

From Portal to Quercus: A Feature Comparison Chart for U of T Instructors and Course Staff

This is not a complete list of the tools and features included in both systems. Please be advised, some of the features and tools included in the links to the Canvas Community online support guides and videos in this document may not be available at the University of Toronto.

View the video [Quercus \(Canvas\) Overview](#) and review [Instructor Guide](#).

See also the a [brief glossary](#) of system terms and a [full glossary of system terms](#) that are commonly used.

Note, the Instructor course role in Quercus is Teacher.

Portal (Blackboard)	Quercus (Canvas)	Quercus Functionality	Support Guides and Resources
User Settings			
Calendar	Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track activities and events for all courses. Can add appointments for students to sign up for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the Calendar? How do I use the Calendar as an instructor? Video: Calendar Overview
Content* (formerly Content Collection with My Content, Course Content, Organization Content, Institution Content) *See also Course Content	Files	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located in Account at the top of the Global Navigation bar on the left. Course materials and files can be stored in Files for use across multiple courses. There are three different file storage areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> User Files (similar to My Content in Portal) - located in each user's profile. Course Files (similar to Course Content in Portal) - located in each course (students, teachers, and TAs can access the files unless they are locked by the teacher). Group Files (similar to Institution Content in Portal) - instructors may be added to a group (e.g., for your department or collaborate on group projects and assignments). Drag and drop to folders capability. Files can be downloaded as a .zip file. Uploaded .zip files are automatically unzipped. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are Files? How do I use Files as an instructor? Video: Files: Add Course Content

Global Navigation	Global Activity Stream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays important recent activities from all courses including announcements, discussions, assignments, and conversations. • Global Activity Stream is similar to the Course Activity Stream for individual courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I use the Global Activity Stream as an instructor?
My Page	Dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dashboard is the system entry point • Courses are displayed as course cards. • Announcements and upcoming Calendar items appear on the Dashboard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I use the Dashboard as an Instructor? • Video: Introduction to Dashboard
Notification Settings	Notifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any changes made to notification settings apply to the user only; they do not control how other users receive updates. • All changes are made immediately. • Four delivery types: notify me right away, daily summary, weekly summary or don't send. • Students should be aware that they have the right to forward notifications to a non-university, external email provider such as Hotmail, Gmail etc., however this is not recommended. University policy on official correspondence with students states, "... remain responsible for ensuring that all University electronic message communication sent to the official University-issued account is received and read." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I set my system notification preferences as an instructor?
Personal Information	Account Profile and Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add profile information such as a biography and custom links. • View your Enrollments. • View Enrollments you share with other users. • In Account Settings, instructors can add their contact preferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are Profile and User Settings? • Video: User Settings & Profile Picture • How do I add contact methods to receive (Quercus) Canvas notifications as an instructor?
Tabs (My Page, Community, Content)	Global Navigation Menu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located on the left side of every page in the system. • Links provide quick access to frequently used system features and courses. Links items include the Dashboard, Courses, Groups, Calendar, Inbox, Course Evals, User Account, and the Help menu. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I use the Global Navigation Menu as an instructor?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: Overview of Global Navigation Menu plus more
Course Tools--	Accessibility Checker in Rich Content Editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rich Content Editor includes an accessibility tool that check for accessibility errors within the editor. • It is highly recommended to run other online tools in addition to this tool such as WAVE or WebAim. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I use the Accessibility Checker in the Rich Content Editor? • General Accessibility Design Guidelines
Announcements	Announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcast messages to individual courses or across multiple courses. • The announcement tool in Quercus includes an option for students to comment on announcement posts, there is an option to remove the Reply option from student view. • Announcements appear on the User Dashboard and in the course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are Announcements? • Video: Announcements Overview • How do I make an announcement in a course? • How do I use the Announcements Index Page?
Assignment	Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course assessments are added to the Assignments page to show students all of the Assignments that are expected of them and the point value that each is worth. • When an Assignment is created, a column is automatically created in the Gradebook for that item, therefore assignments must be created in order to create a column in the Gradebook. • Instructors can limit the type of file that is uploaded for student submissions. • Instructors can leave audio and video comments. • Assignments can be created in Modules or the Assignment tool. • A Peer Review Assignment is available. • Rubrics can be added to Assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are Assignments? • What is the difference between a Quercus (Canvas) Assignment and a Quercus (Canvas) Activity? • What assignment types can I create in a course?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I add a rubric to an assignment? • How do I create an assignment? • Overview of Assignments • How do I use the Assignments Index Page?
<p>Blank Page*</p> <p>*See also Content Page/ Area with Content Items</p>	Pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pages includes an option to allow both instructors and students to edit the page and use it as a Wiki. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are Pages? • Video: Pages: Creation and Management (Instructors) • How do I create a new Page in a course?
Blogs/ Journals	N/A	--	--
Check Course Links	Course Link Validator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verify all external links throughout the course and ensure they are valid. • The Course Link Validator checks deleted links, these are links that are included in the course but their linked content has been deleted (e.g., link to a course file or page). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I validate links in a course?
Content Editor	Rich Content Editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add and format content for several features in the course including announcements, assignments, discussions, quizzes and Pages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Rich Content Editor? • Video: Rich Content Editor • How do I insert links to course content into the Rich Content Editor using the Content Selector? • How do I insert course files into the Rich

			Content Editor using the Content Selector?
<p>Content Page/ Area with Content Items* (e.g., to post/ upload files; Create: Item, Image, Web Link etc.)</p> <p>*See also Blank Page</p>	Pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content can be uploaded to a Page as part of a course. • Pages can be linked to other pages. • Pages can be customized to suit the course and used as the Front Page/ Home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are Pages? • Video: Pages: Creation and Management (Instructors) • How do I create a new Page in a course? • Pages vs. Modules • How do I upload a PDF to a page in a course?
Control Panel	Settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course management functions (or tabs) in Settings include: Course Details, Sections, Navigation, External Apps, and Feature Options. • The Navigation tab lists all of the links in the Course Menu. The drag and drop feature allows instructors to reorder and hide course menu links. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I use course settings?
Course Calendar	Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A calendar event is a non-graded course activity. These events will not appear on the Assignments page or Gradebook. • Recurring events are only available for course calendars; they are not supported in personal calendars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I use the Calendar as an instructor? • How do I add an event to a course calendar? • How do I add a repeating event to a course calendar?
<p>Course Content*</p> <p>*See also Content</p>	Course Files	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of three different storage areas. • Located in each course where you are enrolled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: Files: Add Course Content

Course Copy	Import Course Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course content such as assignments, modules, pages, and discussions can be copied from a previous Quercus course in to existing courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I copy content from another Quercus (Canvas) course? Content Migration Options from the Portal
Course Menu	Course Navigation Menu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not include the ability to add new items to the course menu (e.g., urls, course links). Instructors cannot edit/modify existing course menu items. Menu items can be hidden from student view, and the list can be rearranged. Many instructors choose to hide tools and instead direct students to the content through Modules. For example, the Syllabus tool could be hidden and a PDF or .docx file added to the first Module. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I use the Course Navigation Menu as an instructor? How do I reorder and hide Course Navigation links? Video: Overview on Navigation
Course Portfolios	ePortfolios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tied to user Profiles and not a specific course. Can be shared outside of U of T. ePortfolios remains active with an active UTORid and password. Ability to export ePortfolios as a .zip file. Private and public viewing options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are ePortfolios?
Course Reports	Course Analytics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays activity, assignment submissions, grades, and students. Displays once students have been enrolled and students have started to participate in the course. Currently, analytics does not measure activity on mobile devices. Analytics for individual students can also be accessed through the People page and viewing a student's User Details page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I view Course Analytics? How do I view analytics for a specific student in a course? How do I view user details for an enrollment in a course?
Create Column in the Grade Center	Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When an Assignment is created, a column is automatically created in the Gradebook for that item, therefore assignments must be created in order to create a column in the Gradebook. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video: Assignments Overview
Discussion Board	Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are two types of discussions: focused or threaded. Focused are short-lived interactions with only two levels of nesting posts: the original 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are Discussions?

