PINELLAS TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Opportunity starts here

Clearwater Campus

2026-2027
Distance Learning Plan

Privacy, Safety & Security of Data · Acceptable Use Policy for Distance Education

Learning Management System: Canvas (Instructure, Inc.)

Updated: June 2026
Pinellas County School Board (PCSB)

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Privacy, Safety & Security of Data

Introduction

The information technology (IT) staff of the Pinellas County School Board (PCSB) and Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) possesses credentials in the following areas: server infrastructure, desktop infrastructure, private cloud, enterprise devices and apps, data platforms, business intelligence, messaging, communication, and the Canvas (Instructure) learning management system. This expertise enables them to implement best practices in technology infrastructure and ensure the security of institutional data.

Data Storage & Network Access

The Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) IT Department manages all staff and student access to the distance learning management systems. They work closely with the Pinellas County School Board (PCSB) IT staff to ensure that PTC-CLWTR is operating with a safe and adequate infrastructure.

PTC-CLWTR employees and students are provided with credentials to access the PTC-CLWTR and PCSB networks and are provided server space to store digital materials. When an employee is no longer a staff member or when a student is no longer enrolled, their access to the server and network is revoked.

Privacy, Safety, & Security Application and User Security

User Authentication: User data on our database is logically segregated by account-based access rules. User accounts have unique usernames and passwords that must be entered each time a user accesses the system.

User Passwords: User application passwords have minimum complexity requirements.

Data Encryption: Certain sensitive user data, such as account passwords, are stored in encrypted format.

Physical Security

The distance education infrastructure required for the learning management system (LMS) is provided as part of the agreement with the vendor who supplies the LMS to Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) on a multi-year contractual basis. This off-site infrastructure includes the servers, security, storage (including archival storage), and support, as set forth in the Instructure Master Terms and Conditions, which govern the Canvas service.

Data centers: PTC's distance education information systems infrastructure (servers, networking equipment, etc.) for the learning management system is maintained in a server facility off-site (may be one of various locations throughout the United States), due to our managed hosting/SaaS system configuration. Some limited use servers are secured at the district level and are housed at the Pinellas County School Board's secure data center, where they are monitored and maintained by Pinellas County School Board district staff.

Data Center Security: The Pinellas County School Board's data center is surveilled 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Access is fully secured with district security entry requirements.

Environmental Controls: All Pinellas County School Board and Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus information technology dedicated data storage facilities are maintained at controlled temperatures and humidity ranges which are continuously monitored for variations.

Smoke and fire detection, and response systems are in place. Distance education data is housed in a secure Amazon Web Services (AWS) data facility, due to our managed hosting/SaaS configuration, and is maintained under the same strict conditions as those provided by the district. Institutions in the eastern United States, such as PTC, are served from the AWS US East region, located in Northern Virginia.

Back-Ups: Back-Ups are performed daily at the off-site storage facility provided through our managed hosting/SaaS solution. All back-ups have storage on and off-site. On-site back-ups are performed on an annual basis.

Responsibilities of Institution

Introduction

The information technology (IT), instructional and administrative staff members of Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) hold credentials in those areas of expertise that determine their responsibility to ensure the quality of distance education offered by the institution.

IT Staff Responsibility

The Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus IT Department will maintain equipment designated for student use, will provide support to the network (local and district), and will work with the Pinellas County Schools staff to ensure access to resources. They will communicate periods of down time, and will provide appropriate technical support at all levels, as requested through instructional faculty. The IT staff for PTC-CLWTR also assumes responsibility for verifying and maintaining the currency and quality of all contracted courseware, on both an annual and ongoing basis, as well as maintaining curriculum oversight responsibility – in partnership with PTC-CLWTR faculty and administration – within all contracts.

Instructional Faculty Responsibility

Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus instructional faculty members will provide access to high-quality distance education curriculum that is aligned to state and industry standards. They will provide initial training on the use of the learning management system (LMS), through an introduction and orientation to the LMS during campus orientation, providing resources for use of the LMS, and by specific familiarization with LMS features and content relevant to the enrolled course. The institution ensures timeliness of its responses (synchronously or asynchronously) to students' requests by placing a requirement on response time of no more than 24 hours. Each course/program uses a standardized template within the LMS, course descriptions and learning objectives, course requirements (e.g., standard syllabus, outcomes, grading policy, content resources, etc.), and learning outcomes in order to ensure the quality and assessment of student academic performance. The curriculum will be reviewed by an advisory panel of industry members and will use instructional materials that represent up-to-date and relevant theory within the discipline. Courses will be continually evaluated, both by the instructors and by administrators, to ensure that the elements of high-quality and standards-aligned online coursework are in place.

