

Allowing Students to Upload Files to your Canvas Course

Canvas does not have a built-in function to make a “drop box” style folder in which any student can upload files for all to see. Typically, students would upload files individually as assignments – in which their files can only be seen by instructors.

However there are a number of situations – for example, individual or group presentations that are given in front the rest of the class members – where it makes sense for students to be able to see all files uploaded for that purpose.

By using the Groups feature, we can accomplish the goal (albeit in a roundabout way) of designating a space where students can upload files for common consumption.

For this example, we are going to create one single Group, in which all of your students are members.

1. Log into Canvas and go to the course where you wish to enable uploads.
2. Go to “People” in your left-hand course menu.
3. Click on the red “+Group Set ” button in the upper right corner.
4. For this example, we are naming our group “Student Files”.
Do not check “allow self sign-up”.
Select the “I’ll create groups manually” option. Then click Save.

Create Group Set

Group Set Name

Self Sign-Up ☐ Allow self sign-up ?
☐ Require group members to be in the same section

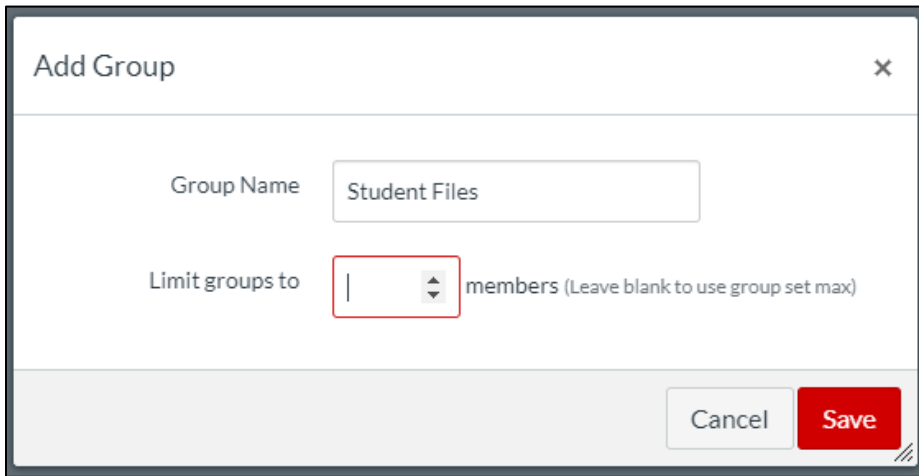
Group Structure ☒ Split students into groups
☐ I'll create groups manually

Cancel Save

5. Click on the white “+Group ” button in the upper right corner.

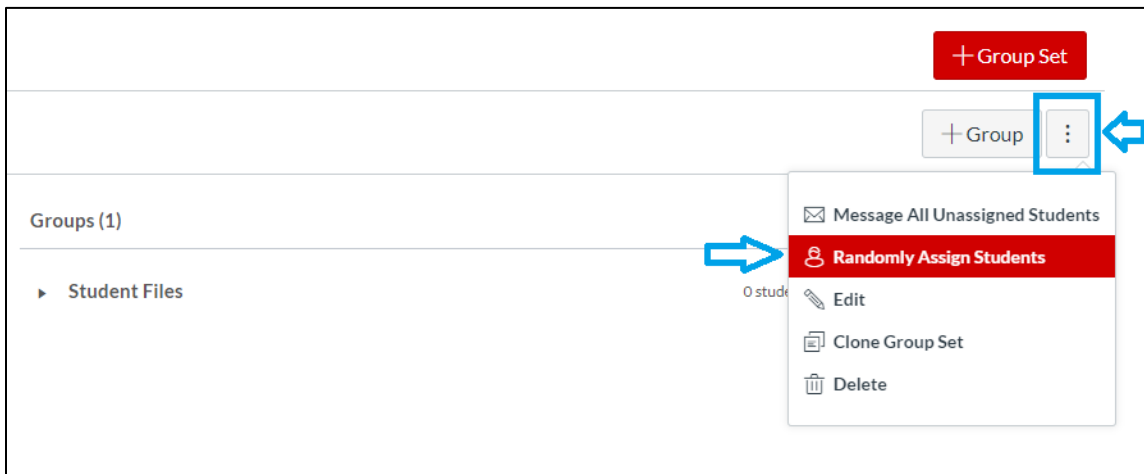
Allowing Students to Upload Files to your Canvas Course

6. In the Add Group window, assign a name – Again, we can just call this “Student Files”. Leave the “Limit groups to” setting **blank**.



