

# Canvas Semester Start Checklist

Each checklist item links to an explanation and support resources.

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- Confirm Canvas [course access](#) ~60 days before the term starts

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  - Enter course participation [start and end dates](#) in Settings, if applicable.

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  - [Cross-list multiple courses](#) into a single course before you begin building

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  - [Copy a previous course](#) and/or content from other courses

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  - [Edit the Home](#) welcome page to introduce students to your course

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  - Update your course [syllabus and outline](#)

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  - Set up [Assignments](#) with clear instructions and accurate due dates

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  - Ensure [Grades](#) calculate as stated in your course grading policy

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  - Confirm [office hours and contact information](#)

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  - Edit or build your [orientation module](#) including practice items to help students learn new tech

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  - Edit or build your [content modules and instructional materials](#)

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  - Quality check the appearance and functionality of your course with [Student View](#)

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  - [Publish](#) your course before the start date and time

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  - Post a [welcome announcement](#)

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  - [Add colleagues](#) that need access to your course

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## Confirm Your Course Access

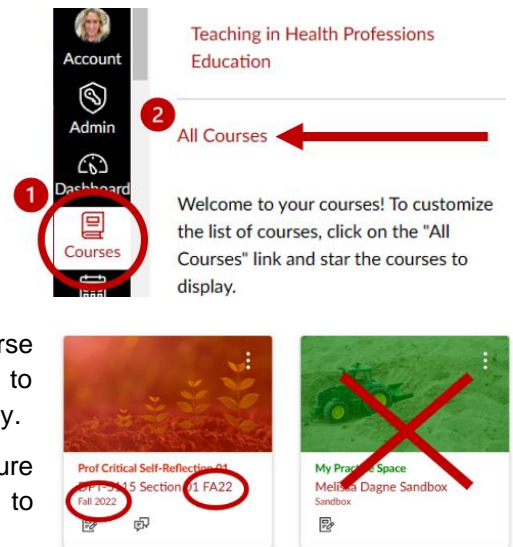
1. Access Canvas via **Cardinal Apps**. Don't see the course on the Dashboard? Check your **All Courses** list.

★ On your All Courses list, the orange star icon is how you control adding and removing courses from your Dashboard. Once a course end date passes, it will automatically be removed from your Dashboard.

2. Your academic courses show the term. You teach in these courses and Banner manages your student enrollments for you.

Any courses stating Blackboard or Sandbox are NOT your academic course to teach in. You can copy content from them into your academic course to reuse, but your student enrollments are in the academic course spaces only.

3. Still not able to find your Canvas courses? Contact your department to ensure you're added as instructor of record in Banner. Banner enrollments feed to academic Canvas courses.



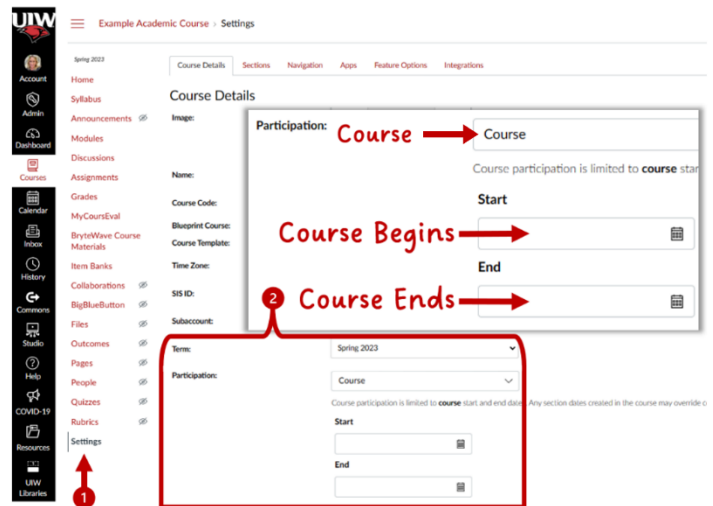
## Enter Course Start and End Dates

Does your course follow the undergraduate term dates on the **UIW academic calendar**? If not, you can control the start and end dates in your course.

In Settings, change Participation from Term to **Course** and set accurate **Start** and **End** dates and times. Scroll down to click **Update Course Details** to save your changes.

