LAUNCH CHECKLIST

30-Day Online Course Launch Checklist

A clear, practical checklist to help you prepare your first course and open enrollment with confidence.

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INTRODUCTION

Launching your first online course can feel like a long list of decisions competing for your attention. This checklist turns that list into six manageable phases, taking you from testing your course idea to opening enrollment and supporting your first learners.

It's designed for first-time course creators. You don't need a large audience, a polished studio, or a fully built course before you begin. Work through the phases in order, adapting the suggested day ranges to your available time. Check off tasks as you complete them, and keep the course promise focused so your plan stays realistic.

Some tasks may not apply to your platform or business. Make a clear decision about those rather than letting them delay your launch. By the end, you'll have a practical readiness check for opening enrollment and a plan for responding to the first questions that come in.

- ✓ Test whether your course idea is specific and useful
- ✓ Map a focused learner journey and lesson sequence
- ✓ Prepare the course, enrollment process, and learner support
- ✓ Plan your launch messages and check your readiness
- ✓ Open enrollment and respond to early questions

DAYS 1–4

Validate Your Course Promise 01

Use these first four days to check that your course idea addresses a real learner need. Keep the promise specific, realistic, and grounded in what potential learners tell you.

DAYS 1–4

Name The Learner And Problem

- [ ] Choose one learner by role, experience, and current situation.
- [ ] Name the task or moment that prompts them to seek help.
- [ ] Describe the problem in words they might actually use.
- [ ] List what they need to know or do to make progress.

Define A Realistic Result

- [ ] Describe one observable result learners can work toward.
- [ ] Connect that result to skills or decisions you will teach.
- [ ] Set a clear boundary on what your course cannot guarantee.
- [ ] Draft a promise: Help [learner] [achieve result] without [obstacle].

Check With Potential Learners

- [ ] Invite a few potential learners to a short conversation.
- [ ] Ask what they have already tried to solve this problem.
- [ ] Ask what still feels difficult, confusing, or unanswered.
- [ ] Note their exact phrases and revise your promise for clarity.

DAYS 5–8

Plan the Learner Journey 05

Use Days 6–10 to map the route from your learner's starting point to the course outcome. Keep the plan focused on what learners need to do—and what you can realistically create for your first launch.

Define the Destination

- [ ] Write one observable outcome learners can demonstrate by course end.
- [ ] Describe the learner's starting point and main challenge.
- [ ] List what the course will cover and what it will leave out.
- [ ] Choose a clear finish line, such as a completed task or decision.

Sequence the Lessons

- [ ] Break the outcome into a few teachable milestones.
- [ ] Arrange milestones from the learner's first action to the finish line.
- [ ] Give each milestone one focused lesson or lesson group.
- [ ] Add a practice task that applies each lesson's main idea.
- [ ] Note any prerequisite knowledge learners need before each lesson.

Check the Fit

- [ ] Estimate the time needed to prepare and review each lesson.
- [ ] Choose a lesson count that fits your available launch-preparation hours.
- [ ] Identify existing materials you can adapt for the course.
- [ ] Remove lessons that do not support the promised outcome.

DAYS 9–16

Build the Course Essentials 09

Create the minimum complete learning experience: core lessons, only the resources learners need, and clear directions for moving through the course.

Draft Core Lessons

- [ ] Break each lesson into one clear learner outcome.
- [ ] Outline the explanation, demonstration, and practice for each lesson.
- [ ] Remove topics that do not support the course outcome.

Record Essential Lessons

- [ ] Record lessons using your outlines as prompts.
- [ ] Choose a quiet space and check your audio before recording.
- [ ] Retake sections where an explanation or demonstration is unclear.

Make Only Useful Resources

- [ ] Create worksheets only when they help learners take action.
- [ ] Tie each resource to a specific lesson task.
- [ ] Remove materials that repeat the lesson without adding practice.

Review the Learner Experience

- [ ] Preview every lesson from the learner's point of view.
- [ ] Add clear instructions for where to begin and what to do.
- [ ] End each lesson with the next action learners should take.
- [ ] Open every linked file and check it matches the lesson.

