

NOVA Start-of-Semester Checklist

resource guide

CanvasHelp@nvcc.edu | EdTechHelp@nvcc.edu

NOVA | **CETSS**
Northern Virginia
Community College | Canvas and Educational
Technology Support Services

Start-of-Semester Checklist

Canvas for NOVA Instructor Support

Related Video: [Help Menu](#)

24/7 Canvas Support

(877) 875-8425

LIVE chat with Canvas Support from the Canvas HELP button

CETSS Email Addresses

canvashelp@nvcc.edu edtechhelp@nvcc.edu

NOVA Canvas Blog

blogs.nvcc.edu/cetss

NOVA CETSS Twitter

@NOVACanvas @NOVATechEDU

Canvas Start-of-the-Term Checklist

Welcome to the start of a new term. This is a list of some items to double-check to help you have a smooth start to your semester.

Homepage Options

The homepage is the first item students see upon logging into your online classroom. There are numerous options available for instructors to select as a course homepage, but the preferred options include pages front page (custom homepage) or syllabus as front page. [Guide](#)

- [Pages Front Page](#)
- [Syllabus to Front Page](#)

Adding a Syllabus

It is important to add the syllabus into your Canvas course. This allows students access to important information for being successful in your course. You can create a Syllabus natively in Canvas OR you can upload your Syllabus file to the Syllabus Navigation link inside of Canvas. [Guide](#)

Managing Course Navigation Links

Inside of a course, instructors have the ability to restrict the use of course navigation links. These links can be turned off/hidden from students to control how and what students can access. For example, if you want students to work through Modules to access Content Pages (instructional pages you create), Assignments, & Quizzes in a particular order, you could turn off the links to Pages, Assignments, & Quizzes and leave on the “Modules” tab so that students have to work through that Modules tab. [Managing Course Navigation Links: Guide](#)

SUGGESTED NAVIGATION: Home, Announcements, Syllabus, Modules, Discussions, Grades, NOVA Policies, Tutor.com, Career Connection, Library Services, Lockdown Browser (if using), Quickly Attendance (if using)

Adding Modules

Pulling content into modules is the BEST way to create a course flow in Canvas. When we set up our content through modules, it helps create a linear textbook type flow so that students access content in the systematic sequence you design. You can easily pull created content into a module which then gives you options to locking it down & controlling when students access it.

[Guide](#)

You might consider editing each module to lock it until a certain date and/or time. This helps to keep students from attempting to work ahead & advance to modules/content you are not ready for them to access. However, locking a module does not hide it. It simply restricts access to the content within it until the unlock date. Students can see the module name & content items but cannot access any of the content until the access date set by you. [Guide](#)

Publish/ Unpublish Modules

Students cannot see or access your modules until they are published. It is a great way to “hide” modules & other content from students within a module until a certain date & time. Select the modules tab in the navigation bar. Inside of modules, you will see a prohibition sign in the gray cell all the way to the right from the module name. The prohibition sign signifies that the module is unpublished while, while the green circle with the white checkmark means published. Even if content items are “published,” students will not be able to see or access those items in the “unpublished” module. [Guide](#)

Publish Assignments

Verify all activities including, pages, discussions, assignments, & quizzes are published. You still have options to lock down these items & keep students from accessing them until later dates even when published. Unpublished activities will NOT be visible to students, will NOT show up in the Gradebook, and you will NOT be able to enter grades for them. [Guide](#)

Publish Course

Before students can access any course content, it must be published by you, the instructor. Remember, it is important to publish the course 3-days before the start of the term to adhere to the college expectations. Even on the first day of class, students will not be able to access your content if it isn't published. By publishing the course, students will be able to enter your online course, not necessarily access all your content based on restrictions you put into the course. [Guide](#)

Grades/Weighted Grades

It is important to set up your grading system to replicate your course syllabus, such as with the total points or weighted grades. [Guide](#)

- [Weighted Grades Option](#)- Set weighted grades then verify all assignments are weighted correctly on the Assignments Index page.
- [Total Points Option](#)- Verify total points possible by navigating to the homepage & selecting "[Student View](#)" on the navigation tools located on the right side of the screen. This option allows you to see total points or a percentage grade in the "total" column of the gradebook. First, go over to the right side of the page and turn off the "check" by "Calculate based only on graded assignments" so that it totals all points assigned in the course at the "total" on bottom of student grade report will show you the total number of points assigned in the course, which should match total points identified on your course syllabus.

Grading Policies

Within the Canvas Gradebook, there are some options you might consider before the semester starts.

- [Automatic vs. Manual Grade Posting](#)- Posting grades automatically will notify each student immediately when a score or comment is entered or changed. If most of your assignments are auto-graded, you may want to leave it this way – especially if you want students to be able to see their scores immediately after completing an assignment or quiz. If you want students to have to wait to see their grades until a certain date/time, then you would want to use the manual grade posting option. Make sure you apply the policy BEFORE any grading occurs.
- [Missing Assignments](#)- If you use the "Apply a Missing Submission Policy," in the gradebook features, it will automatically issue a grade for all missing assignments after the due date has passed. The grade issued is determined by the policy you set in the course such as a zero or even a certain point or percentage value. This would save you the time of having to add-in these missing score values by hand. NOTE: this applies retroactively to any missing assignments in the course.

Link Validator

It is important to double-check that all links are working before publishing to students. There are times when links break upon pulling content into new courses. To check that all links are working correctly, go to the "Settings" then over to the right select "Validate Links in Content." [Guide](#)

Course Overview/ Student View

As an instructor, you might opt to do a once-through in student view. It will help you to verify that everything is set up and looks the way you want it to look. It will also help you with double-checking that all items are locked down properly. [Guide](#)

Importing a Course

If you want to import course content from another course, it can be done quickly. You will go to settings within the course you want to add content into. All the way over to the right-side of the page select “Import Course Content.” A drop down will appear from the top center then select “Copy a Canvas Course.” In the search bar, find the actual course you want to copy then identify if you want specific content or all, then press “import.” [Guide](#)

Importing Course Content Clean-up

After importing content from an older course, it is important to go through the content that was imported. Many assignment & quiz due dates will need to be changed because old dates will have been imported and will put incorrect information on student calendars and to-do lists. On occasion, some links will break, so double check all links are properly connected.