CANVAS: How to reset a copied course

A new blank Canvas account must be ordered every time a course is taught. Once the new account is received, you can edit it and copy any other Canvas course into it if you have teacher/co-teacher access in the course being copied. (If you wish to copy a course that did not belong to you, you must have permission from the original instructor or your department head.) After copying in a previous course's contents in full or part, there are several clean-up steps required. For the most part, the order of these steps is not critical.

Preparatory step:

Create a detailed schedule of course topics, assignment availability and due dates, as well as activity point distributions and grading policies. These details are important for a complete reset of the imported course.

Remove Past Announcements:

It is recommended that you remove all old announcements. Past announcements may have date references, either in the message body or in the display settings, which are incorrect for your new course. They may also contain links to content stored in the previous course, so the links won't work for students in the new course. If necessary, you can refer back to the previous course and copy text from an announcement to use in your new course and build new links that go to the current course's content or activities.

1. Course Menu > Announcements
2. Click the empty box in front of each announcement to select it - a checkmark appears in the box.
3. Click the trash can icon in the upper right to delete the selected announcements.
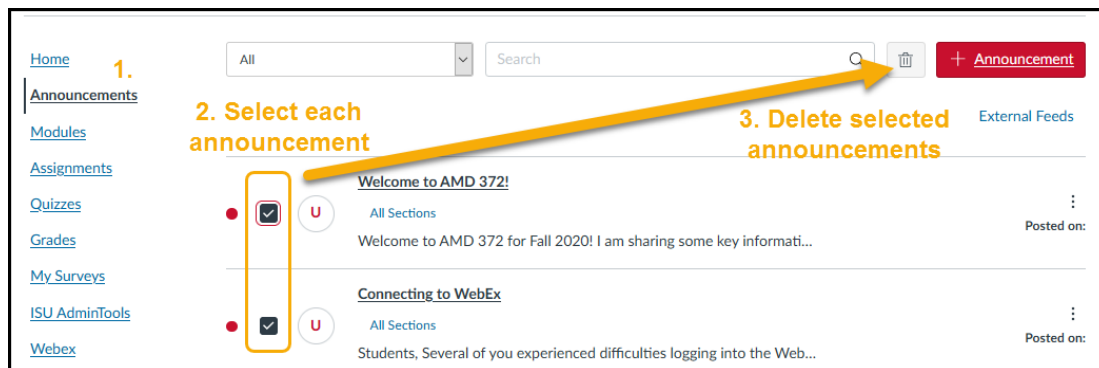
Cleanup Assignment Groups:

Every new Canvas course comes with a default Assignment Group on the Assignments page, labelled "Assignments." This is a redundant group if you have copied in a previous course and should be removed to both cleanup the Assignments page and remove the unneeded Subtotal column from the grade book.

1. Course Menu > Assignments
2. Find the empty Assignment Group
3. Click the 3 dots in the right corner of its frame
4. Select Delete from the drop down menu
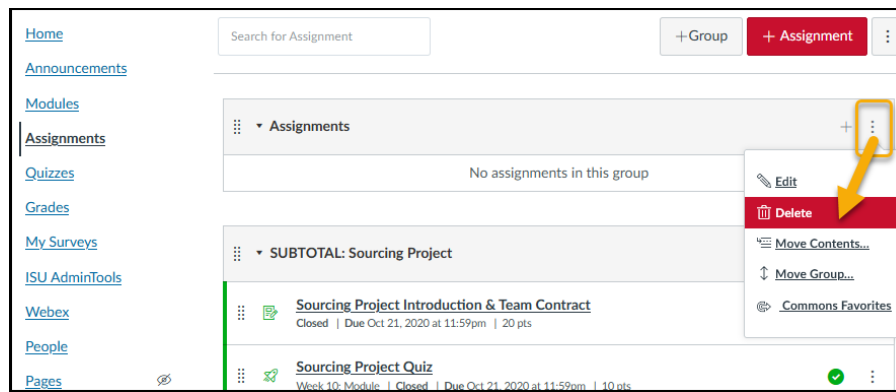
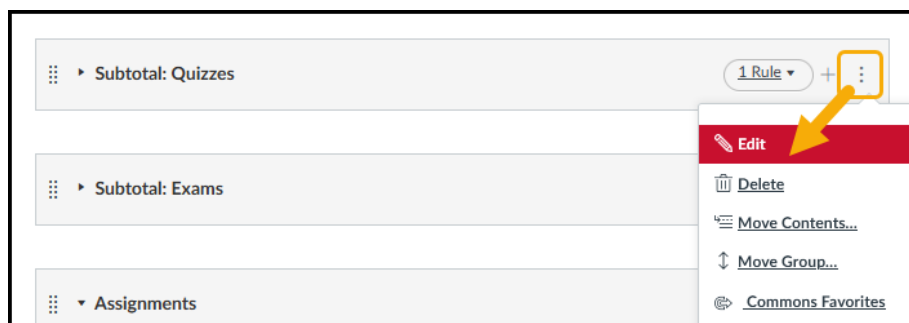## Check & Reset Rules for Manipulating Assignments in Groups:

If your course grading policy allows for assignment scores in specific categories to be dropped, e.g. drop the lowest two weekly quiz scores, you need to consider at what point during the course these rules should be applied.