DAYS 17–21

Set Up Enrollment and Delivery 17

Build and test the sign-up-to-lesson path before inviting learners to enroll.

Enrollment Setup

- [ ] Add course details, enrollment dates, and access instructions to the enrollment page.
- [ ] Connect a payment method and set the price and payment options.
- [ ] Set course access to begin at the time you intend.

Welcome and Support

- [ ] Draft a welcome email with the access link and first action.
- [ ] Name one support channel and when learners can expect a reply.

Test the Learner Path

- [ ] Run a test sign-up using preview or test mode where available.
- [ ] Check that the payment confirmation and welcome email arrive.
- [ ] Open the course link and follow the first lesson instructions.
- [ ] Fix confusing steps, broken links, or missing access details.

Welcome Email

Subject: Your course is ready: start here

Hi [name],

Welcome to [course name]. Access lessons: [course access link]. Start with [first lesson or action]. Need help? Contact [support contact]; I'll reply [expected response time].

Next step: Open the course and complete [first action].

DAYS 22–26

Prepare Your Launch 22

Write clear launch messages, plan when and where to share them, and test the enrollment path before opening.

Draft Your Messages

- [ ] Name the learner and the problem your course helps address.
- [ ] Describe the course outcome in realistic, specific terms.
- [ ] Write an enrollment email that explains the offer and next step.

Choose Where And When

- [ ] Choose the channels where your intended learners already hear from you.
- [ ] Select a launch date and work backward to set message dates.
- [ ] Assign each message a channel, date, and clear purpose.

Rehearse The Enrollment Path

- [ ] Check that page copy, price, dates, and offer details agree.
- [ ] Run a test payment or use your platform's test mode.
- [ ] Confirm the confirmation message leads to the right course access.

Enrollment Announcement Email

Subject: A course to help you [work toward learner outcome]

If you're [intended learner] and [problem or goal], I've created [course name] to help you work toward [realistic course outcome].

Inside, you'll find [key lessons or resources]. Enrollment details: [price, access date, and any important terms].

Next step: Read the details and enroll here: [enrollment link]

DAYS 27–30

Open Enrollment with Confidence 27

Use this final check to confirm learners can enroll and reach their first lesson. Then open enrollment, watch for problems, and respond to early learners.

Confirm Readiness

- [ ] Open the enrollment page on desktop and mobile.
- [ ] Check that the offer, price, and enrollment dates are correct.
- [ ] Complete a test payment or verify the checkout instructions.
- [ ] Confirm the welcome message reaches a test inbox.
- [ ] Follow the course-access link and locate the first lesson.

Open and Monitor

Announce Enrollment

Publish your opening message with the enrollment link and a clear way to ask questions.

Check the Sign-Up Path

Visit the page and checkout, and confirm each new learner receives the promised access.

Support Early Learners

Answer incoming questions promptly and record any access or instruction issues you find.

Learn and Improve

- [ ] Check enrollment notifications and payment records regularly.
- [ ] Reply to learner questions with a clear answer or next step.
- [ ] Note repeated confusion, broken links, or missing instructions.
- [ ] Fix urgent access problems and add other improvements to your course notes.

CONCLUSION

A first launch is easier to manage when you keep returning to the learner's path: a clear promise, a focused sequence of lessons, and a straightforward way to enroll and begin. You don't need to build every possible feature before opening enrollment. Make the essential experience work, test it from the learner's point of view, and keep your launch plan within the time and resources you have.

As you work through the phases, treat the checklist as a decision-making tool—not a reason to delay until everything feels perfect. If a task does not support the course promise or the learner's first steps, consider whether it can wait. Before you announce enrollment, verify the complete sign-up route and know where learners can turn with questions.

When enrollment opens, stay attentive to what people ask and where they need help. Use those early signals to support your learners and make thoughtful improvements.

Next Step

Choose your first launch task, add it to your calendar, and take one step toward opening enrollment.

Plan Your First Step