Canvas User Guide (LMS Admin)

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Frequently Asked Questions

Can I share my Discussion podcast feed with the public?

This is possible to do. See How do I create a podcast with a Canvas Discussion for more information.

How do I obtain an API access token?

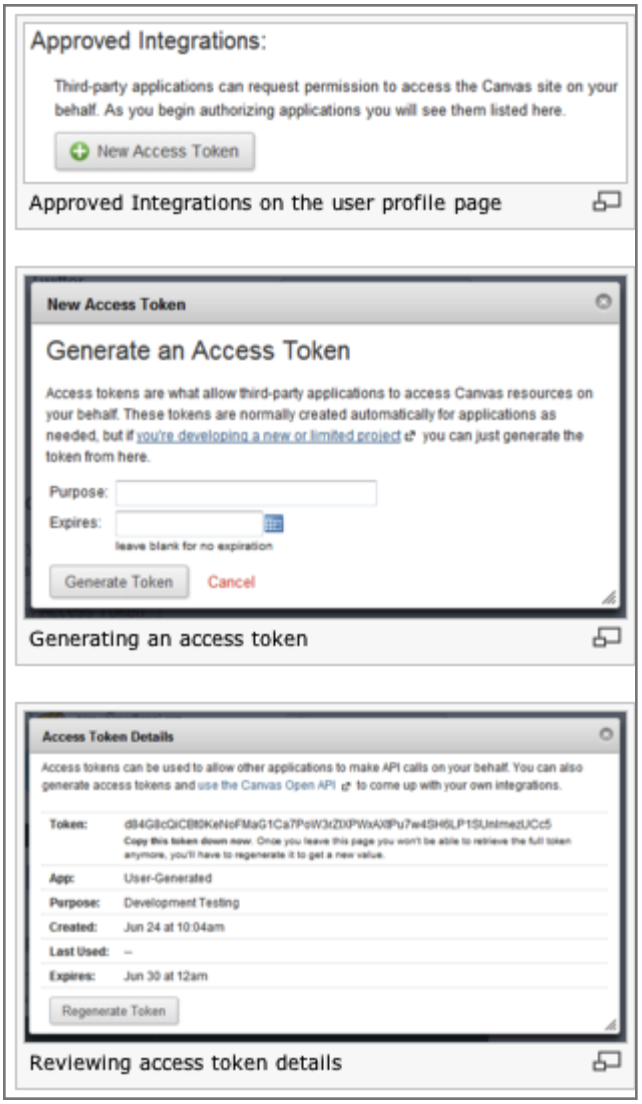
Canvas allows for programmatic access to some pieces of information via the Canvas API. API calls require authorization, and are made on behalf of an authorized user. The information returned will be different depending on the user you are representing, their roles and permissions. We are using OAuth2 for remote services to allow access to resources (note: we haven't yet completely the typical Oauth-user delegation flow, but have a pre-generation utility that can be used in the mean time), which means that all API calls will need to be over https, and will require an access token as a means of representing the user.

You can see the most up-to-date documentation on github (note: this link is to the most up-to-date API interface, which may or may not be accurate for locally installed instances of Canvas. If you are not using Canvas Cloud, talk to you site administrator about getting an accurate set of API documentation. Admins, you can generate this documentation by running rake doc:api on the console).

Obtaining an Access Token

In a user's profile, there is a section titled, "Approved Integrations". This is a way for a user to create an access token that can be shared with a third party, giving the remote service permission to access Canvas resources on behalf of the user. The user can give a name to the external tool for easier identification, set an expiration, and even revoke access to the API by deleting the token.

Once you have a Canvas login you can create one of these access tokens to use for testing your development projects. Copy down the token string. This token must be included as a URL query parameter in any API calls made to Canvas.



Approved Integrations on the user profile page

Generating an access token

Reviewing access token details

Making API Calls With an Access Token

Making API Calls With an Access Token

All API calls must also be made over https. The access token must be included as a URL query parameter in any API calls made to Canvas. For example, the endpoint to grab the user's list of courses is

GET /api/v1/courses.json

If Bob's access token were "token_of_magical_power" then you would call

GET /api/v1/courses.json?access_token=token_of_magical_powers

to retrieve Bob's list of courses.

For a detailed example of using the API, check out the API basics documentation on github.

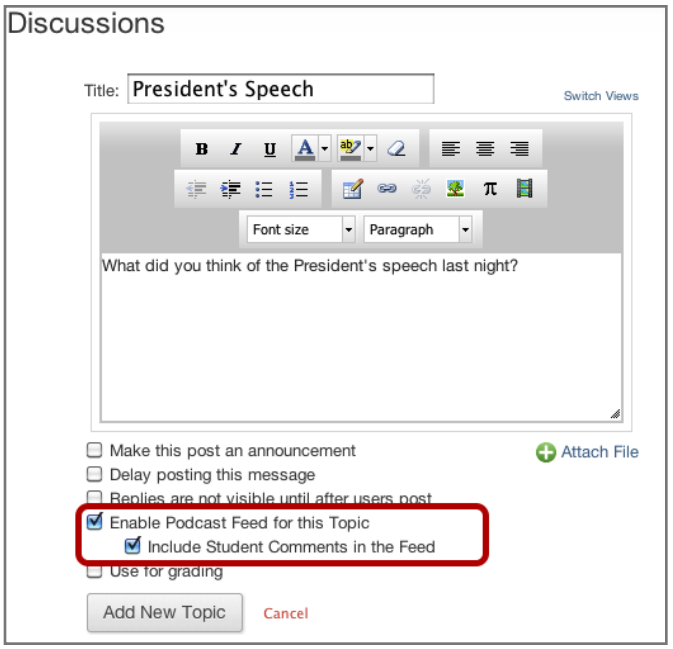
How does the Canvas announcement feed integrate with iTunes?

Canvas announcements themselves do not integrate with iTunes. However, it is possible to create a discussion topic that does. View the document on enabling a Podcast feed for Discussions to find information on how to do this.

How do I create a podcast with a Canvas Discussion?

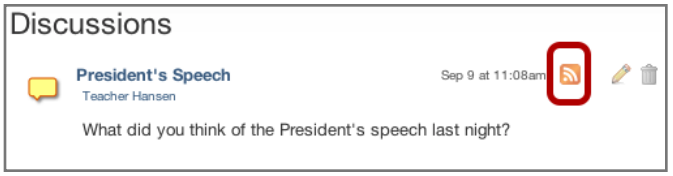
Enable Podcast Feed for Discussion

When creating the Discussion, check "Enable Podcast Feed for this Topic" to have Canvas create the podcast feed. You can optionally set Canvas to include Student media comments in the Podcast feed.



You can tell that a discussion has a Podcast feed when it has an RSS feed icon near the title.

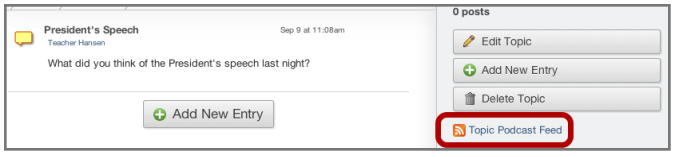
Click on the Discussion title to view the Discussion details.



Get the Podcast Link

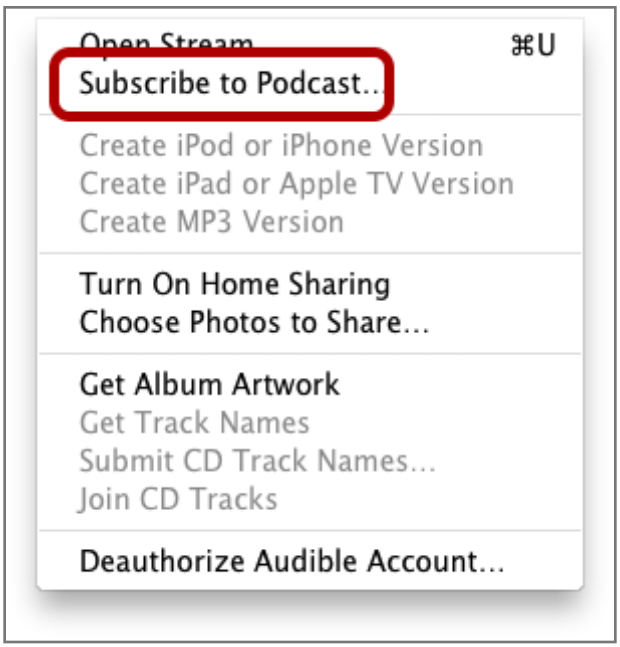
In the right Sidebar, you will find the "Topic Podcast Feed" link. Copy the target of the link.

