

Setting up Canvas courses to support learning for all students

This guide summarises some steps that can be taken when designing a Canvas course to ensure the learning needs of all students are taken into account in an inclusive way.

1. Provide a course timetable with deadlines, times and locations of lectures, tutorials and classes

Providing a clear course timetable allows all students to organise their learning. Use the Calendar tool to create events (including dates, times and location) or assignments (with due dates). All course calendars are colour coded and available from one global calendar. It is most helpful if this information is provided at the beginning of the year or term, so that students can plan ahead.

2. Use the Announcements tool to reinforce important instructions that were given verbally and to give reminders, as appropriate

The Announcements tool broadcasts important notifications to all students enrolled on a Canvas course, as an email to their university address. (Students should be cautioned not to deactivate this setting in their Account Notifications.) A setting is available to teachers, which displays all announcements as messages at the top of the Canvas course home page.

3. Plan to upload slides and handouts at least 24 hours in advance

Making learning materials available in advance helps students to engage more fully in teaching sessions and to take more effective notes. This is particularly helpful, for example, for speakers of English as an additional language.

4. Provide a reading list that highlights the most important reading for the course (known as a 'targeted' or prioritised reading list)

The [Oxford Reading Lists Online \(ORLO\)](#) tool is available within Canvas and allows readings to be marked as 'Essential', 'Recommended' and 'Further'. Identifying priority reading in this way is helpful for anyone who takes longer to read documents or needs more structured tasks. It does not mean that students are not expected to read more widely, but it helps them to organise their reading.

5. Provide a glossary of new terms to be used in advance of each session

A glossary could be published as part of a page, or uploaded as a separate document. Glossaries of new terms help many students prepare for, and navigate teaching sessions.

6. Provide structured feedback in writing

Many students may find verbal or handwritten feedback difficult to interpret and use. The Assignments tool enables tutors to provide typed feedback on work submitted via Canvas. When writing feedback, ensure that comments include clear, actionable suggestions for improvement. The Speed Grader tool (in Assignments) allows lecturers to provide audio or video feedback (directly within the interface), which some students may prefer, and can be replayed as they wish.

7. Create a Discussion forum for students to post questions after a lecture or tutorial, or for use during the vacation

Discussion forums can encourage students to ask questions to clarify their understanding. However, if you set up a discussion forum, it is important to ensure that it doesn't go unmonitored. It's a good idea to let students

know that they should visit the Discussions tool frequently, or show them how to subscribe to email notifications on appropriate threads.

8. Use Panopto to make recorded lectures available quickly

Panopto, the lecture capture software used by the 'Replay' service at Oxford, can be made available within any Canvas course on the tools menu, or within a page. Panopto integrates the slides with the lecturer's audio commentary, and recordings are available automatically after recording, while learning is fresh. Lecture recordings enable all students to review their learning from a lecture, with the ability to pause and rewind complex sections, or search for text or audio segments.

Recordings are particularly helpful for those who have impairments which affect attention, speed of note-taking or information processing. See the [lecture capture help pages](#) for more information and this [guide to lecture capture as a reasonable adjustment for disabled students](#).

Remember to use a good quality microphone and webcam (if applicable) when recording lectures or teaching sessions.