

CSUSM Distance Learning Best Practices Checklist

(Based on CSU QLT Core 24 Criteria)

This checklist offers best practices in teaching online and will help guide you as you design your online course. It can also assist you if you choose to submit your course for QLT Certification in the future.

Sub-bullets in blue reflect the best practices that enhance and promote student resilience.

Online 101

- Instructor uses course environment to provide clear and detailed instructions for students to begin accessing all course components, such as syllabus, course calendar, assignments, and support files.
- Detailed instructor information is available to students and includes multiple formats for being contacted by students, availability information, brief biographical information, and a picture of the instructor.
 - Instructor could use this as an opportunity to start developing a meaningful, authentic relationship with students, which we know promotes student resilience; in brief introduction, instructors could consider discussing any setbacks in their career paths, which will introduce and normalize the idea of resilience.
- Course description includes the purpose and format of the course, as well as prerequisite knowledge and competencies, if applicable.
- Academic integrity or “code of ethics” is defined. Related institutional policies for students to adhere are clearly stated and/or links to those policies (e.g., online catalog; institution web page) is provided.
- Instructor provides reminders of due dates and duration of respective modules, as well as other instructions to keep students on task.
 - Consistent, reliable communication is necessary for any meaningful student-faculty relationship, and promotes student resilience
- Instructor provides students with adequate notice and time to acquire course materials.
- There is a variety of instructional material types and perspectives, while not overly relying on one content type such as text.
- Navigation throughout the online components of the course is logical, consistent, and efficient.

Backwards Design/Assessment

- All student learning outcomes are specific, well-defined, and measurable.
- Grading policy is provided in a manner that clearly defines expectations for the course and respective assignments.
- The learning activities (including graded assignments as well as ungraded activities) promote the achievement of the student learning outcomes.
 - [Focusing on mastery goals, rather than performance goals promotes student resilience.](#)
- The assessment instruments (e.g., rubrics) are detailed and appropriate to the student work and respective outcomes being assessed. This includes assessing modes of online participation and contributions.
- Throughout the semester, instructor provides multiple opportunities to give feedback on student learning, as well as helping students “self-check” their learning.
 - [Providing meaningful, authentic feedback will demonstrate instructors' investment and compassion for students, creating an opportunity to establish a more meaningful student-faculty relationship.](#)

Student Engagement

- Learning activities facilitate and support active learning that encourages frequent and ongoing peer-to-peer engagement.
 - [Creating opportunities to develop social support systems in the class will also promote student resilience.](#)
- Course learning activities help students understand the fundamental concepts and build skills useful outside of course.
 - [Any life skills or knowledge that promotes adaptation should be highlighted, as these skills are necessary for resilience across contexts.](#)
- Instructor provides feedback in a timely manner.
- At the beginning of the course, instructor provides an opportunity for students to introduce themselves to develop the sense of community.
- Instructor takes advantage of the current tools provided by the Learning Management System (or similar) to enhance learning.

Accessibility

- Course syllabus (or related) provides an introduction to campus academic (non-technical) support services and resources available to support students in achieving their educational goals. E.g., Disability Support Services, Writing Center, Tutoring Center.
- Syllabus (or similar) links to the campus accessible policy, whether it is required or recommended by the institution.
- A clear explanation of the disability support services (DSS) is provided and clear links to DSS resources are provided.
- Course documents and text materials created by the instructor or from external sources are in formats that are accessible to students with disabilities.
- Policies and practices are designed to accommodate differences in the context of students' learning—not to treating all students “the same.”
- Instructor provides clear information regarding access to the technology and related resources required in the course.
- The course syllabus (or related) lists and/or links to a clear explanation of the technical support provided by the campus and suggestions as to when and how students should access it.

Equity-Mindedness

- Instructor creates and maintains an equitable, inclusive and respectful class environment through explicit guidelines for class communication (written as well as video, video-conferencing, etc.) and by addressing bias, disrespect, racism, microaggressions, stereotypes, etc. when they occur.
- Instructor communicates respect and value for diverse abilities, talents, life experiences, and ways of knowing, and recognizes their importance to student learning through course design. Examples include collaborative learning, applying concepts to students' everyday lives, and allowing students to choose project topics and/or ways of completing assignments.