

Canvas Course Lifecycle Practices and Procedures

[As of August 2023]

This document outlines standard course content and activity retention practices and procedures in the Canvas learning management system (LMS) at Northern Arizona University. These practices are intended to balance adequate access for the retrieval of content, grades, and student activity with technical storage considerations and institutional risk management.

Academic departments and course owners (instructors and designers and their department or academic unit) are responsible for maintaining course content and retaining course records. ITS will not create or store offline course archives; once a course is deleted from the LMS, ITS will be unable to retrieve it. Course owners should store their own content outside of the LMS as needed. Course owners may export course content and store the resulting .imsc (Instructional Management Systems Common Cartridge) file on a shared department drive, OneDrive, etc.; or may share course content to [Canvas Commons](#), a digital repository of learning objects. It is also recommended that course owners maintain copies of their original course documents, quiz questions, assignment prompts, media, etc. outside of the LMS.

The following practices apply to different categories of courses in the LMS as determined by the Canvas sub-account in which the course is stored. These practices are subject to change as storage capacity changes, University or State policies evolve, etc.

Canvas Sub-Account	Retention Period	Comments
Peoplesoft SIS* (For-credit academic courses scheduled in Peoplesoft)	2 years following course end date in Canvas	Canvas course end date may be later than the official course end date stored in Peoplesoft
Continuing Education	At the discretion of Continuing Education department	CE manages their own sub-account in Canvas
Development Shells (Courses used to develop new course content or maintain longer-term base course content)	Indefinite	ITS Canvas Admins will check periodically with course owners to determine whether DEV shells are still needed
Non-Credit Academic ("Academic-adjacent" courses that support learning; e.g., Math Placement, Career Steps – FCB Pathways)	2 years following course end date in Canvas	ITS Canvas Admins will notify course owners at least 2 months before deletion of course
Personalized Learning	2 years following course end date in Canvas or most recent student subscription	Still need to consult with PL to see if this is acceptable
Professional Development (Courses used for faculty and staff training, tutorials, etc.)	2 years following course end date in Canvas	ITS Canvas Admins will notify course owners at least 2 months before deletion of course

<p>Sandboxes (Courses used for practice, training, experimentation)</p>	<p>At the discretion of ITS Canvas Admins</p>	<p>These courses are created with the expectation that they may be deleted at any time without notice</p>
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*For-credit courses must be retained for at least 2 years in accordance with the [Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records General Retention Schedule](#):

Record Series Number: 52978

Student Records: Student Coursework – Used for Grading: Universities

Including but not limited to: student assessments, tests, examinations, quizzes, papers, projects, blog postings, online discussion, multimedia reproductions of work or performances done for class assignments (e.g., photographs and audio recordings), and other working student data. This is material that, may be maintained in a course management system or third party platform by the instructor or by the educational unit, and leads to a grade and to a posting on the official student record of the registrar.

Retention Period: 2 Years

Retention Remark: After semester in which course is taught, or after administrative value is served, whichever is later.