PREPARING YOUR COURSE

To effectively prepare for your course, your course plan should include:

- measurable learning objectives and outcomes
- assessments aligned directly to learning objectives
- activities structured in an online asynchronous (anytime/anyplace) format

COMMUNICATING EXPECTATIONS

To effectively communicate expectations to students, the course syllabus should include:

- course objectives and outcomes
- required materials
- technical requirements
- instructor contact information
- communication requirements
- methods for students to ask for and receive assistance
- instructor’s plan for providing feedback
- assessment strategies and grading policies
- requirements for student participation and assignment completion
- academic integrity policies
- information for students with disabilities
- standards for appropriate online student behavior
- additional information as pertinent to the course and program

PREPARING YOUR STUDENTS

To prepare your students for successful participation upon entering the course, the course welcome/home page should include:

- a welcome message from the instructor
- instructor contact information
- an introduction to the course structure and purpose
- communication guidelines for the course
- instructions for accessing course content
- resources for help and technical support

To prepare your students for successful engagement throughout the course, the course should include an orientation module with the following components:

- a course description
- the course syllabus and a clearly identified schedule (i.e. Week 1, Week 2, etc.)
- instructor contact information
- guidance for successfully completing the course material and assignments
- information about being an online learner and links to support resources
- an introductory discussion
PROVIDING CLEAR AND ACCESSIBLE INSTRUCTION

To ensure your students can successfully navigate and access course content, instructional modules should include:

- manageable segments or “chunks” of instruction (for example: Modules, Weeks or Chapters)
- properly formatted text (uses the menu to format headings/lists and insert links/graphics)
- numbered lists for ordered content and bulleted lists for unordered content
- descriptive tags for all instructional and non-instructional graphics
- descriptive text for hyperlinks (and not “click here”)
- underlining only to indicate hyperlinks
- links set to open in a new window (eCourseware requirement)
- captions for all video content and transcriptions of audio content
- easy-to-read text in Sans Serif fonts (i.e. Calibri, Arial or Tahoma)
- instructions provided in HTML format

FACILITATING LEARNER ENGAGEMENT AND PROVIDING INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

To facilitate learner engagement and maximize instructional support in the course, instructional modules should include:

- a statement of learning goals and objectives in each module
- instructional materials and resources consistent with learning objectives
- activities and assessments consistent with learning objectives
- sample assignments to illustrate instructor expectations
- evidence of instructor presence and learner support
- instructions that are clear, easy to understand, and consistent throughout the course
- opportunities for student collaboration and active learning
- an online learning community and opportunities for discussion
- differentiated modes of instruction (i.e. text, audio, and video) to support a variety of learners

To maximize the grades tool as a means of providing feedback, each assessment item should include:

- a corresponding gradebook item that parallels the course syllabus
- an assigned weight that does not exceed 50% of the final average
- a means for students to measure their progress (i.e. rubric, checklist, practice quiz, self-assessment, etc.)

These standards were adapted from the original UM Online Course Review Checklist, as well as the Quality Matters Rubric, and the Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard.