Oncourse: Messaging & Notifications for Site Owners

Created By: IT Training

This document contains the following how to guides

- Site Setup: Setting up and Organizing a Site
- Site Setup: Working With Groups
- Tools for Communication & Collaboration
- Messages: Sending, Replying & Organizing
- Oncourse: External Site Communication
- Forums: Creating & Organizing
- Chat Room: An Overview
- Wiki: An Overview

We hope you find the information in the document to be useful.

For more information

For the latest Oncourse information and resources online, see:
http://oncourse.iu.edu/info

There you'll find recent announcements, a getting started guide, short online demonstrations, short "least-you-need-to-know" documents, self-study step-by-step materials, help documentation and more. You'll also find contact information for your campus teaching and learning center.
Site Setup: Setting up and Organizing a Site

Use Site Setup to revise or organize course or project site information.

Adding or Removing Tools Using the Edit Tools Link

For each site you can customize the list of available tools. You can add or remove tools using the Edit Tools link.

1. From the menubar on the left, **Click Site Setup**.
   The Site Setup tool opens. Across the top of the screen the following options appear. See Figure 1.

   ![Figure 1](image1.png)

2. **Click the Edit Tools link**.
3. To add tools, **Check the checkboxes** next to the tools you wish to add to your site.
4. To remove tools, **Uncheck the checkboxes** next to the tools you wish to remove from your site.
5. **Click Continue**.
6. **Click Finish**.

Reordering, Hiding, or Disabling Tools

Tools can also be reordered or hidden by using the Reorder Tools link.

1. If necessary, from the menubar on the left, **Click Site Setup**.
2. **Click Page Order** in the list of tool options at the top of the screen.
   A list of tools active for your site appears. See Figure 2.

   ![Figure 2](image2.png)

3. To change the order of the tools, **Hover the mouse over the tool title**.
4. **Click and Drag the different tools** until they are in the order you want.
5. **Click Save** for the changes to take effect.
6. To remove a tool from the list of tools on the left of the Oncourse window, **Click the red X**.
   *Note: The tools without a red X cannot be removed*.
7. To hide a tool from normal users, **Click the yellow light bulb icon**.
   *Note: It is not necessary to Click Save when hiding or disabling a tool.*
8. To disable a tool for normal users, **Click the padlock icon**.
Adding a Participant to a Site and Assigning a Role

You may want to add guest speakers or others who are not a part of the official class roster. Be aware that the Registrar will not remove participants that you add using this method.

1. In Site Setup near the top of the screen, **Click Add Participants**.
2. In the Official Email Address or Username field, **Type the IU username or the username of an IU Guest Account (an email address)**.
3. Next, you must assign a role to the new participant(s).
   a. To assign all participants to the same role, **Verify that the Assign all participants to the same role radio button is selected**.
   b. To assign individual roles, **Click on the Assign each participant a role individually radio button**.
4. Next, you can select the status of the new site participants
   a. To allow new participants to use the site immediately, **Verify that the Active radio button is selected**.
   b. To prevent new participants from using the site until you change their status to Active, **Click on the Inactive radio button**.
5. **Click Continue**.
6. From the Choose a Role for Participants screen, **Select an appropriate role**.
7. **Click Continue**.
8. To notify the participant(s) that the site is available, **Select “Send Now - send an email now to users notifying them that the site is available”**.
9. **Click Continue**.
10. To confirm the adding of the participant(s), **Click Finish**.
    
    *Note: To change permissions for a participant at a later time, go back to Site Setup and change the role of the participant.*

Making the Site Hidden or Published

By default, the site is publically viewable by the participants.

1. On the Site Setup screen, near the top of the screen, **Click Manage Access**.
    
    On the Manage Access site you have three section with options: Site Status, Site Visibility, and Global Access.
    
    - **Site Status** allows you to choose whether your site is visible to participants or not.
      i. To open your site to participants, **Select Publish site**.
      
      A published site will appear as a tab and/or in the active sites list of each of your participants.
      
      ii. To hide your site from participants, **Select “Leave as Draft-accessible only to site maintainers”**.
      