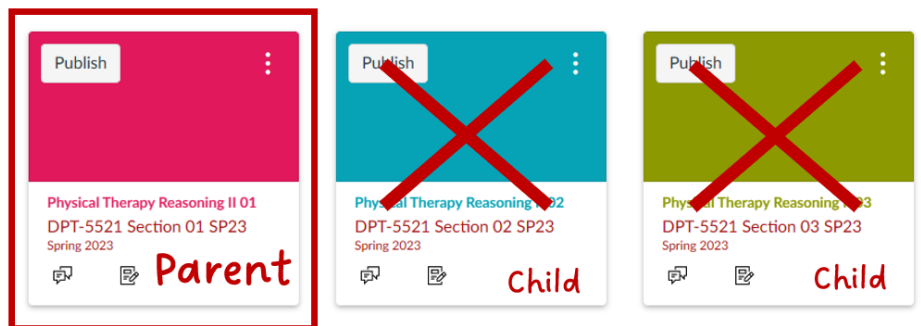
**If you're teaching multiple sections and plan to cross-list your courses, do this step in each section first!**

After the end date has passed, your course becomes READ-ONLY. **Submit a Help Desk ticket** to the Canvas administrator if you need to make changes to a read-only course.



## Cross-list Courses to Manage a Single Course

After you set your Course Start and End dates, you can combine multiple sections into one course. **Cross-list your Canvas courses** before you start building them. You'll select a parent course and associate the other sections as child courses. Then you and your students will no longer have access to the child courses.



## Copy Existing Content

Save time and effort by using content from existing Canvas courses rather than building from scratch. There are three methods to **copy content in Canvas**.

1. **Copy To:** Send a single piece of your course to a different course.

2. **Import Course Content – Select Content:** Pull pieces of your course into a different course.
3. **Import Course Content – All Content:** Pull an entire course into a different course.

## Edit the Home Welcome Page

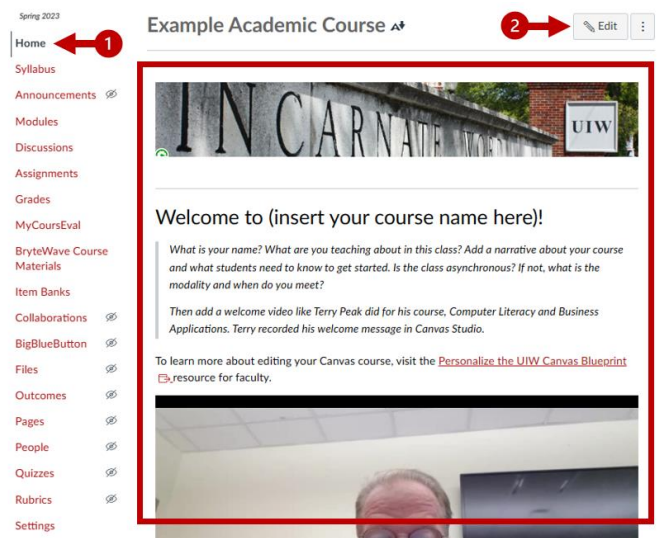
Your course home page welcomes students into the online space. Your welcome page sets the tone for your course, plus it's a great place to get students started off on the right foot and pique their curiosity about your subject.

Edit the placeholder text using the [Rich Content Editor](#) or [set the Front Page](#) to a different welcome page you copied from another course.

Tell students your name, if the course is on campus, online, or hybrid, and when the class plans to meet.

Then provide students with an introduction to your course subject and highlight what students can expect to learn.

A welcome video is a great way to get gain student interest. Delete Terry Peak's sample video by placing your cursor after the video and pressing the backspace key, then add your own video.

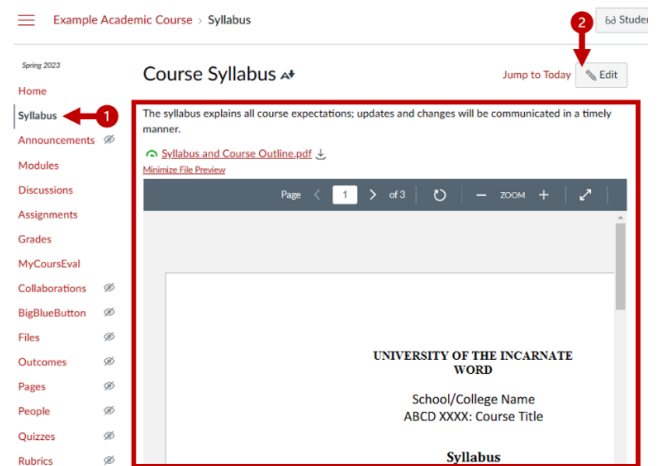


## Update Course Syllabus and Outline

Your syllabus and course outline contain critical information students rely on to understand expectations. You'll want to [remove the link](#) to the UIW Syllabus Template that comes with your course. Ensure you [upload an accurate, up-to-date version](#) and [link the document](#) on the [Syllabus page in Canvas](#).