Note: The target URL of this link is different for each user. You must either be a student or teacher of the course to get a link that will work in iTunes or other podcast-compatible programs.



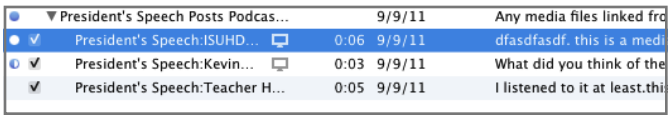
Subscribe to Podcast

The URL that is copied can be used to subscribe to the podcast with programs like iTunes.



Example of iTunes

This screenshot show an example of what the podcast looks like in iTunes.



How do I clear my browser cache?

How do I clear my browser cache?

Firefox (Windows):

- Clear Cache: In Firefox go to Tools > Options > Advanced > Network (tab) > "Clear Now" button
- Clear Cookies: In Firefox go to Tools > Options > Privacy > "Remove individual cookie" link > "Remove All Cookies" button

Firefox 4+ (Windows):

- Clear Cache: In Firefox go to Firefox (top left) > Options > Options > Advanced > Network (tab) > "Clear Now" button

Firefox (Mac):

- Clear Cache: In the menu bar select Tools > Clear Recent History. Set the Time Range to clear drop-down to Everything and check cache and cookies in the boxes below and click the Clear Now button. Quit Firefox and restart.
- Clear Cookies: Same process

IE 8

- Clear Cache & Cookies: In Internet Explorer go to Tools > Internet Options > General > Browser History (section) click "Delete" button > Place checks for
- Temporary Internet Files and Cookies, remove check for Preserve Favorites Website Data > Click "Delete" button. Restart IE8

Safari

- In Safari > Reset Safari > Check these boxes:
- Clear History
- Remove all webpage preview images
- Empty the cache
- Remove all cookies
- Remove all website icons
- Close all Safari windows.

How do I brand my Canvas instance?

We've spent a lot of time making sure that the user experience for Canvas is easy, simple, and intuitive, and we don't want to leave anyone out. In fact, Canvas received the "Gold" certification from the National Federation of the Blind, becoming the fastest LMS ever to do so. For this reason, we allow limited customization of colors and schemes.

Canvas conforms with the W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WAI WCAG) 2.0 AA and Section 508 guidelines.

To brand your own install of Canvas, you'll need a few things to get started:

The branding files - https://instructure-branding.s3.amazonaws.com/example_branding.zip
Knowledge of CSS
An admin account on Canvas

The branding process is pretty straightforward:

Use the files to guide you as you create your own CSS file for the site. The file is heavily commented and will give you some good insights into naming conventions, sizes, etc. When your CSS file is complete, you'll want to post it somewhere that is accessible to both http and https requests.
Build your custom imagery using the images in the zip file as templates for size.
From your General Account Management Page, go to Settings and you will see the Global JavaScript and CSS includes box:

GlobalCSS.jpg

4. Paste a global URL directed to the override.css that you have modified in the Global CSS URL field.

5. Your branding should be visible.

*Please note that you may need to use HTTPS for any url located in the CSS file if you receive security warnings when viewing your branded Canvas instance in Internet Explorer.

You can also customize the login page graphic as well. Here are instructions courtesy of Tom Bell about how to modify the css file and background graphic:

The following are the steps to create a custom login page.

Save the original 'login-bg.jpg' image from your site.
Modify the original image to look like you want. Since you can't modify the html on the login page without global Javascript, I found that it was just easiest to add information to the image direct. For example I added our support number to the bottom.
Add the following css to your overrides.css file (the pieces you'd like):

```
#modal-box {
 background: url("login-bg.jpg?v1") no-repeat !important; /* This will pick up your custom image */
 color: #8DC34B !important; /* The color of the text on the login page */
 height: 400px !important; /* Optional I changed the height of the original image which was 687x396 */
}

#flash_notice_message, #flash_error_message { background-color: #8DC34B !important; } /* Changes the background color of the flash notice. This is what you see at the top of the page when you login. */

#footer { margin: 0px auto !important; } /* Optional I moved the footer to be more consistent with our look. */
.forgot_password_link {display: none;} /* Optional I hide the Forgot your Password link because we are using LDAP. We are still discussing whether or not this is a good idea. This means that anyone with a canvas internal account won't be able to change their password. */

#modal-box h2 { margin: 55px 10px 0; } /* Optional login-bg.jpg is also used on the confirm registration page. Our logo is in the upper left and the text on the page overlapped it so I moved the whole registration form down.*/
```

Which browsers does Canvas support?

Which browsers does Canvas support?

Browsers: Mozilla Firefox 3.5+, Apple Safari 4+, Microsoft Internet Explorer 8+, Google Chrome

Canvas will support most recent versions of IE8, Safari, Firefox and Chrome. Canvas will function when using IE 7, but we cannot guarantee or support all functionality. We highly reccomend using higher versions of IE. We support Flash 9.0 and higher.

Now, with that said, we will run on earlier versions of some of these, but they may be a bit more buggy. Here are some of the comments from our engineers -

I'd suggest the message you send is something like "Canvas works best in the most recent versions of Firefox, Chrome, Safari, Opera, and Internet Explorer and with the most recent version of the flash plugin. Be sure to keep your browser and flash player up to date."

Canvas will work fine without any Flash, you just wont see any media comments.

It will work fine in IE8 and above, you just won't have any rounded corners and rendering and interaction on a lot of pages will be noticeably slower than in a good browser like Chrome or Firefox.

There are only 2 hard requirements:
1. You have to have Javascript enabled in your browser. 2. No IE 6, it's just too bad to be able to do do the interactive things canvas does.

Canvas runs on Windows, Mac & Linux. All that is required is a web browser! To get them most out of Canvas, please use the following recommendations for browsers and versions when running Canvas.

The minimum browsers versions that Canvas will support are:
Internet Explorer 8
Chrome 9
Safari 5
Firefox 3.6
Flash 9 (plug-in)

We recommend using these browser versions:

Internet Explorer 9
Chrome 11
Safari 5
Firefox 3.6 or 4
Flash 10 (plug-in)

Why does the student see a different version of the quiz than the one I am working on?

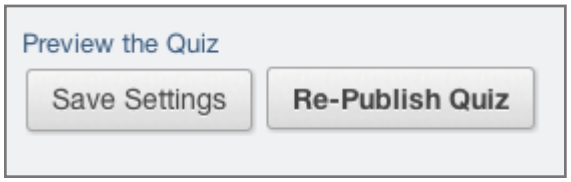
There are severals scenarios that can cause a student to see a different version of a quiz that the instructor.

When a Student Start a Quiz

Once a student starts a quiz, Canvas essentially freezes the version of the quiz until the student completes the quiz.

Instructor Must Re-Publish a Quiz

Instructors can make changes to a quiz as much they want until students start taking the quiz. At that point the quiz is locked at the current version. Instructors can continue to make changes but until the "Republish Quiz" button is clicked, the quiz is locked at the previous version.

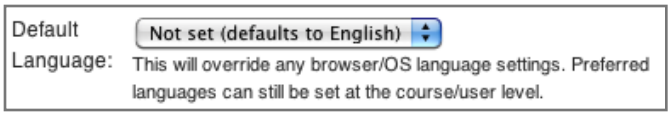


What aspects of the user experience can the LMS admin enable or disable?

