What is Canvas? An Overview for Faculty

A *Learning Management System (or LMS*) is a software tool that facilitates the delivery of online learning content and resources to students. Some of the types of things that you may use it for include posting the syllabus, course notifications and announcements, a class calendar, handouts and other course content, assignments and quizzes, course discussion forums, and much more! As you are probably aware, the use of LMS systems such as *Canvas, Blackboard,* and others is very common in colleges and universities. Several school districts and higher education institutions in Tennessee utilize Canvas.

Get the mobile app! *Canvas by Instructure*

Canvas is best used on a mobile device by downloading the app, which runs on both iOS and Android devices. Note that not all features may be available, depending on your device. In the box where it says: *Find your school or district*, enter the following: ***jcschools.instructure.com***

Getting Started

How do I log in?

To log in to Canvas, go to main webpage of JCS and find "Canvas" under "Quick Links" or go to the following URL: jcschools.instructure.com

Your username is: Johnson City Schools email (name@jcschools.org)

Your *password* is: same as your email password

The Dashboard

Once you log in, the first thing you will see is your *Dashboard.* The dashboard contains the *Global Navigation Menu* (on the left), which provides quick access to all main areas in Canvas. There is also a *Sidebar* on the right with various types of feeds (*To Do, Coming Up,* and *Recent Feedback*), as well as the *Start a New Course* and *View Grades* buttons. The Dashboard defaults to the *Course View*, which includes a *course card* for each of your courses. See more about this later in this document*.* The Dashboard also supports a *recent activity stream*, which can be toggled at the top of the Dashboard (button at upper-right) based on user preference. The recent activity stream shows activity for *all* of your Canvas courses.

Access Your User Settings

- Click on *Account* in the *Global Navigation Menu,* upper left-hand corner of the screen.
- Click on *Settings* (under *Account,* to the right of the *Global Navigation Menu*)
- Click on *Edit Settings* on the right-side of the screen.
- Change your *Password* by clicking on *Change Password* (under *Time Zone*, on the left). Note: passwords require a 6 character minimum. Click *Update Settings* when done.
- To add a *profile picture*, mouse over the little "head icon" near the top left of the screen.
- Under *Ways to Contact* (right-side of screen), you can add additional emails or a cell phone number. This is handy for *notifications* (see below).
- Click on *Account,* then *Notifications* (left-side of screen). Canvas displays a list of course activities, with each of your contact methods in a separate column. For each activity, you may specify which method you want Canvas to use to notify you, and how often: *right away, daily, weekly,* or *never*. You can also have Canvas push notifications to your phone (get messages without using the app).
- Within your *Account,* you can also find the *Files* option (on the left). This allows you to upload personal files to your account. There is also an option to create *ePortfolios* (public or private).

Other Canvas Features:

- *Calendar*
  By clicking on C*alendar* (left of screen), you will be able to see everything coming up for all of your courses in one place. You can view the calendar by *week, month,* or *agenda.* Each course you are teaching (and/or enrolled in) will be color-coded on the calendar (colors can be changed).
- *Inbox (Conversations)*
  Conversations is a messaging system within Canvas. It allows you to easily converse with students enrolled in your courses, as well as any co-teacher(s). To access *conversations,* click on the *Inbox* link on the left of the screen, in the *Global Navigation Menu.* Click on the *little pencil* (upper-middle of screen) to compose a message.

Access Your Course(s)

By default, the Canvas dashboard defaults to the *Course View*, which includes a *course card* for each of your courses. The four icons on the card represent the four main Canvas features for student course activity: *Announcements, Assignments, Discussions*, and *Files.* A number next to the icon indicates new activity in that area. To go to a particular course, simply click on the name of the course from the course card, or choose the course from the *Courses* link on the left, in the *Global Navigation Menu*. Once you have clicked on a course, you can access the *course navigation links* (to the right of the *Global Navigation Menu)*. (If you don't see them, click on the "*3 bars*" icon to the right of the Canvas logo, near the top-left of the screen). The links displayed will allow you to access specific areas *of the course* and may include *Announcements, Assignments, Discussions,* and the course *Syllabus*. The links that are available are customizable by you*.* To get back to the Dashboard, click on the *Canvas* logo (upper-left) *or* the *Dashboard* link on the *Global Navigation Menu. Note*: If you don't see your course on the Dashboard, click on *Courses* (on the left), and then select *All Courses*. A list of your courses comes up. Click on the *star* to the left of the course name for each course that you want to see on the Dashboard.

Note that your courses for the school year are pulled directly from PowerSchool. If you are teaching multiple sections of the same course (for example, 3 periods of English 9 or 3 sections of 4th grade Language Arts), you will only see the course (e.g. English 9 or 4th Grade Language Arts) listed *once.* Click on the name of the course; then, from the course page, click on *Settings* (bottom left). Now choose *Sections* to see the students enrolled in each section (period) of your course. Each section can have its own due dates for assignments, quizzes, and discussions; content is the same.

Note: **A course must be *published* in order for it to be accessible to students.**

Get Help

- Click on *Help* on the lower left of the *Global Navigation Menu.* From here, you can:
  - ➢ *Search the Canvas Guides*.
  - ➢ *Report a Problem or Call Canvas Support or Chat with a Canvas Support Person*

An Important Note About Browsers

Flash is required in several places: media recording/streaming and viewing, as well as uploading files. We strongly recommend the use of Chrome or Firefox.