

Start-of-Term Guide

Please use this guide to prepare your courses before the start of the term. Following these steps in advance will help ease your work throughout the term and better ensure a good learning experience for students. You should also refer to the [Online Course Checklist](#) for best practices.

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Merge Sections

If you teach more than one section of the same course, you may want to merge them into one course in Canvas by filling out the [Section Merge Request Form](#). This can save you time posting announcements, making changes, adding resources, etc.

Note: Student data and grades cannot be moved, so make sure you request the merge *prior* to copying/adding content into your course shells *and prior* to student enrollments.

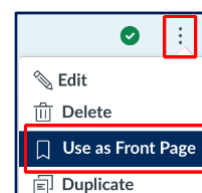
You can create different announcements, assignments, and due dates for the sections. Though, if you set different due dates on the same assignment, it will not show up on the Course Schedule in Simple Syllabus.

Copy Your Course

You can easily copy your course from one term to the next. Follow the steps below or visit the Canvas guide [How do I copy content from another Canvas course using the Course Import tool?](#).

1. Go into your new course shell (where you want the content to be). From the course “Home” page, click the “**Import Existing Content**” button on the right.
2. From the “Content Type” drop-down menu, select “**Copy a Canvas Course.**”
3. Click the “**Select a course**” drop-down menu or use the search box.
4. Select the “**All content**” option.
5. **Note:** Make sure you select the “**Adjust events and due dates**” option to move the dates forward for the new term; it cannot be done in bulk later.
 - a. Set the “Beginning dates” (leave “Ending dates” blank). Visit [How do I adjust events and due dates in a course import?](#) for details.
 - b. **Pro Tip:** To keep the due dates on the same day of the week (e.g., Friday), always use the Monday of the term start week for the “Beginning dates.” For example, to copy from Spring to Fall of 2023, select January 9, 2023 and August 21, 2023.
6. Click the “**Import**” button.

Pro Tip: To use the Home page from the course that was copied in, go to “Pages” and click the “**View All Pages**” button at the top. Find “**Home Page-2**” page, click the three dots on the right, and choose “**Use as Front Page.**”



Notes and Tips

- Please wait for the “Current Jobs” area to show “Completed” before copying another course. Also address any errors if you see an “issues” link.
- If you teach more than one section of a course (and did not merge), copy the previous term’s course into one new section, update everything you need to, and then copy that into your other section(s).
- If you accidentally copied in the wrong course, contact an [instructional designer](#) to have the course cleared out.

Course Syllabus

Check Simple Syllabus to make sure everything is up to date. When it's finished, make sure you submit it so students and your Dean are able to see it.

Syllabus Copy (Import)

Since Simple Syllabus is a separate tool from Canvas, copying a Canvas course does not copy anything in Simple Syllabus. By default, your syllabus will be in edit mode and will only contain template information, including course details from Banner. To copy in a previous syllabus, click the **"Import"** button in the upper-left.

Course Schedule

The template includes a Course Schedule that will auto-populate based on graded activities in the Canvas course. Please make sure it is comprehensive and the due dates are accurate (see [Check Due Dates](#) below). If any changes are needed, make sure you adjust them in the Canvas course and do not edit the schedule in Simple Syllabus.

Note: If the Course Schedule assignments aren't listed correctly by due date, you can reset that component. Edit the syllabus and click the **"Reset"** button at the top. Select only **"Course Schedule,"** click **"Next,"** confirm that is the component you want to reset, and click **"Reset."** After it's done, you can submit your syllabus again and the dates should be in the right order.

Your Instructor Information

The course Home page contains a template for you to add your instructor information. If you copied your course from a previous term, you may want to check it for accuracy, particularly office hours details. We recommend adding at least one photo of yourself so your students can "see" you. (It humanizes you and helps them connect.) You can also add a photo to your Canvas profile. Visit [How do I add a profile picture in my user account as an instructor?](#) for details.

Textbook Link

If you order your books through Follett, you will need to add a link to your course so students have access to the book through single sign on.

1. Go to the **"Modules"** area in your course.
2. For a **"Getting Started"** or first week module, click the **"Add"** + sign button.
3. Click the Add drop-down menu at the top and choose **"External Tool."**
4. Select **"BryteWave Deep Linking"** from the list.
5. When the pop-up opens, select **"My Shelf"** and then click **"Create Link."**
6. Click the **"Add Item"** button.
7. The link will be added to the bottom of your module. You will need to publish the link so students can access it.

Welcome Announcement


Make sure you have a welcome announcement that informs students how to get started (i.e., where and when). Every course shell is created with a template announcement that can be modified. To have your name attached as the author, you'll need to copy-and-paste the information into a new announcement (and then delete the template announcement).

We strongly encourage you to post housekeeping/update announcements each week.

If you are meeting virtually, provide clear instructions on accessing the virtual classroom, including the days, time (noting time zone), and location. Kaltura Classroom is our official virtual meeting tool and guides are available from "Help" > "DMACC Instructor Resources and Support" and "DMACC Student Resources and Support."