There are several user experience settings that Admins can adjust for Accounts and Sub-Accounts. All of these settings are found on the Account Settings page.

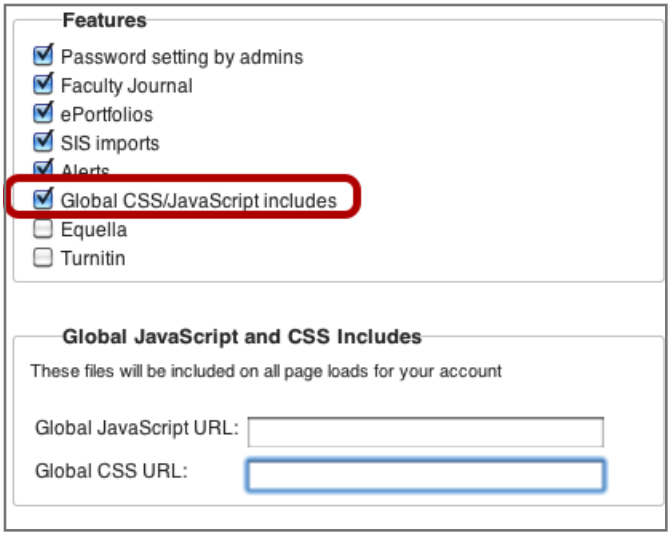
Default Language

Admins can set the default language for an account. It is not set initially.



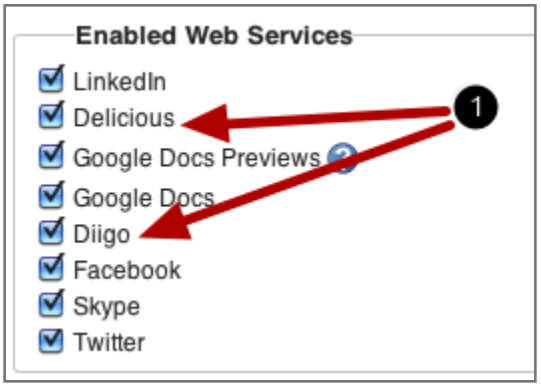
Branding

In coordination with Canvas Support Staff, an organization can enable custom CSS and JavaScript that can be used to customize the look and feel of their Canvas instance.



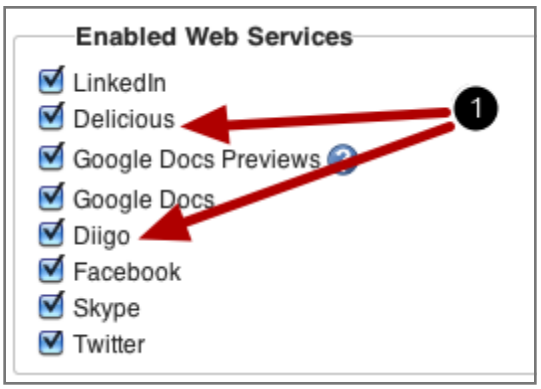
Web Services

Several of the Web Services integrated with Canvas modify the user experience in small ways.



Delicious and Diigo

The Delicious and Diigo Web Services (1) enable users to create links to their Delicous or Diigo bookmarks anywhere they use the Canvas Rich Content Editor.



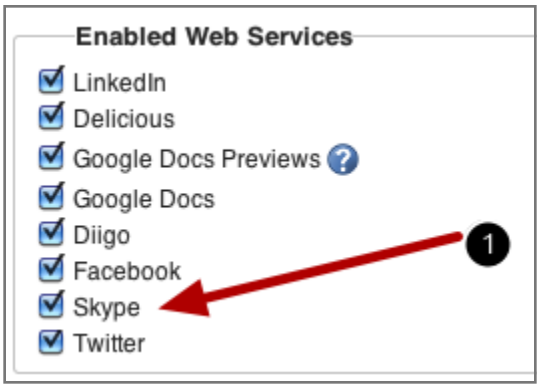
Google Docs

Enabling the Google Docs Web service(1) allows:

- Students to submit assignments from their Google Docs
- Students and Teachers to use Collaborations with Google Docs.

Skype

The Skype Web Service (1) allows users to connect their skype profile to their Canvas user profile. Doing this will enable a Skype Status icon to appear in several places in Canvas to indicate if the user is logged into Skype.



Accounts and Sub Accounts

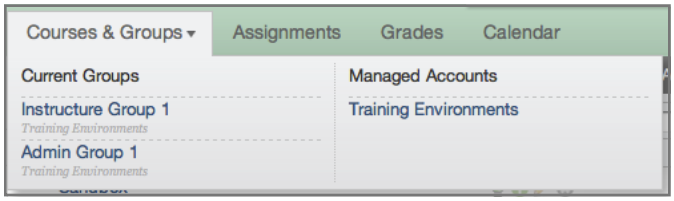
How do I create a Sub-Account in Canvas?

Creating Sub-Accounts can be a good way to organize Courses, Learning Outcomes, Administrative users as well as other items in Canvas. Many items that are created at an Account level can be created at a Sub-Account Level as well. In addition, features like Permissions can potentially override settings in the parent account.

This articles describes how to create a Sub-Account.

Navigate to your Account

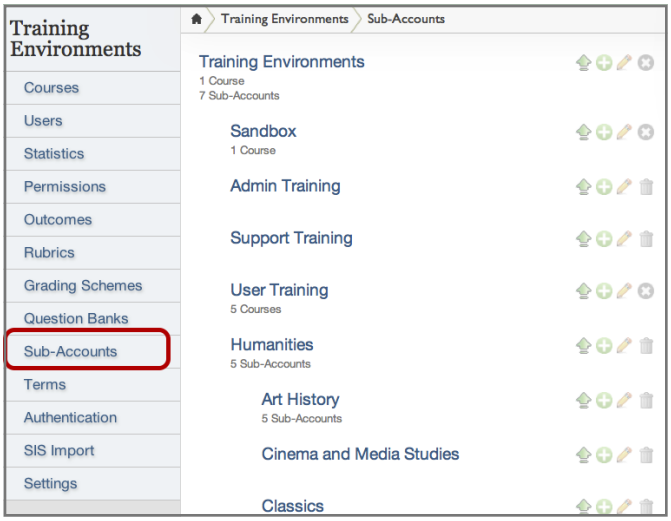
Navigate to your Account using the Global "Courses and Groups" drop down menu. In this example, the Account being managed is **Training Environments**. Click on the Account.



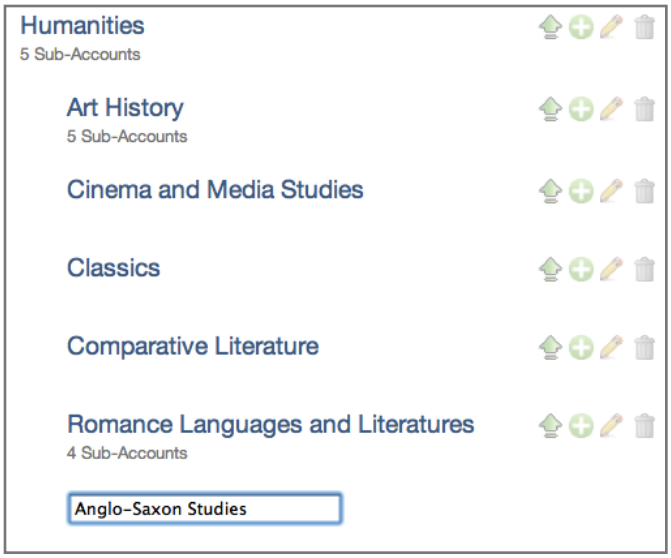
Open Sub-Account Page

Click on Sub-Accounts. On the page that appears we will create the Sub-Account.

In the main screen will be listed all Sub-Accounts under this Account. To add a Sub-Account, click on the plus sign to the right of the Account that should house the new Sub-Account. In this example, I will add a Sub-Account called **Anglo-Saxon Studies**.



