
CANVAS TERMINOLOGY

Activity Stream

An Activity Stream displays all recent activity in Canvas. There are two types of Activity Streams in Canvas: Global and Course. The Global Activity Stream is part of the Dashboard and shows recent activity for all courses. The Course Activity Stream is part of a Course Home Page and shows recent activity for a specific course.

Announcements

Announcements is a communication tool that allows instructors to post announcements for all users in a course. Announcements can be created in courses and groups. Canvas admins can also make announcements for an entire Canvas account. Instructors can allow students to reply to announcements. Announcements is a link in Course Navigation.

Assignments

An assignment is any activity assessment that is created by the instructor. Assignments can include Assignments, Discussions, and Quizzes. Some assignments are submitted for no grade. Other assignments may be submitted offline but tracked in the Canvas Gradebook or be submitted online. Assignments is a link in Course Navigation. The Assignments page lists all assignment types in a course.

Breadcrumbs

Breadcrumbs are the trail at the top of a page window that helps users see what page they are viewing in the course hierarchy. Calendar The Calendar is a communication tool that shows users all events and assignments in their courses and groups. The Calendar is a link in Global Navigation.

Canvas Community

The Canvas Community is an external resource provided by Canvas for all Canvas customers. The Canvas Community includes the Canvas Guides, which provides all Canvas documentation and videos, Canvas Feature Ideas, community groups, and more. Chat The Chat tool provides synchronous video, audio, and text communication between students enrolled in a course. When added to a course, Chat is a link in Course Navigation.

Collaborations

Collaborations is a tool that allows students and instructors to create and edit documents that can be edited by the entire course or any subset of the course roster. Collaborations is a link in Course Navigation.

Conferences

Conferences allow instructors to create virtual classrooms and interact with their students in real time using audio, video, desktop sharing, and presentation tools. Students can also create conferences in groups. Conferences is a link in Course Navigation.

Conversations

Conversations is a messaging tool used in Canvas to communicate with a course, a group, an individual student, or a group of students. Messages created in Conversations can be sent to one user or multiple users. Conversations is a link in Course Navigation.

Courses

Courses are units of instruction in one subject that typically last one term. Courses can be created by Canvas admins or instructors.

Course Home Page

The Course Home Page is the first page that students see in a course. The Course Home Page can be customized to display content based on an instructor's preference. The Home Page is a link in Course Navigation.

Course Import Tool

The Course Import Tool allows content to be imported from existing Canvas courses and content packages from other LMS and textbook publishers. The Course Import Tool is located in Course Settings.

Course Navigation

Course Navigation is a menu on the left side of a Canvas course. Course Navigation consists of navigation links directed to all the feature areas within a course. Instructors can customize Course Navigation for each course.

Course Statistics

Course Statistics are an instructor tool that summarizes overall student participation in the course.

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Course Status

Course Status refers to the state of a Canvas course. All new Canvas courses begin in an unpublished state, where admins can manage course enrollments and instructors can prepare content and assignments for students. A published state means the course is available to students. A concluded state means the course has ended and users can access content in a read only format.

Dashboard

The Dashboard is a panel of content that acts as the Canvas default landing page and provides an overview of all Canvas activity for a user. The Dashboard shows all courses and groups, recent activity, to-do items, upcoming assignments, and recent feedback.

Discussions

Discussions is a forum designed to facilitate informal communication between students in a course. Discussions can also be created as assignments for grading purposes. Students can also respond to informal and graded discussions in the context of a group. All Discussions content is public, and all course students can view and reply to a discussion. Discussions is a link in Course Navigation.

ePortfolios

ePortfolios allow students to showcase their best work to colleagues and prospective employers. They also make it possible for students to create light-weight websites or presentations. ePortfolios is a link in User Navigation.

Files

Canvas provides a file repository for each user, group, and course. Files can be public or private. Files is a link in User Navigation or Course Navigation.

Global Navigation

Global Navigation is the menu that appears on every Canvas page. Global Navigation consists of navigation links that direct users to frequently-used features in Canvas. In the New Canvas User Interface (UI), Global Navigation is located on the left of every Canvas page.

