schedule project: Development	
Week 12 21 May	Revision and review	<b>Reading:</b> Course text, pp. 161-170 <b>Activity:</b> Course schedule project: Finalising	<b>Assessment 3:</b> Course schedule portfolio <b>Due:</b> 9am Monday 9 October (online submission and in-class presentation)
Week 13 28 May	SWOT VAC	SWOT VAC	SWOT VAC
Week 14 4 June	Exams	Exams	Exams

# APPENDIX 2: RMIT COLOURS CHEAT SHEET

**RMIT Red**  
—  
RGB 230 / 30 / 42  
CMYK 3 / 100 / 95 / 0  
HEX #E61E2A  
PMS P 485

**White**  
—  
RGB 225 / 225 / 225  
CMYK 0 / 0 / 0 / 0  
HEX #FFFFFF  
PMS P N/A

**RMIT Blue**  
—  
RGB 34 / 33 / 96  
CMYK 100 / 98 / 21 / 30  
HEX #222160  
PMS P 2757

50% tint

30% tint

10% tint

**Black**  
—  
RGB 0 / 0 / 0  
CMYK 0 / 0 / 0 / 100  
HEX #000000  
PMS P Black

**RMIT Yellow**  
—  
RGB 250 / 200 / 0  
CMYK 2 / 20 / 100 / 0  
HEX #FAC800  
PMS 7406

75% tint

50% tint

**RMIT Warm Grey**  
—  
RGB 227 / 229 / 224  
CMYK 10 / 6 / 10 / 0  
HEX #E3E5E0  
PMS P 7527

75% tint

50% tint

For more information on RMIT Branding see the [RMIT Branding guidelines](#)

# CHECKLIST

Course ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Course URL: \_\_\_\_\_

Element	Description	Complete	Comments
1	Course Home Page Information and Banner		
2	Introductory Announcement		
3	The Course Welcome and Orientation Module is Present		
4	Welcome to Course: Video and Course Guides		
5	Teaching Team Details		
6	Canvas in this Course		
7	Course Queries: Discussion Thread		
8	Course Schedule		
9	Required Navigation: Menu Items		
10	Additional Navigation: Menu Items		
11	Copyright and Active Links		
12	Assessment Tasks: Present and Consistent with Course Guide		
13	Assessment Tasks: Essential Information and Submission		
14	RMIT Style		