After clicking on the plus sign, a text box will appear that you should use to enter the name of the new Sub-Account then press **Enter**.



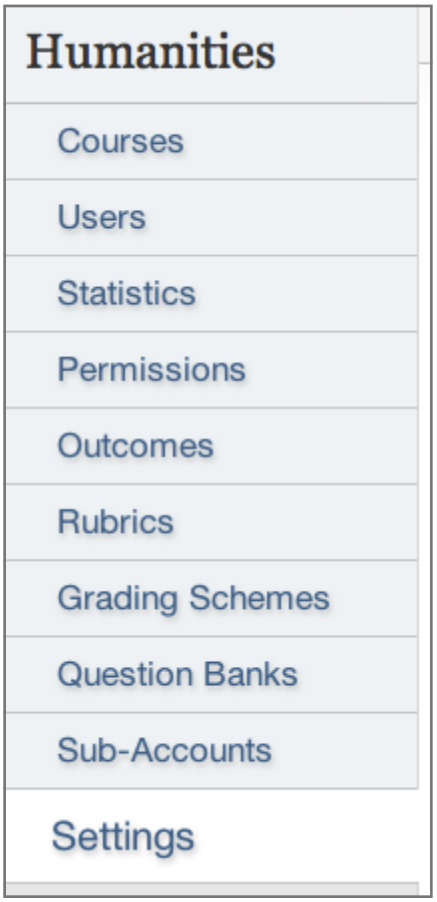
Click on the pencil icon to edit the name of the Sub-Account. Click on the trash can to delete it.

Note: You cannot delete an Account that has courses in it.

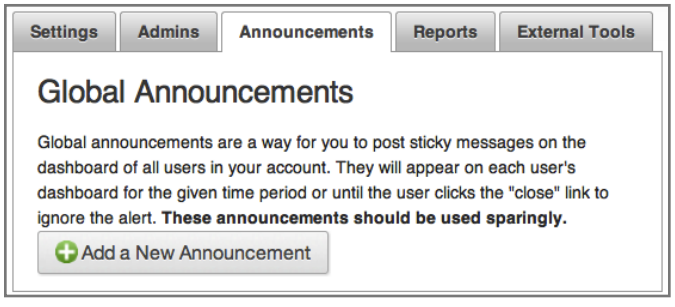
How do I send a message to all users in an account?

The ability to send a message to all users of an Account is actually called "Announcements".

Click on the settings page of the Account you want to send the Announcement to.

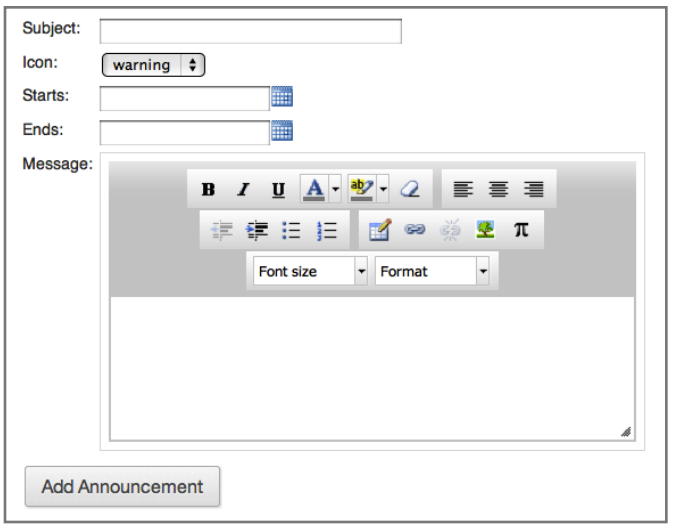


Click on the **Announcements** tab then **Add a New Announcement**.



Add Announcement Details

Fill out the fields for the Announcement then click **Add Announcement**.



How do I add an Administrative user to an account?

Navigate to the Admins Tab

Navigate to the Settings page for an Account. Click on the **Admins** tab.

Add Admin by Email

Enter the email address of the user you want to add as an Account Admin then click **Add Admin**.

If the user already has a profile in Canvas, they will receive an email notifying them that they are now an Admin for the Account.

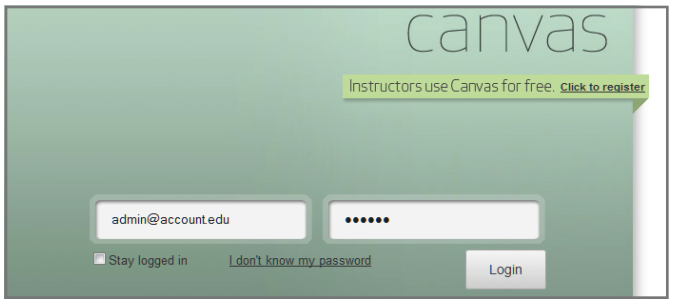
If the user does not already have a profile, they will receive an email with a link they will need to use to create a profile. Once this is done, the user will be able to access the Account in the Courses and Groups drop down at the top of Canvas.

How do I change self-enrollment settings for my account?

Self-enrollment allows a student to sign up for a course without being invited to the course by an instructor or added to the course via SIS import. An account administrator determines if self-enrollment is enabled, partially enabled or disabled for the account. If self-enrollment is enabled, an instructor may still choose to enable or disable self-enrollment at the course level. This guide demonstrates how to change self-enrollment options at the account level.

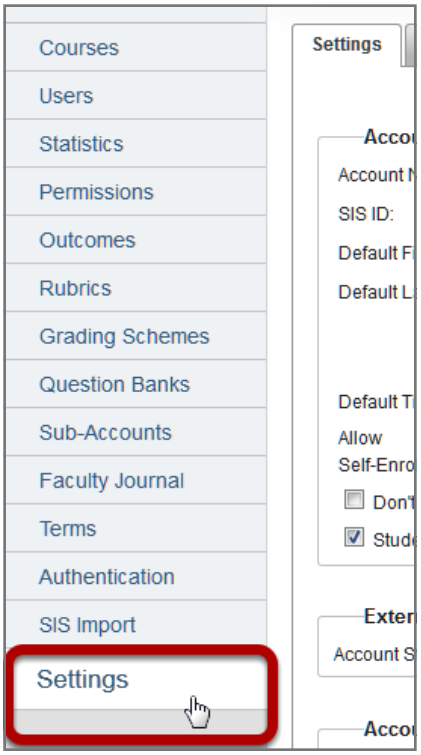
Login to Canvas with an administrator account

You must have administrator access for your institution to change the self-enrollment setting for the account.



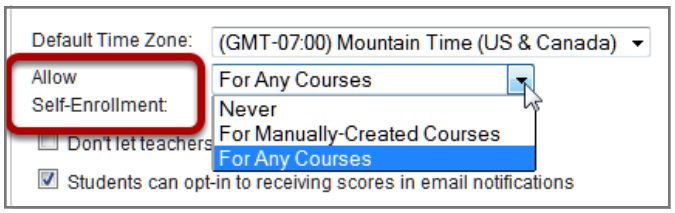
Choose Settings from the Account Navigation

From the Account Navigation menu, choose Settings



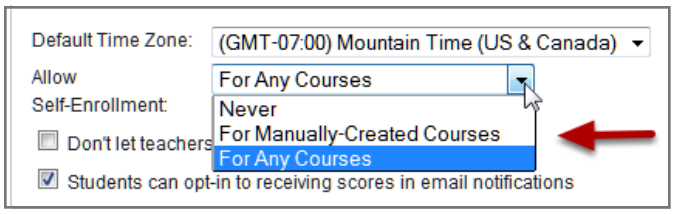
Select Self-Enrollment drop-down menu

On the Settings tab, select the drop-down menu next to Allow Self-Enrollment



Select a Self-Enrollment option

1. The "Never" option turns off self-enrollment for all courses. Students must be invited to the course or be enrolled via the SIS.
2. The "For Manually-Created Courses" option enables student self-enrollment for courses manually created in Canvas but not for courses imported from an SIS.
3. The "For Any Courses" option enables student self-enrollment for all available courses.



