

UBC Forestry

PFFAC Tip Sheet^{PLUS}:

Communications Protocol in Online Learning Environments

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1. Introduction: why communications are critical

Are you teaching online soon and fearful of receiving dozens of emails *per hour* from your students, cluttering your inbox to the point of no return? If so, this guideline is for you! Here, we provide tips on how to turn a nightmarish potpourri of inefficient digital bombardment into a paradisiac platform for harmonious dialogue that ultimately **enhances** student learning. Yes, an optimized communications system for the participants of your course will become a powerful asset rather than an administrative burden. Moreover, communicating *online* is the only way of communicating in an *online* educational environment, so we might as well put time and effort into creating something good from the very beginning, which you can then easily export to your other courses. This guide is not a one-size-fits-all

prescriptive document, but rather an example of best practices for communications for a particular course already taking place online. Every course will need specific adaptations and creative solutions for optimum delivery in remote digital mode.

Here are some great reasons for implementing a communications protocol:

- **To enhance student engagement & learning:** a student asks a wonderful technical question thinking outside the box of your already wonderful course content. Your answer is an inspirational piece of art. Other students witness it all in a glowing discussion board. Isn't it great?
- **To minimize the number of written communications and administrative burden:** would you rather **a)** reply to one student's email, only for another one to ask the same thing again, or **b)** see the student post a question in a discussion board that is answered immediately and satisfactorily by another student and endorsed by you with one mouse click?
- **To increase the relevance and quality of written communications:** *"How much is the midterm worth?"* or *"Can I have one more day to submit the assignment"* can turn into *"You mention in slide 15 of Lecture 3 that deforestation rates have decreased globally, yet remain alarmingly high. Can you provide examples of success stories about reducing or eliminating deforestation?"*
- **To reduce the time taken to provide high-quality feedback to students:** in online learning environments, our response speed to students is critical. And that cannot happen if your time is consumed by an inefficient and redundant communications system.

2. Communication flow

The section shows some elements of communication that are important for online course delivery.

2.1 Before the course starts

1. **Welcome message.** No later than two weeks prior to a course starting, it is important to send a welcome message to your students (ideally via the FSC system if the Canvas site is not populated yet). This message should include **a)** the fundamentals of how the course will be organized, **b)** the exact date, time and digital location of the first meeting, and **c)** a link to a *baseline survey on online learning* (see next point below). **Appendix 1** is an example of such a welcome message.
2. **Baseline survey on online learning.** It is important to understand your students' situation before the course starts, especially with respect to their time zones and technological resources. A simple survey such as the one shown in **Appendix 2** can help you calibrate your schedules for live sessions and know if students have major limitations. It is recommended that this survey is hosted by **Canvas** to make sure that registered students complete it only once, that students registering late can later participate, and those dropping the course removed from the statistics (the first time I used Qualtrics, I got 85 responses, while only having 61 registered students). **Canvas' Classic Quizzes**

interface allows the use of **Ungraded Surveys** with an anonymous submission modality if time zones and technological resources are considered personal information.

2.2 At the very beginning

During the first week or two of your course, these are highly recommended and very enriching informative pieces that will significantly reduce the number of questions students may have about the course:

3. **Syllabus.** Encourage students to read the syllabus carefully, and create a syllabus that has as much information as needed about the course. A sample syllabus for a course fully delivered online during the summer of 2020 can be found in the PFFAC Tip Sheet on *Syllabus Best Practices*.
4. **Getting started guideline.** Different courses have different technological needs. Make sure to communicate to students what are the minimum resources including suggestions on how to get them. An example of a **Getting started** section with four steps, implemented as a Module in Canvas, is shown in **Appendix 3**.
5. **Communication protocol announcement.** It is critical to train students very early on how communications work. The reader is referred to the self-explanatory example of **Appendix 4**, which can be posted a standalone announcement in Canvas but should echo a corresponding section of the syllabus (yes, the more students see this, the better).

2.3 Throughout the course

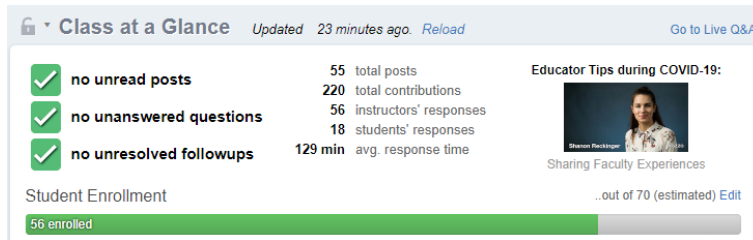
In an online environment, an appropriate system of ongoing communications is critical. Below are three key elements that will make students, Tas, and instructors have a much easier time interacting:

6. **Discussion boards.** The single most important platform to prevent hundreds of emails in your inbox is a discussion board. Within Canvas, there are two options available: the Canvas **Discussions** section and **Piazza**, both briefly described below:

Piazza

Piazza is a good general communications option that can be easily activated in Canvas. **Advantages of Piazza** include:

- a. All questions are centralized in a good-looking user-friendly platform so everybody can see them (eliminating redundancy).
- b. Students can post anonymous questions —ideal for the shy and insecure.
- c. Other students can help you answer the questions, and you can endorse those answers.
- d. You can keep track of the number of posts, as well as unread or unanswered questions:



- e. Students, TAs and instructors can tag posts with user-defined categories (called “folders”) that are extremely easy to create (see reference to Piazza in **Appendix 4**).
- f. Students can consolidate a single answer that all can contribute to.

Disadvantages of Piazza include:

- a. It may still require a lot of time to resolve all student questions, but overall it can be an enjoyable experience to do so.
- b. Piazza may be more difficult to handle in large classes (100+ students).
- c. Not so great for tracking graded participation since many of the comments will be anonymous.
- d. While easy to activate in Canvas, it is still a third-party application.

To activate Piazza, go to your **Canvas** site > **Settings** > **Navigation**, and then drag **Piazza** from the bottom list to the upper one (visible to students); don’t forget to click **Save**. Finally, click on the **Piazza** link now appearing on the left menu and follow the steps for activation.

Canvas Discussions tab

The **Discussions** section in Canvas constitutes another type of discussion board alternative.

Advantages of Canvas Discussions include:

- a. It is better suited for structured and graded discussions about course content.
- b. It has a simple interface (Canvas in-house, not third party).
- c. Better for large classes.
- d. It allows peer-reviews.

Disadvantages of Canvas Discussions include:

- a. Not as equipped and functional for daily quick communications as Piazza.
- b. It does not allow anonymous comments.

7. **Grading and feedback platform.** Another major source of <not so much fun> communications is grading. The digital world offers a wonderful way to centralize all grading matters into a single system. See section 3.3 below for establishing an optimum grading-feedback communications system.

8. **Announcements.** Canvas announcements are extremely powerful. A good announcement can prevent a flood of emails from confused students. Announcements should be sent in a timely fashion when information becomes critical, such as providing instructions on how to prepare for a test. There is a balance to be reached between the number of announcements, their content, and their length; however, it is generally preferable to send fewer announcements that are more

comprehensive than a barrage of random minor stuff. Quality over quantity! If you manage to send a concise (yet thorough), informative (yet friendly), and colorful (yet serious) announcement for students to know what is happening at the beginning of every week, you are a rock star. High-quality announcements must provide crystal-clear instructions, be sent at the right moment, and have direct links if you need to redirect students to a section of the course website or external sites. Great announcements will have their own Canvas link so you can always reference back to them directly when needed.

2.4 Communication types, sources, and handling

Below are shown, in **Table 1**, the types of communications that instructors and TAs typically get in while delivering an online course.

Table 1. Communication types and their implications.

Type	Sub-type	Sub-sub-type	Example	Source of information	Should students be contacting you?	How to prevent excessive inquiries
Personal	---	---	"My girlfriend broke up with me. It was nasty. May I get an extension please?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Email •Office hour 	YES	Mmm... Not sure about this one. Be nice and sympathetic.
Course-related	Logistical	Grading	"Why did I lose marks in this question?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Comments directly in Canvas. •Grading rubric. 	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •TA writes detailed feedback in Canvas •Clear grading rubrics.
		Dates & schedules	"When is Lab 4 due?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Canvas calendar •Canvas assignment deadline 	NO	Post EVERYTHING in Canvas (course activities and assignment deadlines)
		Other	"This link not working"; "Do we need to bring repellent for tomorrow's field work?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Announcements •Discussion board 	NO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Setup course website perfectly. •Send clear announcements.
	Content-related	Within scope	"What is the difference between deforestation and forest loss"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discussion board •Live sessions 	YES	•Create excellent self-explanatory, comprehensive course materials.
		Beyond scope	<i>Good:</i> "Can you provide examples of success stories of deforestation mitigation?" <i>Ridiculous:</i> "Can you provide the names of the people who deforested England in the 1500s?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discussion board •Live sessions 	YES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Stimulate students to inquire more, not less! •Be explicit about what is out of the scope of the course.

The objective of **Table 1** is to propose that:

- Personal communications should be received and resolved, but are generally infrequent.
- **You should NOT** get any additional communications related to **logistical** matters because you have these unnecessary-communication-killing weapons:
 - An extraordinarily complete syllabus that you have strongly and frequently encouraged your students to read.

