# Self-Paced Courses - Quick Reference User Guide

Self-paced courses are designed for students to complete **on their own schedule**. They are given 6 months to complete a course upon enrollment; therefore, due dates for course modules and assignments are not necessary. All course material in a self-paced course should stand alone, meaning that **students should be able to complete the course without teacher-student or student-student interaction**.

## What should you include in a self-paced course?

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| Do’s | Don’ts |
| * Course Syllabus (use the self-paced template as a starting point) | * Do not include due dates. |
| * Learning Material and Activities (Lessons, Units, Chapters, etc.) | * Do not include asynchronous or synchronous meetings. |
| * Quizzes and Tests (with robust question banks) | * Do not include course discussions. |
| * Assignments (tailored toward autograded or self-graded feedback) | * Do not include any activity that requires group participation or interactions with other students. |
| * Handouts and other Resources/References (to help the student with the understanding of course material) |  |

## Follow the University guidelines for accessibility

* Use appropriate logical heading structures for documents (i.e., use the Styles ribbon).
* Utilize header rows/columns for tables (again, use the Styles ribbon).
* Use preset layouts for PowerPoint design.
* Include alternate text for images.
* Provide videos with correct captioning, transcripts, and appropriate audio description.
* Make course content easily navigable by keyboard for screenreader users.
* Utilize appropriate color contrast and fonts without serifs (i.e., Calibri), and include an asterisk when stylizing text with color/bold/italics for emphasis.
* Utilize the built-in list styles for unordered lists (bullets) and ordered lists (numbers).
* When creating hyperlinks in your document, do not use the URL for the link or words such as “Here,” “Click Here,” etc. Use a descriptive name for the URL instead (i.e., [TTU (Texas Tech University)](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/elearning/accessibility/) Online Accessibility). Set the link to open in a new window so that the user can easily navigate back to the course.
* Verify your document is accessible prior to uploading it into Blackboard by using the application’s accessibility checker (both Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat have this).

For more information regarding building accessible online courses, please visit the [Online Accessibility at TTU](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/elearning/accessibility/) website or contact [eLearning Accessibility Services](mailto:elearning.oa@ttu.edu).

## Utilize a Style Guide

By using a style guide, you ensure that the course material is consistent and adheres to TTU branding guidelines.

Self-Paced Course Development Checklist

* Gather all lesson materials
* Gather textbooks, online tools, and any external resources for course development

**NOTE:** Use materials from their original source, such as a digital PDF of a journal article (scans of documents which are saved as images are not accessible)

* Create alternative formats for lessons which are normally lecture based in a face-to-face course (e.g., record the lecture, provide a PPT with detailed notes, and/or source external videos)

**NOTE:** All material must be able to stand alone. Be sure to include explanations and clarifications that you would normally cover in class.

* Create meaningful dialog feedback for all answers to questions, including incorrect answers
* Arrange materials in a Lesson/Unit/Chapter format

**NOTE:** If using a textbook for course, follow textbook framework for setting up the syllabus and Blackboard

* Create your syllabus with the self-paced template
* Develop lessons within Blackboard
* Include the following Course Pages:
  + An Overview of the course
  + Materials, additional materials the student will need (anything beyond internet access and a device to work on)
  + Assignment expectations
  + Exams
  + Grading Policies
  + Getting Started (How to complete the course)
  + Lessons (each lesson contains objectives, reading material, assignments, activities, and task)
  + Presentations and video lectures (properly captioned with instructor notes)
* Provide references and resources
* Verify functionality of course
* Ask your Instructional Designer to verify continuity of course