Below the Course Syllabus area at the top of this page, is a section called **Course Summary**. This feature is automatically populated as you build assignments, graded discussions, quizzes, pages with dates, or add events to the Canvas course calendar.

Note you're unable to edit the Course Summary; make all changes within the specific items listed.

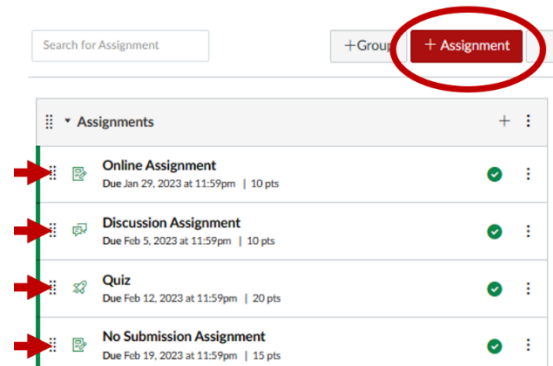


## Assignments

Building the [Assignment Index Page](#) automatically creates your gradebook and gives students access to [What If Grades](#) to help them track their progress. Graded Discussions or Quizzes also appear on the Assignment Index Page since they are features that get grades and need to be part of your gradebook. **One Assignment creates one corresponding column in the gradebook.**

Ensure your Assignments have clear instructions and the appropriate settings. There are [several types of Assignments](#), each offering custom features based on the type. For example, a No Submission assignment type removes the options for students to submit work online.

An Online submission type offers options to type a response, annotate a document, upload a file, and more.



**Due dates can be bulk edited** and further help communicate clear expectations to your students. Including due dates also gets the assignment added to the course calendar, To Do notifications, and the Course Summary in chronological order. This is an excellent way to keep students on track! **Availability dates are different** and control student access to the assignments, specifically allowing access on the start day/time and removing access on the end day/time. If you do not have an availability end date set, students can submit work late – late work is noted in the gradebook.

Do not publish **Group Assignments** prior to creating and assigning the Groups students work in. If students turn in a group assignment individually, you must delete the assignment, rebuild it, and have the students start over.

## Grades

You must **set a Grading Scheme** in your course Settings for letter grades to be assigned correctly. Account for how you want the system to round grades when you select an available scheme or build your own range values.

The screenshot shows the 'Settings' page for a course. A red arrow points to the 'Settings' tab. The 'Grading Scheme' section is circled in red, showing the option 'Enable course grading scheme' which is checked, with a 'set grading scheme' link below it. An inset window titled 'View/Edit Grading Scheme' displays a table of letter grades and their percentage ranges:

Name:	Range:	
A	100%	to 93%
A-	< 93%	to 90%
B+	< 90%	to 87%
B	< 87%	to 83%
B-	< 83%	to 80%
C+	< 80%	to 77%
C	< 77%	to 70%
D+	< 70%	to 67%
D	< 67%	to 63%
D-	< 63%	to 60%
F	< 60%	to 0%

Each Assignment you build in your course creates a column in Grades for your gradebook. The point value of an assignment tells Canvas how to calculate grades. An assignment with 0-point value is calculated as extra credit. Assignments with no grade entered are excluded from the calculation.

Organizing assignments into **Assignment Groups** tells Canvas to calculate all the assignments within the group - taking the total points earned and dividing them by the total possible points.

If you set **assignment groups to be weighted**, that calculated grade for the assignment group is multiplied by the percentage you indicate the group is worth toward the final grade.

For example, an instructor may create three assignment groups (A, B, and C) weighted at 20%, 50%, and 30%, respectively. The total score equation for a course with three assignment groups would be (percentage A x weight A) + (percentage B x weight B) + (percentage C x weight C) = final course percentage. If a student scores 75% in Group A, 98% in Group B, and 87% in Group C, the final score would be calculated as  $(.75 \times .20) + (.98 \times .50) + (.87 \times .30) = .901$ , or 90.1%.

