

## Blackboard – Best Practices

Instructors who teach online classes at MATC are expected to adhere to the following best practices, [adapted from Quality Matters](#), for delivering effective instruction that supports student success.

### **Respond to student email within 24 to 48 hours during the scheduled work week.**

Your [MATC Gmail account](#) is your primary means of communication with students and for students to get in contact with you. Be sure to check your MATC Gmail frequently. Please see the [Google Apps Learning Center](#) to review how to use Gmail.

### **Send a weekly announcement to each class for ongoing communication.**

Use your course's [announcements](#) tool to notify students of course events, the activities that they should complete that week, general feedback for all learners, or regular class updates. You may schedule your weekly announcements in advance.

### **Use best practices for effective communication to support student learning.**

When sending communications through email or Blackboard's announcement, discussion board, or grading tools, it is a best practice to craft messages that follow the Five Cs:

- Clear – The message is well structured and easy to understand.
- Complete – The message provides enough detail for the student to take action and respond.
- Concise – The message succinctly makes its point.
- Correct – The message is free of spelling, grammar, and content errors.
- Courteous – The message should follow [netiquette guidelines](#) and be supportive in tone.

### **Provide and monitor a “Questions and Answers” discussion board forum in your courses.**

To foster a sense of community and open communication, [create a discussion board forum](#) in the course for students to post questions that they may have as the course progresses. Encourage students to provide support to each other and reply to student questions in the forums with 24 to 48 hours within the scheduled work week. To monitor the forum, we recommend [subscribing to the forum](#) so that you receive an email notification whenever there is a new message posted.

### **Communicate grading criteria in advance and provide feedback within 1 week of due dates.**

Online students need timely, meaningful, and consistent feedback to guide their performance in your course. To inform students of an assessment's requirements and how you will assess students, consider creating [grading rubrics](#) and making them available to students before grading occurs so that they can prepare accordingly.

We recommend [using your course's Grade Center](#) to post grades and feedback on quizzes, tests, and other assessments. It is a best practice to provide grades and feedback to students one (1) week after they submit their work. Showing grades to students through the [My Grades](#) tool allows students to monitor their progress throughout the course. You may use your course's announcements tool to advise all students in your course on your grading progress and provide general feedback that could be of value to all students.