Restricting self-enrollment options at the course level

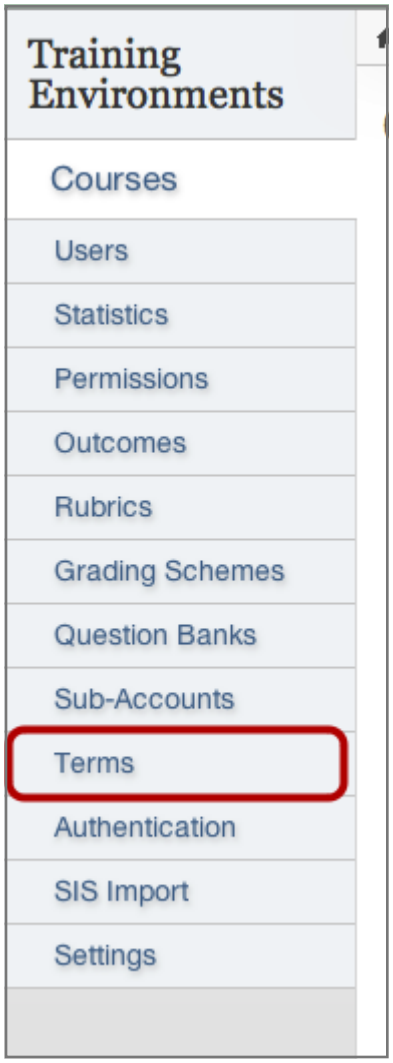
Note: If an institution chooses to enable self-enrollment for courses, self-enrollment must still be enabled at the individual course level to allow self-enrollment for that course. The default for all courses is that self-enrollment is turned off. See How do I change self-enrollment settings for my course?

Terms

How do I create a Term?

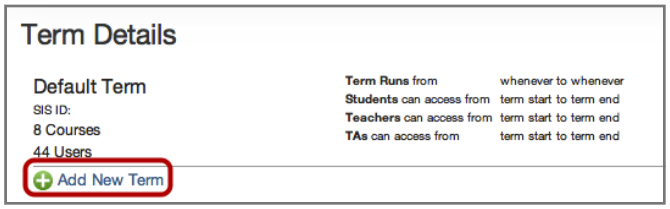
Navigate to Terms Settings Page

When looking at the Account click on **Terms**.



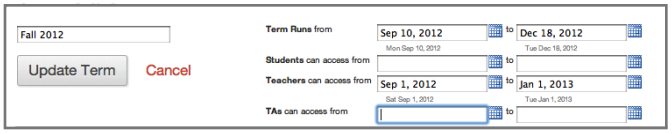
Click Add New Term

Click Add New Term.



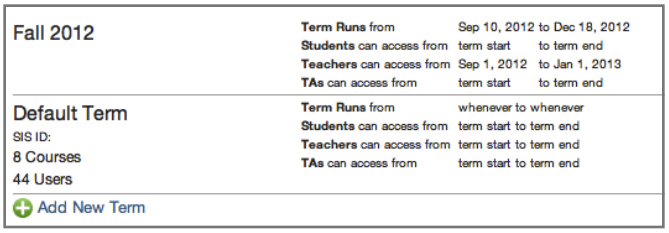
Edit Term Details

Edit the Term details. In the example above, I have created a term called Fall 2012. The default dates go from Sep 10,2010 to Dec 18, 2012 but teachers can access it 9 days before the term and until Jan 1, 2013.



Click Add Term to save your changes.

View Changes



Users

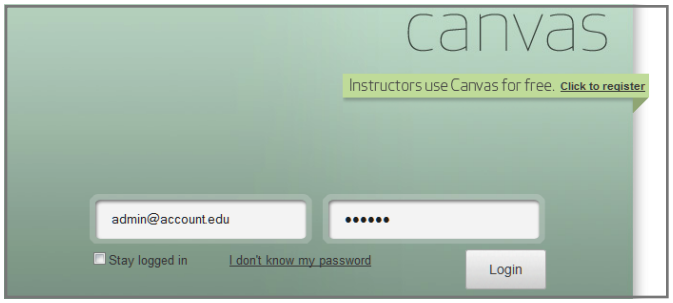
How do I change open registration settings for my account?

Open registration allows students who do not have an existing account at your institution to register for courses. An administrator can enable or disable open registration for the account.

If open registration is enabled, an instructor can invite a student to participate in a course even if the student does not exist within the SIS. If open registration and self-enrollment are both enabled, a student can choose to self-enroll in a course without having an account in the institution's SIS.

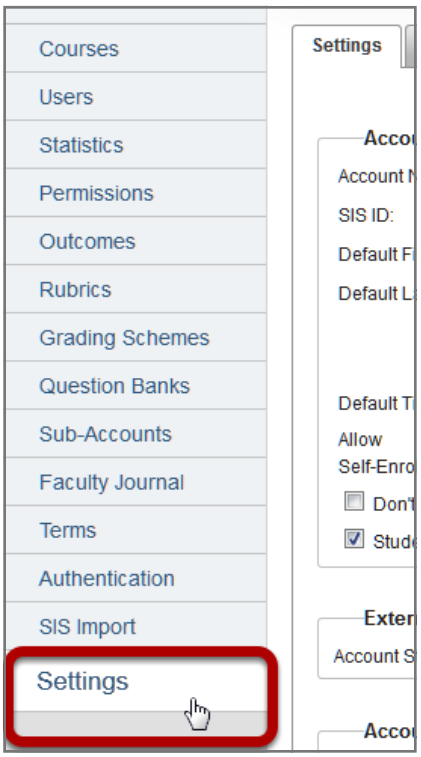
Login to Canvas with an administrator account

You must have administrator access for your institution to change the open registration setting for the account.



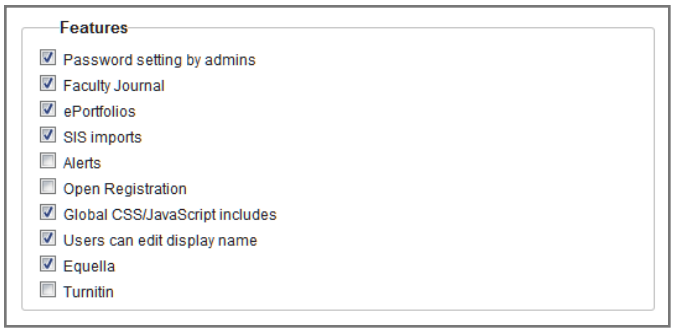
Choose Settings from the Account Navigation

From the Account Navigation menu, choose Settings



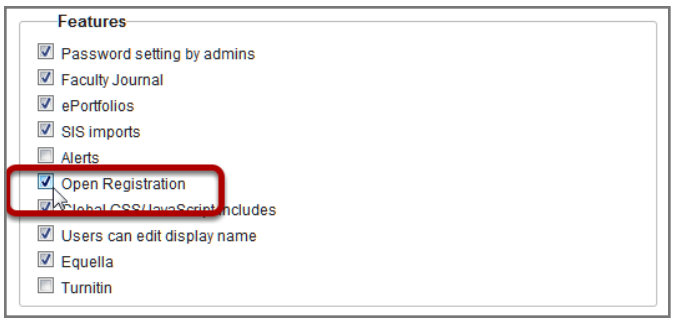
Scroll down to "Features" group

On the Settings tab, scroll down to the "Features" group of options



Enable or Disable Open Registration

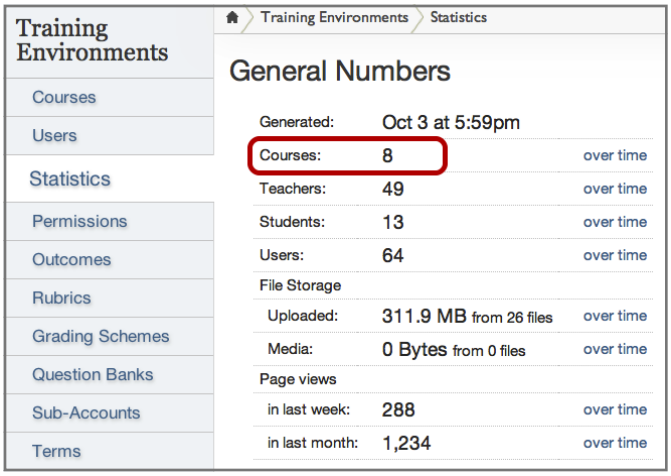
Clicking the checkbox next to Open Registration enables this option for your account. By default, this option is turned off. If you enable open registration, students who do not have an account at your institution will be allowed to register for courses in Canvas.