The screenshot shows the 'Assignments' page in Canvas. A red circle highlights the '+Group' button. Below it, three assignment groups are listed:

- Academic Honesty - Check Your Papers for Proper Citations Here (0% of Total)
- Attendance and Participation Grades (10% of Total)
- Discussions Grades (10% of Total)

The final score calculation is changed if there are no graded items in an assignment group. In this case, all assignment groups with graded items will be divided by their combined weight, and the assignment groups without graded items are removed from the equation. If the previous example were adjusted so Group C contained no graded discussions, assignments, or quizzes, the calculation for final score would be  $[(.75 \times .20) + (.98 \times .50)] \div .70 = .9143$ , or 91.43%.

## Confirm Office Hours and Contact Info

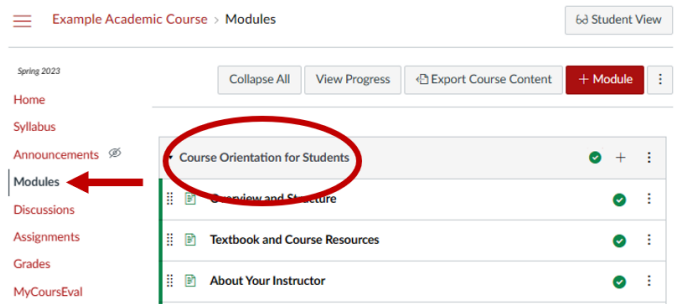
Busy schedules impact our availability each term and your office hours or method of hosting them may change. Ensure the information provided in the course is accurate so students can contact you easily. Contact information fits nicely on the **About Your Instructor page** provided with each course. Add a bio, photo, and video to humanize the online space. An **Introduce Yourself discussion** is also provided to invite your students to do the same and further establish your course community. Consider hosting virtual office hours using the **Zoom integration in Canvas**.

## Orientation Module

An orientation module is much like an introductory paragraph in a well-written paper. It allows you to introduce your course, organize general information, and provide resources that help students get started.

An orientation module is a good place to offer practice activities students can use to learn new technology and troubleshoot their devices. This practice is particularly important if you are planning to use features under specific time constraints, such as a quiz during class, and want to avoid time spent on technical issues.

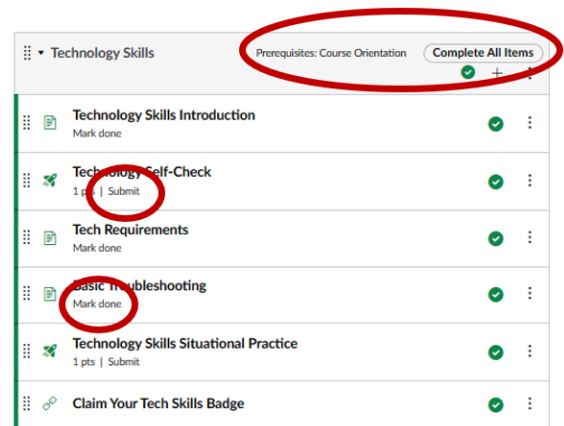
Ensure the **module is published** as well as each item within the module or students are unable to see the information.



## Content Modules and Instructional Materials

Content modules and instructional materials guide students through your course. Sequencing your instruction from simple to complex and following a consistent structure supports student success. Modules can be **locked until a set date and time**, have **prerequisites** to complete before gaining access to the next module, or **requirements** preventing students from moving on until they complete the work.

Ensure your instructional materials are updated and use consistent language between your syllabus, online course space, and instructional materials to reduce student confusion. For example, ensure the name of a video students are expected to watch is called the same title across all the places you reference it.

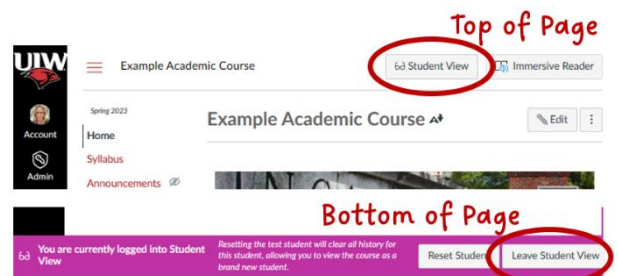


## Student View

**Student View** changes your view into a student perspective. Use Student view to ensure the course looks and functions as you expect it to. Performing this quality check reduces emails from students about unpublished modules, missing content, and broken links.

Student View allows you to submit assignments, quizzes, and discussions as a Test Student and records your activity in the gradebook. If you have assignments that are not available to students yet, Student View is also unable to access the assignment. Use this feature to **practice grading** and see how grades are calculated based on the way you have set up your course. To delete the Test Student's data, use the Reset Student button to the left of the Leave Student View button.