- A well-designed and user-friendly Canvas course website (a Canvas course template can be found in **Appendix 6**).
- Astonishingly clear grading rubrics for all assignments.
- A properly setup discussion board (e.g. Piazza) where students answer to themselves and redundant questions are inexistent.
- A fully functional and complete Canvas calendar. Tell your students: *“If it is not in the Canvas calendar, it does not exist”*. Be careful, though, do not forget to put it in the calendar!!! The Calendar we are talking about has all the course events, such as live lectures, and Canvas automatically puts assignment deadlines too. It looks like this:

Today		← → August 2020		Week		Month		Agenda		+			
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	31	1							
Lab 5 - Answer submission	9a MIDTERM REVIEW SESSION	9a LAB PRE-MIDTERM REVIEW SESSION	9a MIDTERM OPTION 1	4p LAB 6 - LIVE SESSION	9a Andres' office hour	Lab 6 - Answer submission							
Lab 5 - PDF file upload	4p Andres' office hour	4p Andres' office hour	9:30a Cohort Meeting	Lecture 6 - Post-lecture quiz	10a Pramila's office hour	Lab 6 - PDF file upload							
	5p Pramila's office hour	5p Pramila's office hour	4p MIDTERM OPTION 2	Lecture 6 - Pre-lecture quiz									
		MIDTERM Simulation - Answer submission		Lecture 6 - Within lecture quiz									
		MIDTERM Simulation - PDF upload											
2	3	4	5	6	7	8							
	9a LECTURE LIVE SESSION	9a LAB 7 - LIVE SESSION	4p LECTURE LIVE SESSION	4p LAB 8 - LIVE SESSION	9a Andres' office hour	Lab 8 - Answer submission							
	4p Andres' office hour	4p Andres' office hour		Lab 7 - Answer submission	10a Pramila's office hour	Lab 8 - PDF file upload							
	5p Pramila's office hour	5p Pramila's office hour											
9	10	11	12	13	14	15							
	9a LECTURE LIVE SESSION	9a LAB 9 - LIVE SESSION	9:30a Cohort Meeting	4p LAB 10 - LIVE SESSION	9a Andres' office hours	Lab 10 - Answer submission							
	4p Andres' office hour	4p Andres' office hour	4p LECTURE LIVE SESSION	Lab 9 - Answer submission	10a Pramila's office hour	Lab 10 - PDF file upload							
	5p Pramila's office hour	5p Pramila's office hour		Lab 9 - PDF file upload	12p August 14th submission -								

- **Content-related communications ARE THE ONES** we should be spending our time on, in order to enhance student learning (except those that are beyond the scope of the course and are irrelevant).
- **If the proper communication protocols and systems are in place**, the quantity of unnecessary communications will be reduced, and the quality of the content-related ones will be enhanced.

3. Synthesis of tips

3.1 About a pleasant online learning environment

- Learning purely online without the therapeutic smile of Instructors and TAs can be very intimidating. Why not use a **friendly and candid language** in all communications and course materials (see how **Appendix 1** starts).
- Respond to student inquiries quickly and efficiently.
- Reduce the number of communications by sending weekly announcements instead of multiple smaller messages.
- Setup a user friendly course website that is easy to navigate, where students can readily find the information needed, and that allows them to track their progress.

3.2 About course logistics and organization

- Provide cross-referencing links as much as possible so students can access information directly, but carefully check that all links are functional.
- Discourage the use of email: do not tell students not to email you, but explicitly invite them to use the discussion boards to post any question that is not personal.
- Use color-coding and pleasing aesthetics.
- Use the Canvas calendar for all scheduled activities.
- Organize course website carefully so it is easy to navigate and avoids unnecessary pages or tabs.
- Delegate as many communications as possible to the TAs (e.g. monitor discussion board and answer any question regarding labs).
- Redirect students to the appropriate communication protocol (**Appendix 4**) anytime they misuse the communications system.

3.3 About grading and feedback

Grading is an aspect of teaching and learning that can generate one of the highest volumes of unnecessary communications if some measures are not taken. To reduce questions about grading, consider:

- **Developing a grading feedback protocol.** Refer to **Appendix 5** for an example of an efficient system for students to communicate directly with the marker in case of discrepancies.
- **Grading rubrics.** Develop extremely clear grading rubrics that are available to students.
- **Detailed personalized feedback.** Provide detailed written feedback on assignments as much as possible. This can be done by the markers directly on questions in Canvas quizzes. In face-to-face modes, this is less critical as we typically use lab sections to clarify any discrepancy with grading. In online environments, the effort put into providing detailed feedback from the very beginning pays off!
- **Generic written feedback.** Markers should keep a written record of common issues found in assignments or tests. Once all assignments are graded, a general feedback compilation can be posted for all to see.
- **Be careful with automatic grading and posting.** Sometimes quizzes that are graded automatically immediately show grades to students, but some questions may require manual grading. As a result, some students may panic after immediate submission. Make sure you know how to adjust the settings in Canvas for students to be or not be able to see grades immediately when applicable.
- **Provide multiple attempts.** For low stakes assignments or quizzes, which are graded automatically by Canvas for certain types of questions, allow students to submit multiple attempts with the highest grade possible taken from any of the attempts. Also, if possible, they should see the correct answers after submitting the last attempt. Doing this for online courses dramatically reduces the need for students to communicate with the TAs or instructor, and at the same time encourages them to try to get the right answer on their own.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Sample welcome message