Content Reminders

Ideally, your entire course should be set up and ready to go prior to the start of the term. The entire course does not need to be available to students, but the content should be there and set to become available as needed. At the very least, make sure the module and materials for the first week/unit/lesson are ready to go and published to students.

- Verify modules, materials, and assignments are **published**  so students can see/access them. Even if a module/assignment is locked until a certain date, it still needs to be published to be viewed by students. Visit [How do I lock a module?](#) for details.
- Make sure the **module Lock Until dates** are updated for the new term.
- If your **module titles** contain dates, make sure you update those.
- Create or update your **welcome video**.
- If you have a Questions & Answers discussion, don't forget to **subscribe**. Visit [How do I subscribe to a discussion as an instructor?](#) for details.
- Refer to the [Online Course Checklist](#) for **best practices**.

Tools to Check After Copying

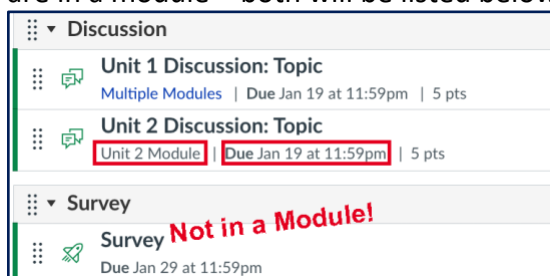
Some of the third party integrations require attention after copying or importing courses.

- If you use one of the textbook **publisher integrations**, don't forget to link your new Canvas course with your new publisher course.
- If you use **Respondus LockDown Browser**, check the dashboard to make sure there aren't any errors.
- If you copied **Turnitin** assignments, check them to make sure they still work. If you had a due date or availability date(s) in the Canvas settings, they might conflict with the Turnitin dates and prevent the Turnitin assignment from working. In which case, remove the dates from Canvas so you can edit and update the Turnitin dates.

Check Due Dates

Please check every due date for accuracy. **All graded activities should have the due date specified in the settings** (per [DMACC's Gradebook Expectations](#)). This helps students succeed in the course; they always know when things are due and can take advantage of notifications.

1. Check the “**Assignments**” area to make sure *all* graded activities have a due date and are in a module – both will be listed below the title.



2. Click the “**Assignment Settings**” button (three dots) in the upper-right corner of the Assignments area and choose “**Edit Assignment Dates**” to view/adjust all due dates.

Note: We do not recommend using availability from/until dates on graded activities. If an assignment is in a module that’s locked until a certain date, students will not be able to access it until the module is available. Instead of adding availability end dates on graded activities, we recommend setting a Late Policy (see [Gradebook Settings and Tips](#) below).

The due date will be shown in lots of places, including Modules, Grades, Calendar, and the Dashboard.

Gradebook Settings and Tips

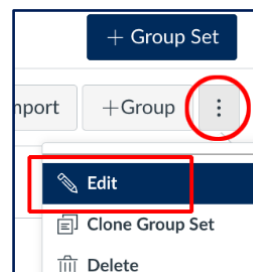
Visit [DMACC's Gradebook Expectations](#) to ensure your course complies.

- Make sure your course is using the correct **grading scale**. Go to course “Settings,” scroll down to the “Grading Scheme” area, and click the “View/Edit” button. By default, courses are created with a plus/minus scheme of 7-3-0 (i.e., 93, 90, 87, 83...), so you may need to switch the scheme to match your syllabus (do not adjust it to “round up”).
- If you use **weighted grades**, go to “Assignments” to make sure everything is in the correct Assignment Group. Go to “Assignment Settings” (three dots) in the upper-right and click “Assignment Groups Weight” to verify the percentages match your syllabus. Visit [How do I weight the final course grade based on assignment groups?](#) for details.
- Click the “Gradebook Settings” ⚙ icon in the upper-right corner of Grades to set/check your **late policy** deductions. Visit [How do I apply a Missing Submission policy in the Gradebook?](#) and [How do I apply a Late Submission policy in the Gradebook?](#) for details.
- In Grades, the “Default Order” view is based on the order in the Assignments area. Click the “Gradebook Settings” ⚙ icon > “**View Options**” tab > “Arrange By” to view columns in a different order, such as by “Due Date - Oldest to Newest” or “Module – First to Last.” Visit [How do I arrange columns in the Gradebook?](#) for more information.

Update Groups

Groups will need to be recreated. If you had one group set in your previous course, it will be renamed “Project Groups” during the copy and all the groups within it will be removed. However, any group assignments/discussions/quizzes that used the group set will still be tied to the Project Groups set, so you just need to create groups within that set.