      This can be helpful if you are building a site and don’t want participants to see the site and materials before you are ready.
    - **Site Visibility** allows you to choose whether your site will be listed in the public site list once it is published.
      i. To limit site visibility to only your site participants, **Select Private**.
      
      ii. To open your site description and any public announcements or content to anyone with access to IU’s site list, **Select “Display in public site list”**.
    - **Global Access** allows you to choose which users may join the site once it is published.
      i. If you want to control who has access to your site, **Select “Limited to whom I add manually, or through automatic roster updates”**.
      
      ii. If you want to open your site to more participants by allowing users to search for and join the site, **Select “Allow anyone to join the site with valid login id”**.

2. **Click Update**.

Editing a Site

You can edit your site description and the Site contact name for certain types of worksites.

1. To edit information about your site, **Click Edit Site Information**.
    
    You may choose a URL that allows you to quickly get to your site.
2. To do so, **Type a new alias in the Add Site URL text field**.
3. In the Description field, **Type the information that you wanted displayed in your site’s worksite Information box**.
4. **Type the appropriate information in the Site Contact Name and Site Contact Email fields**.
    
    *Note: You also have the option to add a short description which will be displayed in publicly viewable list of sites and/or an image to use as an icon. To add an icon you must supply a URL for the image.*

5. **Click Continue**.
6. To confirm, **Click Finish**.
    
    *Note: You cannot delete a course site. Courses remain available in Oncourse for eight semesters. For information on how to hide or change the order of course sites, go to: http://kb.iu.edu/data/arox.html.*
Combining Course Sites

If the course you are teaching has several sections, you may want to combine each section into a single parent site so that you need to maintain only one syllabus, calendar, sets of materials, etc. However, it is best to combine course sites before adding content because content from individual sites is not automatically transferred to the parent site and all the tools in the individual sites are disabled.

1. To combine course sites, go into a site you wish to combine with others.
2. From the menubar on the left, Click Site Setup.
3. From the list of links near the top of the screen, Click Combine Rosters.
   Note: If you already have a parent site or sites, you will see a Choose a Destination heading. Under this heading are options for creating a new parent site or to merge the rosters into an existing parent site.
4. On the Combine Rosters screen, Click the checkboxes to select the sections you want to combine.
   Note: If you are combining sites from different campuses, you will be asked to choose a new name for the parent site.
5. Click Continue.
   Note: The site from which you accessed Site Setup is selected automatically. Also, sections that are combined into another parent site will be listed, but will have grayed-out checkboxes.
6. Click Finish.
   Note: The new site appears either as a new tab or as a new entry in the -more- drop-down list. The name of the new site includes a "C" to indicate that it's a combined section. If you no longer wish to see the individual sections, you can remove them from your tabs.

Importing Data from another Site

For any course or project site you create, you can import instructor-generated content (e.g., announcements, assignments, tool settings) from one or more other sites you own. Submitted materials, such as completed assignments, forum postings, or grades, cannot be imported using this method; you must download and save such material manually.

1. In the menubar on the left, Click Site Setup.
2. From the list of links near the top of the screen, Click Import from Site.
3. On the Import Data screen, Choose one of the following:
   • "I would like to replace my data" - Use this option if you want the imported data to overwrite the existing data. This method allows you to import Gradebook settings.
   • "I would like to merge my data" - Use this option if you want the imported data to merge with the existing data. This method does not import Gradebook settings.
   • "I would like to merge my user(s)" - Imported users will merge with existing users. This method only imports those users manually added to a site. It does not import users added to a site by the Office of the Registrar.
4. Select the box next to the site that contains the source data.
   If you merge data, you can choose more than one site. If you choose to replace data, you can only choose one site.
5. Click Continue.
6. Under the name of the site(s) you selected, Check the box next to each tool that contains source material you want to import.
   Note: If a box is grayed out, it means the corresponding tool is not available in that site.
7. Click Finish.
   Note: When you import Gradebook settings, it is possible to import an item with a Gradebook Item Point Value of less than or equal to zero; however, if you try to edit such an item, you will receive an error message.
Site Setup: Working with Groups

Once groups are created within a site, ‘Group-aware’ tools can be configured to facilitate group work.

Creating a Group

Creating groups can help facilitate group work. Tools such as Forums, Messages, and Resources are group aware. The options for groups in these tools only become available when groups exist.

