



Addendum to Continuity of Operations Plan: Preparing for Learning Management System Disruptions

For the latest official Canvas status information, visit the [Instructure status webpage](#).

Should Loyola's Learning Management System (LMS, Canvas) experience a prolonged outage, instructors should be prepared to implement alternative methods for delivering instruction and maintaining communication with students until normal service is restored. To support academic continuity and minimize disruptions to teaching and learning, faculty are *encouraged* to develop contingency plans for their courses. These plans are also useful in the event of an evacuation or system failure in another learning technology (e.g., Kaltura, Zoom, etc...).

Communications

When creating a contingency plan, instructors should identify course functions that could be impacted by an LMS interruption and determine how these activities will continue during the outage. It's likely an outage will affect online courses to a greater extent than on-campus courses, but all faculty should consider the following: how will communication be facilitated, how will students receive course materials, how will assessments be administered, and how might those assessments be collected using alternative methods. Clear procedures should be communicated to students so they understand how course activities will proceed until access is restored.

- [How do I access my class roster and student emails outside of Canvas?](#)

Having a syllabus statement will also help students know what to do in the case of a disruption. Here is an example statement:

Should Canvas experience an outage, we will maintain course communication via your university email. It is your responsibility to monitor your official email account for any necessary updates, modified instructions, or shifts in deadlines. In the event that activities such as quizzes or discussions are impacted by a system disruption, I will issue guidance regarding alternate procedures or revised submission dates as needed.

Assessment Continuity

Whenever possible, the preferred response to an LMS disruption is to postpone the assessment or extend submission deadlines. This approach will minimize confusion and reduce the need for students to adapt to new testing methods.

Depending on the duration of the outage, faculty may consider one or more of the following alternatives:

- Extend assessment availability or submission deadlines.
- Delay quizzes, exams, or other assessments, if possible.

- Use take-home or alternative assessment formats when appropriate.
- Conduct assessments in person, if possible and if the course is not online asynchronous.
- Replace an assessment with an alternative assignment or project.

Faculty are not expected to redesign every assessment in advance of a potential disruption, but should identify assessments which could be reasonably delayed, extended, or delivered through an alternative format.

When assessments are affected by an LMS disruption, instructors should also consider the following actions:

- Ensuring changes remain consistent with student accommodations, as approved by the Office of Accessible Education.
- Communicating all course and assessment changes to students promptly.
- Awarding incomplete grades only when appropriate and consistent with Loyola's academic policies.

Faculty should avoid rushing implementation of changes to assessments, exams, or other high-stakes assignments. In most situations, delaying or extending a deadline will be preferable to rapid adoption of a new technology or approach. Consider whether the new method or approach provides students with fair, accessible, and effective opportunities to demonstrate skills or learning.

Alternate Assignment Collection Options:

- Email
- Hard copies (for in-person courses, if on-campus courses are occurring)
- Google classroom
- Google docs
- Google shared drive (but do not provide viewable student grades here)
- Google forms with an option to submit files

Access to Course Materials

Instructional continuity ensures that students can access essential course resources. While it is not necessary for faculty to replicate an entire course outside of the LMS, instructors should identify critical course materials and develop a method for providing temporary access during a service disruption. Which course materials will students need in order to continue participating in the course? How will these course materials be distributed? Consider starting your plan by examining which course materials should be backed up in the unlikely event access to the LMS is disrupted for an extended period of time.

Maintaining Backups of Essential Course Resources

Instructors should maintain secure local or cloud-based copies of course materials whenever possible. These materials may include:

- Course syllabi*
- Recorded lectures and narrations*

- Required readings and resources
- Lecture slides and presentation materials
- Grading rubrics and evaluation criteria
- Other materials essential to course completion, grading, or student engagement

Faculty likely already have most of these materials stored on their local computer or on the cloud. Having these resources readily available will allow instructors to continue course operations and provide students with timely access to important information until services are restored.

If you need to download materials from Canvas, please watch this how-to video:

- [How do I download a file or folder from Canvas?](#)

Faculty are also *encouraged* to [download a Canvas course export package](#) for secure storage in a university-sanctioned location. This serves as the fundamental backup for primary course materials. These IMSCC/Common Cartridge files allow for future restoration within the system and may encompass various essential resources, including course settings, syllabi, modules, assignments, and quizzes, as well as question banks, discussion prompts, pages, and rubrics. Having a back-up of Canvas courses is good practice and allows the instructor to keep a copy of their intellectual property as well.

** Concourse Syllabus and Kaltura video storage will likely remain available in the event of an LMS disruption. Using these technologies, as required or suggested, provides back-ups of some course materials.*

Backup Grades and Course Records

Grades, student work, assessment results and other course records are necessary components of operations. During an LMS disruption, access to these records may be limited or unavailable. Maintaining back-up copies of course data can help ensure continuity in grading, student support services, and course administration. As such, Loyola has contracted with K16 to archive course data. K16 will maintain copies of essential course records including:

- Gradebook and grading records
- Attendance and participation records*
- Student assignment submissions
- Quiz, examination, and other assessment results
- Other records necessary for evaluating performance

If these records are needed, the Online Learning Team, IT, and CTRL will work with faculty to secure course data records.

Canvas provides step-by-step instructions for downloading submissions and grades for faculty who would also like to keep copies of their course data:

- [How do I download submissions for an assignment?](#)
- [How do I export grades from the Gradebook?](#)
- [How do I download reports from Canvas?](#)

** Qwickly Attendance will likely remain available in the event of an LMS disruption.*

Data Security and Privacy Considerations

Any back-up copies of student records or assessments should be stored securely and handled in accordance with university policies, privacy regulations including FERPA, and any data security requirements provided by IT. Faculty should avoid storing sensitive student information in unsecured locations or on shared devices.

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