Appendix 2. Sample baseline online survey

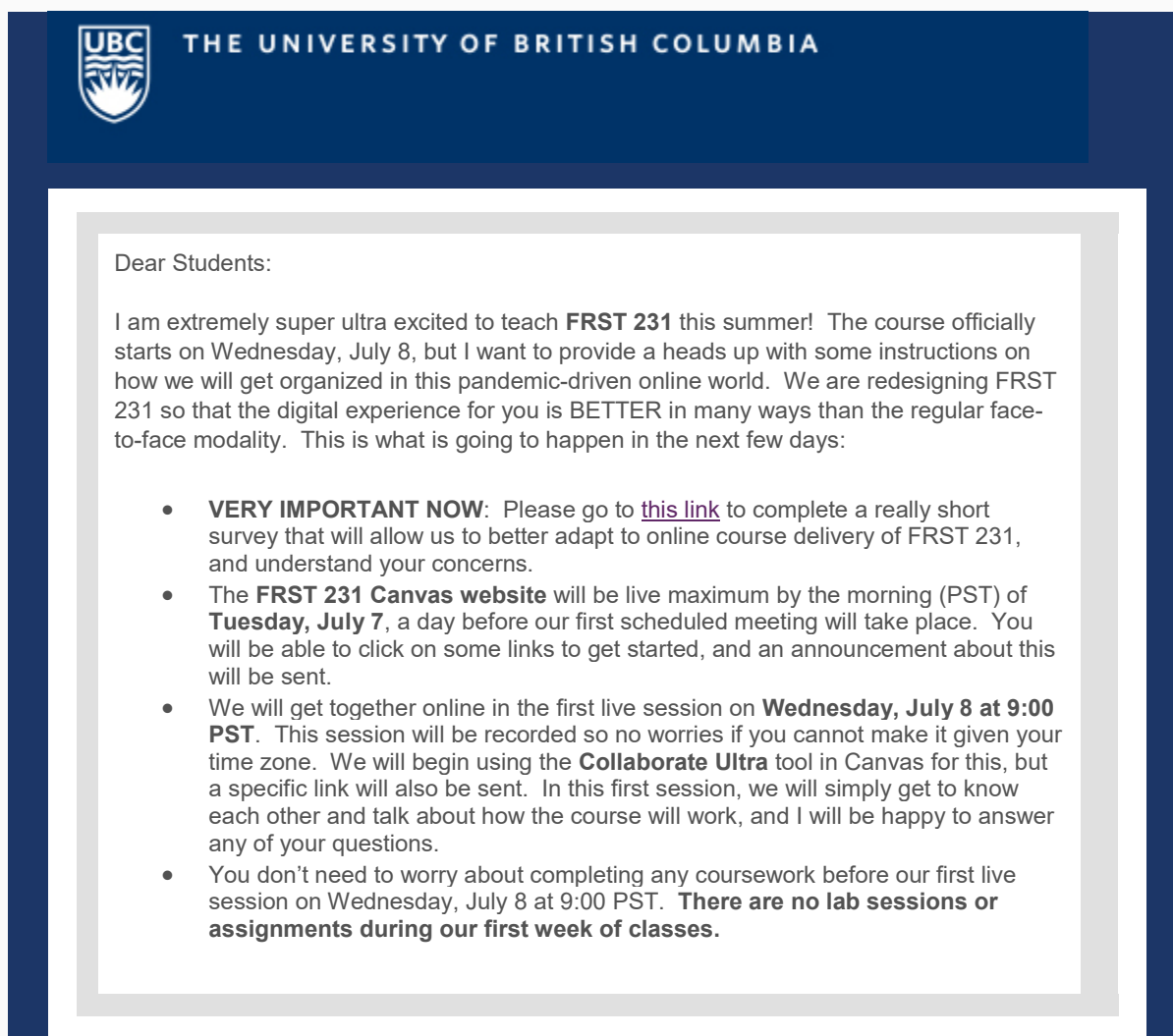
Appendix 3. Sample *Getting started* guideline

Appendix 4. Sample communications protocol announcement

Appendix 5. Sample grading protocol announcement

Appendix 6. Canvas course template

Appendix 1. Sample welcome message



The image shows a sample welcome message from the University of British Columbia (UBC) for the course FRST 231. The message is framed by a dark blue border with the UBC logo and name at the top. The text is as follows:

Dear Students:

I am extremely super ultra excited to teach **FRST 231** this summer! The course officially starts on Wednesday, July 8, but I want to provide a heads up with some instructions on how we will get organized in this pandemic-driven online world. We are redesigning FRST 231 so that the digital experience for you is **BETTER** in many ways than the regular face-to-face modality. This is what is going to happen in the next few days:

- **VERY IMPORTANT NOW:** Please go to [this link](#) to complete a really short survey that will allow us to better adapt to online course delivery of FRST 231, and understand your concerns.
- The **FRST 231 Canvas website** will be live maximum by the morning (PST) of **Tuesday, July 7**, a day before our first scheduled meeting will take place. You will be able to click on some links to get started, and an announcement about this will be sent.
- We will get together online in the first live session on **Wednesday, July 8 at 9:00 PST**. This session will be recorded so no worries if you cannot make it given your time zone. We will begin using the **Collaborate Ultra** tool in Canvas for this, but a specific link will also be sent. In this first session, we will simply get to know each other and talk about how the course will work, and I will be happy to answer any of your questions.
- You don't need to worry about completing any coursework before our first live session on Wednesday, July 8 at 9:00 PST. **There are no lab sessions or assignments during our first week of classes.**

While the syllabus you will be sent shortly is extremely detailed, these are the key aspects of how the course will work:

- All **lecture topics** will be pre-recorded in 10-15 minute video blocks. In those lectures I cover the theory and solve abundant sample exercises for each topic by hand.
- We will select two time slots per week for **live sessions** where we can discuss any lecture topic, answer your questions, get deeper into some concepts, perhaps solve a couple of extra exercises, etc. We will book one of these sessions during the allocated lecture slots in the official schedule (Wednesdays), plus one additional session on a completely different time to accommodate students in different time zones (to be determined).
- You will work on **lab exercises** on your own, with deadlines to submit directly online via Canvas. There are two submissions for each lab: 1) enter the numerical results for exercises directly in Canvas for automatic grading and 2) submit a digital copy of your handwritten procedures for the TAs to provide partial marks where needed.
- Similar to the lecture topics, the TA will conduct **live sessions** to answer any questions you may have about the lab exercises before you submit them. Schedules will be announced after we analyze your time zones provided in the survey.
- A textbook is optional for you to order from the bookstore (eBook of course), and this will give you access to optional tutorials that you can complete for bonus points (I will tell you more about this in the syllabus and on Wednesday the 8th).
- There will be **one midterm** and **one final exam**, both in the **modality of open book**, that you will complete by submitting answers directly in Canvas, and a PDF of your handwritten procedures.
- We will have an automatic booking system during key time slots during the week so that both myself and the Teaching Assistant can help you with one-on-one meetings.

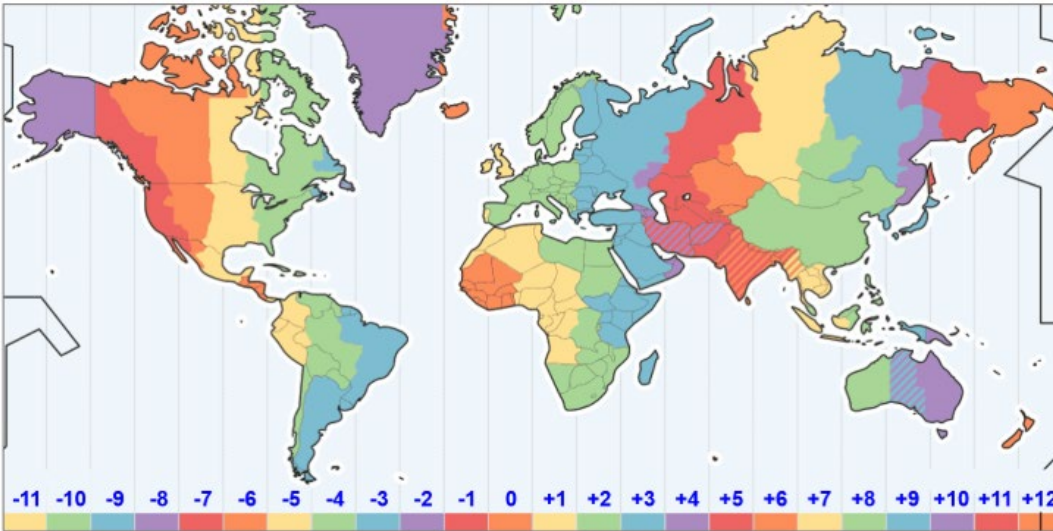
I hope this email answers many of the questions you may have been wondering about. Have a great week!