Reports and Statistics

How do I know how many courses are in my Canvas instance?

When viewing an Account, click on Statistics to view general statistics about the account that include the number of courses in the account.



Authentication

How do I integrate LDAP?

We use LDAP for authentication only. You won't be able to log in to Canvas with an LDAP account unless there is also a corresponding account created in Canvas through SIS imports.

If enabled:

1. Usernames and password from the login are received over our secure login.
2. We authenticate using our provided account to the institution's LDAP server.
3. We search for the user by appending the provided filter with the provided username substituted to the Base query string
4. We re-bind using the found user and the provided password to authenticate the user.
5. If the authentication was successful, we look up the associated user created in Canvas (via SIS integration or Bulk Enrollment)
6. If the user is found, we log them in. Roles and permissions policies are dictated by enrollments within Canvas.

In order to set up an LDAP integration with an institution we need the following information:

* Host address of their LDAP server (ex: ldap.college.edu)
* Port of LDAP server
* Does this host and port require SSL?
* Base query string
* Filter- the LDAP filter used to select subsets of the search (for example (sAMAccountName=Template:Login))
* LDAP Username
* LDAP Password for institution-created Instructure user for bind/re-bind
* Login label ex: uid or sAMAccountName (ActiveDirectory). The value of this LDAP attribute should match the login_id value given to Canvas through the Bulk Enrollment API.

Bind/Re-bind

Institutions should create an LDAP account for Instructure Canvas. This makes it so that they do not have to allow unauthenticated search or query access to their LDAP servers. Authenticated searches can more easily be logged and debugged when tied to an account.

Firewall Rules

Many LDAP servers are not publicly available and are protected by firewalls. If this is the case, in order to authenticate users with LDAP they will have to create a firewall exception that allows our servers access to the LDAP server. We designate a stable set of servers and their associated IP addresses to simplify these firewall exception rules (stable meaning they aren't spun down due to Automated Provisioning).

Integrations

What integrations are or can be enabled with Canvas?

Below is a list of industry players and our integration levels with each of them

Integrated (Normal)
No Integration (Italics)
Partial Integration (Bold)

Social Media/Communication

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Delicious
- Skype
- Diigo
- SMS
- YouTube
- Email
- RSS/Atom Feeds
- **LinkedIn**

SSO

- LDAP
- SAML
- CAS

SIS

- Banner
- **PeopleSoft**
- *Diamond-D*
- *Datatel*
- *CampusVue*
- *PowerSchool*
- *Jenzabar*
- *Poise*

(we can do any SIS via batch integration or mass upload)

Collaboration

- Diigo
- Google Docs
- Ether Pad
- Scribd
- Google Calendar
- iCal
- Outlook
- TinyChat
- Big Blue Button
- Wimba
- Adobe Connect

Educational

- Turnitin
- Wimba
- Equella
- **Respondus**
- **E-Packs/Publisher Content**
- *ExamView*
- *IMS QTI*
- LaTex (Native Equation Editor)

Multimedia

- Kaltura
- Equella
- Flickr
- RSS
- Podcasts

Calendar formats

- Outlook, iCal, Google

Course Import Formats

- Basic LTI (course content)
- IMS QTI for quizzes
- SCORM packages (content linking through modules, but no gradebook connection)
- *AICC*
- WebCT (Blackboard Vista)
- Blackboard

- Angel

Course Cartridges

- McGraw-Hill course cartridges
- Cengage
-

Course Export

- Common Cartridge

How do I enable Turnitin for my Account?

Turnitin is the leading academic plagiarism detector, utilized by teachers and students to avoid plagiarism and ensure academic integrity. (http://www.turnitin.com)

Canvas supports Turnitin. Follow these steps to enable it for an account or sub-account.

Signup for Turnitin Account

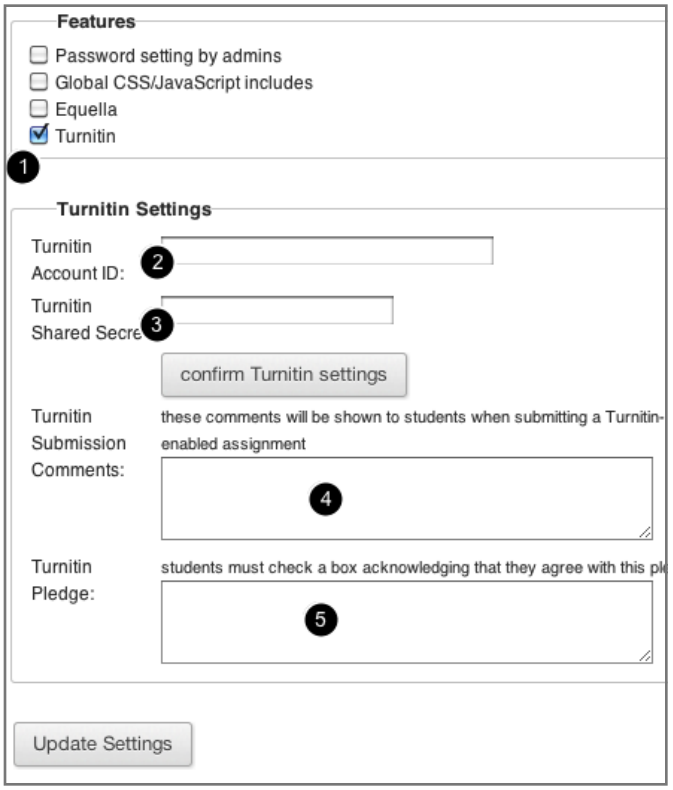
Signup for an account with Turnitin.com.

Enable in Account Settings Page

Open the settings page for the account or subaccount for which you are enabling Turnitin. Find the "Features" section and check "Turnitin" (1). Enter you Turnitin Account ID (2), and Shared Secret (3).

Those are the only required changes to make. There are two more options to fill out if you wish. You can also enter a generic comment (4) that students will see each time they submit an Turnitin-enabled assignment. There is also a space (5) for an agreement that students must acknowledge before submitting their first Turnitin-enabled assignment.

Click **Update Settings** to save your changes.



Does Canvas integrate with my SIS?

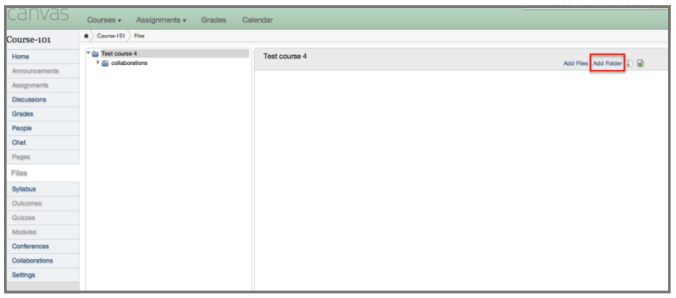
Canvas has built-in support for a number of different SIS systems. For more information on these integration details please contact info@instructure.com.

Canvas can also support integrating with arbitrary SIS systems or other user management tools through its SIS CSV interface. For more information on the details of the Canvas SIS import format, please see the Canvas SIS Import Format Documentation and our API documentation.

How to I import SCORM objects?