		post and subsequent replies. Threaded discussions allow for replies within replies.	
Download the Grade Center	Export Scores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The export file of the Gradebook can be modified to create a class list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I download grades from the Gradebook?
Export/Archive Course	Export Course Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an export file of the course as a backup that can be downloaded to a computer. Exports do not include student interactions and grades. Office 365 tool configurations are not retained in exported courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I export a Quercus (Canvas) course?
Grade Center	Grades, Assignments and Quizzes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps track of student progress in the course. Assignment columns are hidden from student view using the Mute option. Unmuting sends a notification to students. Fewer question types are supported in Quercus compared to Portal Quizzes can only be scored by points in Quercus (compared to % and letters in Portal) Unlike Portal, single columns cannot be added to the Gradebook tool, they must be added to the Assignments tool as either a "No Submission" or "On Paper" submission type. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are Grades and the Gradebook? How do I use the Gradebook? How do I hide totals in my students' grade summaries? Video: Gradebook Overview
Home Page	Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors have the option to select the Course Activity Stream as the course homepage. The Course Activity Stream (see Course Activity Stream in this document) displays recent activity from a single course including announcements, discussions, assignments and conversations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video: Course Layout: Customization (Instructor) How do I use the Course Activity Stream as an instructor?
Inline Grading and Commenting (formerly CrocoDoc, and Box View)	SpeedGrader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View student submission files for inline commenting, feedback and grading. Rubrics option for grading. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is SpeedGrader? Video: SpeedGrader Overview Video: DocViewer Overview
Learning Module	Modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the main approach used by Quercus (Canvas) to organize course information. Modules present content together and create a learning path for your students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are modules? Video: Modules: Creation and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors can sequence course information, resources and activities using a storyboard approach based on student learning outcomes. 	Management (Instructors) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I add assignment types, pages, and files as module items?
Mobile Apps	Canvas Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes features like SpeedGrader Instructors should use their desktop computer or laptop to grade course assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> About Mobile Apps and Quercus How can I use Canvas on my mobile device as an instructor?
Mobile Apps	Canvas Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost all student functions available in the web version are available in the Canvas Student mobile. Canvas Student should be installed by Students and Instructors who want calendar entries in Quercus to be added to their mobile device. Student should not use the mobile app for assessments (e.g., submitting assignment files, or completing tests, quizzes or surveys) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I use Canvas on my mobile device as a student?
My Grades	Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows students early access to preliminary grades and view their progress. ACORN is the official system recognized by U of T for student final grades Instructors can choose to include or hide Grades in the course menu for student access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I view my grades in a current course? (Students) Video: Grades (Students)
Performance Dashboard	People, Modules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Displays all information about the users in your course. Instructors can view the progress of students and see how they are progressing through the course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I use the People page as an instructor? How do I use modules to view the progress of students in a course?
Rubrics	Rubrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rubrics can be created for grading and adding comments to Assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video: Rubrics Overview (Instructors) How do I create a rubric in a course?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I manage rubrics in a course?
Self and Peer Assessment	Peer Review Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students provide peer feedback on assignment submissions. • Peer reviews can be displayed to the student and grader anonymously or attributed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I use peer review assignments in a course? • How do I create a peer review assignment?
Send Email	Conversations Inbox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversations is the messaging tool used instead of email to communicate with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a course - a group - an individual student, or - a group of students. • Private messages appear in the Inbox. • The interface will disclose the names of other students in groups messages, but if a student chooses to reply-all, the message will not actually be delivered. • Discussion responses can be accessed from the Inbox. • By default, students will receive an email for every announcement and Conversation message that is sent. • Students cannot send messages to other students, even within the same group. • Messages can be sent between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor/TA → Student(s) • Student → Instructor/other course staff • Messages can NOT be sent between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student → Student 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Conversations? • Video: Conversations Overview
Set Availability to Make Course Available	Published/Unpublish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quercus courses are Unpublished by default. Instructors must manually Publish they course for students to access it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I publish a course?
Release Criteria / Adaptive Release	Modules and other settings in specific tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modules can be locked until a release date. • The releasing of a module reveals all content within the module to students. • For some module items, such as Files, Assignments, Discussions and Quizzes, additional restrictions can be added to the items itself, this is not the case for Pages, Text Headers External URLs or External Tools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I lock a module? • How do I add prerequisites to a module? • How do I add requirements to a module?

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modules also have prerequisites, this releases the module's content after individual students complete the prerequisites. • Modules also have requirements, this allows instructors to require students to complete some or all requirements in a particular order. 	
Student Preview	Student View	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located in the Course Navigation Menu under Settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I view a course using a test student?
Tests, Surveys, and Pools	Quizzes, Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice quiz option is available. • Specific questions types that appeared in the Portal do not appear in Quercus such as “Hot Spot” questions types. • Automatic submission is available for Quizzes, Tests and Surveys that are timed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are Quizzes? • Video: Quiz Creation: Questions (Instructors) • Video: Quiz Creation: Settings
UT Course Grafter* *U of T Building Block	Cross-Listing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cross-Listing tool allows instructors to move course section enrollments from individual courses and combine them into one course. This allows instructors to filter my section in most areas and receive updates from ROSI as they are made. • Unlike UT Course Grafter the cross-listing process results in less total course sites as they are consolidated, not an additional site as UT Grafter created. • The sections combined in the surviving course can be used like Smart Views 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-listing
UT Manage Groups/ My Groups* *U of T Building Block	Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced group functionality is under review. • Grouping is not available for SpeedGrader, only Sections can be used to filter submissions. • The Groups tool in Quercus is a collaborative tool where students can work together on group projects and assignments. • A group home page is created for each group and a space to work including discussion board, announcements area, and people • Members of a group are aware of the name and members in the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are Groups? • Video: Groups: Creation & Management (Instructors) • How do I add a group set in a course? • How do I automatically create groups in a group set? • How do I automatically assign students to groups? • How do I manually

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> create groups in a group set? How do I manually assign students to groups? How do I create self sign-up groups? How do I assign a student leader to a group?
UT Manage Users* *U of T Building Block	People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add and view users in the course. The People tool discloses student names and any information they have added to their profile to instructor and other students. Many instructors choose to hide the People tool from course navigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Video: People Overview (Instructors) How do I add users to a course?
UT Opscan Upload* *U of T Building Block	--	--	--
Weight Assignments	Assignment Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final grades are weighted based on Assignment Groups. Selecting this option assigns a weight to each Assignment Group and not the assignments themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do I weight the final course grade based on assignment groups?
Wikis	Pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Wiki by selecting "Teachers and Students" or "Anyone" enrolled in the course can edit a Page. This will allow both students and the instructor to edit the Page. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are Pages? How do I create a new page in a course?