Best,

The Instructor

Appendix 2. Sample baseline online learning survey

Which time zone from the image below corresponds to the predominant location where you will be taking this course remotely?



- 11
- 10
- 9
- 8 (Vancouver)
- 7
- 6
- 5
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1
- 0 (UTC)
- +1
- +2
- +3
- +4
- +5
- +6
- +7
- +8 (China)
- +9
- +10
- +11
- +12

Which hardware tools do you currently have for online learning? Choose all that apply.

- Own laptop computer
- Shared laptop computer
- Own desktop computer
- Shared desktop computer
- Mobile smartphone
- Shared tablet
- Own tablet
- Webcam (in any of the devices listed)
- Microphone (in any of the devices listed)
- Printer
- Scanner (proper)
- Scanning app for mobile devices

Choose the option that best describes your predominant internet connection (the one you will mostly use for the course).

- High-speed WiFi of my own
- Low-speed WiFi of my own
- High-speed cabled of my own
- Low-speed cabled of my own
- High-speed (WiFi or cabled) only accessible to me sporadically (e.g. internet cafe)
- Low-speed (WiFi or cabled) only accessible to me sporadically (e.g. internet cafe)

Using the device, internet connection and browser that you will predominantly utilize for the course, go to <https://fast.com/> and indicate the speed that your connection reports.

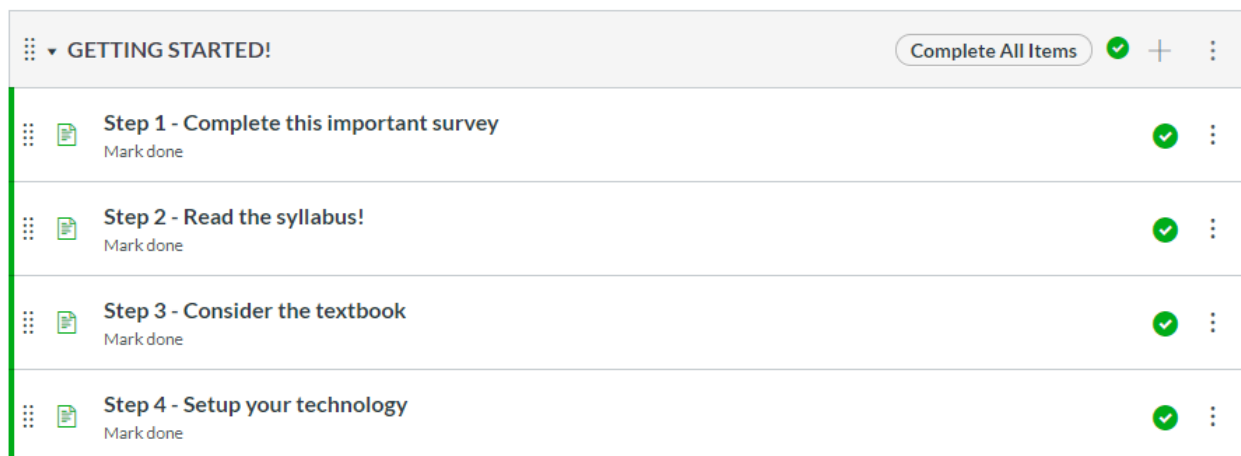
- Below 5 Mbps
- Between 5 and 20 Mbps
- Between 20 and 100 Mbps
- More than 100 Mbps

Describe what you believe represents your internet situation overall (considering speed, accessibility, intermittence, etc.).

- Absolutely terrible
- Poor
- Decent
- Good
- Fantastic

Please indicate what concerns you the most about learning on an online environment. Just let it all out! We are here to alleviate any issues.

Appendix 3. Sample *Getting started* guideline



Step 1 – Complete this important survey

If you have not done so already, please click on [this link](#) [link to your Canvas survey; see [Appendix 2](#)] to complete an anonymous shout survey about your time zone and internet situation. If you have done this, click on the **Mark Done** button above!

Step 2 – Read the syllabus!

Many students never even look at the syllabus, later to discover that, oops!, all assignments needed to be submitted to pass the course, no matter how late. Do not be like them, and take your time to read the [Syllabus](#) [direct link to the syllabus]. Feel free to print it: one copy for your backpack, another for your night table drawer, and perhaps one as a gift for that special someone.

Step 3 – Consider the textbook

[This section is very different for every course so sample text is not provided, but if a textbook or other readings are required or suggested, it is a great idea to provide a direct link to the source, preferably via the UBC Bookstore; see for example [this link](#) for direct purchasing for the **FRST 231** – Introduction to Biometrics textbook; don't worry: clicking on the link will not automatically charge your credit card and, even if it did, you would get a student discount!]