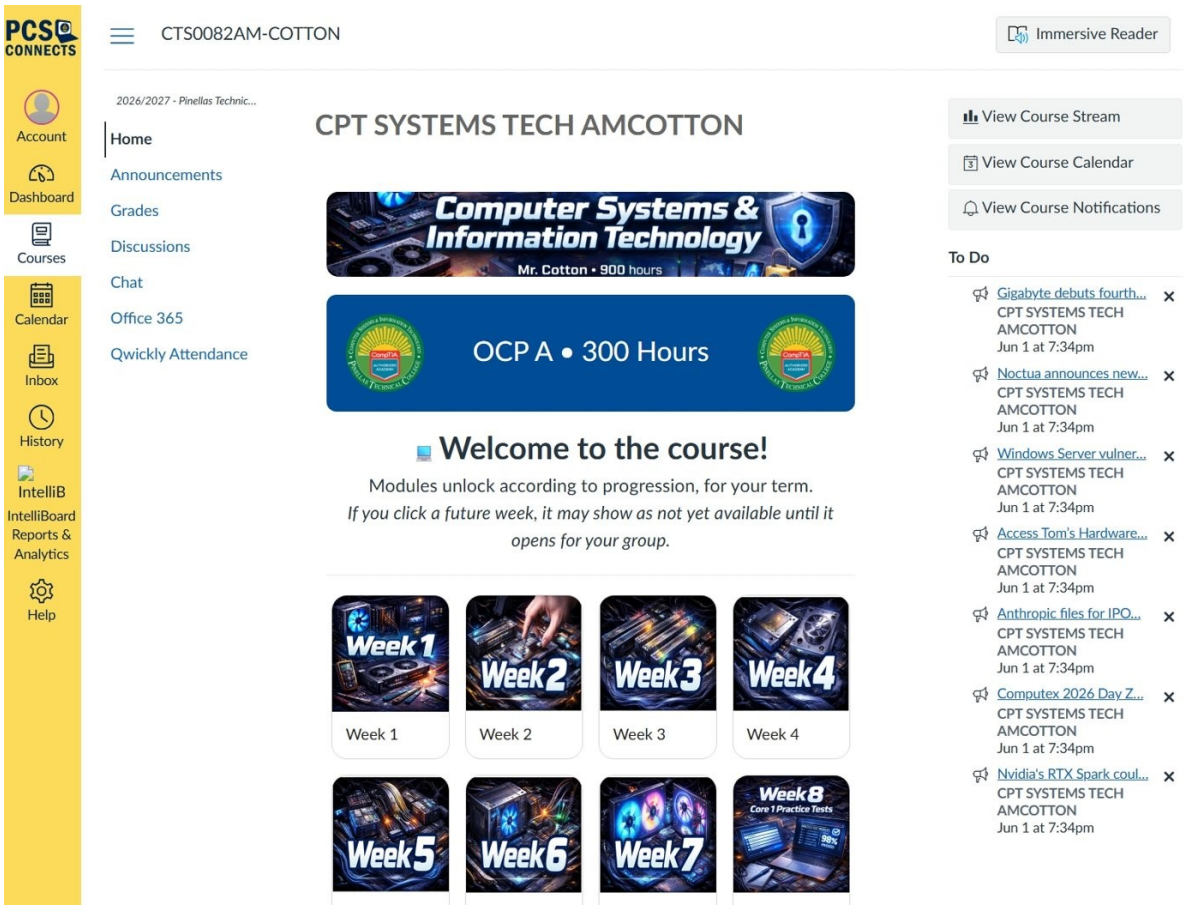

Figure 1. *A Pinellas Technical College distance education course built on the standardized Canvas course template.*

Responsibility of Administration

The Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus administration will review distance education courses for content and structure regularly, ensuring that courses delivered via an online instructional format are identical to those taught traditionally, regarding:

- quality and rigor,
- depth of academic and technical standards,
- completion requirements, and
- credentials awarded.

They will communicate expectations for quality to instructors, participate in advisory meetings, and address student concerns as they related to distance education needs, in an impartial fashion.

Acceptable Use Policy

Introduction

This document sets forth the policy of acceptable use by users of the learning management system utilized by Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus ("PTC-CLWTR"). Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus currently uses Canvas, provided by Instructure, Inc., as its learning management system ("LMS"), and this policy should be read in conjunction with the Instructure Acceptable Use Policy and Product Privacy Policy. All users, including, but not limited to, students, teachers, school administrators, and educational organizations, are subject to this policy and are expected to comply with its provisions.

User Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of any person using the learning management system (LMS) to read, understand, and comply with this policy. Any person with questions regarding the meaning of the policy, or application of this policy in a particular context, should seek clarification from their instructor, their administrator, and/or the LMS administrator for Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus at shafferma@pcsb.org. Use of the LMS shall constitute acceptance of the terms of this policy.

Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses

The learning management system (LMS) is available only for educational purposes. Users may not use the LMS to store any files that are not educational.

It is unacceptable for users to use the LMS for:

- furthering any political or religious purpose;
- engaging in any commercial or fundraising purpose;
- sending or posting threatening, harassing, or disparaging messages or content to or regarding an individual or group of people;
- gaining unauthorized access to computer or telecommunications networks;
- interfering with the operations of technology resources, including placing a computer virus on any computer system, including Canvas;
- accessing or sharing sexually explicit, obscene, or otherwise inappropriate materials;
- intercepting communications intended for other persons;
- attempting to gain unauthorized access to Canvas;
- logging in through another person's account or attempting to access another user's password or files;
- sending defamatory or libelous material concerning a person or group of people;
- furthering any criminal or illegal act, including downloading, uploading, or distributing any files, software, or other material in violation of federal copyright laws;
- infringing on any intellectual property rights; or
- downloading, uploading, or distributing any files, software, or other material that is not specifically related to an educational project.

The LMS may not be used to transmit or store messages or other data that are prohibited or inappropriate under this policy. Users may not create, send, or store messages or other data or content that are considered offensive, contain sexually explicit material, or otherwise offensively

address the age, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability of a person or a group of people. Users also may not create, send, or store messages pertaining to dangerous devices such as weaponry or explosive devices. Users should take all reasonable precautions against receiving or downloading messages, images, or other data of this sort.

Expectations Regarding Academic Integrity

Enrolled users will participate and submit required assignments as requested or required. The assignments submitted by users will represent their own work, or, where the work is not their own, the work of sources that are appropriately credited. Any user who is found to have submitted work that is not his or her own, either in whole or in part, and that has failed to credit the source, may be subject to one or more penalties. Penalties may range from warning, to loss of credit for the assignment, to failure of the course, dependent upon the nature and severity of the act or omission.

No Expectation of Privacy

Use of the learning management system (LMS) constitutes consent for administrators to monitor and/or inspect any files that users create, any messages they post or receive, and any web sites they access. PTC-CLWTR may inspect any user's account and the files it contains at any time. PTC-CLWTR also has the right to give permission to teachers, school administrators, law enforcement officials, and others, as appropriate, to review the LMS to determine the online activities of a user who PTC-CLWTR has reason to believe may be in violation of this policy. Users are advised that messages in discussion forums, including deleted messages, are regularly archived and can be retrieved. In addition, an Internet firewall automatically checks all data moving between the local area network and the Internet and logs the sending and receiving destinations.

Passwords

Each user shall be required to either create a secure password or maintain the administrator-assigned password in a manner directed by the LMS vendor and shall use and maintain the password as directed by the same and set forth in this policy. This password is to be used to access the LMS computer network and any resources that reside within the network and require password access. LMS users are expected to keep their passwords confidential and are responsible for all activity under their accounts. If a user suspects their password has been compromised, they must notify their instructor, who will notify the LMS administrator.

Violations

Failure to comply with this policy may subject a user to termination of the user's LMS account. PTC-CLWTR will notify school or organization administrators of any inappropriate activities. It will also advise law enforcement agencies of activities conducted through the LMS which PTC-CLWTR believes may be illegal. PTC-CLWTR will cooperate fully with local, state, and/or federal officials in any investigation related to illegal activities conducted through the LMS.

Disclaimers

Pinellas Technical College makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for LMS services and resources. PTC-CLWTR is not responsible for any damages incurred, including, but not limited to: loss of data resulting from delays or interruption of service, loss of data stored on the LMS, or damage to personal property used to access LMS resources; the accuracy, nature, or quality of information stored on LMS resources or gathered through the

LMS or the Internet; or unauthorized financial obligations incurred through LMS-provided access. Further, even though PTC-CLWTR may use technical or manual means to limit user access, these limits do not provide a foolproof means for enforcing the provisions of this policy. All provisions of this agreement are subordinate to local, state and federal laws.