1. Go to “**People**” and click the “**Project Groups**” tab at the top.
2. In the upper-right corner, click the three dots and choose “**Edit.**”
3. In “Edit Group Set” window you can rename the group if you’d like.
4. Then adjust the settings as needed, such as allowing self sign-up and limiting the number of members per group.
5. Click the “**Save**” button.
6. Then click the “**+Group**” button in the upper-right corner, type in a name (such as “SDV108 Group 1”), and click “**Save.**” Repeat this step to create as many groups as you need.
7. If you will be assigning students to the groups, you can drag-and-drop their names from the “Unassigned Students” list into the appropriate group. Visit [How do I manually assign students to groups?](#) for details.



If your course had multiple group sets, those will be assigned to the one “Project Groups” set. You will need to create new group sets as needed. Visit [How do I automatically create groups in a group set?](#), [How do I manually create groups in a group set?](#), or [How do I create self sign-up groups in a group set?](#) for details. After you’ve created the necessary group sets, you’ll need to edit the corresponding assignment settings to use that set instead of Project Groups.

Attendance

If you want to use the Attendance tool in Canvas, you will need to enable it. Go to “**Settings**” > “**Navigation**,” move “Attendance” up below “Kaltura Media Gallery” so it’s visible to you, and then click the “**Save**” button at the bottom. Students will not be able to see it in the course menu, but it must be enabled for you to access it. Visit [How do I use the Roll Call Attendance tool in a course?](#) for more information.

Pro Tip: If you don’t want attendance to count toward grades, go to the “**Attendance**” area in your course menu, click the “**Settings**” ⚙ gear icon in the upper-right corner, and choose “**Roll Call Settings.**” Click the checkbox for “Do not count attendance toward final grade” (also adjust the late percentage if necessary) and close the settings box.

Accessibility

We are required by law to make sure all learning materials are accessible, but more importantly, we should *want* to remove barriers to learning and ensure all students have an equitable opportunity to learn. This starts with the material and information we provide to students.

Tools

- **Ally** is a tool we license to check accessibility and provide alternative formats to students. Visit the [Ally Quick Start for Instructors](#) webpage for more information.
 - Check Ally meters that appear on individual course materials for ADA compliance. Click on the Ally meter to learn about issues and how to fix them.
 - You can run an accessibility report on your course(s) by clicking “**Ally Course Accessibility Report**” in the course menu (that link is visible only to you, not to students).
- Use the “**Accessibility Checker**” ⓘ button below the textbox in the Rich Content Editor to fix any issues. Visit [How do I use the Accessibility Checker in the Rich Content Editor as an instructor?](#) for more information.

Reminders & Usability

- Do not change the **course menu** in Canvas, except to enable tools that you need to use (e.g., enabling/moving “Attendance” or “LockDown Browser” below “Kaltura Media Gallery”). The default menu is required per DMACC’s Accessibility Policy.
- Do not change default **font** colors and types. Changing the font can hinder readability. If you want fonts to be larger or smaller, adjust your computer’s system settings or zoom in/out in your browser.
- Make sure there aren’t duplicate **titles** for content or graded activities. All titles should be short, descriptive, and unique (e.g., not two pages called “Overview”).
- If you have **hyperlinks**, make sure the link text (i.e., what the student clicks on) is short, descriptive, and makes sense out of context (e.g., not “click here” or “this link”). Do not use the full web address as the link text unless it is short and easy to read/hear, such as “www.dmacc.edu.”
- Use the “**Student View**” tool in the upper-right corner to get a student’s perspective. (Is it obvious what they should do each week? Are instructions clear and detailed?)
- Check the **captions** on your Kaltura videos to make sure they’re accurate. Instructions can be found by going to Help > “DMACC Instructor Resources and Support” > scroll down to “Software” and click “Kaltura.”
- Periodically check your links, videos, etc. to make sure they all still work. You can check your Canvas course links if you go to “**Settings**” and choose “**Validate Links in Content**” in the menu on the right. Visit the Canvas guide on [How do I validate links in a course?](#) for more information.

Resources

- DMACC's [Digital & Web Based Content Accessibility Resources for Faculty](#) website contains policy information and resources to help make your content accessible.
- Additional resources and tools can be found in the ***Instructor Training and Resources*** course in Canvas > "Modules" > "DMACC Instructor Training" > "Accessibility" section.

Expectations and Resources

From the "**Help**" menu in Canvas you can quickly access the "**DMACC Instructor Resources and Support**" page in the *Instructor Training and Resources* course. It contains links to DMACC's expectations documents, information on software/tools available to you, and other resources.

Need Help?

If you have any questions or need help with your courses, please reach out to the [instructional designers](#) in Distance Learning. They can help with Canvas issues, course design improvements, and using educational technology, such as Kaltura for lectures, Kaltura Classroom for synchronous online meetings, etc.

Distance Learning offers a variety of training sessions online on a regular basis. Visit the [Training Sessions Calendar](#) for a list of upcoming events.

As the term draws to an end, please refer to the [End-of-Term Guide](#) (PDF) to help wrap up the course and prepare to submit final grades.