IMPORTANT: For grade calculations to be accurate, it's critical that a score or zero be entered for any missed assignment when the activity's availability period is over. A blank is not equal to a score of zero.

- If you apply drop rules from the beginning of the semester, students may see an earned Total score during the semester that is lower their final earned point value will truly be.
- If you add the drop rules at the end of the semester, before final grades are calculated, some students see an inflated earned point value all semester, which can be misleading and misunderstood.

If you only want the rules applied at the end of the semester, remove them before the class begins.

- On the Assignments page, find a Group with a rule listed in the frame (border) to the group.
- Click the 3 dots on the group's frame
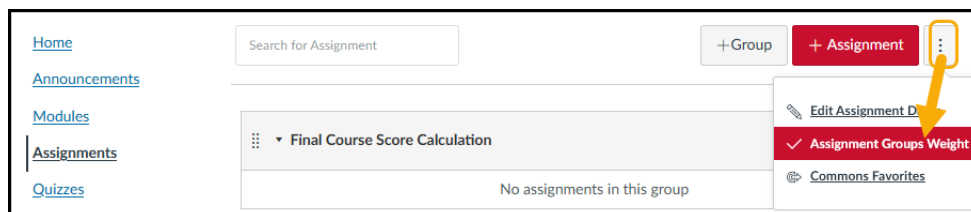- Select Edit from the dropdown menu
- Change the number of dropped scores to zero then click Save

Check & Reset Weighted Grading of Assignments:

The course copied into your new account is almost always is in an "end-of-semester" state as far as both content visibility and Assignment (Gradebook) manipulations. Review the grade manipulation rules defined on the Assignments screen and reset if necessary, so the course is ready for "start-of-semester" use.

Note that most courses, assignments and exams have point values that already reflect their relative contribution to the overall course value and so **weighted grading should not be turned on**.
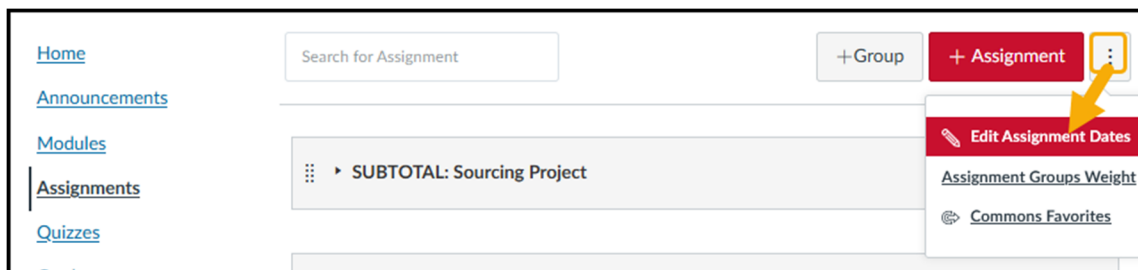
1. Course Menu > Assignments
2. Click the 3 dots in the top row of buttons
3. Select Assignment Group Weights from the dropdown menu
4. Revise the group weighting if / as necessary
   - If you created group weighting just to calculate final grades, remove or reverse it.

Reset Assignment Dates:

You can view and manage Assignment Due and Availability dates from the Edit Assignment Dates page.

1. Course Menu > Assignments
2. Click the 3 dots in the top row of buttons
3. Select Edit Assignment Dates from the dropdown menu

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All published and unpublished course assignments - EXCEPT practice quizzes and ungraded surveys - are listed along with their Due dates and availability start ("From") and end ("Until") dates. These dates can be adjusted individually by typing in the date boxes, or in batch mode.

Batch Shift: To shift the dates for two or more assignments by the same number of days, select the desired activities by clicking on the empty box in front of each activity, then click the Batch Edit button on top of the page. In the Batch edit menu either indicate the number of days to shift the date entries by or remove the dates altogether, which makes it easier to manually insert correct dates later.

Notes:

- When you change a date, the original Due time you selected for the assignment is retained. If no time is set, the due time defaults to 11:59:59 pm for the course time zone, and the assignment is marked late at 12:00:00 am.
- An empty "From" box means an activity is immediately available.
- An empty "Until" box means that the activity will remain available for student submissions.
- Make certain that all published assignments have Due dates! These are critical because the Due dates are what appear in the course calendar and on the course To Do lists for students, and are what trigger email alert (reminder) messages. Many students rely on receiving such notifications.

