

Engagement Guide for Your Course

This timeline provides best practices for improving student engagement.

Weeks Before the Semester Begins

- Click on the course links to make sure everything is active
- Review all materials (syllabus, discussion posts, assignments, etc.) to be sure the dates are accurate
- Set [Retention Center](#) rules

One Week Before

- Make the course available on Blackboard
- Provide guidance on how to be a successful student in your class
- Send a welcome announcement, email, and/or video

First Week

- Administer a syllabus quiz to ensure students understand the course requirements and expectations
- Set ground rules for communication
- Post an introduction video to the discussion board and invite your students to do the same

Second Week

- If possible, send individual welcome messages to students with their names and something specific that they mentioned in their introduction
- Start tracking attendance
- Identify and reach out to those who are not logging in enough via Retention Center

Third Through Sixth Week

- Administer an early low-stakes assignment/test
- Provide regular scaffolding assignments and instructional activities to establish structure and maintain engagement
- Send out communication about progress via Retention Center by acknowledging students who are doing well and providing guidance to students who are struggling

Midsemester

- Gather student feedback via mid-semester evaluation
- Make adjustments to the course as appropriate
- Keep grades up to date and inform students about their standing in the course

Two Weeks Before Semester Ends

- Send out encouraging announcements to finish strong
- Remind students of the remaining work and deadlines
- Plan a culminating event to end the class

Last Week/Days

- Post end-of-class announcements
- Post final grades and include grading criteria for clarity
- Offer course overview, support, and advice

Things to Take Care of Daily

- Monitor class discussions, the help board, and student emails

Things to Take Care of Weekly

- Post announcements
- Open weekly module and double-check the links/dates
- Grade assignments/tests and update gradebook
- Summarize discussions and post feedback
- Hold virtual office hours

Throughout the Semester

- View the [SQL calendar](#) for live webinars on on-line teaching and learning
- Check out the [Grab-N-Go series](#) for more quick tips on student engagement
- For instructional support, feel free to visit [Blackboard Central](#), [CID](#) and [CFLD](#)