Authentication of Academic Submissions & Examinations

Introduction

Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus has several systems in place to ensure that academic submissions received from and examinations administered to students are completed by the same student who has registered for that course or program of study. Students are required to agree, in writing, to standards of academic integrity and to adhere to specific codes of student conduct; in addition, all students of Pinellas County Schools are required to sign an agreement for Network/Internet Acceptable Use, prior to being permitted access to any electronic resources.

Processes Used to Ensure Authentication

When students register at Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus (PTC-CLWTR) and enroll in one of the many programs offered, they are registered by the school's guidance professionals and enrolled in the student information system (SIS) by the student records specialist. They are required to provide two forms of official identification, to establish identity and proof of residence, in order to register. When they are enrolled in the program, in the SIS, they are provided with a unique student identification number.

Students access their Canvas courses through the Pinellas Technical College Canvas login portal, which directs each student to the correct login pathway for their program. Students in full-time programs sign in to Canvas using their Office 365 credentials. Students who do not have an Office 365 account sign in using their FOCUS (student information system) credentials, which are distributed to the student by email. Each pathway authenticates the student against their district-issued account, and Canvas access remains tied to the unique student identification number established in the SIS.

Students are advised in orientation, and during introduction to the LMS, that log-in credentials are to be kept confidential and sharing of log-in information may be a violation of academic integrity. All student activity in the LMS is continually monitored by faculty, as well as by administration, in addition to reports being provided by the LMS administrator upon request; this information includes log-in time, log-in frequency, course activity, coursework submission activity, confirmation of student time online, and percentage of coursework completed, in addition to any other relevant or requested data.

Off-Site Exam Administration

When online students are required to take tests at a location other than at a Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus campus location, distance education instructional personnel have several options for securing the test, including:

- Requiring the use of a separate password to access the examination
- Timing the exam
- Setting the exam to “turn on” and “turn off” within specific time frames
- Randomizing questions for each re-examination
- Limiting the location where the exam can be taken, based upon the IP address

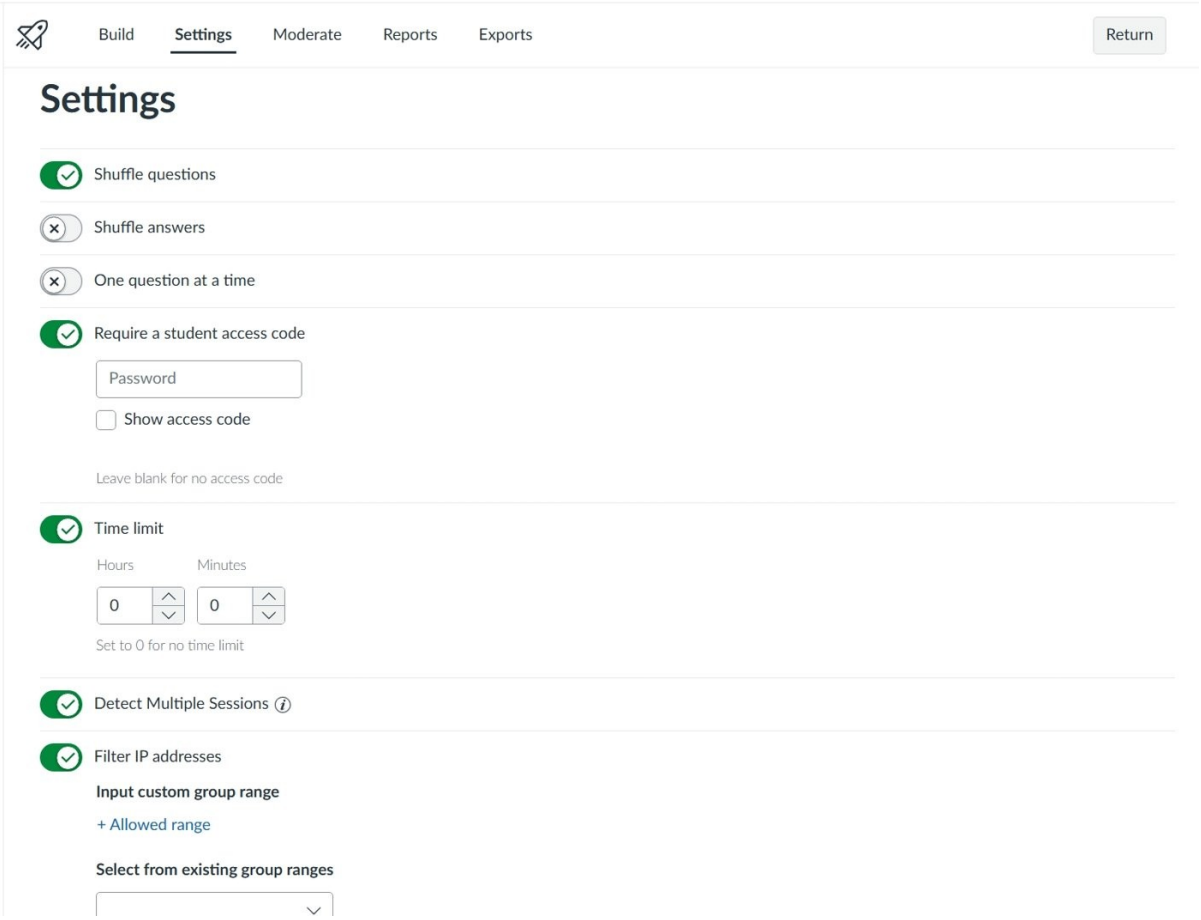

Figure 2. *New Quizzes settings in Canvas used to secure off-site examinations, including a required access code, an enforced time limit, shuffled questions, and IP-address filtering.*

On-Site Exam Proctoring

For added security, distance education instructional personnel also schedule on-site exams for students, and secure testing locations for those students to test when they arrive on-campus. In addition, there are testing centers on campus that have been established for specific industry certification testing purposes with certified proctors, to ensure the validity and authentication of such examinations, as required by the testing bodies. Students must schedule these tests in advance, and present valid photo identification before being permitted to test.

Appendices

The following appendices accompany this plan.

