UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC ANR online courses - Minimum standards

Table of Contents

1. **Why these Standards**
2. **Branding**
3. **Uploading & Course Description**
4. **Development process**
5. **Key Elements to include Courses/Online Classes**
6. **Review and Testing**
7. **Income Considerations**
8. **ADA Compliance**

Minimum online course standards will help us provide a better and more uniform user experience.

1. Why these Standards

Given the growth in interest and need to further develop our UC ANR
online course presence, it is appropriate to have minimum recommended standards/guidelines *that help us develop a common look and feel at the quality we want.*

2. Branding

1. Brand at the beginning and end - don't over brand.
2. All materials will have the UC ANR logo and (as relevant) the Statewide/Institute Program logo (See example below)
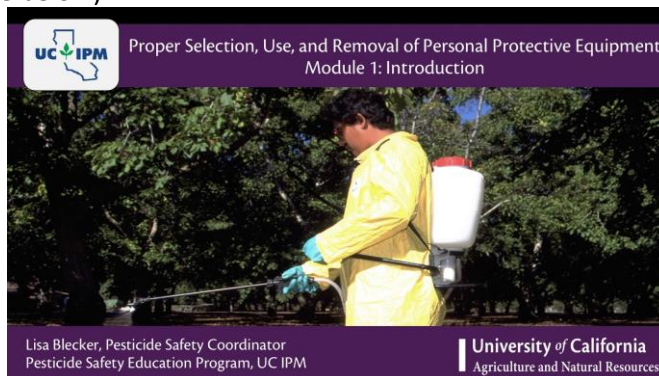
Resource: **UC ANR communications toolkit**.

3. Uploading & Course Description

e.g., information provided as course background when uploading to eXtension.

Provide the following information when uploading a course online.

Factors to include when loading a course online.

Element	Description
Branding	Include the UC ANR along with the relevant statewide program, institute or other logo
Target audience	Indicate who this course is intended for./
Course description	Include a brief description of the topic. Note: Some people include the learning objectives, although this may or not be needed. Note whether there are prerequisites.
Course developer	If relevant, include who developed the course (e.g., name and program)
Course credit	Note is the course is accredited for Continuing Education Units (CEUs). If so, note which CEUs and how many hours. If no Continuing Education Units then just include approximate course completion time.
Basic technical requirements	Note if audio is needed and compatible browsers (if there are known limitations)?
Contact person	Include email only

4. Development Process

In development, consider using the modified ADDIE approach (a la UC IPM) or an agile product development methodology (e.g., agile product example article). The latter process essentially uses early user feedback on ease and desire to use the product (and is based on the principles of lean startup). The methodology can help us become the preferred source of learning - i.e., we are delivering the information people want in an understandable form they both want and enjoy.

5. Key Elements to Include Courses/Online Classes

Courses should have some combination of:

Element	Description
Clear Title	Include a clear (where appropriate catchy) title
Learning Objectives	Include clear learning objectives that clearly indicate what people will know and/or be able to do at the end of the class/course
Introduction	Include some brief upfront material showing why the topic is important
Interactivity	People learn better when they are engaged. Use best practices to engage the learner and assess learning throughout the lesson.
Time Estimates	Include time estimates for each section and if video is part of the course, include the time to view each video. For example, above each embedded video have a title: **Making Baskets | UC ANR (2.5 min.)** to clarify viewing expectations.
Visual appeal	Use design principles and colors to make layout attractive. When considering visual appeal and elements, consider • Relevant Images (are there copyright restrictions). ... • Infographics. ... • Graphs and Charts. ... • Timelines. ... • Progress Bars. ... • Buttons and Icons. ... • Relatable Characters

Resource: Online learning (UC ANR Learning & Development)

6. Review and Testing

Any course should include review to assess that

- Content is technically correct
- That language is readily understandable and clear
- That learning objectives are clear and easily achieved.

- Pretesting and user feedback from early users (See Development process above), this can be part of the course content or as simple as asking users directly for improvements
- Collect user feedback from final course to refine future efforts

Re: ADA compliance - It is critical to test the course, so that it actually does work for people with different types of disabilities. One shouldn't just rely on authoring software to make the outcome accessible.

7. Income Considerations

Consider if there is an appropriate opportunity for Income generation - be it payment for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and/or micro-certification (which can be an option. - i.e., course participants can do the course for free, or for some fee, receive a micro-certificate indicating they completed the course. Note: there is no endorsement or implication of competence with micro-certification.)

Payment option workflows. As we move towards the Integrated Web Platform optional processes are being established for how people can (easily) charge and receive income from online resources.

8. ADA Compliance

This section draws on the current practices of UC IPM:

RE ADA compliance, here is the minimum that we do in UC IPM to make our online courses compliant:

1. Any image included in the online course needs to have its description in the 'alternative text' field in its metadata. This will be read by a screen reader for visually impaired people.
2. Any video with voice needs to have closed captions so that hearing-impaired people can read what is being said (YouTube automatically generates closed captions. The system currently has enough errors the transcripts should be reviewed and edited). When writing the script for videos that you are recording, keep visually-impaired people in mind so that they can understand what is going on just from listening.
3. Video clip without voice/sound – to make it accessible to visually impaired people, make sure to include its description in the 'alternative text' field in its metadata (similar as in making images accessible). That is usually sufficient for short videos. For longer silent videos consider providing audio description.
4. For people with limited mobility, make sure that they can navigate course content using the keyboard (TAB key) instead of mouse. That means that some interactive components (e.g. drag and drop or clicking on hotspots) cannot be used because current technology doesn't make them accessible to people who cannot use mouse.
5. Make sure that whatever software or plug-in you use to create quizzes and tests makes them also ADA compliant (= can be navigated through using just keyboard without mouse and if images are included they must include alternative text).

Note: The most challenging simulation of accessibility can be for visually impaired people because there are so many screen readers in the market that behave differently in different operating systems and browsers.