

## PREPARING FOR TEACHING ONLINE WITH OR WITHOUT SYNCHRONOUS COMPONENTS

A Checklist of Best Practices and Recommendations

SYNCHRONOUS SESSION	
<b>Planning (before the session starts)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I check document permissions before I start the session if I am using shared documents</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When possible, I open my Zoom room early</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provide my students with an agenda and points of discussion to allow them to come prepared to the synchronous session</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I prepare all my links for copy pasting during the session</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>At the start of the synchronous session</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I introduce the learning goals of the session</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I start with a quick ice breaker or quick check-in</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have a housekeeping slide to inform the students about the best practices during synchronous sessions. Housekeeping slide example on <a href="#">page 7</a>.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>During the synchronous session</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My presentations is accessible (sight, hearing, cognition, translation, visuals, infographics, use of text features, graphics, accessible text,...)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My class starts and ends on time</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I verbally describe what I am doing during the lesson (for example: I am opening a document)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I build in pauses that allow students to ask questions</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I use active-learning exercises in balance with teacher-led presentations</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provide explicit modeling and instructions (time limit, product, expectations) before sending students to breakout rooms</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>In the breakout rooms</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I use a note catcher mechanism for the breakout rooms (a shared document, office or google doc, to allow students to take notes collaboratively)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: You can read more about <a href="#">note catcher and find a template</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I send announcements to students to let them know the remaining time</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I monitor students' work by opening the note catcher</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I assign group roles to students during breakout rooms.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: Learn more about <a href="#">roles in group work</a>	

<b>At the end of the synchronous session</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I leave time for questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I provide a space where students can ask their remaining questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I collate students' questions into a Frequently Asked Questions space on eClass	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I plan for session wrap up: I summarize the session and connect it to following activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I ask students to reflect and give them an exit ticket	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: Exit tickets help instructors collect feedback on students' understanding at the end of a class. You can ask them: "What was the muddiest point in today's class?" or "What questions do you still have about today's lecture?" and you can use online tools such as polling in zoom or post a question on <a href="#">Padlet</a> or <a href="#">Interactive presentation software - Mentimeter</a>	
<b>ECLASS COURSE MENU</b>	
• Is the menu accessible from anywhere in the course?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do I have all the course components visible to students no matter which page they are on?	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I decided whether my course will open all at once when the semester begins, so that a learner can access all modules or modules will open later in the semester	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Did I account for students who will access the course through their phone? How much scrolling will they be going through?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>SYLLABUS</b>	
• My syllabus references the expectations for appropriate course behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: You can include information on <a href="#">Zoom etiquette</a> and appropriate <a href="#">discussion board etiquette</a>	
• Syllabus establishes expectations for students' communication, behaviour, and participation (e.g., respectful, professional, and appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My syllabus clearly articulates the expectations related to the use of webcams and/or microphones	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: If you want students to turn on their webcams and/ or microphones during a synchronous class for pedagogical reasons or other valid reasons (such as, the course may require active class discussion), you are advised to include a clear statement in your syllabus	
<b>ASYNCHRONOUS COMMUNICATION</b>	
<b>I provide weekly wrap up</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Post something to synthesize what I did last week	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Point out common themes, correct any misconceptions	<input type="checkbox"/>
• State when students can expect detailed feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I say briefly what's coming next	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I give weekly introductions</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TIP: if your content is delivered asynchronously, providing a weekly introduction at the top of each week/module helps indicate to students that there is an instructor leading the course. The introduction doesn't need to be long: 1 or 2 sentences max. It can also be a short video or audio recording (1-2 minutes).	
<b>I post weekly announcements</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Reminders or previews of upcoming assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Comments on or a summary of a current discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>
• General comments on how the class did on a test or assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>
• A link to a relevant video or article	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Remediation on a misunderstood or muddy learning point with examples from student work	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Personal news I'd like to share with the class	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I provide my students with clear expectations</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Students can find clear expectations for the activities in the course syllabus or a course introduction page or module	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>I provide my students with information on all course attendance related requirements</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• How much time students can expect to spend on each learning activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Where they can look for announcements and FAQs	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Which activities are required, and which are optional	<input type="checkbox"/>
• When students can expect feedback on any graded activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
• How I will communicate with students	<input type="checkbox"/>
• How much time students should be working on the course each week	<input type="checkbox"/>
• How students are expected to communicate online with their colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>
• How I expect students to communicate with me	<input type="checkbox"/>
• What type of questions I will be answering	<input type="checkbox"/>
• What type of questions they can find answers to in the forum	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Expected response time for questions posted on a course site	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Expected response time for questions sent through e-mail	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Special virtual office hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>FOCUSING STUDENTS' ATTENTION</b>	
• I explain the purpose of each activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I give specific guidance on what students should be paying particular attention to while doing an activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I incorporate visible thinking activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: you can find routines and protocols to make learning <a href="#">visible</a>	
• I help my students monitor their activity	<input type="checkbox"/>