Appendix A: Sample Student Contract

Online-Hybrid Student Contract

To be an online/hybrid/campus-based student at PTC, you must agree to the following rules:

1. As an **online** student I hereby agree that I will log into the PTC LMS system Monday through Friday (or as designated by the student calendar). By doing this, I will receive 5 hours of attendance credit per day. If I log in less than 5 days per week, my time will be reduced by 5 hours for every day I do not log in.
2. I understand that I must maintain minimum attendance each week, as stated in the campus catalog and my financial aid provider. After six (6) consecutive absences I may be removed from the program. I am also aware that an employer will expect 100% attendance each week on the job; therefore, I will work to form the habit of 100% attendance.
3. **Please Note**: On the last day of each month that school is in session and on the last day of the term, I will log on before noon or will be marked absent because attendance must be submitted before the end of the school day for that month or term.
4. I will maintain academic progress per term as required by PTC to be in good standing. I understand that I must maintain minimum academic progress each week as stated in the student handbook and my financial aid provider. I am also aware that an employer will expect 100% performance on the job; therefore, I will work to form the habit of 100% academic progress.
5. I will submit assignments WEEKLY. Weekly assignments will be submitted each week either to my instructor or via Canvas . I will submit assignments that are equivalent to the 25-hour week that any PTC student is obligated to work within.
6. I will read my email/course mail daily and respond as required in a timely manner. Instructors communicate on a regular basis using email/course mail. I am responsible for knowing the information relayed to me in these messages.
7. As an **online/hybrid** student I will obtain access to or purchase the software required for the program in which I am enrolled.

Failure to meet any of the above requirements for distance learning will result in my termination as an online student. To continue in the program, I will be required to attend class on the PTC campus Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (normal class hours).

All Certification exams must be taken and completed prior to a student's completion date or graduation from the program. NO certification exams shall be provided to any student after that date.

I hereby fully understand and agree to the above requirements.

Print Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Revised 11/19/2025

Appendix B: Sample Academic Integrity Statement

Academic Integrity Statement

Every student at Pinellas Technical College will adhere to the academic integrity policy outlined below. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action and may jeopardize the student's continuation in the course and any award of academic credit.

Each student will agree to abide by the following rules of academic integrity:

1. Your work on each assignment will be completely your own.
2. Your instructor must approve or assign any collaboration with another classmate on assignments and/or projects.
3. You will not practice plagiarism in any form.
4. You will not allow others to copy your work.
5. You will not misuse content from the Internet.
6. You will not share your log-in credentials (username and/or password) for any academic site with any other individual.
7. You will not use the log-in credentials of someone else (username and/or password) to access any academic site.

Plagiarism is copying or using ideas or words (from another online classmate, or an Internet or print source) and presenting them as your own.

Remember that all instructors use several methods to check for authenticity. If an instructor confirms that a student has violated academic integrity, the student will be subject to consequences determined by the Code of Student Conduct for Postsecondary Career, Technical & Adult Education.

I hereby agree to abide by the rules of academic integrity as stated above.

_____
Print Your Full Name Above

_____
Sign Your Full Name Above

_____
Date

Revised 11/23

Appendix C: PCS Network/Internet Acceptable Use Agreement Form

PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

NETWORK/INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE AGREEMENT

Pinellas County Schools use computers to support learning and to enhance instruction. Computer networks in the schools allow students and staff to interact with many computers. The Internet, a network of networks, allows people to interact with hundreds of thousands of networks and computers. Internet access is now available to designated students in Pinellas County Schools. This resource offers vast, diverse, and unique resources to students that will allow them to communicate with people from around the world, visit electronic libraries, perform research on a variety of subjects, and participate in special projects with students from all points on the globe. The goal in providing this service is to promote educational excellence in schools by facilitating resource sharing, innovation, and communication. This technology will benefit all students as they prepare for work in a global marketplace.

The student is expected to follow all guidelines stated below, as well as those given orally by the staff, and to demonstrate ethical behavior that is of the highest order in using the network facilities at the school.

1. Acceptable Use
The purpose of the Internet is to facilitate communications in support of research and education by providing access to unique resources and the opportunity for collaborative work. The use of the student's account must be in support of and consistent with the educational objectives of Pinellas County Schools. Use of other organizations' networks or computing resources must comply with the rules appropriate for that network. Transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. or state regulation is prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secret. Use for commercial activities is generally not acceptable. Use for product advertisement is also prohibited. It is prohibited to download or install unauthorized applications or alter the basic configuration of the computer. It is also prohibited to execute any unauthorized applications from a third-party device (hard drives, USB drives, etc.).

2. Privileges
The use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use will result in a cancellation of those privileges. The districtwide network system administrator is the supervisor of distributive and user support systems. In addition, the principal will appoint a staff member to act as the school's network system administrator. Students may not allow others to use their account name or their password. Violation of this rule could jeopardize access to the Internet and students who violate this rule will immediately lose all network and computer access. The school's network system administrators will deem what is inappropriate use and their decision is final. Also, the school's network system administrators may close or restrict an account at any time as required. The administration and staff of the district or the school may also request the districtwide network system administrator or the school's network system administrator to deny, revoke, or suspend specific user access.

3. Network Etiquette
Students are expected to abide by the generally accepted rules of network etiquette. These include, but are not limited to the following:

a. Do not reveal personal address, phone numbers, or other personal information of yourself or classmates.
b. Be polite. Do not get abusive in messages to others.
c. Use appropriate language. Do not swear, use vulgarities, or any other inappropriate language.
d. Do not engage in activities that are prohibited under state or federal law.
e. Do not assume that electronic mail is private. People who operate the system do have access to all mail. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities may be reported to the authorities.
f. Do not use the network in such a way that would disrupt the use of the network by other users.
g. All communications and information accessible via the network should be assumed to be private property.

4. Services
a. Pinellas County Schools will not be responsible for any charges related to fee for service access to on-line resources services incurred by account holders without prior written approval being received from the district.
b. Pinellas County Schools makes no warranties of any kind, either expressed or implied, for the service it is providing. Pinellas County Schools will not be responsible for any damages suffered. This includes loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, mis-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by its own negligence or errors or omissions including any and all viruses. Use of any information obtained via the Internet is at the student's own risk. Pinellas County Schools specifically denies any responsibility for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.

5. Security
Security on any computer system is a high priority, especially when the system involves many users. If the student can identify a security problem, the student must notify the school's network system administrator or the Pinellas County Schools districtwide network system administrator and should not demonstrate the problem to other users. Attempts to logon to the Internet as a network system administrator will result in cancellation of user privileges. Any user identified as a security risk or having a history of problems with other computer systems may be denied access to the Internet.

6. Vandalism
Vandalism will result in cancellation of Internet privileges. Vandalism is defined as any malicious attempt to harm or destroy data of another user, Internet, or any of the above listed agencies or other networks that are connected to Pinellas County Schools. This includes, but is not limited to the uploading or creation of computer viruses.

STUDENT

I understand and will abide by the Network and Internet Use Agreement. I further understand that any violation of the regulations stated is unethical and may constitute a criminal offense. Should I commit any violation, my access privileges may be revoked and school disciplinary and appropriate legal action may be taken.