IMPORTANT: Click the red SAVE button on the top of the screen to store (keep) your revised dates.

These adjustments only change the activity settings, not dates that appear in the activity descriptions or in files that have been attached to assignments. Therefore, after updating dates on the Edit Assignment Dates master screen, it is still necessary to review each assignment individually and check it further.

Remove Unneeded Content and Assignments:

Go through all the content and activity storages – Files, Pages, Quizzes, Discussions, and Assignments – and delete anything that will not be used in the coming semester. Since all content and activities were copied from a different course, you can always dip back into that original course should you find you removed something you would like back. Clearing out your course this way makes it much easier to manage and reduces the chance of errors.

TIP: If you delete something you want back, you may also be able to retrieve it using this **unofficial trick** -

1. While in your Canvas course, go to the location line in the web browser.
2. Remove everything in the URL after the 5 digit course number. You will be left with something like https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/29348
3. Type a forward slash and the word "undelete" after the five digit number, so it looks like https://canvas.iastate.edu/courses/29348/undelete
4. Press the enter key (return key) to generate a list of deleted items, each with the date they were removed. If the item you want is listed, click the restore button after it.

Organize Documents in Files:

If documents and images are in one long list in the FILES storage, it is advisable to create topic-based Folders and catalogue the documents and images within the folders. This saves time and reduces errors when managing both this course and future copies of the course.

Correct Problematic Quiz Questions

The best time to replace or edit quiz questions is before they are presented to students. There are three ways in which questions may be stored in your course.

1. **If your quizzes link directly to banks**, then there is just one copy of each quiz question in the course, i.e. the one in the bank. Simply edit a quiz and follow the link to the bank, find the problematic question, and then edit or delete it. If necessary, add a replacement question. Save the question and the quiz.

2. **If you coded questions directly into quizzes, there will be two copies of each question** - one stored in the quiz and a copy stored in the question bank section. By default, these copies are stored in a bank labeled "Unfiled Questions". The two versions of the question are independent, editing one copy does not change the other. To be thorough and reduce future errors, update both versions of the question. To reach the question banks, click Quizzes on the Course Menu > click the 3 dots on upper right > select Manage Question Banks from the drop down menu.
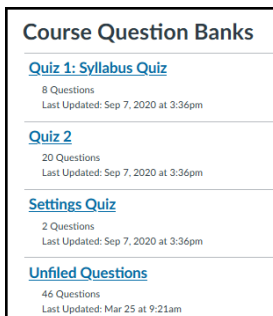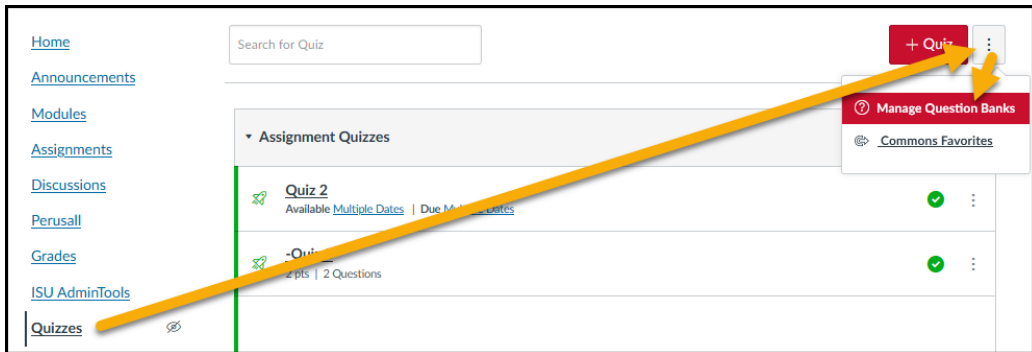
3. If you populated your Quiz by copying questions stored in a question bank (this is done with the Find Question tool), then you have a situation similar to number 2. In such cases, the question bank is typically a topic-based bank and not the Unfiled Questions bank. To be thorough and reduce future errors, update both versions of the problematic question.

Verify & Adjust Course Settings

The course settings in your new blank account will be overwritten with the settings in the course you copy into it. Verify these are still accurate by going to Course Menu > Settings > Course Details tab.

Working down the screen of options.

- IMAGE is the course tile image. You may wish to use a new image each time you teach.

  Be sure to replace the old tile image if it displays out of date semester information or a textbook photo that is out of date.