The screenshot shows the 'Add Group' dialog box. The 'Group Name' field is filled with 'Student Files'. The 'Limit groups to' field is empty, with a red box highlighting it. The 'Save' button is highlighted in red.

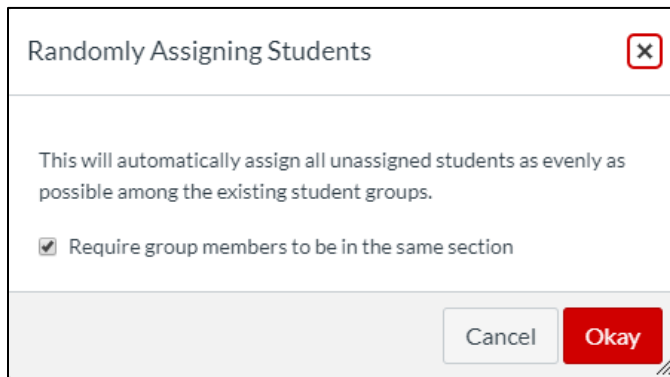
7. Look for the “three dots” button (More Settings) on the right side of the screen. Open the more settings menu, and click “Randomly Assign Students”.



The screenshot shows the Canvas Groups page. The 'More Settings' menu is open for the 'Student Files' group, showing options like 'Message All Unassigned Students', 'Randomly Assign Students', 'Edit', 'Clone Group Set', and 'Delete'. A blue arrow points to the 'Randomly Assign Students' option.

Allowing Students to Upload Files to your Canvas Course

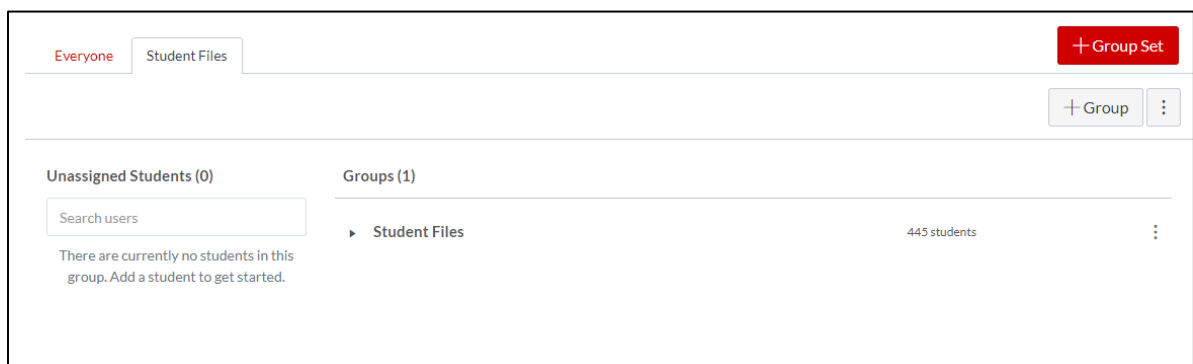
- On the pop up window, click Okay. The web page will take at least 1-2 minutes to finish assigning students to the new group.



Note: Because we only created one group (not multiple), you can ignore the word ‘random’ in this context. It is assigning everyone to one, single group.

If you had already created any other groups within your course, this method **would not work**.

- When assignment is finished, you will see one group listed on your page, populated with all students in your course. Example:



Briefly, let's pause for some background explanation:

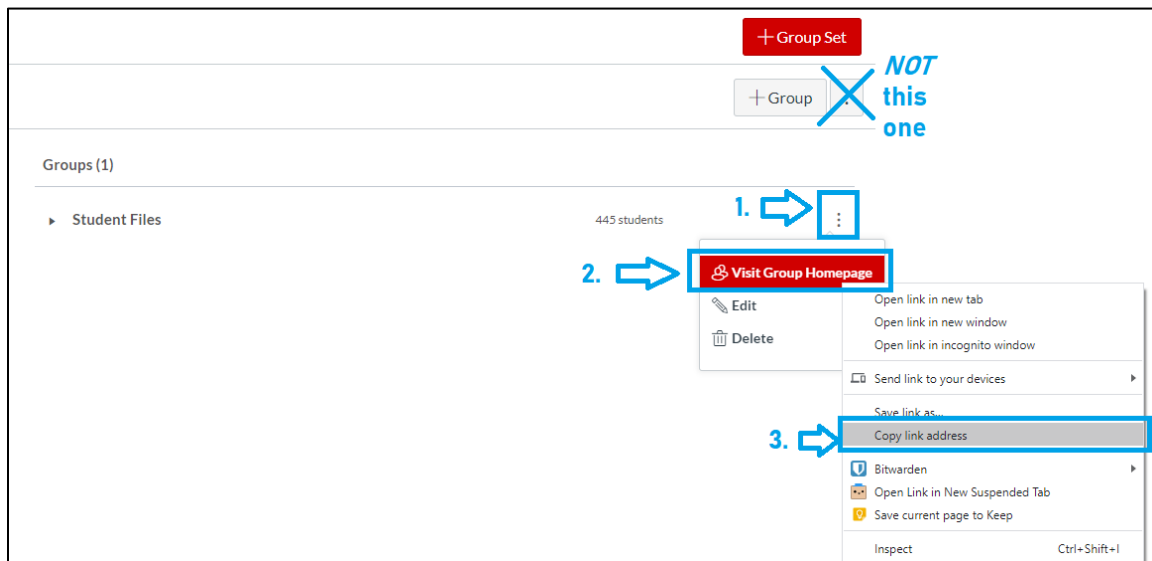
Canvas makes it unusually difficult for a student to open the Group Homepage from within a given course – It wants to show them *all* the groups they are a member of, in one central hub.

In order to work around this behavior so that our students can easily access file uploads, we are going to make a *link* to their Group Homepage accessible from within our course.

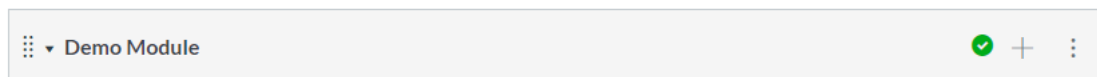
Because we are just pasting a URL, you can put it wherever you think is best – for example, on a Page or in an Announcement. For the purposes of these instructions, though, we're going to put it in an **Item** within our Modules list on the Home Page. Okay, now let's continue...

Allowing Students to Upload Files to your Canvas Course

10. On your current screen, click the “three dots” button (More Settings) next to your new group.
(2.) Right-click on the Visit Group Homepage button, and
(3.) Select Copy Link Address (or Copy URL depending on your web browser).

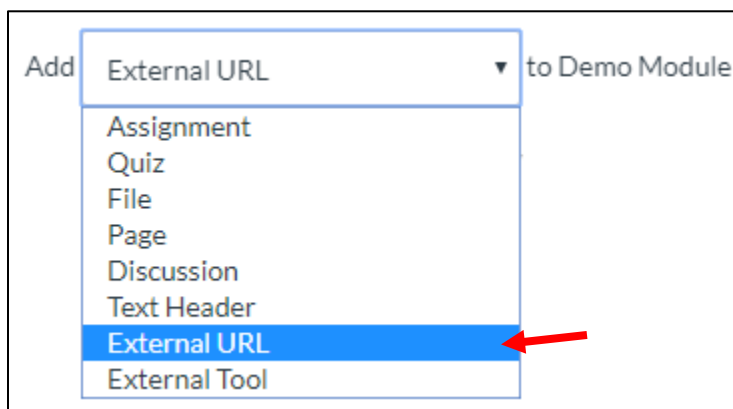


11. Now that you have the URL in your clipboard, I’m going to return to my course’s Home page. That is where all of my Modules and Items have been published for students to access. Here, you’ll see I’ve already created a new module to demonstrate posting this link.



(If you are putting your URL somewhere else, like a Page, then go to that area instead.)

12. Click the + on your module to add a new item to it. In the pop-up window, change the drop-down box and select “External URL” from the choices.



Allowing Students to Upload Files to your Canvas Course

13. Paste the URL in your clipboard into the appropriate field. Give the item a Name that helps students identify the right item to click. Check the box to Load in a new tab, and then Add Item.

Add Item to Demo Module

Add External URL to Demo Module

Enter a URL and page name to add a link to any website URL to this module.

URL:

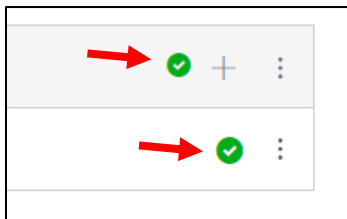
Page Name:

☒ Load in a new tab

Indentation:

Cancel Add Item

14. Don't forget to Publish the Module your link is within, **and** the Item you just added!



15. Students should open the Group Homepage link, and then click “Files” in the menu bar. Inside of that area, they can click “Upload” to add a file, or “+Folder” to create a new folder.