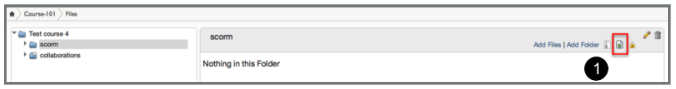
Canvas supports importing content from SCORM (Shareable Content Object Reference Model) objects.

To start the process go to the "Files" page, click add folder

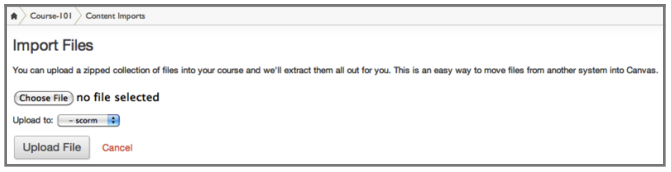


Give the folder a name and press "Enter"

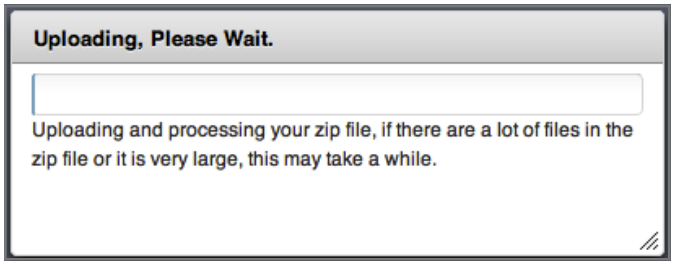
Click on the "import zip file" (1) option.
Note: This button is only available in the Course Files upload screen.



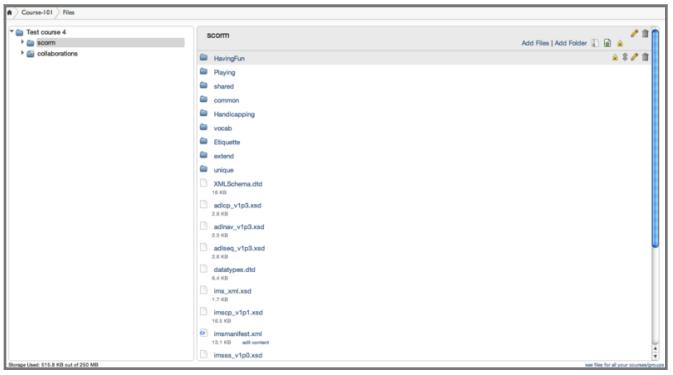
Click on the "Choose file" button, navigate to the file you want to upload making sure you've selected the correct target directory, and click "Upload".



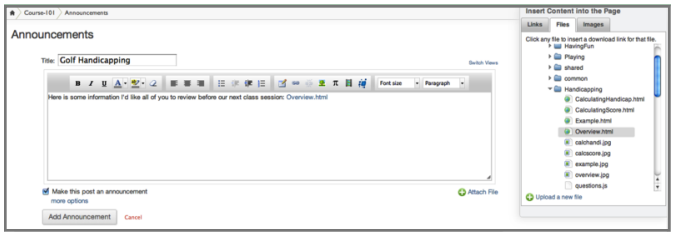
You will see a progress bar indicating that the SCORM file is being uploaded and unpacked by Canvas



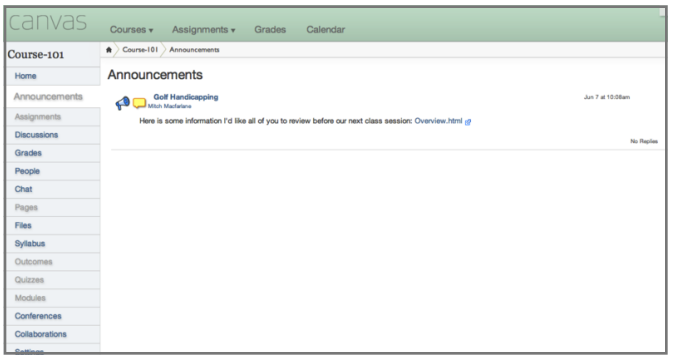
Once the upload and unpacking processes are complete you can click on the directory you created and see the content of the SCORM file.



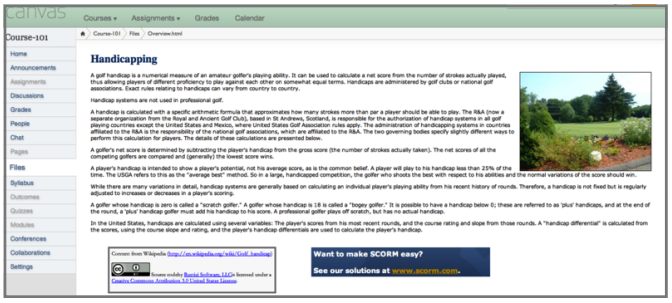
Now you can link to your SCORM content from many places in Canvas. You can link to it from an Assignment, within a Module, a wiki, or many other places. I've chosen to create an Announcement with a link to the content. After you click the "Create Announcement" button you will give your Announcement a title and text in the body. On the right-hand side of the page you have a tab that will display all files for the course. Navigate to the file you want to link to and double-click it. This will create a link inside your Announcement.



Here's what the Announcement will look like after I've created it.



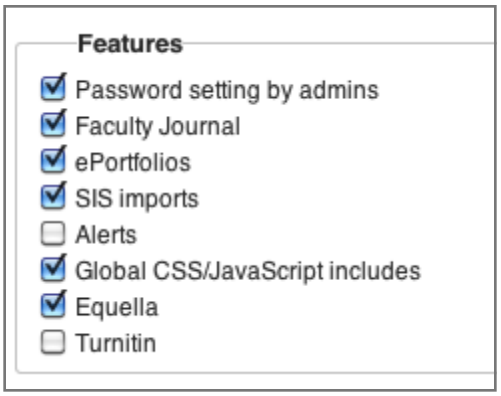
And here's the content after I click the link inside the Announcement.



How do I enable Equella for my Account?

Enable Equella

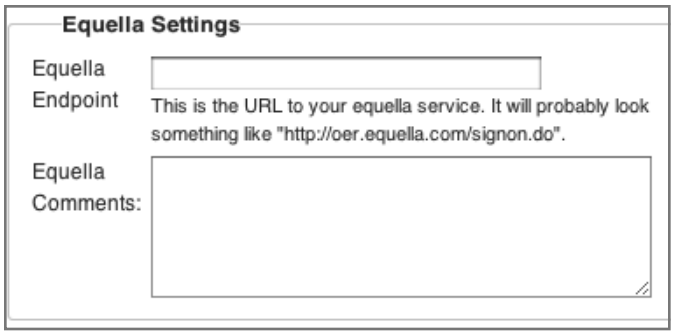
Enable Equella by visiting the account settings page. Check the box next to "Equella".



Enter Equella Settings

In the Equella Settings section that appears, enter your Equella Endpoint URL.

Click "Update Settings" at the bottom of the page.



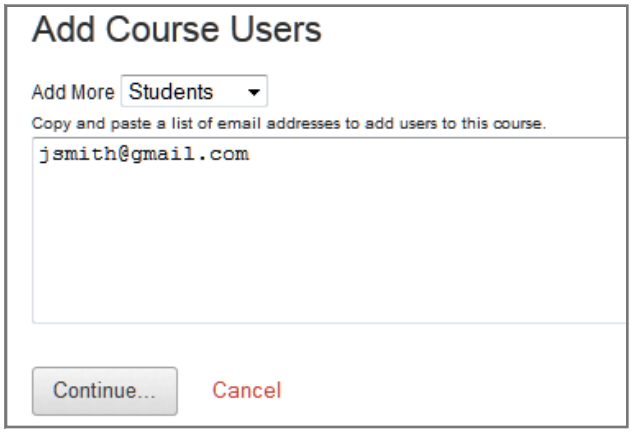
SIS Imports

How does Canvas handle new student enrollment by email address?