• I create a checklist through eClass	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I give my student a progress checklist that they could fill	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: It is more important than ever to direct students' attention before reading, watching, or listening to something. <a href="#">Course Progress Tracker</a> gives an example of a progress tracker.	
<b>REGULAR INSTRUCTOR PRESENCE</b>	
• My syllabus encourages students to contact me outside of class	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My syllabus encourages students to provide feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I post weekly announcements	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I create brief weekly videos introducing each week's content	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I create brief weekly videos providing information about assignments	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I schedule remote office hours	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I hold optional synchronous class session	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I participate in online discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I arrive to class a few minutes early and leave a few minutes late	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: You could put music on when you open the Zoom room early. Some instructors ask students for a playlist and they include that in Zoom before the start of their class.	
<b>COMMUNITY BUILDING</b>	
• I share humanizing personal stories, interjecting in discussion forums to extend conversations, or encouraging all students to drop in for a group virtual office hour	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: Learn more about how to humanize your course with this <a href="#">infographic</a> from MICHELLE PACANSKY-BROCK	
• I created a dedicated discussion topic for "Questions & Answers" that encourages students to post and answer each other's questions can help build this sense of support	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I provide an opportunity for students to know each other and practice interacting	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>INTERACTIONS</b>	
• I create opportunities for students to engage with the content	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: you can improve student-content engagement by allowing metacognition, motivation, enthusiasm, value of information, and transparency. <a href="#">Read more.</a>	
• I create opportunities that foster student to instructor interactions	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: Allow your students to know your personality while maintain professionalism. <a href="#">Read more.</a>	
• I create opportunities that foster student to student interactions	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: There are three categories where you can foster student interaction:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social and content-based interaction: discussions and co-learning</li> <li>• Assessment-based interaction: group assignments and projects</li> <li>• Presentations and peer assessments</li> </ul>	