Step 4 – Setup your technology

As you may have read in the [Syllabus](#) [direct link to the syllabus], there are a few things that will make your life easier when completing this course. Let's take a look:

1. Participating in live sessions with a **camera** and/or **microphone** is not mandatory, but it will be very enriching if we can see and listen to each other every now and then. Eventually you will need audio at least for participating in one-on-one sessions with the Instructor or TA during office hours.
2. **Do you have access to a printer? Not the end of the world if not**, but it is ideal for you to download lab handouts, midterm and exam so you can complete the exercise procedures by handwriting. If

you do not have a printer, you can recreate any handout by hand neatly in blank paper sheets with question numbers only and respecting the space provided in the original handout.

3. **Do you have a proper scanner?** Yes, you guessed it: lab handouts, midterm and exam handwritten procedures need to be submitted as PDFs of decent quality as opposed to dozens of JPEG photos taken under terrible light conditions and featuring your cat's tail. **If you don't have a proper scanner, don't worry!** There are quite good "scanning" apps for mobile devices that will auto-detect your pages as you take pictures and make editing miracles to create a single acceptable PDF. **Genius Scan** seems to work well for both [Android](#) and [Apple](#) but feel free to explore others.
4. **Setup Canvas in your mobile device:** there will be participation questions embedded in lecture videos, and it will be really handy for you to install the **Canvas app** in a mobile device different than the one you will use to watch the videos. If you have not done so, find the **Canvas Student** Google Play, Apple Store, or your system of preference. Install it and type **UBC Canvas** or **canvas.ubc.ca** when prompted for your school, and login with your CWL UBC credentials.
5. While 99% of FRST 231 is completed by hand, I will show you a couple of examples with Excel. To be able to open those files, you need a **Microsoft Office** license. **Did you know UBC provides one for free?** Check it out [here](#). This is totally optional for this course, but will be useful for your life!
6. It will be very handy for you to have a **QR code scanner** in a mobile device different than the one you will use to watch video recordings. This is because there will be fun polls and interactive stuff embedded in the videos, but you will not be able to click on them or copy long links. So please make sure you have a proper QR Code app and scan the code below to test it (it is a YouTube video so if you cannot access due to firewalls, sorry!; by the way, **you may need a VPN** also if firewalls are an issue).



If you feel you got all of the above covered, click on **Mark as Done!**

Appendix 4. Sample communications protocol announcement

Communications Protocol

Dear Students:

In an online learning environment, it is important to follow certain rules to be efficient with communications. Please follow these instructions carefully to make everybody's life easier (this is a remake of **section 12** of the [Syllabus](#) [direct link to the syllabus]).

Should I even contact?

While we are always there for you, there is a lot of information already available that may answer your question directly. Please always first check the [Syllabus](#) [direct link to the syllabus], the **Getting Started!** module [see [Appendix 3](#)] which has very detailed instructions, the lovely [Piazza](#) [direct link to Piazza] board, the [Calendar & Key Dates](#) [direct link] page, and the remarkably informative stream of [Announcements](#) [direct link to your Canvas announcement page]. We many times find ourselves answering questions of matters already discussed.

Who to contact?

TA: everything regarding labs, from questions about the lab exercises, submissions, late concessions, or anything related to labs, labs, labs. Lab questions sent to the instructor will be forwarded to the TA.

Instructor: everything regarding lectures, lecture quizzes, midterm, tutorials, and general course organization (except organization about labs).

How to contact

Use this hierarchy in strict order:

1. **Ask questions during live sessions** (both lecture and lab).
2. **Come to the office hours** and ask the questions directly. Typically, very few show up at different times to office hours so they can turn into private tutoring sessions.
3. **Post the question in Piazza** [direct link to Piazza] if you want anonymity or cannot wait until the live sessions or office hours, but **please tag it with the appropriate Folder label** (lab1, lab2, lecture1, lecture_general, etc.) so we know who is best to answer. Remember that Piazza allows **fully anonymous participation** in case you are insecure about asking something.
4. **Email us** directly or through Canvas messaging, **but only if this is for personal matters**, in other words, stuff that your classmates do not need to know (e.g. you need an extension due to sickness or your fiancé ate your homework).

Ok, thanks so much! I feel that we are getting our system fine-tuned and efficient!

Have a great weekend!