1. From the menubar on the left, **Click Site Setup**.
2. **Click Manage Groups**.
3. **Click Create New Group**.
4. In the Title field, **Type a title for the group**.
   *Note: Avoid using the word “group” in your groups’ titles, as some tools automatically add “group” after the name.*
5. In the Description field, **Type a description for the group** if desired.
6. In the Membership Site Member List, **Click the participants you want to add to the Group Member List**.
   *Note: To select multiple participants, Ctrl + Click [Mac: Command-Click] on each name.*
7. **Click the right-facing arrow** to add group members.
8. **Click Add** to save changes.

Viewing Groups within the Roster

Groups can be viewed from the Roster page.

You may view all participants sorted into their respective groups.

1. From the menubar on the left, **Click Roster**.
2. From the list of links at the top of the screen, **Click Group Membership**. See Figure 1.

3. To display the class member list according to groups, from the View drop-down menu, select **By Group**.
4. To view the members of a specific group, follow these steps:
   a. From the list of links at the top of the screen, **Click Overview**.
   b. In the View drop-down menu, **Select the group you wish to view**.
5. To view the members of a specific group with their pictures, follow these steps:
   c. From the list of links at the top of the screen, **Click Pictures**.
   d. In the View drop-down menu, **Select the group you wish to view**.

Sending Announcements to Groups

Announcements can be made viewable only by specific groups.

1. From the menubar on the left, **Click Announcements**.
2. From the list of links at the top of the page, **Click Add**.
3. Add data to fields such as **Title**, **Body**, etc., as required.
4. In the Access section, **Click Displays this announcement to selected groups only**.
   A list of all groups within the site appears. See Figure 2.
   1. **Click the appropriate checkboxes**.
   2. **Click Post Announcement** when finished with any other settings.
      To learn more about adding announcements, see **Announcements: Posting an Item**.
Posting Assignments to Groups

Follow the steps below to post an assignment just to specific groups.

1. From the menubar on the left, **Click Assignments**.
2. From list of links near the top of the screen, **Click Add**.
3. In the Access section, **Click Display to selected groups**.
   A list of all groups within the site appears. See Figure 3.

4. To select/deselect groups you wish to send the assignment to, **Click the appropriate checkboxes**.
5. Add data to fields like **Title, Instructions, Submission Details, Availability, Details**, etc., as required.
   For more, see Assignments: Adding an Item.
6. When you are finished with any other selections, **Click Save**.

Making Resources Available to Specific Groups

Follow the steps below to make resources available only to specific groups.

1. From the menubar on the left, **Click Resources**.
2. **Hover over the Actions drop-down arrow** next to the file or folder to which you wish to grant group access.
3. **Click Edit Details**.
4. Under the Availability and Access section, **Click “Display this folder and its contents to selected groups only.***
   A list of all groups within the site appears. See Figure 3.
5. To select/deselect groups to which you wish to make the resource visible, **Click the appropriate checkboxes**.
6. When you are finished with other selections, **Click Update**.
   For more information, see Resources: Adding & Removing Files.

Displaying Calendar Events to Specific Groups

Calendar events can also be made visible for specific groups.

1. From the menubar on the left, **Click Calendar**.
2. From the list of links at the top of the page, **Click Add**.
3. **Add data** to fields such as Title, Date, etc.
4. Below the Message textbox, **Click the Display to Selected Groups** option.
   A list of all groups within the site appears. See Figure 3.
5. To select/deselect groups you wish to display the calendar event to, **Click the appropriate checkboxes**.
6. **Click Save Event** when finished with all other selections as needed.
   For more help, see Calendar: Adding an Event.

Sending Messages to Groups

You can choose to send a message to all members of a group.

1. In the menubar on the left, **Click Messages**.
2. **Click Compose Message**.
3. In the To field, **select the group(s)** to whom you wish to send your message. See Figure 4.

   *To

   Instructor Role
   Student Role
   Section 1 Group
   Section 2 Group
   Section 3 Group

   Figure 4

   Note: To select multiple groups, Ctrl + Click on the group names [on a Mac, use Command + Click].
4. **Add a subject line** to the Subject field,
5. **Add your message** to the Message field.
6. **Click Send** when finished.
   For more, see [Messages: Sending, Replying & Organizing](#).