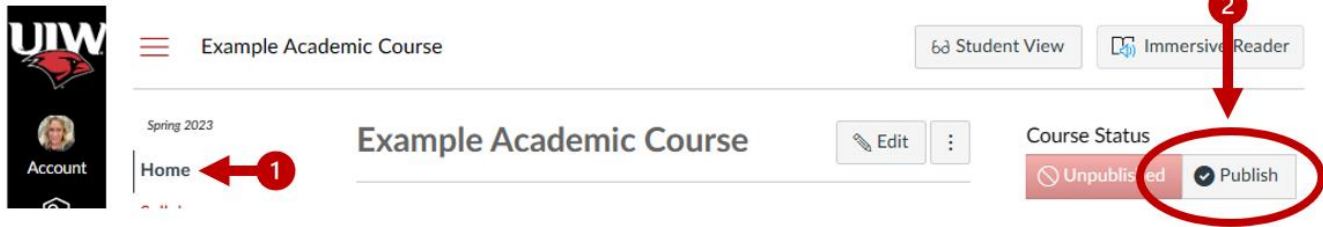
**Note Student View doesn't work with third-party tech tools**, such as digital textbooks and other available software, since the Test Student is a feature of Canvas and not an actual account.



## Publish Your Course Before the Start Date and Time

Ensure you **publish your course** before the start date and time you indicated in Settings. Students can only see, enter, and work in a Published course.

The option to unpublish a course is disabled after students begin participating. Note you must publish the entire course with this button in addition to having published each item and module throughout the course.



## Welcome Announcement or Email

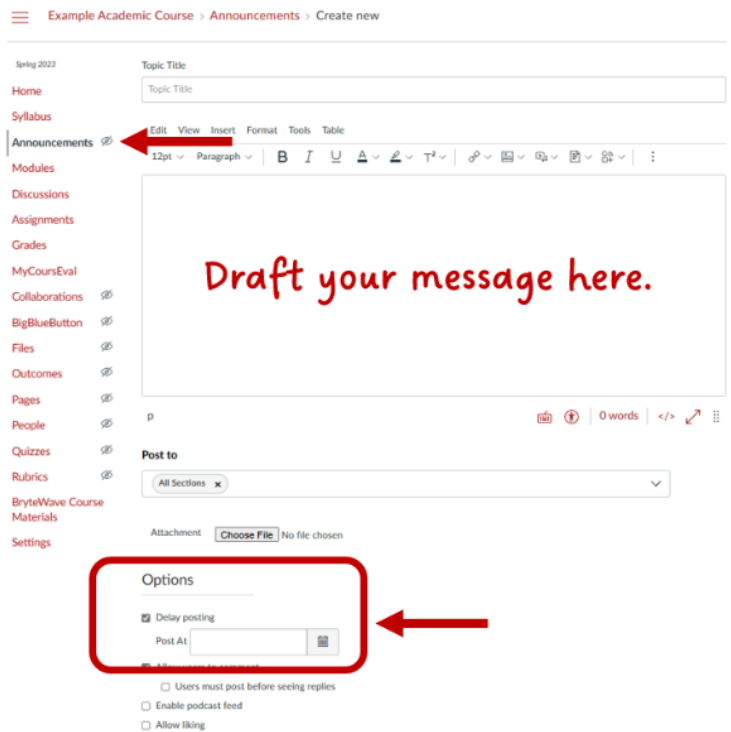
Make a great first impression and create a positive presence by starting off the term with a welcome **Announcement with a delayed release** to post when your course participation start date and time begins.

The Announcement tool remains hidden from students on the course menu until you have posted your first announcement – indicated by the eye with a line crossed through it.

For students to receive a notification email and see a Canvas Announcement:

1. Your course must be Published.
2. The course start date and time must have passed before the time the message is posted.

If you prefer to reach students before your Canvas course is published and set to start, use email instead.



## Add Colleagues Not Handled by Banner

All instructors of record and students are given access to Canvas courses through Banner. An instructor can add additional users to their courses in People using a UIW email address.

The person you add receives an invitation to accept both on their Canvas Dashboard and as an email notification. **Note your course must be published before invitations are sent.** If a co-instructor needs access before the course is published, contact your department to have them added as an instructor in Banner.

[How to add a user to your course](#) | [How to remove a user from your course](#)