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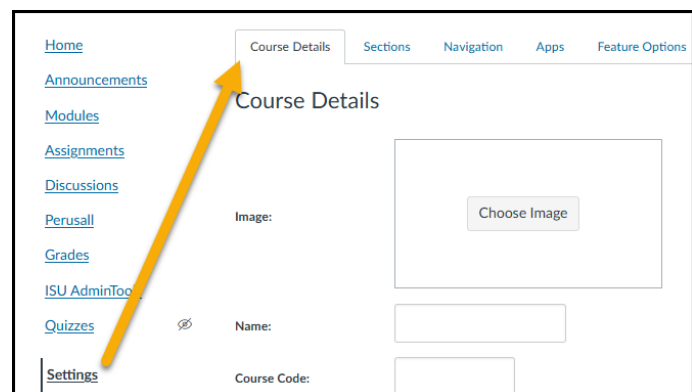
- NAME appears under the course tile on the Dashboard and on the course Home page. Name can be revised from the Course Details screen. Include the semester and year as part of the Name so that different iterations of the course can be easily identified.

- STARTS and ENDS dates are optional and default to ISU Term-based dates if left blank. If you enter dates, you must checkmark the box in front of "Students can only participate in the course between these dates" in order for them to take effect. Students will then have read-only access before the start date, and after the end date, unless you add further access restrictions.

- To completely prevent student access to the course before the Start date and/or after the End date, checkmark the appropriate restriction boxes.

- Click the 'view grading scheme' link and verify that the course letter grade breakpoints (expressed as percentages) match the breakpoints defined in your syllabus. This is **critical** if you will be submitting Midterm and Final Grades from Canvas to the Registrar!
  - Please contact the college's Online and Distance Learning staff for assistance or review the information available on the Course Settings portion of the Tech Tips site.

- Expand the '**more options'** link at the bottom of the Settings screen to reveal important additional settings.

  Most of these default settings should be changed. Your course will reflect the settings of the imported course. The recommended 'more options' settings are to show the most 2 or 3 announcements on the home page, to allow students to attach files to discussions and to hide grade distributions from students unless the course will have over 50 students. All other settings should be unchecked.

IMPORTANT: Click the red 'Update Course Details' button on the bottom of the screen to save your settings!

Revise Module Visibility

The course you copied into your new account was at its end-of-semester stage, so all the Modules will be published and visible to students as soon as you enroll them. Typically you only want one or two modules to be available at the start of the semester, so either unpublish the rest or add a release date to each.

To unpublish a Module, click the green dot on the top frame of the module.

To add a date release to a Module, click the 3 dots on module frame, then select Edit. Checkmark the Lock Until box, then pick a release date and time using the calendar tool. Click the red Update Module button.
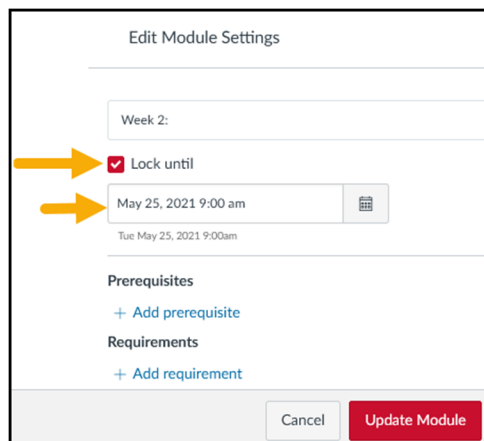
IMPORTANT: If a Module is unpublished or has not reached its release date, students cannot access any activities linked within it, even if they are attempting to access the activity via a different route, such as from the Assignments link on the Course Menu.

Final Steps 1: Run a Link Validation Report

After reviewing and resetting your course, use the built-in link validation tool to check for broken links, unpublished content, links that go to other Canvas accounts, and similar problems.

- Canvas User Guide: How to use the link validation tool

Final Steps 2: Review your course as a Student

Each course comes with a Test Student. You can switch to student view and review the course as the Test Student. This is a handy way to verify that when you enroll registered students, they will be able to see what they ought to and not see what should be initially hidden.

- [Canvas User Guide: How to view a course using Student View](#)

However, the Test Student has a few limitations:

- It cannot be added to a group, so cannot be used to verify that group assignments are available or display accurately.
- You cannot release an activity to the Test Student using the Assign To rules, which makes it impossible to use this user account to pre-check an activity before it is released to all students.

To get around the limitations of the built-in Test Student, you can enroll a valid ISU netID - other than the one you use as instructor - as a student in your course. First you will need to sponsor a second netID for your own use. After your request is approved and the new netID is activated by selecting a login (netID) and password, you then enroll it in your course. You can use your sponsored netID as a test student (demo student) for multiple courses, over multiple years.

- [How to sponsor a netID](#)
- [How to manually enroll a non-credit earning participant into a Canvas account](#)