

BEGINNING-OF-COURSE CHECKLIST

This checklist is based on the collective experiences of the Canvas team members in education and their deep knowledge of Canvas. The Beginning-of-Course Checklist is a starting point for ensuring your course is ready to go for student access at the start of a new course term.

How To Use

A ★ is an **Essential** practice and a ★★ rating indicates a **Best Practice** criteria. Features that may or may not be utilized are listed as **if applicable**. Relevant help guides are linked throughout the text.

Beginning of Course Practices

Essential ★	
Yes ✓	Practice
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	<p>Set Up Account Notifications</p> <p>To ensure you receive communication, set up Notification Preferences and your contact method. → Trainer Tip: Show students how to set their notification preferences</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	<p>Customize Course Detail Settings</p> <p>Be aware that numerous options reside within Course Settings, under Course Details. Select more options at the bottom of the section to open a menu of extra features such as allowing students to post their own discussion threads and hiding grades summary. → Trainer Tip: Remember to select Update Course Details at the bottom once you update the settings → Trainer Tip: You may want to select Validate Links in Course Settings to ensure there are no broken links</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	<p>Simplify Course Navigation</p> <p>For optimum course experience, hide unnecessary course navigation links. → Trainer Tip: The fewer the better</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	<p>Choose Home Page</p> <p>The Home Page is the first impression of a course – select the best option for your students. → Trainer Tip: Include visuals to engage your students and incorporate important information about your course</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	<p>Verify Students in the People Link</p> <p>Select People to verify your Canvas roster (teacher, student, TA, etc.) for accuracy. → Trainer Tip: The People link also displays course sections (if applicable)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	<p>Review Course in Student View (on laptop/desktop)</p> <p>Review your course content from Student View to experience it from a student perspective. * Note: Some third party tools may not have student view functionality → Trainer Tip: Student View adds a Test Student to Grades. See Gradebook to view any Test Student entries</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	<p>Download the Student Canvas app (on iOS or Android)</p> <p>Download the Student Canvas app to take your course on a mobile test drive. Navigate the course, view files and images, watch videos. Ensure organization is intuitive and mobile ready. → Trainer Tip: A majority of students use the mobile app for a portion of coursework. See Mobile App Best Practices Checklist, download it and click on Examples column links.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> ★	<p>Publish Course and Content</p> <p>Check visibility of individual items and Modules as a whole. Don't forget to publish your course. → Trainer Tip: You can unpublish any items you don't want students to see</p>

Best Practices ★★

Yes ✓	Practice
☐ ★★	<p>Select Favorite Courses Customize which course cards are displayed on the Dashboard by “Favoriting” or “Moving” courses based on preference, current term, quarter, semester, etc. → Trainer Tip: Once courses are displayed, you can also give the course a “Nickname” visible only to you</p>
☐ ★★	<p>Add Syllabus Add the current syllabus to your course. Delete any older versions. → Trainer Tip: Add it to the Course Syllabus tool, as a File link in your course, onto a course Page, etc.</p>
☐ ★★	<p>Manage Files Upload and review course folders and files. Manage the visibility of content by <i>Publishing, Unpublishing or Restricting Access</i> to folders and files. → Trainer Tip: You can bulk upload files</p>
☐ ★★	<p>Set Up Grades Verify the Gradebook is arranged according to your grading policy and your syllabus. → Trainer Tip: You can move the “Total” column from the far right to the far left, next to the student list. → Trainer Tip: You can change your Total column to display as Points, if needed. → Trainer Tip: You can set Late Submission or Missing Submission policies.</p>
☐ ★★	<p>Set Up Assignment Groups (if applicable) If you use weighted grading categories for your final grade calculations, you will want to add Assignment Groups to the Assignments Index Page and assign weights to each Group. → Trainer Tip: You have the ability to add drop rules to each Assignment Group</p>
☐ ★★	<p>Adjust Course Settings (if applicable) Visit the course Settings to check your Course Details, Sections, and Feature Options. Feature options allow you to choose when you want to enable new feature releases. → Trainer Tip: See “Course Details” tab, scroll to the end, select “More Options” to see more settings options → Trainer Tip: RC uses SIS, so cross-listing of courses is possible. Contact the IDC to request. → Trainer Tip: Adding a course card image is a great visual cue for quickly identifying courses → Trainer Tip: Integrate 3rd party LTI Tools (apps) with your course. Contact the IDC to request.</p>
☐ ★★	<p>Clean Up Migrated Content (if applicable) If migrating content from another course, you will need to check course settings, organize and review Pages, Modules, Quizzes, Assignments, Discussion and Files, and remove unneeded content before publishing your course. * Note: First, remove items from a module, then go to that item’s index page to delete. → Trainer Tip: Verify settings for Assignments, Discussions and Quizzes. Some items may come into Canvas published. Unpublish any items as needed. Check out the Instructor Canvas Guides in the Canvas Community</p>
☐ ★★	<p>Verify Calendar (if applicable) Check the Calendar tool to verify Assignment due dates and Events scheduled for your course. * Note: The Calendar displays graded/published Assignments, Quizzes, Discussions and Events with due dates</p>
☐ ★★	<p>Set a Profile Pic (if applicable) Set a profile picture; students will see the image in Announcements, Discussions, and People tab.</p>

ABOUT

The Training Services Department at Instructure is committed to supporting any training needs at your Institution. Reach out to your CSM if you are interested in learning more about this resource, additional resources or any of our training offerings.

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