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Use Canvas Groups for Discussion Sections

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You can use the Groups tool in Canvas to organize group discussion sections. The following article walks through the steps to create group sets, add and name groups, and assign students to groups. Reach out to dld@brown.edu to learn about other ways you can use Groups for discussions, assignments, projects, and grading in Canvas.

Step 1: Create Groups and Group Sets

Group Sets house one or more **Groups**.

1. Click **People** in the Course Navigation menu.
2. Click **+ Group Set**.
3. Enter a group set name in the **Group Set Name** box. (i.e. Discussion Sections).

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

4. Keep selected **I'll create groups manually**, and then select **Save**.
5. Click on your Group Set tab and click **+ Group** to add groups to the group set.
 1. Depending on how many sections you would like to make, you will create that many groups. Name the groups: i.e., *Discussion S01*.

Step 2: Set Up Group Discussions

When creating a new discussion or updating an existing discussion, you must enable the Group Discussion setting.

1. Depending on if you are creating or editing a discussion, click **+ Discussion** or **Edit** the discussion assignment.
2. Scroll to the **Group Discussion** setting, select **This is a Group Discussion** and then select *Discussion Sections* (or whatever you've named the group set) from the drop-down menu.
 1. NOTE: if you have not created any group sets or groups, you will be prompted to create a **New Group Category** at this point.
3. Scroll to the bottom of the page to click **Save**.

Step 3: Assign Students to a Group

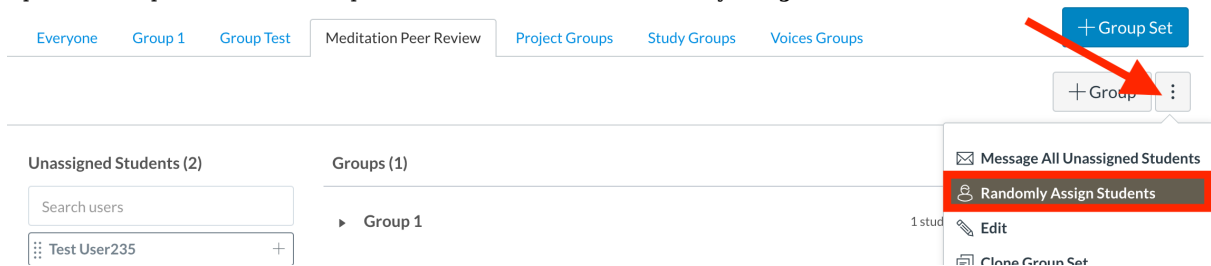
After creating your group set and groups (see Step 1), you may manually or automatically (randomly) assign students to the groups. If enrollment changes (students add or drop the course) you must assign the new students to a group or they won't be able to participate in the discussion section groups.

Manual Assign

1. Return to the Group Set and click and drag student names listed from the **Unassigned Students** column into the appropriate group, or click on the + symbol next to the students name to assign each student to a group.

Automatic (randomly) Assign

1. Open the Group Set and click the options menu and then click **Randomly Assign Students**.



The screenshot shows the Canvas Group Set interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Everyone', 'Group 1', 'Group Test', 'Meditation Peer Review', 'Project Groups', 'Study Groups', and 'Voices Groups'. A blue '+ Group Set' button is in the top right. Below the tabs, there is a '+ Group' button with a dropdown menu. The dropdown menu is open, showing options: 'Message All Unassigned Students', 'Randomly Assign Students' (highlighted with a red box), 'Edit', and 'Clone Group Set'. A red arrow points from the '+ Group' button to the 'Randomly Assign Students' option. Below the menu, there are two columns: 'Unassigned Students (2)' and 'Groups (1)'. The 'Unassigned Students' column has a search box and a list with 'Test User235' and a '+' icon. The 'Groups' column has a dropdown for 'Group 1' and a list with '1 stud' and an 'Edit' icon.

For more information about Groups, you may visit our [Create and Manage Groups in Canvas Knowledgebase article](#) or email us at DLD@brown.edu.

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