Preparing for a New Semester – Canvas

Canvas is the learning management system used by PSC to deliver all forms of eLearning content, i.e.,
distance learning courses, hybrid courses, and companion websites. This document provides a list of
tasks that should be completed prior to the beginning of each semester. If you have any questions,
please do not hesitate to contact the eLearning Department at 850-484-1751.

Distance Learning and Hybrid Courses - Course shells for the new semester are uploaded automatically
a week or so before the semester begins for distance learning and hybrid courses. However, when your
course shell appears in your account it is empty. You may import content yourself (often from an existing
course from the previous semester) or you may ask the eLearning Department do this for you.

Companion Websites – If you are planning to use Canvas as a companion website you must first log into
eRoster and identify the section(s) as having an eLearning component per the steps below:

1. Log in to eRoster
2. Select the semester for which you’d like the companion shell(s).
3. (Please note, only current semester course shells can be uploaded to Canvas.)
4. Click the “Companion Courses” button (from the list on the left).
5. Select a course section.
6. From the “eLearning Companion” drop down list, select Yes and click the Submit button.
7. Repeat this process for each section requesting an eLearning Companion site in Canvas.

Add Course Content – For online, hybrid, and most companion courses, content can be imported or
copied from another course shell. If this is your first time using a companion site in Canvas, content will
need to be created using the tools in Canvas or by uploading course files. Note: It is very important to
have course content available to students at the opening hour on the first day of class. A distance
learning course with missing content is very confusing for students and implies that you are unprepared
and/or simply do not care about your students. If you foresee a problem that may affect your ability to
have your course fully prepared by the first day of class, please contact the eLearning Department for
assistance.

Syllabus – Upload or update your syllabus for the new semester. You may use the syllabus tool in Canvas
or upload a separate .pdf file and include it in your Course Information Module. The advantage of using
the syllabus tool in Canvas is that you can make your syllabus public (no username/password required).
This is a nice feature as students may review the syllabus before the semester begins.

Dates - Set/adjust all course and assignment due dates. This is especially important as Canvas will place
these items on the course calendar automatically. Note: Course beginning and ending dates are set by
the college and not by the instructor. Student access to Canvas opens at 8:00 a.m. on the first day of
each semester/session and closes at the end of the business day on the last day of the semester/session
(4:00 p.m. fall and spring, 5:00 p.m. summer). While students can access a course shell after the
semester has ended, they can no longer participate. Be sure to highlight this information in your syllabus,
and make sure all your date settings in Canvas are adjusted appropriately.
Assignments - Organize the Assignments manager and check final grade calculations.

Content Modules – Don’t forget to publish all content modules and sub-items within each module.

Navigation - Hide navigation elements that will not be used or could be confusing to students.

Attendance – If you are teaching a distance learning course you will not need the Attendance link, so make sure this item is hidden.

Introduction - Post an introductory welcome announcement.

Discussion Forum - Update Discussion Forum options (located in the Settings for your course). If appropriate, deselect the checkbox that allows students to create discussion topics.

Grades - Enable/update your course grading scheme.

Third Party Integration – If you are using publisher content such as Pearson “MyLabs,” Panopto, etc., be sure the integration is configured properly and is working as it should. You may contact the eLearning Department if you need assistance with this.

Review – Be sure to check your course from the perspective of the student before the semester begins. This can be done by simply viewing the course in Student View.

Publish – Don’t forget to publish your course. Your course is not accessible by students until it is published.

Proctored Assessment – If proctored assessment is not a requirement for your course, no action is required. However, if you do require proctored assessment please note the following:

1) If you would like the eLearning Department to verify the proctor, students must be made aware of the proctoring process. This information is available at the following locations:

   - Proctoring Information for Students
   - Proctoring Information for Faculty

2) Send your test information to the PSC Testing Center early in the term (attention Ms. Kathryn Quillen) as most of your students will probably use this service. The Pensacola Testing Center will forward this information to all campus Testing Centers. Be sure to provide access codes, and any other information as needed (e.g., whether or not your test requires the Respondus Lockdown Browser). Inform students they must make an appointment with the Testing Center to take their test.

3) If you are going to allow students to use ProctorU (recommended) please make sure they are made aware of that option.

   - ProctorU – Information for Students
   - ProctorU – Information for Faculty

Respondus Lockdown Browser – If you intend to use the Respondus Lockdown browser for assessment, students need to know this at the beginning of the semester. Also, if you intend to use ProctorU with the RLDB, ProctorU will need to know this when you submit your access information to them at the beginning of the semester.