You can read more about <a href="#">student – student interaction</a>	
<b>DELIVERING COURSE CONTENT</b>	
<b>My course content is organized and relevant</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I record or deliver several short micro-lectures and avoid long lectures</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: Check these webinars for more information about recording <a href="#">microlectures</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My content is structured into modules (each module has chunked content that is preceded by a course or assignment orientation, built-in formative assessments, clear communication channels, and a consistent but flexible schedule)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: Learn more about <a href="#">chunking information</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course materials include materials related to current local, national, and/or global events, when pertinent to course learning objectives</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: Learn more about <a href="#">Make Real World Connections to Course Material</a>	
<b>Workload</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I account for students taking other courses</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: <a href="#">Course Workload Estimator — Rice University Center for Teaching Excellence</a>	
<b>Diversity of Assignments</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I use a variety of large group, small group, and individual work experience</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have an accessibility section to show students where they need to go to get additional assistance and accommodation</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My assignments have a clear PURPOSE through explicit connections to learning outcomes</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provide my students with detailed steps of what TASKS they are supposed to do to complete the assignment, together with a marking rubric when possible</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provide explicit information about CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I offer alternative ways through which students can demonstrate their learning when possible</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All my word files and pdf files are fully accessible</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All videos that I am using have closed captions OR written transcripts available</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I considered the representations used in my examples, characters, images, and other learning materials I am using</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have diverse representations of gender, ethnicity (different skin, hair color), cultures (names, food, clothing), abilities (not everyone can see, hear or walk), and/or socio-economic conditions (not everyone has two parents, fancy cars or living situations) used in language, images and narratives</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I am responsive to students' different educational backgrounds and learning needs</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course materials or topics include diverse perspectives, authors, and/or applications</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: <a href="#">6 ways to create culturally responsive classrooms</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required resources are equitably available to all students</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have a diversity statement in my course</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: consider a <a href="#">diversity syllabus statement</a>	
<b>FEEDBACK</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I plan check-in points with the students to provide feedback</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The feedback I provide my students highlights both strengths and weaknesses, and offers concrete tips on how to improve performance</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>DISCUSSION FORUMS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I make discussion topics interesting and relevant to the learners' content</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I let learners know how the discussion will help them with comprehension of content</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I post 2 or 3 open-ended questions</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rubrics are clearly displayed in my course</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course includes multiple low-stakes assignments distributed across the course to prepare for larger assignments</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: read more about <a href="#">low-stakes assignments</a>	
<b>GROUP WORK</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow students to do group work in advance to practice</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific roles are assigned for each group member</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: Check the different types of <a href="#">roles in group work</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provide detailed information on how student activities will be assessed</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provide group contracts</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: Learn more about <a href="#">group contracts</a>	
<b>TECHNICAL TROUBLESHOOTING</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I provide information to students on how they can resolve technical issues (technical support, IT helpdesk contact)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TIP: <a href="#">Student guide to eClass - Learning Technology Services (yorku.ca)</a>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have prepared guidelines for students on alternative ways to complete assignments</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>RESOURCES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have made campus support resources available to students to reach out to about tutoring, assistance with writing, and librarians</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TIP: Academic supports: [SPARK | York University](#), [Office of Student Community Relations | York University](#), [Student Guide to Remote Learning | York University](#), [Student Accessibility Services | York University](#), [Academic Support Services | Academic Advising | York University](#)

- I provide resources to students in case they need mental health support ☐

TIP: [Mental Health and Wellness at York \(yorku.ca\)](#), [Student Counselling, Health & Well-being | York University](#)

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## Appendix A: Housekeeping Slide

YORK  
UNIVERSITY

**Note: This session is being recorded.** The recording and the transcript will be available on eClass as soon as possible after the session. Feel free to turn off your camera if you don't wish to be recorded.  
Please refrain from sharing the recording with people not registered in the class for privacy reasons.

It is better if you remain on **mute** when you are not speaking. Unmute yourself when you want to speak.

Click on **Participants** to **share reactions** with the class and the instructor or to raise your hand when you would like to speak

Use the **Chat** to ask questions or share comments

## Course Progress Tracker

Fill the course requirements below and add the dates and deadlines

Name of your course:

Module	Readings	Assignments	Group work	Discussion board posts
<b>Module 1</b>	Reading 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Assignment 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Contact group members <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion board 1 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Reading 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Assignment 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply to a colleague <input type="checkbox"/>
	Reading 3 <input type="checkbox"/>		Meeting 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion board post 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
			Submission <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply to a colleague <input type="checkbox"/>
			Group evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion board post 3 <input type="checkbox"/>
			Self evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply to a colleague <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Module 2</b>	Reading 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Assignment 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Contact group members <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion board 1 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Reading 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Assignment 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting 1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply to a colleague <input type="checkbox"/>
	Reading 3 <input type="checkbox"/>		Meeting 2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion board post 2 <input type="checkbox"/>
			Submission <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply to a colleague <input type="checkbox"/>
			Group evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion board post 3 <input type="checkbox"/>
			Self evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>	Reply to a colleague <input type="checkbox"/>



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