

Facilitating Your Course: A Checklist

Use the following checklist to guide your course facilitation throughout the term:

During the first week:

MANAGERIAL:

- Watch for non-participants during the first week of class, contact them via email, and encourage their participation.
- Provide prompt support to late registrants and help them gain access to group spaces, discussion forums, and course materials.

SOCIAL:

- Post a personal and welcoming introduction and photo to a “Getting Acquainted” forum on the discussion board(s).
- Ask students to post an introduction and respond to the introductions of their peers.
- Model the response, behavior, and tone you seek on the discussion board. Use a conversational tone that is inviting, personal, friendly, and engaging.
- Encourage students to take advantage of online office hours and/or to schedule individual appointments with faculty.
- Add a social forum such as a “Student Lounge” so that students have a space in which to exchange ideas that are casual and off-topic.
- Maintain a positive rapport by communicating with students daily via discussion forums, email messages, or course announcements.

PEDAGOGICAL:

- Monitor discussion forums daily. Reinforce student discussion board contributions. Provide positive personal feedback to those who make the discussion area a more engaging place through participation.
- Determine the areas in which students need to improve and provide feedback.
- Challenge your students by asking questions that apply to the course materials and communicate high expectations.
- Discuss the [SPS Academic Integrity and Community Standards](#) policy with students and help them understand what constitutes dishonesty by showing examples and non-examples.

Throughout the semester:

MANAGERIAL:

- Conduct the course according to the schedule with deviations and delays in grading communicated to students well in advance.

- Announce instructor absences to students and provide guidance on what students should do during an absence.
- Make reasonable accommodations for students when technical or personal issues arise that are beyond the student's control. For program specific guidance, please reach out to your program's Academic Director.
- If you receive a notice from [Disability Services](#) that a student in your course needs academic accommodations, work with Phong Luu, SPS's Disability Services Liaison (p12693@columbia.edu), to ensure equal content accessibility.
- Proactively remind students of upcoming deadlines.
- Monitor online attendance and reach out to missing or absent students. If a student is unresponsive, notify Student Affairs by completing the [Student of Concern form](#).
- Direct students to the Helpdesk (cusps.zendesk.com) when technical issues arise.
- Respond to student emails promptly. Recommended: within 24 hours.

SOCIAL:

- Guide collaborative projects (small, large, and dyads) to achieve strong social interaction as needed.
- Enforce guidelines for learner behavior related to [SPS Academic Integrity and Community Standards](#).
- Use the Announcements tool to keep the class on task and personal.
- Maintain a daily presence in asynchronous discussion forums.
- Provide students with individual messages (email, discussion posts, announcements) of encouragement.

PEDAGOGICAL:

- Participate in discussions when appropriate. Know when to be the "guide on the side", and when to step in and redirect, supplement, or summarize student ideas.
- Detect and address misconceptions in discussion postings, assignments, and test results.
- Provide timely and actionable feedback using the Grades tool. Indicate areas in which students have succeeded as well as areas that require further development and improvement.