TIPS FOR ONLINE COURSE SITES

Improve ICON Course Layout and Structure

Research links course clarity to high levels of student satisfaction as well as improved motivation and persistence. Review the best practices provided below to improve the clarity and ease of use in your online course site.

Course Navigation

- Essential course navigation items for a course include Home, Syllabus, Modules, and Grades. If you use Announcements, include that as well. (Suggestion: turn on the option to show the most recent announcements on the home page.)

- Including the Assignments, Quizzes and Discussions tools will allow students to have quick access to common student activities, but you can also provide links to these activities in Modules.

- Remove items included in the global ICON template that are not applicable to your course, such as various textbook portals, Collaborations, Chat, etc.

- Include the People page to allow students to see the list of their classmates or to self-enroll in groups.

- Will you record/share course media or meet virtually with students via Zoom? If so, include UICapture or Zoom.

Module Structure

- Modules are most effective if organized by week, topic, or theme, and should be published to be visible to students.

- Include a Course Resources or Getting Started module for items that do not fit in a week/topic. (This could also include a link to the Canvas Student Guide.)

- Include a topic key word or phrase as a subtitle when naming the modules so the topic is visible to students (e.g. Module 3: Time Value of Money).

- Make sure to include all course components in a module so students can find them in one place.

- Use Text Headers and Indentation to subdivide modules for better visual organization.

- If your modules contain a large number of links to files and resources such as readings, videos, files, etc., consider creating Pages to organize the links. This will help reduce the length of the module and therefore the amount of scrolling required.

- When sharing documents (docx, pdf, pptx, etc.,) with students on a page, you can use the "Auto-open inline preview" function to display the document directly on the page.

- Tip: After modules have been setup, use the Student View tool to make sure all module items students need are visible (published).

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Consistent Formatting

- Become familiar with the formatting options available in the [Rich Content Editor](#), which is present in pages, announcements, assignment descriptions, etc.

- Keep your design simple and organized. It is best to format using the built-in styles rather than manually changing font sizes and attributes.

- Use appropriate headers (H2, H3, H4, etc.) to organize information anywhere that you enter text for better accessibility.

- [Embed](#) media resources rather than linking to locations outside of ICON whenever possible to avoid distractions.

- Upload course videos/media to UICapture instead of ICON's media tool for better streaming performance and editing capability. You can [enable UICapture](#) in your course without logging into UICapture separately.

Manage Assignments

- Set [due dates](#) on *all* assignments. Due dates feed into the ICON Syllabus, Course Calendar, and student [To-Do list](#). Including dates helps remind students when an assignment is due, plus helps them easily locate their assignments.

- Enter an "Available Until" date to set a hard submission deadline. Students will not be able to submit at all after this date has passed. (Note: "Available Until" dates do not appear on the course calendar or To-Do list.)

- Pages can also have due dates as soft reminders to complete readings, watch videos, etc.

- To see a list of assignments without due dates, go to the Syllabus page (located in the course navigation). Instructors can access the Syllabus page even if it is not enabled for students to see.

- Create "On Paper" or "No Submission" [assignments](#) for external assignments and activities not submitted in ICON. These items should still have assignment instructions and due dates so they will appear on students' To-Do list and course calendar.

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