Graduate, Online, and Professional Studies
Canvas Quick Start Guide for Teaching Assistants

Learning Management Systems at UMass Lowell

Canvas and Blackboard are learning management systems used for UML courses. Canvas will be the only one beginning in the Fall of 2026. Faculty use learning managements systems to share course materials with students, assign activities and assignments, facilitate interaction, and provide grades and feedback. As a TA, you may be tasked with assisting the instructor with their learning management system. This guide will be specific to Canvas.

Access Canvas

As a TA, you should be given access to the Canvas course site automatically, shortly after you are added to SIS as a Teaching Assistant.

- Go to *https://canvas.uml.edu/*
- Click Login to Canvas using your UML username and password
- Go through the UML single sign-on and multi-factor authentication process

NB: If you run into issues logging into Canvas, visit *https://www.uml.edu/it/for-students/* for help with password and Duo authentication.

Resources

Canvas Support at UML
https://www.uml.edu/it/services/academic-technology/learning-management-system.aspx

TA Request Form – to be filled out by instructors
https://www.uml.edu/registrar/faculty-forms/

TA Canvas Training
https://faculty.gps.uml.edu/ta-canvas-training/

Send a Message

Canvas has an internal messaging tool, called **Inbox.** It allows users to send and receive messages through the system without having to use actual @uml.edu email addresses.

1. Click on **Inbox** on the **Global Menu** (far left)
2. Click **Compose a Message** at the top right
3. Select the course you want the message to go to
4. Type the name of the students you want to send a message to or select **Students** to send message to all students in the course
5. Type the subject and message text
6. Click **Send**

Technical Support

If during the semester you have questions or run into any issues, please contact Tech Support and someone will be available to assist.

- Support for On Campus Undergraduate courses: canhelp@uml.edu, 978-934-4357 option 3
- Support for Online and Graduate Courses: OnlineLearning@uml.edu, 1-800-480-3190

⚠ Important Info for TAs

Please make sure you consult with your instructor Before making any changes to their Canvas course.

View the Course as a Student

Student View allows you to view and experience the course the same way a student will. This is handy if you need to test something.

1. In the upper right-hand corner, click on **View as Student**
2. When finished, click **Leave Student View**

Add a Module

Modules are a good way to organize course materials. Instructors may organize into weekly modules or Content-specific modules.

1. Go to the Modules page.
2. At the top of the page, select **+ Modules**
3. Add a **Name** (i.e., "Start Here", "Week 1", or "Assignments")
4. You can also set **Lock** modules, and all items you might add to it, by selecting **Edit,** checking the box for **Lock Until,** and specifying a date. The module will be visible, but students will not be able to access the content.

Add Content to a Module

The content in the module will serve as the main instructional material. Each piece of content is considered an "item". You can add a variety of item types to a module.

1. Select the plus sign **(+)** on the right side of the module. You'll see a pop-up with "Add" next to a drop-down menu. The drop-down menu has options like Page, Assignment, File, External URL, Discussion, etc.
2. After selecting the type of item, you might see existing content that you can select. If you want to create a new item, for example a new page, select **[create page].**

Publish / Unpublish Content

If Canvas content is "Published", it is visible to students. If Canvas content is "Unpublished", it is not visible to students.

1. By default, newly added content is unpublished. It has a ⊘ sign to the right of it.
2. If you click the ⊘ sign, it will turn to ✅, which means published.
3. Entire modules (and courses!) can be published/unpublished. Do not unpublish your course.

Send an Announcement

Announcements are a great way to send course-wide messages to students. They can remain posted in the course all semester for easy reference.

1. Click **Announcements** in the course menu.
2. Click **Add Announcement** and add a **Topic.**
3. Type or paste your message.
4. Select availability dates or other options if desired. Select **Publish.**
5. Students will receive the announcement in Canvas and their email (if they hadn't opted out).

Assignment

In the Assignments area, which is accessed through the course menu, you will see a list of all course assignments.

1. You can add an assignment.
2. You can group assignments by type (i.e., discussions, quizzes, etc.)
3. You can provide weights for each group.

This links above have detailed overviews if you need to dive in

Grades

Each graded assignment will appear in the Grades area, which is accessed through the course menu.

1. Each assignment will have its own column click on the top of the column for additional options, such as viewing the grades as points or percentage, and hiding from student view.
2. Click the settings gear on the right for additional options.
3. Student submissions will appear as boxes. Clicking on the box and then **Speedgrader** will allow you to view the submission and add a grade.