Student Name _____ School _____
(please print)

Student Signature_____ Date_____

PARENT OR GUARDIAN

As the parent or guardian of this student, I have read the Network and Internet Use Agreement. I understand that my child's access is designed for educational purposes. I recognize it is impossible for Pinellas County Schools to restrict access to all controversial or offensive materials and I will not hold them responsible for materials acquired on the network. Further, I accept full responsibility for the supervision, if any, when my child's use is not in a school setting. I have read and understand the information in this agreement and hereby give my permission for my child to use the Internet pursuant to the terms of this agreement.

Parent or Guardian's Name (please print) _____

Parent or Guardian's Signature_____ Date_____

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Review Date 5/26

Category C
CC # 5280

Appendix D: Student Orientation to the LMS

Pinellas Technical College provides students a structured orientation to Canvas. During campus orientation and at the start of each course, students are introduced to the Canvas login process

and to the self-paced Canvas Student Orientation course, which covers logging in, navigating Canvas, contacting instructors, viewing and submitting assignments, participating in discussions, and taking quizzes. The figures below illustrate these resources.

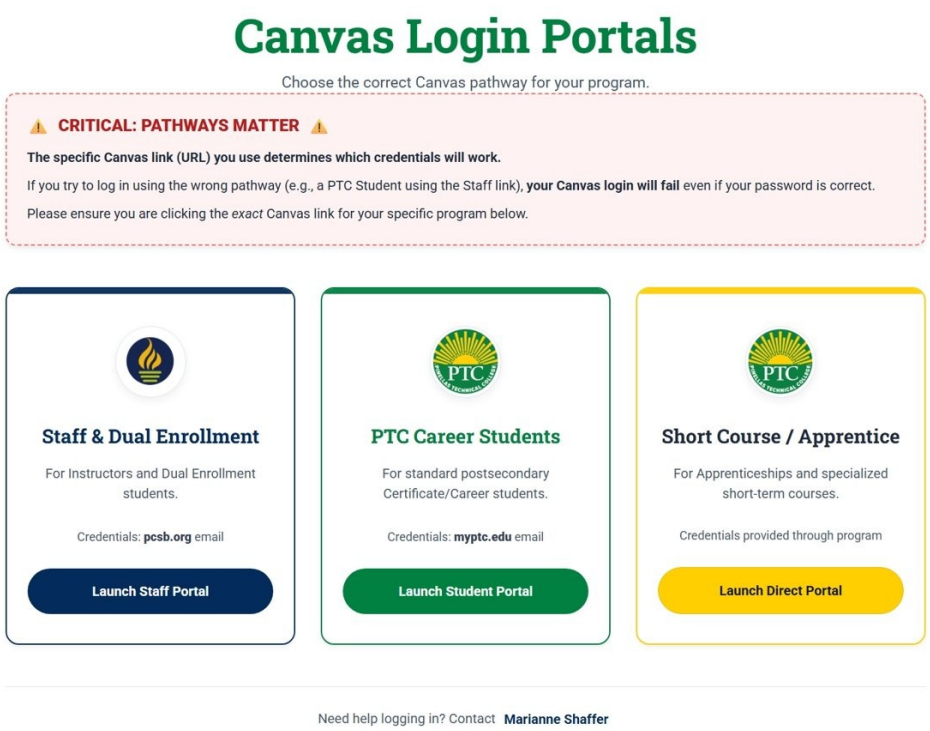

Figure 3. *The Pinellas Technical College Canvas Login Portals page. Students access Canvas through the login pathway designated for their program.*

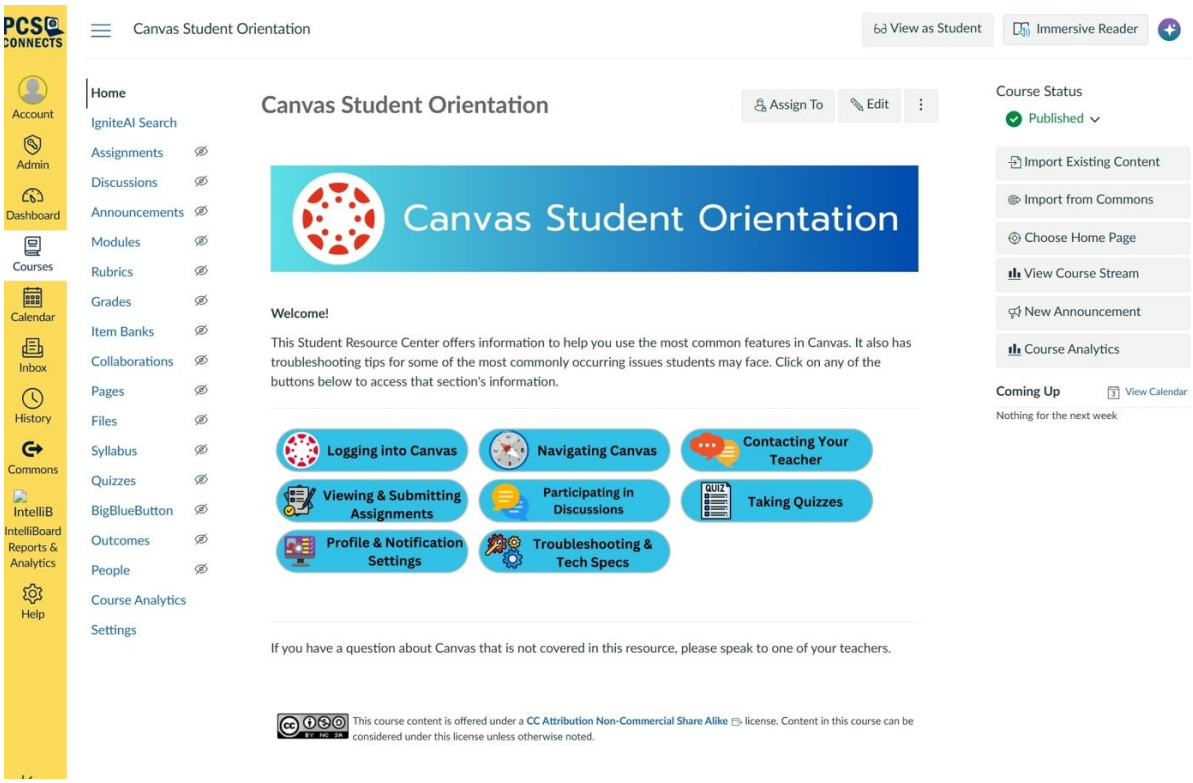

Figure 4. *The Canvas Student Orientation course, a self-paced resource that introduces students to logging in, navigating Canvas, contacting instructors, submitting assignments, participating in discussions, and taking quizzes.*



