**UID Quick-Start Checklist**

**1. Things you can do immediately**

**design**

* provide ample time for assignments determine how much time would be required by a typical student and add a "buffer" to address various contingencies
* differentiate between *need to know* (required) and *nice to know* (optional) information
* allow students to work in pairs in labs where physical effort may disadvantage someone with a disability
* collect mid-semester feedback to discover any problems or areas of confusion
* provide ample time for online work in case of system malfunction

**delivery**

* always face the class and make eye contact when speaking
* use a microphone when necessary
* structure class time in a consistent manner
* post course materials such as syllabi or handouts in Desire2Learn (D2L) or readings in the Library Online Reserve
* allow students to submit assignments electronically
* if you use electronic presentation tools (e.g., PowerPoint) make sure that presentation is legible (minimum 20 pt. font, with a high-contrast colour scheme)
* provide feedback on work before the next assignment or assessment

**materials**

* consider providing lecture outlines (not complete notes) and advanced organizers for lectures that students can annotate during class
* structure and format material for easy readability
* provide students with materials in multiple formats: at the very least, provide digital equivalents of  hardcopy handouts
* ensure that all digital materials you provide to students are in an accessible format (e.g., don't provide PowerPoint files if not everyone has the software)
* ensure all materials, case studies, etc., are free of negative stereotypes

**environments**

* ensure your course website is accessible and usable: use an accessibility checker to identify any potential problems
* use "ALT" (alternate text) tags for any images on web pages so that they may be identified by text-browsers or by screen-reading programs used by students with disabilities
* do a "room check" to make sure there are no problems with hearing, sightlines, or the arrangement of the furniture (e.g., enough left-handed seats). Ask students experiencing problems hearing, seeing, writing, etc., to come forward
* when possible, request an appropriate room and/or arrange the room to facilitate the type of teaching you are doing
* at the beginning of a course and/or in your syllabus, encourage anyone with a disability to come forward and speak with you about it
* ensure people feel free to engage in discussion in your course without fear of ridicule or harassment; encourage the open

**2. Things that you can do with some reflection and development**

**design**

* consider the wide range of abilities, backgrounds, and experiences of your students when designing your activities and assignments
* use online quizzes and self-tests to provide feedback for students
* for writing assignments, allow for drafts and revisions; consider using peer review
* design assignments that don't unnecessarily penalize students for some experimentation and risk taking
* review activities and assignments for the course and assess whether any would present an insurmountable barrier for persons with cognitive or physical disabilities; provide equivalent alternatives if possible
* design assignments to minimize non-essential tasks (e.g., learning irrelevant software just to access information) or non-essential physical travel
* provide choice in assignments if possible (including topic, format, and due dates)
* consider using online conferencing for course support, discussion of content, and group work to foster peer-to-peer and collaborative learning
* provide resources or materials equivalent to any materials that cannot be made accessible
* provide grading schemes and sample assignments to students
* apply grading standards consistently among students and across assignments
* allow the use a word processor whenever possible for submissions

**delivery**

* consider using a variety of strategies during lecture periods including problem-solving, discussion, hands-on exercises, presentations, etc.
* use techniques that increase interactivity in lectures such as think-pair-share
* ensure examples and content used in class are relevant to people from diverse backgrounds and experiences
* present information in multiple, complementary formats such as text, graphics, audio, and video
* review your written materials including overhead and PowerPoint slides for clarity, consistent formatting, and cognitive cues; ensure they are free from unnecessary jargon
* if unaccustomed to teaching large numbers of students in large auditoriums, seek advice or take a workshop on teaching larger classes
* integrate your own research when it relates to the course of study; share successes and challenges

**materials**

* provide tutorials and resources that students reinforce learning outside of class
* develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions and distribute to students
* design documents that can be repurposed for multiple uses (e.g., in class, online)
* use a variety of media such as text, graphics, audio, and video
* where appropriate, offer a choice of file formats for content (e.g., Word, PDF, HTML) on your website and include labels which suggest when each might be useful
* provide captioning or transcripts with any video used for class
* develop a clear course outline that provides policies, procedures, and expectations
* review CD or web-based tutorials for ease of navigation and user feedback; conduct usability testing with some students.

**environments**

* when possible, request an appropriate room and/or arrange the room to facilitate the type of teaching you are doing
* in small classes, use circular seating arrangements during discussion to allow students to see one another's faces

**3. Things that you can do when you design or update your course**

**design**

* ensure that learning objectives are SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely)
* involve experts in course and curriculum design
* consider a variety of teaching and learning techniques that include active and passive learning
* ensure that course content, assessment, and learning objectives are consistent and all activities and assessment relate to a learning objective(s)
* consider using a variety of assessment approaches and techniques (e.g., portfolio-based assessment)
* design a web-based course site with online resources
* ensure that the number of student hours of work is consistent with guidelines
* review your course in detail when it has grown in numbers and/or moved from a small room to large lecture hall
* consider gender, culture, disabilities, learning preferences, language, experiences, prior learning
* consult someone with instructional design experience/expertise
* consider ways to increase active learning strategies and student responsibility for learning

**delivery**

* consider if a "help room" may benefit your students in addition to regular office hours
* divide each class into segments which use different teaching approaches

**materials**

* develop a process by which you can generate material and easily convert it to multiple forms
* have captioned any video you use in your course

**environments**

* think about the kind of learning environment that would be optimal for your course
* consider how blending online and face-to-face learning can allow you to enhance the range of learning materials and activities used in the course
* design a course website that is accessible and minimizes the amount of clicking, hunting, or scrolling for information

University of Guelph Teaching Support Services Open Learning and Educational Support

http://www.uoguelph.ca/tss/uid/uidchecklist.cfm