

Setting Discussion Dates in Canvas

Most Discussions have a requirement of the initial post being due by a specific date followed by a certain number of peer replies due a couple of days after the initial posting. Discussions are usually set this way to encourage student interaction and control the pace of the activity. The process explained below is the recommended way to handle tiered due dates for Discussions.

Please keep in mind that this process requires some work the first time, but after all the pieces are in place, it is easy to shift dates in Canvas so it will not require much work to maintain.

Step 1: Create the Discussion

- Students will interact in the Discussion, so post the directions for the activity. Just be sure not to include static date information in the directions. With all of the places students can see due dates in Canvas, it is not necessary to include date information in the directions. Doing so will cause you more revision work as you prep the course term-to-term.
- Set the Points Possible setting to the point value of the Discussion.
- Set the Due date for the date and time by which you want students to complete their peer replies. Please keep in mind the Due date does not shut off students' ability to post in the Discussion, it acts as a trigger to mark a submission late.
- Set the Available From date to the date on which you want students to be able to post their initial posting in the Discussion.
- Set the Until date to the same date and time set for the Due date. The Until date is the date condition that takes away students' ability to post in the Discussion.

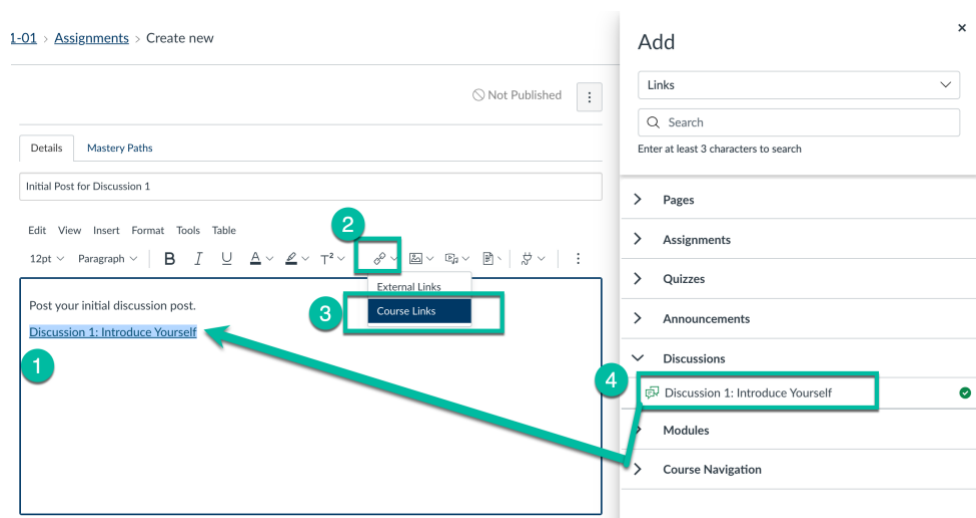
Note: Instructions on how to build discussions in Canvas are found at: [How to Create a Discussion Post](#)

Step 2: Create an Assignment for the Initial Post

The purpose of the Assignment is only to communicate the due date for the initial posting. This is not graded, and is not where you post the instructions.

- Go to assignments and Create a new Assignment
 - If you are unsure of how to do this, please see: [How to create an assignment.](#)
- Name the Assignment with the following naming convention:
 - Title of the Discussion Initial Post (e.g., Lesson 1 Discussion Initial Post)
- Do not post the directions for the Discussion as the directions for the Initial Post Assignment! Instead, post a link to the discussion post you already created. (See Screen shot below)

- (1) Type instructions such as “Post your initial post by following this link” or “Click the link to access the discussion board”
- (2) Click on the link icon in the toolbar
- (3) Select “Course links” and this will pop open the Add bar on the right.
- (4) Expand the Discussion section, and select the Discussion you made in Step 1. This will add the link into the text box.
- Be sure to save.



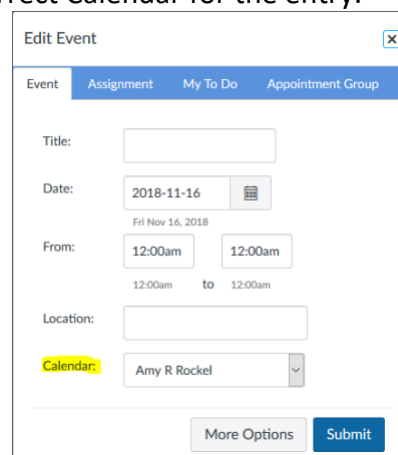
- Set the Points setting to 0.
- Set the Assignment Group to the same Assignment Group in which you have the Discussions organized.
- Set the Display Grade As setting to Not Graded.
 - NOTE: It is important to set the Points to 0 and the Display Grade As setting to Not Graded because you will not use this Assignment for grading, and having the Assignment set to Not Graded keeps it from appearing in the gradebook.
- Set the Due date for the date and time by which you want students to complete their initial posting.
- Be sure to Save and Publish!
- Depending on how you have the class setup, you may want to add the assignment to the corresponding Module.

Timesaver Tip: After you have created the first Initial Post Assignment, you can click the Assignments page, click the option button (three dots) for the Initial Post Assignment you created, and select Duplicate. You can then make the needed revisions (such as the updating the course link, title, and due dates) to the duplicate and save.

Why can't I add manual entries on the Calendar instead of creating Initial Post Assignments?

Technically, you can make manual entries on the Calendar to direct students to do the initial post for each Discussion. The reasons creating Initial Post Assignments are preferred over manual calendar entries are:

- When creating a manual calendar entry, there are more clicks to add a description than there are when creating an Assignment.
- It is very easy to get a manual calendar entry posted to the wrong calendar. Your personal calendar is the default when creating a new entry, so you have to be very careful to choose the correct Calendar for the entry.



The screenshot shows the 'Edit Event' form in Canvas LMS. The form has a title bar with a close button (X) and a navigation bar with tabs for 'Event', 'Assignment', 'My To Do', and 'Appointment Group'. The 'Event' tab is selected. The form contains the following fields:

- Title:
- Date: 2018-11-16 (with a calendar icon)
- From: 12:00am to 12:00am (with a time range selector)
- Location:
- Calendar: Amy R Rocketl (with a dropdown arrow)

At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: 'More Options' and 'Submit'. The 'Calendar' label is highlighted in yellow.

- Manual calendar entries do feed to the Course Summary section of the Syllabus page and students' To Do list on the Home page, but clicking the link for a manual calendar from either of those areas takes users to the Calendar. This can cause navigation issues as it navigates the user away from the course and into the Calendar, which is a global tool in Canvas.
- Manual calendar entries do not show in the Course Activity Stream.
- You cannot duplicate manual calendar entries. You would have to create each entry individually. So many clicks!