Figure 5. *The Canvas Help menu, where students can access the Student Orientation Course, the Canvas Guides, live chat, and the Canvas Support Hotline.*

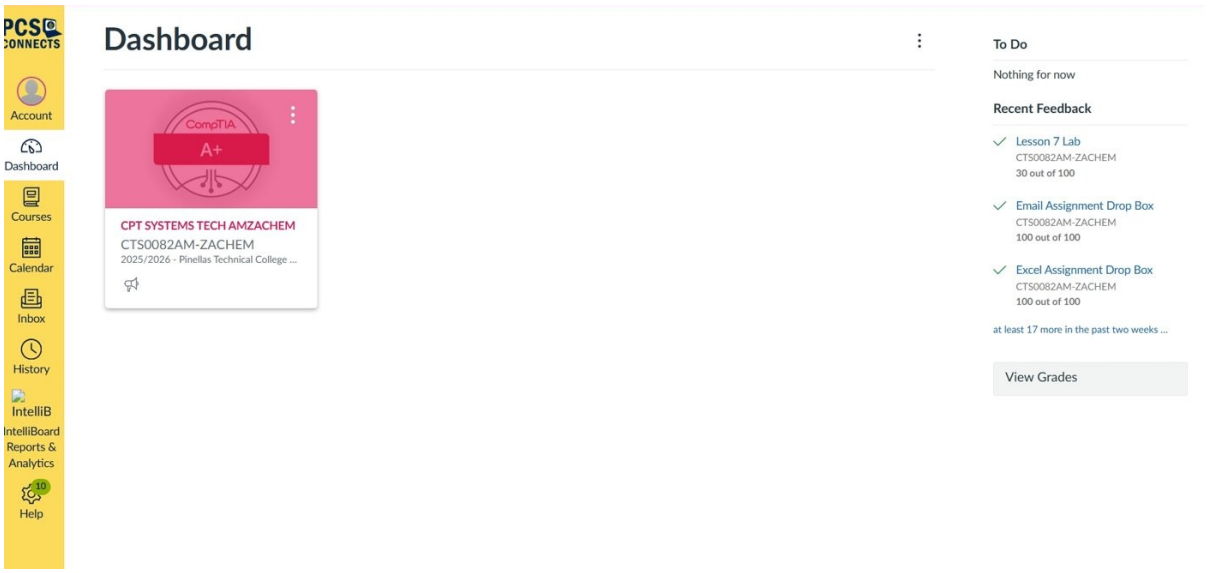

Figure 6. *The Canvas Dashboard, where students see their enrolled courses after signing in.*

Appendix E: Course Evaluation Checklist for Standards-Aligned Online Coursework

Pinellas Technical College evaluates standards-aligned online coursework using the Canvas Course Evaluation Checklist (v3.0), published by Instructure's Learning Services team, which combines curriculum and learning-design quality criteria. The checklist is reproduced below.

Instructure.

Course Evaluation Checklist v3.0

Our Learning Services team members work with Canvas institutions across the globe to provide course evaluation reviews and have found the most successful courses combine both curriculum and learning design elements. The modifications in this version focus on adding curriculum elements found to be most effective for successful learning. These elements support instructors, designers, and administrators to develop courses that are fully functional for every learner.

How To Use: A ★ (1-star) rating indicates an **Essential** and standard design component to online learning (including the top 10 **Foundational** items); a ★★ (2-star) rating is considered **Best Practice** and adds value to a course; and a ★★★ (3-star) rating is **Exemplary** and elevates learning.

Each institution has unique requirements for its courses. This checklist serves as a resource or starting point for teams to develop course design plans best suited to your institution. *The Learning Services team would love to hear how you're using this checklist. Please leave comments in the* Canvas Community: Course Evaluation Checklist v3.0 blog post.

Course Information & Expectations

Yes ✔	Criteria
☐ ★ Foundational	**1.1 Home Page** provides a visual representation of course; a brief course description or introduction; clear instructions for learners (e.g., where to begin), and quick and easy navigation to current content. 📍UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media
☐ ★ Foundational	**1.2** Course **Navigation** is clear and consistent (unused items are hidden). Canvas Guide: Navigation Links 📍Mobile App Design Consideration 📍UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
☐ ★ Foundational	**1.3** Course **Standards or Outcomes** are identified and measurable (e.g.: goals, learning objectives, and/or standards). If available, the official standards document is cited with a link to the official standards and the year those standards were adopted. 📍UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives
☐ ★	**1.4** A course **syllabus** is available and includes **class expectations** such as participation rules, etiquette expectations, code of conduct; **policies** for grading, late work, and make-up work; supplemental textbooks, reading lists, and technology **requirements**. Canvas Guides: Syllabus 📍UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives
☐ ★	**1.5** Instructor has provided **contact information** which may include a biography, availability information, communication preferences, response time, and picture. 📍8.3 Foster collaboration and community
☐ ★	**1.6** A **pacing guide** is available that outlines when and in what order standards are taught and assessed in the course. 📍UDL 6.2 Support planning and strategy development ➝ UDL 6.3 Facilitate managing information and resources
☐ ★	**1.7 Course card** provides a visual representation of the subject by adding an image in Course Settings. Canvas Guide: Add Image to Course Card 📍UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media

☐ ★	**1.8** Course contains information and links to **institutional resources** (e.g. library, institutional services, institution's website) in an intro or resource module. 📍 UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community
☐ ★★	**1.9 Standards or Outcomes, if used, are rephrased or broken down** into student-friendly language while not changing the intent. 📍 UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives
☐ ★★★	**1.10** Opportunities for **course feedback** are present and available to learners throughout the duration of the course. The instructor uses formal and informal feedback to improve subsequent course revisions. 📍 UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions 📍 Mobile App Design Consideration