## Creating and Customizing Forums for Individual Groups

You can customize access to forums based on group membership.

1. From the menubar on the left, **Click Forums**.
2. **Click Forum Settings** next to the forum you wish to edit.
   Note: You can also edit access to specific topics within a forum by clicking Topic Settings.

![SU13 IN UITS PRAC 56423 Forum](image)

### Figure 5

3. Click the arrow next to Permissions to reveal the permissions settings. **Find the group you want to set permissions for** and select the appropriate permission from the drop-down list under Permission Level.
   Note: **By default, the permission for all groups is set to None.**

![Permissions](image)

### Figure 6

4. When you are finished making changes, **Click Save**.
   For more information on how to use the Forums tool, see [Forums: Creating & Organizing](#).
## Tools for Communication & Collaboration in Oncourse

### Messages Tool
Send messages kept within Oncourse to an individual, group, or all those in a role chosen from the Messages dropdown list.

1. To create a new message, in the appropriate course site, **Open the Messages tool.**
2. **Click Compose Message.**
   - Responses to all messages are managed through users’ Oncourse course sites.
3. To send a copy of the message to a recipient’s email, **Click the Send Cc checkbox.**
4. When you have finished composing your message and subject heading, **Click Send** to send your message.

For more, see Messages: Sending, Replying & Organizing.

### Email Archive Tool
Send email messages to all members of a course or project site from an easy-to-remember email address. This tool will also store copies of every message sent to this address.

1. To add the Email Archive tool, **Select Site Setup.**
2. **Select Edit Tools.**
3. **Select the checkbox for Email Archive.**
4. **Click Continue.**
5. **Enter an alias for your course in the Site Email Address box.**
   - The Email Archive tool automatically creates the end of your email address: @oncourse.iu.edu.
6. **Click Continue.**
7. **Click Finish.**

You will be able to send email from any email program to everyone in the site using the Email Archive address. The Email Archive tool will be listed in the menubar.

### Wiki Tool
Employ the power of collaborative, community authoring of web pages with the Wiki tool. Any site participants can add normal and formatted text, tables, links and embedded images.

1. **Click Wiki.**
   - *Note: You may need to add this tool from Site Setup. See Site Setup: Setting Up and Organizing a Site.*
2. To make a change to the wiki page, **Click Edit.**
3. To complete, **Click Save.**
4. To set notification preferences to track changes to Wiki pages, **Click Watch.**

For more, see Wiki: An Overview.

### Chat Tool
Enable Chat Rooms for real-time live text communications among site participants.

1. **Click Chat Room.**
   - *Note: You may need to add this tool from Site Setup. See Site Setup: Setting Up and Organizing a Site.*
2. **Click Options** at the top of the page.
3. **Click Add Room.**
4. **Enter a Title and any other relevant details.**
5. To save the room, **Click Update Options.**
   - You may set a room as the default as well.
6. To enter the room, **Click the appropriate room link.**
7. To post to the chat window, **Type your message.**
8. **Click Add Message.**

For more, see Chat Room: An Overview.

### Forums Tool
Develop forums, structured, threaded conversations in which members participate.

1. To begin, **Click Forums.**
   - *Note: You may need to add this tool from Site Setup. See Site Setup: Setting Up and Organizing a Site.*
2. At the top of the page, **Click New Forum.**
3. **Enter a Title.**
   - You can add descriptions and choose other settings for this forum as needed.
4. **Click Save Settings & Add Topic.**
5. **Add a title for the new Topic.**
   You can add descriptions and choose other settings for this topic as needed.

6. **Click Save.**
7. To post, **Click on a Topic.**
8. **Click Start a New Conversation** from the top of the page.
9. **Type your message.**
10. **Click Post.**
For more, see Forums: Creating & Organizing.

### Create a Group

Groups can be used to create forums or resources that are restricted to a subset of site participants.

1. **Go to Site Setup** on the left of the Oncourse window.
2. **Click Manage Groups** near the top of the page.
3. **Click Create New Group.**
4. Add a Title.
5. Add a Description.
6. **Click a name from the list.**
7. **Press the arrow button** to move the names from the Site Member List into the Group Member List.
8. **Click Add.**
To learn more about how to use groups, see Site Setup: Working with Groups.

