Canvas Guide: Complying with FERPA in Merged Courses

Overview

Faculty teaching the same course in different online sections may merge their courses in Canvas to save time distributing the same course content to students across multiple course sections.

Due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, students may not have access to student information of course sections they are not enrolled in. Therefore, students may not interact in Canvas with students from another course section.

The steps outlined below show how to comply with FERPA regulations in a merged Canvas course site.

Distributing Course Content

Faculty must remove the People, Chat, Conferences and Collaborations course navigation tabs from their Canvas course site. This will restrict students’ ability to view and interact with another course section.

Additionally, student comments should be disabled when posting course Announcements for all sections in cross-listed course sites. Follow the steps below to disable this feature.

In the Course Navigation, click the Settings link.
Click the **Course Details** tab.

Click the **more options** link.

Check the **Disable comments on announcements** checkbox.
Click the **Update Course Details** button

**Sending Messages to Course Sections**

To send messages to students in a particular course section, make sure to select each section separately when sending out each message.

**Setting Calendar Events and Assignment Due Dates by Section**

A single calendar event can have varied dates for each section in your course. Please see the Canvas guide: [How do I set a different Calendar event date for each section in my course?](#)

You should also create Assignments for specific sections and graded discussions for each section. Using Differentiated Assignments, you can create a graded assignment for a specific section of a merged course. Differentiated Assignments also allow you to create graded assignment due dates and availability dates by course section.
- **What are Differentiated Assignments?**
- **How do I create an Assignment for a specific section?**
- **How do I create a Graded Discussion for a specific section?**
- **How do I create a Quiz for a specific section?**

**Creating Student Groups to Facilitate Student Interaction**

It is recommended that faculty [create Canvas Student Groups](#) identical to the course section enrollments to allow student interactions within course sections of a merged Canvas course. After creating Canvas Student Groups, there will be separate group workspaces for each course section inside the course. As an instructor, you can [view all of the student activity within a group](#) by clicking any of the group navigation links.

**Facilitating Discussions by Section**

Once Canvas student groups are created identical to section enrollments, faculty can set up [group discussions](#) to separate student posts, ensuring that students only see discussion posts from classmates in their course section.