

Canvas Basics for Teaching: Video Series

What is Canvas?

This video series provides an introduction to the basic features of Canvas, the approved system at the University of Minnesota (U of M) for creating and hosting course websites for instruction. Links to supplemental information about the Canvas features described in the video episodes are also provided.

Episode 1: Access Canvas and customize your account.

- [Watch Episode 1](#). (video, 3:09 mins)
- Login directly to Canvas at canvas.umn.edu.
 - Note: The Safari web browser (Mac OS) may not be compatible with all features of Canvas. We suggest Chrome or Firefox.
- [Customize your Canvas account profile](#) and [add a profile picture](#).
 - Set your [preferred name](#), [pronouns](#), and record the [pronunciation of your name](#).
- Review and [configure your account notifications](#) to stay current with course activities.

Episode 2: Installing the CEHD Canvas template and copying content from a prior course.

- [Watch Episode 2](#). (video, 4:16 mins)
- Every U of M academic course has an auto-generated Canvas site. Login to canvas.umn.edu to locate your site/s. Unused Canvas sites remain hidden from students.
 - Optional: [Import content from a previous semester](#).
 - Optional: Use the [CEHD Canvas template](#) to organize your course site.

Episode 3: Edit and prepare a Canvas site.

- [Watch Episode 3](#). (video, 10:05 mins)
- Create a chronological structure for your course using [Modules](#).
- Include an orientation module for your course, including:
 - Your contact information and office hours.
 - An orientation to the course site.
 - Links to tool-specific help tutorials if used (Zoom, VideoAnt, etc.).
 - A place to ask questions.
 - Information about how to access textbooks and readings.
 - Contact the [University Bookstore](#) about required textbooks and materials, including [information about CourseWorks](#), the digital textbook platform.
 - Contact the [libraries](#) for support in choosing and integrating materials. [Online reserves](#) are available from the Library and can be accessed by your students via the Library Course Page in Canvas.
- Create [Pages](#) for text, videos, links, or other content that don't necessarily belong in an assignment.
 - Create an "Overview" page for each Module that lists relevant learning objectives and a brief description of the topics, activities, and assignments for that Module. These are included features in the [CEHD Canvas template](#).
- [Upload files to Canvas](#).
 - Consider [converting documents to PDF](#). PDFs can be accessed and viewed by all students because most up-to-date computer operating systems include PDF readers. [Adobe Acrobat Pro DC](#) is available for free to U of M instructors.
 - Links to files can be [added to modules](#) or a Canvas page.
 - [Add links to resources on the web \(videos and readings from other websites\)](#)
- Create [Assignments](#), [Quizzes](#), and [Discussions](#). These are the three types of graded activities in Canvas.
 - Use [Canvas Assignments](#) when students will need to submit content. This might include text, website URLs, media recordings, or files.

- Add [Canvas Discussions](#) when student-to-student and instructor-to-student interaction is needed. Discussions use text for asynchronous discussion. They can be [graded](#) or ungraded.
- [Group work](#) can be conducted in Canvas. Depending on your goals, configuring groups can be complex. Contact deiteam@umn.edu if groups are a significant feature of your course.
- [Use Canvas Quizzes](#) to create a check for understanding quiz, graded or ungraded survey, or an exam. Quizzes have a variety of question types including multiple-choice and essay. Quiz questions and responses can be randomized to increase exam security.
- [Use the Canvas Syllabus feature and automated course schedule.](#)
 - In addition to assignment due dates, late submission policies, etc., also include acceptable file formats for submissions (Word, Google Doc., etc.).

Episode 4: Canvas Gradebook and SpeedGrader

- [Watch Episode 4.](#) (video, 7:42 mins)
- View the course gradebook by selecting *Grades* from the course navigation menu.
 - Canvas Guide: [How do I use the icons and colors in the gradebook?](#)
 - For more information: [CEHD DEI Canvas Guide: Gradebook](#)
- Configure *assignment groups* in your course to apply drop scores or use weighted categories for course grade calculation.
 - [How do I create rules for an assignment group?](#) (a.k.a., *Drop or keep scores*).
 - [Add an assignment group in a course](#) (a.k.a., *Creating gradebook categories*).
 - [How do I weight the final course grade based on assignment groups?](#) (a.k.a., *How do I set up weighted gradebook categories?*)
- [Use a grade posting policy](#) to control when scores and feedback become visible to students in your gradebook.
- Establish a grading scale for your course final grades by [enabling the course grading scheme](#) in the course settings.
- [Use SpeedGrader](#) to annotate and score assignments.
 - Canvas Guide: [How do I get to SpeedGrader from an assignment, quiz, or graded discussion?](#)

Episode 5: Previewing and publishing the course.

- [Watch Episode 5](#). (video, 3:35 mins)
- [Customize your course navigation bar](#) for student ease of navigation.
- [Publish all Modules, course content, and activities](#) that students need to access.
- Evaluate your Canvas site [using the student view](#) to ensure that the site will function properly for students.
- [Publish the course](#) so that students can begin interacting with the course.

Help us improve our resources. Take this [one-minute survey](#).