Course Structure

Yes ✔	Criteria
☐ ★ Foundational	**2.1** All links, files, videos, and external **URLs** are active and working. Canvas Guide: Link Validation 📍 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies
☐ ★	**2.2** Content is "chunked" into manageable pieces by leveraging **modules and pages** (e.g. organized by units, chapters, topics, or weeks). When possible, Canvas **Pages** are used to present content, instead of linking to external URLs or files in the module's flow. Canvas Guide: Modules; Example Resource Comparison 📍 Mobile App Design Consideration 📍 UDL 3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation
☐ ★	**2.3** Each content item type is **formatted consistently** to make expectations predictable (e.g. all assignments are formatted to include the directions, followed by the guidelines, and a technical support area that links to help guides) 📍 UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
☐ ★	**2.4 Course files** needed for learning activities are available for download and meet accessibility guidelines. Canvas Guide: Uploading Documents
☐ ★★	**2.5** There is a "Welcome" or "Let's Get Acquainted" discussion designed to build a **sense of community** and establish rapport. 📍 UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community
☐ ★★	**2.6** Modules and items within modules have a thoughtful **naming convention** (e.g. name the module "Chapter 1: Pandas in the News," not just "Chapter 1"). 📍 UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure
☐ ★★	**2.7** Modules begin with an Introduction/Overview page to **activate knowledge** and end with a Conclusion/Summary page **to summarize** each module. 📍 UDL 3.1 Activate or supply background knowledge
☐ ★★	**2.8 Text headers** and **indention** are included within modules to help guide learner navigation. Canvas Guide: Add Text Header 📍 Mobile App Design Consideration 📍 UDL 2.2 Clarify syntax and structure
☐ ★★★	**2.9** Module **completion requirements** and/or **prerequisites** are utilized to provide course structure, pacing, and flow. Canvas Guide: Adding Prerequisites 📍 UDL 3.3 Guide information processing and visualization 📍 Mobile App Design Consideration
☐ ★★★	**2.10** Learners may choose from **options for differentiation** to demonstrate mastery in **MasteryPaths**. Canvas Guide: MasteryPaths 📍 UDL 7.1 Optimize individual choice and autonomy

Course Content

Yes ✔	Criteria
☐ ★ Foundational	**3.1 Copyright** law is followed. Course follows Copyright, Fair Use Guidelines, and Creative Commons licenses. Canvas Guide: Copyright Resources
☐ ★ Foundational	**3.2** Course **content builds logically** and increases in understanding and difficulty. 📍UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
☐ ★	**3.3** Includes **terminology clarification** if potentially harmful terms are included to assist students in developing increased cultural understanding and empathy. 📍UDL 9.2 Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies
☐ ★	**3.4** Content is at the **appropriate reading level**. 📍UDL 3.3 Guide information processing and visualization. ↠ UDL 3.4 Maximize transfer and generalization
☐ ★	**3.5 Vocabulary** for **content-specific terms** have clear definitions. 📍UDL 2.1 Clarify vocabulary and symbols
☐ ★	**3.6** Uses **inclusive language** respecting learner identity, learner experience, and background (heritage, family, socioeconomic). 📍UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
☐ ★	**3.7 Content is appropriate** for the learners and permitted by the program to use the content. Content adheres to state laws and regulations if applicable. 📍UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
☐ ★★	**3.8 Personalized learning** is evident through opportunities for choice. 📍UDL 7.1 Optimize individual choice and autonomy
☐ ★★	**3.9 Multiple methods** of content delivery are included (e.g.: text, video, and images). 📍UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media
☐ ★★★	**3.10 Permissions** are saved in course files if materials are requested for use in the course. Canvas Guide: Copyright Resources
☐ ★★★	**3.11** Includes **additional vocabulary** specific to assisting English Learners and readers below reading level in gaining a more complete understanding (e.g.: perjury is a term that would be used in a history course but not always defined. English Learners and readers below grade level would benefit if it were defined). 📍UDL 2.1 Clarify vocabulary and symbols ↠ UDL 3.4 Maximize transfer and generalization
☐ ★★★	**3.12 Readings have multiple supports** for readers who are at a higher or lower level. 📍UDL 3.4 Maximize transfer and generalization

Learner Interaction

Yes ✔	Criteria
☐ ★ Foundational	**4.1 Learning activity descriptions and instructions** are clear, detailed, and include instructor expectations and clear expectations for the creation of the learning product. Instructions are platform neutral (mobile and browser friendly) to minimize student confusion. 📍3.3 Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation ↠ UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives

☐ ★ Foundational	**4.2** Learners are provided detailed directions on **how** and **where** they will **submit work**. 📍UDL 9.2 Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies
☐ ★	**4.3** Tasks and submission requirements are **appropriate for teaching methods –** synchronous, asynchronous, or blended. 📍UDL 6.3 Facilitate managing information and resources
☐ ★	**4.4** Task matches the **submission type** — discussion, assignment, quiz, audio or visual recording, handwritten or typed, etc. 📍UDL 3.4 Maximize transfer and generalization
☐ ★	**4.5** Activities include **learner-learner interaction** to foster a sense of community (e.g. discussions, constructive collaboration, and peer reviews). 📍UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community
☐ ★	**4.6** Activities include **learner-instructor interaction** (e.g. instructor is actively engaged in authentic conversations and provides quality feedback). 📍UDL 8.3 Foster collaboration and community
☐ ★	**4.7** Activities include **learner-content interaction** (e.g. learners interact with engaging content and resources). 📍UDL 9.3 Develop self-assessment and reflection
☐ ★★	**4.8** Activities include **learner-self interaction** for opportunities for low stakes self-evaluation and self-assessment of mastery (e.g. pre-assessments, self-assessments, and reflections on learning) 📍UDL 9.3 Develop self-assessment and reflection
☐ ★★★	**4.9 Videos or animations** are included in the directions to **model and clarify** the expectations of an activity. 📍UDL 2.5 Illustrate through multiple media
☐ ★★★	**4.10 Sample assignments** are provided to assist learners in understanding expectations. 📍UDL 5.3 Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance

Assessments

Yes ✔	Criteria
☐ ★ Foundational	**5.1** Learning activities directly **tie into a standard** or the tasks **provide scaffolding** to reach the standard. 📍UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives
☐ ★	**5.2** Formative and summative forms of assessment are included in **consistent use throughout the course.** 📍UDL 8.2 Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge
☐ ★	**5.3** A variety of **assessment formats** are used (e.g., discussions, quizzes, and individual/group assignments) to increase learner engagement and promote active learning. 📍UDL 4.1 Vary the methods for response and navigation
☐ ★	**5.4** Low-stakes **(formative) assessments** occur frequently throughout the course to measure knowledge, skills, and attitude and occur before high-stakes assessments. 📍UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback
☐ ★	**5.5** High-stakes **(summative) assessments** are clearly aligned with stated goals, learning objectives, and/or standards. 📍UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback
☐ ★	**5.6** Assessments support instructors' use of **SpeedGrader** to score and provide prompt and high-quality feedback. Canvas Guide: SpeedGrader 📍UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback
☐ ★★	**5.7 Clear grading expectations** are identified based on the use of **rubrics** (may include objective or subjective measurements) or other means (questions have correct or incorrect answers, other measures of objective assessment). Canvas Guide: Rubrics 📍UDL 9.1 Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation ↠ UDL 6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress

☐ ★★	**5.8** Graded assignments, quizzes, and tests are **appropriately weighted** to reflect the impact of the assessment. 📍UDL 7.2 Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity
☐ ★★★	**5.9** Assessments are **linked to Outcomes** to demonstrate mastery by standard or learning outcomes. Canvas Guide: Outcomes 📍UDL 8.4 Increase mastery-oriented feedback

External Resources

Yes ✔	Criteria
☐ ★	**6.1** External links are **reliable sources** and always **available** (i.e.: not behind a subscription paywall or limited to a number of articles per month) 📍UDL 3.4 Maximize transfer and generalization
☐ ★	**6.2** External sites are **accessible** to all learners by meeting W3C standards. 📍UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies
☐ ★	**6.3 External tools** (e.g., Quizlet, Khan Academy, Padlet, Nearpod, CK-12) are relevant to course content and support active learning techniques. LTIs are used when available versus a link to the resource. 📍UDL 5.2 Use multiple tools for construction and composition
☐ ★	**6.4 Links** to external content, documents, or learning resources are relevant to the task and **appropriate for learner use**. Consideration is given to other material on the site, advertising, and institution firewalls. 📍UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions

Course Accessibility

Yes ✔	Criteria
☐ ★ Foundational	**7.1** Web tools and/or software are utilized to identify and correct **accessibility issues** within the course (e.g. Accessibility Checker.) Canvas Guide: Accessibility Checker 📍UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
☐ ★	**7.2 Accommodation Statement** is present and easily located (e.g., on Home Page or Syllabus). 📍UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies
☐ ★	**7.3 Color** enhances the aesthetic appeal and effectiveness of the course; sufficient contrast between text and background makes information easy to read; and color is not used in isolation to convey meaning. Canvas Guide: Accessibility Checker 📍UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
☐ ★	**7.4 Images** are used to support course content (e.g., banners, headings, and icons) and are accompanied by text descriptions (Alt text) or captions for more complex descriptions. Canvas Guide: General Accessibility Design Guidelines 📍UDL 1.3 Offer alternatives for visual information
☐ ★	**7.5 Styles** (e.g. Paragraph, Heading 2, etc.) are used to format text. Canvas Guide: General Accessibility Design Guidelines 📍UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies
☐ ★	**7.6 Hyperlink** text incorporates the hyperlink destination/purpose (avoid raw URLs, e.g., https://www.canvaslms.com) and includes words and phrases to provide context for screen-readers (e.g., use "Canvas Guide: Hyperlink" rather than "Canvas Guide"). WebAim: Introduction to Links and Hypertext 📍UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies
☐ ★	**7.7 Audio** materials (mp3, wav, etc.) are accompanied by a transcript and videos/screencasts have accessible captions. Canvas Guide: Create Caption Files 📍UDL 1.2 Offer alternatives for auditory information

☐ ★★	**7.8 Tables** are used appropriately and are accessible by having assigned scope (caption and/or heading row/table). WebAim: Creating Accessible Tables 📍 Mobile App Design Consideration 📍 UDL 4.2 Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies

Instructor Supports

Yes ✔	Criteria
☐ ★	**8.1 Answer keys** are provided for instructor-graded assignments. 📍 UDL 8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives
☐ ★★	**8.2 Specific information** is included unpublished in content for the instructor to help teach (e.g.: sensitive topics, additional external resources). 📍 UDL 3.3 Guide information processing and visualization
☐ ★★★	**8.3 Synchronous session supports** are included for courses with blended or synchronous components (e.g.: activities that lend themselves to synchronous learner actions, outline for a synchronous session). 📍 UDL 3.3 Guide information processing and visualization

Mobile App Considerations

If your learners use a mobile app, consider the following. Search “Instructure” to find free teacher and student apps available for iOS and Android.

Yes ✔	Criteria
☐ ★	**9.1 Preview your course in the Canvas mobile app** to experience it from a mobile user's perspective. Make any necessary revisions or adjustments to improve the mobile experience. Check your course in both light mode and dark mode.
☐ ★	**9.2** Consider the length of text passages in content and assessments as they may require excessive scrolling and they **may not display optimally on smaller screens.** 📍 UDL 3.3 Guide information processing and visualization
☐ ★★	**9.3** Students are alerted and given **alternatives** when an unsupported file type is used on the mobile app. Example Message 📍 UDL 7.3 Minimize threats and distractions
☐ ★★★	**9.4** Assessment design takes into account the **additional tools** students have when working on a mobile device - camera, video, audio, file upload, or Mobile Annotations. Canvas Guide: Submit a PDF assignment with annotations - iOS and Canvas Guide: Submit a PDF assignment with annotations - Android

Wrap-Up

The Learning Services department is always ready to help your organization create a cycle of success with Canvas through Design, Curriculum, and Professional Learning & Strategy Services! If you would like to learn more about our offerings, please contact your CSM or Learning Services at learning.services@instructure.com.

Resources

Baldwin, S., Ching, Y.-H., & Hsu, Y.-C. (2018). Online course design in higher education: A review of national and statewide evaluation instruments. *TechTrends*, *62*(3), 46-57. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-017-0215-z

Baldwin, S., & Ching, Y.-H. (2019). Online course design: A review of the Canvas course evaluation checklist. *International Review of Research in Open & Distributed Learning, 20*(3), 268-282. https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v20i3.4283
Best practices for building Universal Design principles into your Canvas courses. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.sfu.ca/canvas/instructors/accessibility/building_udl_into_canvas.html
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Moore, E. (2017, October 16). Implementing Universal Design for Learning on Canvas. Retrieved from https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Instructional-Designer/Implementing-Universal-Design-for-Learning-on-Canvas/ba-p/271887
Online Course Best Practices Checklist. (2012). Retrieved from https://academicaffairs.syracuse.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/bestpracticeschecklistsp12.pdf
CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from http://udlguidelines.cast.org
Going Mobile with Webcourses@UCF. Retrieved February 18, 2020, from https://vimeo.com/134745175
Canvas Live Presentation: Canvas Mobile Design, Ryan Seilhamer, UCF
Canvas Blog: Are Courses Really Mobile First? Ryan Seilhamer, UCF
Design a Mobile Ready Course with Universal Design, Kate Miller, CU Online
Canvas Teacher Mobile Features and Mobile Guides - Canvas Teacher
Canvas Student Mobile Features and Mobile Guides - Canvas Student

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Appendix F: Canvas (Instructure) Privacy and Terms of Use

The following Instructure resources govern privacy and acceptable use for Canvas:

Instructure Product Privacy Policy: https://www.instructure.com/policies/product-privacy-policy

Instructure Acceptable Use Policy: https://www.instructure.com/policies/acceptable-use

Instructure Trust Center (Security & Compliance): https://www.instructure.com/trust-center/security