



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
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DATE: September 27, 2021
 TO: FAU Faculty
 FROM: Bret Danilowicz, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
 RE: Expectations for Use of Canvas and Submission of Early Alerts

In its commitment to ensuring that Florida Atlantic University students are successful in their coursework, I ask that all faculty members make use of the Canvas tools specified in the accompanying handout. I also ask that faculty teaching courses at the 1000- to 3000-levels submit Early Alerts (mid-semester grades) – in the **seventh or eighth weeks for full semester courses and in the fourth week for eight-week courses**. These requirements will commence in Spring 2022.

Information obtained from Canvas provides valuable information that can be used to get students back on track. When students who are experiencing academic difficulties are identified, we can send them texts and emails directing them to talk to their instructor or advisor; we can also encourage them to take advantage of the appropriate resources, such as tutoring. Such messages also let students know that their institution, as well as its faculty, are committed to supporting them.

Early Alerts are an equally critical component of undergraduate student success and good teaching practice. National and institutional studies indicate that frequent, early, assessments are valuable tools for you to gauge student preparedness. Early assessments also allow students multiple opportunities to learn from your feedback. If your syllabus does not include any graded assignments prior to mid-semester, you should plan to do so in future semesters for every undergraduate course you teach. If all faculty use the Canvas tools listed, the generation of Early Alerts is a very easy process. **It is particularly important that faculty enter grades as soon as assessments are graded and not wait until mid-semester or the end of semester.** Some faculty have expressed concern that grade averages at mid-semester are not reflective of the student’s ability to pass the course. If that is the case, we encourage you to notify students when Early Alerts are posted, so that you can better explain how they can succeed in your course. Faculty who believe their course cannot reasonably comply with these expectations should discuss their concerns with their department head.

Please note that there are a number of misunderstandings about what Canvas can and cannot do. I strongly encourage faculty to attend one of the Canvas Gradebook training sessions offered by OIT; departments might consider setting up a meeting with the OIT Canvas Team to learn more about configuring Canvas to meet your course needs.



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Thank you for your continued dedication to helping our students succeed.

CC: Provost's Advisory Council
Council of Deans
Department Chairs
School Directors



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Canvas Tools to Support Students

Post the syllabus in the syllabus link. This allows students to find the information easily, as it will be consistent throughout every Canvas course.

Create assignments with scores AND due dates. Assignments are created in the modules area of Canvas or directly on the assignments page and should reflect the course schedule or syllabus. Assignments include discussion boards, Turnitin, Canvas quizzes, or publisher assignments.

Assignments can collect any type of file, as long as the instructor can open it. Common assignment types can be opened within the “Speedgrader” and it can be annotated with comments right within Canvas. A rubric can be created to assist with grading.

Providing due dates for assignments helps students with time management. Adding due dates in Canvas allows students to see when their assignments are due on their main Canvas calendar, which pulls information from **all** their Canvas courses. These calendar items are also shown in the student Canvas app and in the student’s “To Do” list on the Canvas dashboard.

Weight Assignment Groups (optional). Assignments can be weighted by score or by a percentage and should reflect what is in the syllabus.

Gradebook should be used to post scores. Posting the scores *regularly* in the gradebook allows the students to see where they stand in the course. This information is also sent to Starfish, our advising tool, to help with student intervention and advising.

Note: The gradebook cannot be used without creating the assignments. **They must be used together.** Assignments can be created as “no submission” if assignments are collected in-person.

OIT Resources

FAU’s OIT Canvas Team hosts training sessions, one-on-one appointments, and customized group training for individual departments or colleges. It also maintains written documentation and video to support instructors in using Canvas (and other instructional technology tools).

Training Calendar: <https://techevents.fau.edu/>

Recorded Webinars:

<https://fau.mediasite.com/Mediasite/Channel/75ce569fd9074e86a17c306e6920ed395f>



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Schedule a One-on-One Appointment:

<https://techevents.fau.edu/appointments/online>

Submit Help Request:

<https://helpdesk.fau.edu/TDClient/2061/Portal/Requests/ServiceCatalog?CategoryID=1326&SIDs=6082>