



Quick-Reference Guide to COMMUNICATING WITH STUDENTS IN CANVAS

Conversations

Conversations is a messaging system within Canvas. **Conversations** can be used instead of standard email to communicate with a course, a group, an individual student, or a group of students. You can communicate with other people in your course at any time. To access your messages at any time, click "Inbox" in the far-left blue navigation.



Use Conversations to:

- Send a message to someone in your course
- Send a message to your entire class (if allowed)
- Send a message to members of a group
- Reply to messages from others in your course
- Filter conversations by course or type
- View and reply to assignment submission comments

To ensure that your message went through, you can adjust your notification preferences in your Canvas settings. Click on "Account" at the top of the far-left navigation bar, and then "Notifications". Check the column to the far right of "Conversations Created By Me" in order to receive email confirmations.

Course Emailer

The **Course Emailer** can be used to send email to an entire class or a class section using your default email client (such as Outlook or Gmail) instead of the built-in messaging system (Conversations) in Canvas. The **Course Emailer** also displays the individual email addresses of class members.

This tool may be a good option for teaching staff who are more comfortable communicating via email or who want to keep all of their correspondence within their own email client. The **Course Emailer** is accessible in the left navigation of your course's site.

Discussions

Canvas provides an integrated system for class discussions, allowing both instructors and students to start and contribute to as many discussion topics as desired. **Discussions** can also be created as an assignment for grading purposes (and seamlessly integrated with the Canvas Gradebook), or simply serve as a forum for topical and current events. **Discussions** can also be created within student groups. **Discussions** is accessible in the left navigation of your course's site.

Discussions can be used to:

- Help students start thinking about an upcoming assignment or class discussion
- Follow up on a conversation or questions that began in the classroom



- Test student comprehension of important points made in class
- Debate contradictory ideas
- Brainstorm different approaches to a class problem

Chat

The **Chat** tool in Canvas allows students and teachers to interact in real time. **Chat** can be enabled in your course site's Settings in the left navigation.

Use Chat to:

- Give students an opportunity to immediately contact you when you are online
- Conduct virtual office hours
- Conduct group discussion
- Conduct study sessions
- Contact students who are challenged by course content and need encouragement on a regular basis

Announcements

Announcements are used to communicate with students about the logistics of your course. As soon as you have created an **Announcement**, Canvas takes care of notifying students according to their preferred Notification Preferences.

In Canvas, you have the option of feeding posts from your blog or other information sources directly into your **Announcements** page using RSS. RSS feeds can be filtered by keyword to prevent irrelevant content from entering the course. Students who use RSS readers can subscribe to course **Announcements** outside of Canvas. The default setting for **Announcements** allows students to reply. To disable replies, click the gear to the right of an announcement on the **Announcements** page.

Use Announcements to:

- Remind your students what they need to accomplish to stay on track
- Point students to internal and external resources that will help them achieve course Outcomes
- Leave a message for the entire class with video or audio comments

Global and Course Streams + Notifications

The **Global Stream**, shown on your Canvas Dashboard, provides a snapshot of course activity across all of your Canvas courses. The "To Do" feed, shown in the Sidebar, shows assignments that you need to grade and students' assignments that need to be submitted. The "Coming Up" feed shows assignments and events occurring in the next 7 days, and the "Recent Feedback" feed shows students' assignment feedback you have provided.

The **Course Stream** provides a snapshot of activity specific to a course. The **Course Stream** appears as the course homepage or is accessible from the course homepage Sidebar.

Notification preferences are global settings that you configure to receive course alerts when and where you want — by email, text, or through social media. Set up the ways you want to be contacted and how frequently you want to be contacted (immediately, daily, weekly or not at all) for each notification type and communication channel.