

5 Canvas Essentials: *A How-To Guide for Faculty*

Created by the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL)

Canvas, Jefferson's learning management system, has numerous features to help you facilitate student engagement within your course. As you get started with Canvas, utilize this guide to complete the **five essential actions** that will help you make the most of the platform.

1: Update your profile and notification settings

- **Your Canvas profile is a way to share information about yourself**
 - ❖ We recommend that you add a photo and a short bio and update your contact information
 - To edit your profile, click the **Account** button in the dark blue navigation menu on the left, and select **Profile** to write your bio or **Settings** to change contact information
 - ❖ Canvas gives users full control over how, and how often, to be notified about specific course events
 - Manage your notification preferences by clicking the **Account** button in the dark blue navigation menu on the left, then selecting **Notifications**
 - The key at the top of the page shows the options for notification frequency, and the table allows you to control contact methods and frequencies

For more information, see the [User Settings and Profile Picture video](#) and [Notification Preferences video](#).

2: Build Assignments directly in your course

- **Options in Canvas include Discussions, Quizzes, and Assignments that allow submission of links or documents**
 - ❖ Assignments populate the course gradebook and can be organized by course section or theme using Modules (e.g., a Week 1 Module with weekly readings, writing assignments, and quiz)
 - ❖ To add Assignments to your course, use the + buttons on the Quizzes, Discussions, or Assignments pages

- To add a column to the gradebook for an activity that doesn't require online submission, such as an in-class quiz, use an Assignment with the submission type 'No submission' or 'Paper'

For more information, see the [Assignments Overview video](#).

3: Present concise course information with the Syllabus

- **Canvas automatically populates the Syllabus feature with details from course Assignments and Modules, streamlining information for students**
 - ❖ The Canvas Syllabus page automatically compiles a chronological list of course tasks, drawing from the course components (like Assignments, Quizzes, and Discussions) added by the instructor
 - ❖ If your department has policies or information that must be included on course syllabi, additional information can be added to the Syllabus page
 - We recommend keeping this information as concise as possible by taking advantage of the ability to link to other documents and webpages

For a walk-through with step-by-step screenshots, see the [How do I use the Syllabus as an instructor? Guide](#).

4: Explore the many options for streamlined grading in Canvas

- **Canvas makes grading easy**
 - ❖ Enter grades directly into the Gradebook
 - Easily create groupings on the Assignments index page to facilitate weighted grading
 - ❖ Create rubrics in Canvas and use them to grade submitted work
 - Files, rubrics, and multimedia commenting options are integrated within the grading interface
 - ❖ Provide automatic feedback for formative assessment
 - Set up quizzes to provide automated feedback on student responses, streamlining formative assessment

For more information, see the [What are Grades and the Gradebook? Guide](#).

5: Remember to Publish!

- **Anything you add to your Canvas course will be invisible to your students until you change an item's status to Published**
 - ❖ Toggle items from Published to Unpublished by using the red **Unpublish** and green **Publish** buttons on an item's page
 - ❖ From an index page, quickly toggle between the green checkmark (indicating a Published item) and the grey slash symbol (indicating an Unpublished one)

For more about Publishing items, see the [How do I use Draft State in Pages? Guide](#).

Canvas Help

- **Call the Canvas Help Desk: (267) 666-6253**
- **Chat live with Canvas support: cases.canvaslms.com/liveagentchat**
- **Visit Jefferson's Canvas website: canvas.jefferson.edu**
- **Reach out to campus-specific support**
 - ❖ **Center City: Contact the CTL's Educational Technologies team at EdTech.Support@lists.jefferson.edu or call (215) 503-2830**
 - ❖ **East Falls: Contact the East Falls Help Desk at HelpDesk@philau.edu or call (215) 951-4648**