



## Onboarding Students: The First Step Toward Virtual Learning Success

Onboarding students is key to their success in a new virtual learning environment. This process generally involves activities and information that help students better understand course expectations, learn about the community of learners they will engage with, and become acquainted with the resources available to them. Regardless of students' experiences with online learning, every course is new and merits we set the proper scaffolding for success.

### Onboarding Strategies

- Post a **welcome message** in the course home page that briefly states how to begin the course.
- Share a **course introduction video** that conveys your excitement about the course. Highlight key requirements, your expectations, and the relevance to students.
- Add an **orientation module** to your course and have students review it before moving on to course content. This module might include:
  - A list of pre-course tasks
  - A course tour video featuring the main areas of the site
  - An About the Instructor page
  - Technical requirements, as well as technical support information
  - A pre-course survey
  - Links to on-campus and online academic resources
  - Tips for online learning success
  - An icebreaker discussion activity where students can introduce themselves to peers and share their motivations for taking the course
  - A course expectations quiz
- Develop concise **onboarding videos for high-stakes assignments and/or group projects**. Use them on the course site or as part of your communications when introducing these assessments to students.

Onboarding students is a process that spans the first few weeks of the course. During this period, check in with students, clarify questions, and remind them of the resources available to them. Every effort to engage students will strengthen your instructor presence and set the foundation for student success.