



Creating & Using Groups

Canvas Tip Sheet

Student groups are a useful way to organize students for things like group projects or discussions. Every student group gets their own homepage so they can work together more effectively. This tip sheet provides information about setting up, using, and grading groups in your Canvas courses.

Creating & Managing Groups

- Canvas has two types of groupings: group sets and user groups.
 - Group sets house the different groups within a course. Group sets can be created for group assignments and discussions. Example: Project 1
 - User groups can be created by an instructor or student and are created within a specific group set. Example: Project 1 – Group 1, Group 2, Group 3
- To [create and manage group sets and groups](#), click the **People** link on the **Course Navigation Menu** then add a group set using the **Add Group Set** button.
- Instructors can [randomly assign students to groups](#) of a specific size or number of groups, or [manually create and organize the groups](#). Instructors can [allow students to self-enroll in groups](#).
- Once you create group sets and groups, each group has its own **Group Homepage** including their own Calendar, Discussion board, Collaboration tools, and more. Only students added to a group have permission to see and use the respective tools within the group.
- Students access their group sites using the **Groups** button in the **Global Navigation Menu**.
- Instructors can access groups' homepages from the **People** link. Select the appropriate **Group Set** tab, click on the three-dot menu next to a group, then select **Visit Group Homepage**.

Group Assignments

- A group assignment is a way for instructors to allow students to work together on an assignment and submit it as a group. Only one group member needs to submit it on behalf of the group.
- [Create a group assignment](#) by using the **Group Assignment** checkbox when [adding details to an assignment](#). Selecting this checkbox shows additional settings to assign grades individually and select group sets.
- Group assignments cannot be used with External Tool assignments, so be sure to [select a different submission type](#) when creating a group assignment.
- In group assignments, all students should be assigned to groups before the assignment is published. Grades and submissions may be affected for students who were not in a group at the time of assignment submission but who were later added to a group.

Groups Discussions

- A group discussion assignment creates an identical discussion topic in each group category. When students reply to the discussion topic, they do so within their group environment.
- [Create a group discussion](#) by using the **This is a Group Discussion** checkbox when adding details to the discussion.
- Select an existing group set from the **Group Set** drop-down menu or create a new group category by clicking the **New Group Category** button. Groups created by students cannot be used for Group Discussions and do not display in the Group Set drop-down menu.
- In group discussions, ensure all students have been added to a group before assigning a group set to the group discussion. If a student is not added to a group and replies to the discussion, the student's reply will be part of the original discussion topic.
- To [view each group's discussion](#), click the Groups icon in the top left corner of the discussion, then click the name of the group you want to open.

Groups & Grading

- To [grade group assignments](#), the SpeedGrader drop-down menu displays the name of each group. Select the name of the group to view their submission. If the group assignment was set up to assign grades to each student individually, the submission will still apply for each group member's assignment, but the drop-down menu displays the name of each individual student.
- You can grade and provide feedback on [graded group discussions in SpeedGrader](#). Discussion replies will display individually, but the replies can also be viewed in context by selecting the **view the full group discussion** link in SpeedGrader.
- For graded group discussions, grades cannot be assigned for students not included in the discussion, and graded discussions not assigned to a student are not factored into grades.
- To [focus on a specific group when grading](#), use the **Filter** menu. Click the **Grades** link in the Course Navigation Menu, then select the **Apply Filters** button. From the drop-down menu, click the **Student Groups** option, then select the student group you want to display.

Things to Remember

- Students cannot self-enroll in groups if the [People link has been hidden from Course Navigation](#).
- If you create a group set with self sign-up or manual group assignments, you will not be able to use the group set until users have been added to the subgroups.
- Ensure all students have been added to a group before assigning a group set to the group discussion or publishing a group assignment. Functionality and grading for discussions and assignments will be affected if groups are not established first.

Learn More

- The [Canvas Instructor Guides](#) are an incredible resource, and we recommend consulting them to learn more about how to use Canvas.
- Check out the on-demand [UM Canvas Essentials Faculty Tutorial](#) or our [upcoming live trainings](#) for more specific information about Canvas at the University of Montana.