The Instructor

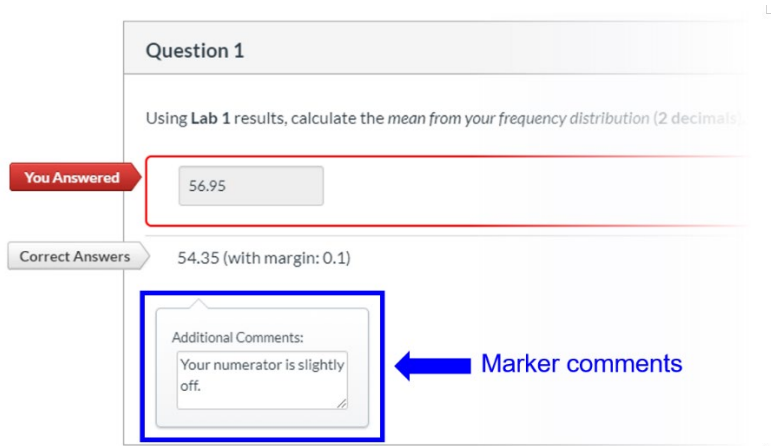
Appendix 5. Grading & feedback protocol

Grading & Feedback Protocol

Dear Students:

As our first grades start to come out, it is important for both students and members of the teaching team to make sure our grading - feedback process goes smoothly in this fully online environment. So here is the sequence of events that typically happen, and what you should do in sequential order:

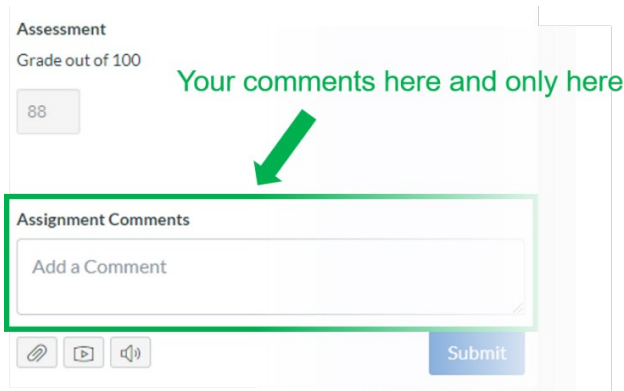
1. You work on the first attempt, submit it via the **answer submission** assignment, identify the questions that went wrong, and submit the next two attempts until you minimize your questions marked as wrong.
2. You submit the **answer submission** assignment after the third attempt and the **PDF upload** with your procedures.
3. Canvas automatically grades some **answer submission** questions and identifies the questions you got wrong despite the attempts. then **you WAIT** until the marker reviews the submission. **DO NOT INQUIRE** about your grade until you reach the step where that takes place, described below.
4. The marker manually reviews your procedures to check for completion and rescue partial marks.
5. The marker will make an effort to provide feedback for each question where you lost points. This is done directly in the answer submission assignments in Canvas, and looks like this:



6. We will post an announcement once each assignment grading has been finalized and that will include links to general feedback where the marker explains common mistakes made on the assignment in general or each question. This feedback will be located in the **WELCOME! module > Learning Resources [direct link] > Lab assignment feedback [direct link]**. You will now see **Lab 1 - Feedback** and **Lab 2 - Feedback** already posted.
7. **IMPORTANT:** **Only after the assignment grading has been completed** as indicated by the announcement **AND** the general feedback has been released, communicate with the marker directly if you have any questions or discrepancies regarding your marking. In other words, carefully check

the individual **Marker comments** as illustrated above, question per question, **AND** the general feedback report posted before asking about your grades.

8. **EVEN MORE IMPORTANT:** Please DO NOT SEND EMAILS about grading discrepancies to anybody as a first step. The protocol we will follow for this is that you write the clarification requests directly in the **Assignment Comments** section that you should see when accessing your assignment, as shown in the screenshot below. Please be extremely clear on what your discrepancy or comment is, referring to the specific question that requires clarification.



9. Only in the very unlikely event that you get involved in a nasty discrepancy with the maker (who by the way is always guided by the TA and instructor), only then email the TA.
 10. The marker will reply to your inquiries directly in the same **Assignment Comments** section.
- Ok, this is it for now! Have a great rest of the day!

The Instructor

Appendix 6. Canvas course template

Canvas Course Template

Below are the instructions for viewing and importing the Canvas Course Template created by CTLT. To take a look at the template, please self-enroll with your CWL:

<https://canvas.ubc.ca/enroll/R4PTHT>

To download the template, click below (the file may go to downloads folder):

[sample-ld-canvas-course-template-export.imsc](#)

To import the template to your course site:

1. Go to your Canvas Course.
2. Go to **Settings** from course menu.
3. Find and click **Import Course Content** link in the right panel.
4. For **Content Type**, choose **Canvas Course Export Package**.
5. Choose **File** from your computer.
6. Choose **All content** or **Select specific content**. Note: Read the **Quick User Guide** (link below) if you select specific content to import, but this may be a safer option if you are not sure what you want on your Canvas site.
7. Click **Import**.

To download Quick User Guide for the template, click below:

[Quick User Guide](#)

The guide Includes instructions to:

- Access and download the templates
- Import templates to your own Canvas course
- Customize templates for your own Canvas course