Gradebook

The Gradebook stores information about student progress in Canvas. Canvas includes two types of gradebooks: a standard gradebook that provides a collection of numerical or letter-grade assessments, and a Learning Mastery Gradebook that compiles assessments based on learning standards and outcomes. The Gradebook is a link in Course Navigation for instructors.

Grades

Grades are a measurement of student performance. Students can calculate hypothetical grades on this page. Instructors can quickly edit grades for any course or section. Grades is a link in Course Navigation for students.

Groups

Groups is a tool that helps instructors separate students into smaller course units. Groups can be created for students or by students to enable efficient collaboration. Groups is a link in the Global Navigation Menu.

Help

The Help feature is part of Global Navigation and helps users get help in Canvas at any time.

Math Editor

The Math Editor is a Latex-compatible toolbar that makes it easy for instructors to write math expressions and equations. Instructors and students can use the Math Editor when creating and taking quizzes.

Modules

Modules is a tool that can unify all course content into structural components. Module content can be grouped by week, topic, or day. Modules can be set up to require students to complete materials in a sequential fashion. Modules is a link in Course Navigation.

Notifications

Notifications allow users to determine where and when they will be notified about activity in Canvas. Each Canvas user can adjust the Notification Preferences in their Profile to contact them via email or SMS on a schedule that fits their individual needs. Some users will want to be notified of course events on a more regular basis than others. Notifications are set for an entire user's account, not on an individual course basis.

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Outcomes

Outcomes are statements that describe skills, understandings, and attitudes that learners will develop during a course or program. Instructors can specify learning outcomes for their courses and track student progress based on measured standards rather than letter grades. Outcomes is a link in Course Navigation.

Pages

Pages comprises all pages created in a course. A page allows instructors to create content for a Canvas course. Students can also create and edit pages in Groups. Pages is a link in Course Navigation.

People

People displays all users enrolled in a course. Instructors can click a student's name to view a summary of their activity in a course. People is a link in Course Navigation.

Profile

A profile is a description that provides information about a person. Admins can choose to enable the Profile feature, which allows users to create biographies and link to social networks as part of their user account.

Quizzes

Quizzes displays all quiz assessment types in a course. Quizzes is a link in Course Navigation.

Rich Content Editor

The Rich Content Editor is a word processor that supports instructors to create and format content within specific Canvas areas.

Rubrics

A Rubric is an assessment tool for communicating expectations of quality. Rubrics are typically comprised of rows and columns. Rows are used to define the various criteria being used to assess an assignment. Columns are used to define levels of performance for each criterion.

Sections

Sections are divisions of students within a course. All course sections view the same course content.

Settings

Settings allow admins and instructors to customize the Account or Course Navigation, add users, import content, and link to external tools. Settings is a link in Account and Course Navigation.

SpeedGrader

SpeedGrader is a grading tool that helps instructors evaluate student work. Instructors can use rubrics for fast assessment and leave text, video, and audio comments for their students. SpeedGrader is also available as a Canvas mobile app on iOS and Android devices.

Student View

Student View is a tool used by instructors to see how their course appears to students. Activating Student View generates a Test Student that appears in a canvas course and can be used to submit assignments, reply to discussions, and upload files as a test method in the course.

Service Cloud

Service Cloud is the Canvas Support system. A support case is a formal request from a Canvas admin to receive help or direction from Canvas Support. Support Cases can be accessed by institutions using Service Cloud.

Syllabus

The Syllabus is a piece of content that outlines activities in a course. The Syllabus is a link in Course Navigation. Term A term is a period of time assigned to academic instruction. In Canvas, course dates generally align with term dates, though course dates can extend beyond or be shorter than default term dates.

Test

Test is the environment used for testing real data in Canvas without affecting the production environment. The test environment is overwritten with data from the production environment every three weeks.

Web Services

Web Services are a collection of third-party services that users can use for notifications. Web Services currently support integrations with GoogleDocs, Skype, LinkedIn, Twitter, Delicious, Diigo, and Yo.