Canvas identifies users by email address. When students are added to a course, Canvas attempts to reconcile any email address conflicts when the user first logs in to the course. This guide addresses possible scenarios that may occur when an instructor invites a student to a course or when a course is enabled for self-enrollment. For possible scenarios that may occur when a student is enrolled via SIS import, see How does Canvas handle email address conflicts on SIS import?

Invite a student to enroll

An instructor may invite a student to join a course using the student's email address. Alternatively, a course may be designated for self-enrollment, allowing a student to register themselves using an email address.

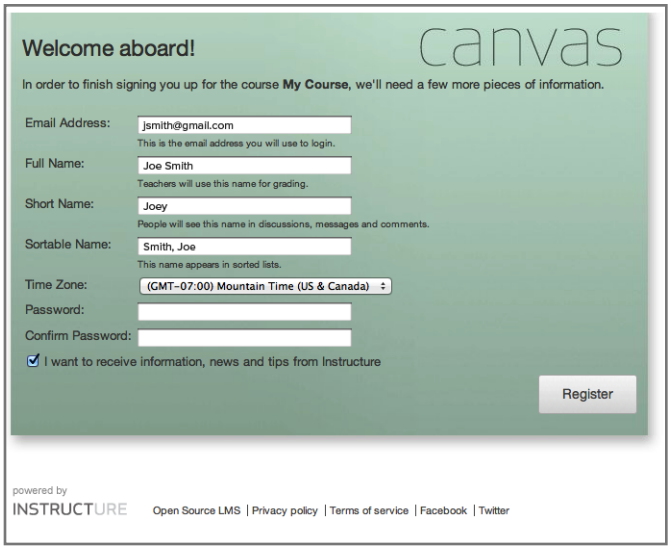


Canvas ties the email address to an account

Canvas uses the email address to identify the student. Depending on the status of that email address in Canvas, one of the following four scenarios will occur:

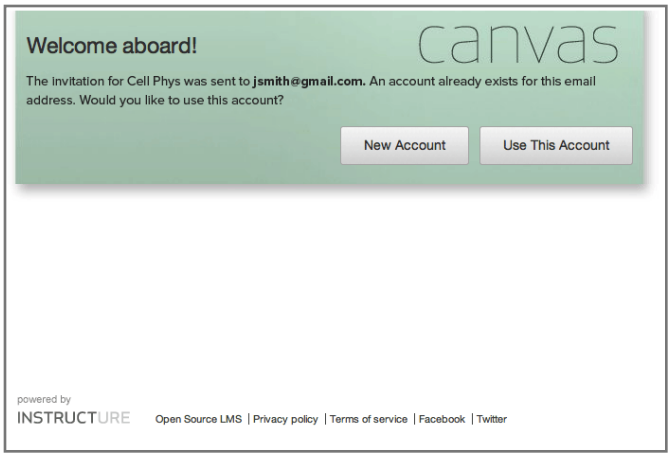
Scenario #1: New account creation

If the email address does not already exist in Canvas, the student will be prompted to create a new account.



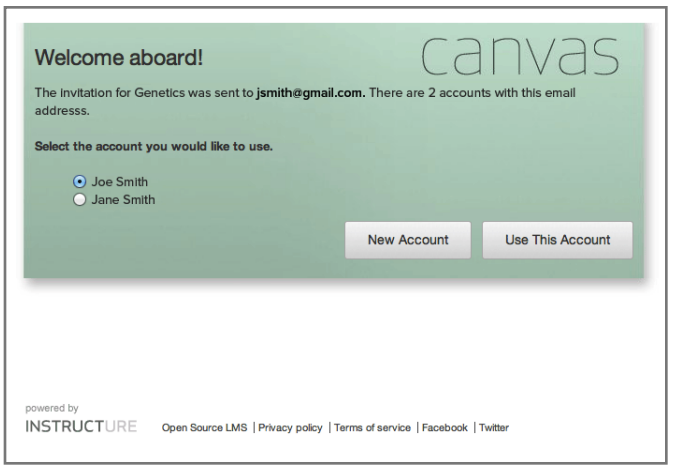
Scenario #2: Email address already exists

If the email address is already associated with an account, the student will be asked if they want to use the existing account or to create a new account. In most cases the student will use their existing account. The option to create a new account exists to support multiple students who share a single email address.



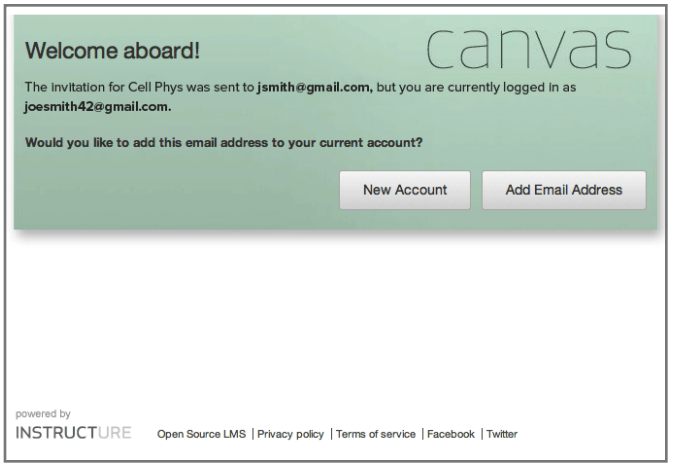
Scenario #3: Students sharing a single email address

Sometimes more than one person shares an email address, and both people may be taking courses in Canvas. Canvas supports multiple students using the same email address, but each student must create their own unique account in Canvas. When two accounts are already associated with a single email address, Canvas will ask the user to select which account to associate with the course.



Scenario #4: Student with multiple email addresses

Sometimes a student may be using multiple email addresses within Canvas. If a student responds to a course invitation at one email address, but is logged in to Canvas using a different email address, the student will be asked if they want to link both addresses to the same account.

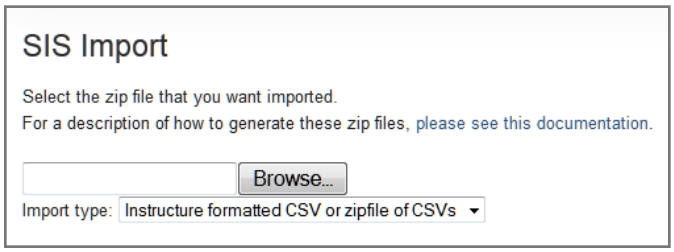


How does Canvas handle email address conflicts on SIS import?

Normally email addresses are unique to each student. At times multiple students may share a single email address. When adding students to courses via SIS import, Canvas recognizes when an email address is assigned to more than one student.

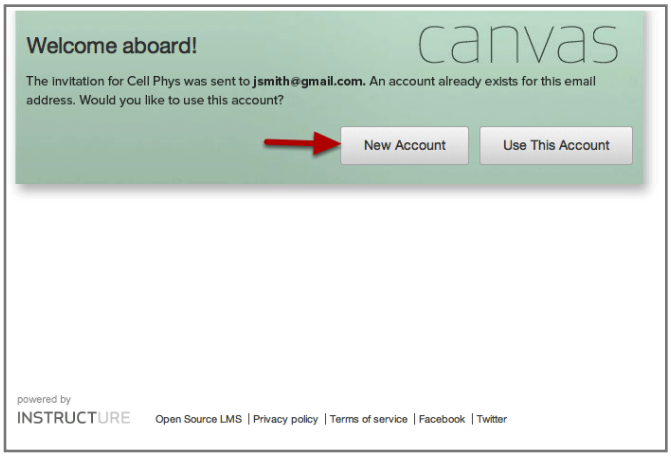
Import student data by SIS import

An administrator conducts an SIS import into Canvas.



Canvas detects email address conflict

If a new SIS ID is associated with an email address already assigned to an existing SIS ID, Canvas sends an email to the email address.

Student creates new account

The student sharing an email address receives notification that the email address is already in use and is invited to create a new account in Canvas.