### Create Resource Folders Restricted to each Group

You can restrict access to a Resources folder to a specific group. To do so you must already have a group set up.

1. **Open the Resources tool.**
2. **Hover the mouse cursor over the Add box** next to the main Resources folder.
3. **Click Create Folders.**
4. In the Folder Name field, **Type a folder Name.**
5. To make the folder available only to the group, **Click “Add Details for this item”** next to the Folder Name field.
6. Under the Availability and Access heading, **Select “Display this folder and its contents to selected groups only.”**
7. **Check the relevant group(s).**
8. **Click Create Folders Now.**
   Only the selected group or groups may access this folder in Resources.

### Edit Permissions for Existing Folders

You can change permissions in folders to allow students to freely share (e.g., upload, revise, or delete) material.

1. **Open the Resources tool** in the appropriate course site.
2. Next to the group folder name, **Hover the mouse over Actions.**
3. In the list that opens, **Click Edit Folder Permissions.**
4. **Check the desired permissions** for each role in the site.
   Suggested permissions for students are Create resources, Edit any resource, Edit own resources, and Delete own resources.
5. **Click Save.**
   Students will be able to introduce, edit, and work collaboratively on items in the group folder.
**Messages: Sending, Replying & Organizing**

*The Messages Tool allows participants to read, send and organize messages within a site.*

### Sending a Message

The Messages tool allows site participants to communicate using internal course mail. A copy may also be sent outside Oncourse to the recipients’ email addresses.

1. From the list of tools to the left, **Click Messages**.

2. To start to compose a message, near the top of the screen, **Click Compose Message**.

3. In the To field, **Click the recipient's name or the group name**.
   
   *Note: You can use Ctrl+Click [ Mac: Command+Click ] to select multiple recipients.*

4. To send a copy of the message to the recipients' email addresses, **Click the Send Cc checkbox**.
   
   *Note: Instructors or site owners may choose to turn this option off. If you are an Instructor or owner you can turn this feature off under the Settings link on the main Messages screen.*

5. In the Subject field, **type a subject**.

6. **Type the message text**.

7. If you wish to attach a file to the message, see the section **Adding an Attachment** below.

8. **Click Send**.
   
   A copy of the message will be saved in your Sent folder in Messages.
Adding an Attachment

Additional resources may be attached to messages. Resources may be attached by uploading a file from your computer, linking to a web site or by attaching a file already stored in this site or another sites Resources tool.

1. **Verify that you are on the Compose a Message screen.**
2. To add an attachment, **Click Add Attachments.**
   You see the Add Attachment form. This allows for three situations:
   - **Upload local file** - A file that is on your computer.
   - **URL (link to web site)** – A web address.
   - **Select a resource** – Any item that is stored in Resources – either in this site or another site.

![Add Attachment Form]

1. If you want to add a file from your computer, at the top of the screen next to Upload local file, **Click Browse.**
   The Choose File to Upload window opens.
   a. **Navigate to the file on your computer** that you would like to attach.
   b. **Double-click the file of your choice.**
      A gray bar added to the top of the screen labeled Items to attach shows what has been selected for attachment.
   c. **To add additional attachments, Repeat the steps.**
2. If you want to add a web address, **Type or paste the URL** in the “URL (link to website)” field.
   a. **Click Add.**
      A gray bar added to the top of the screen labeled Items to attach shows what has been selected for attachment.
   b. **To add additional attachments, Repeat the steps.**
3. If you want to attach a file from Resources, **Navigate to a file in your Resources folder.**
   *Note: To access Resources for other sites such as My Workspace, Click the link for Show other sites.*
   a. **Click “Attach a copy”** to the right of the desired file.
      A gray bar added to the top of the screen labeled “Items to attach” shows what has been selected for attachment.
   b. **To add additional attachments, Repeat the steps.**
4. To finish the selection process, **Click Continue.**
   You are returned to the Compose a Message screen.
5. To send the message, **Click Send.**
Reading Messages

Messages are held in the Received folder in the Messages tool by default.

1. To open the Received folder, **Click the Received link**
2. To open a message, **Click the message subject link**

Replying to Messages

Both above and below a message are buttons that allow the reader to reply to the sender, reply to all recipients of the message, or to forward the message to someone else.

1. **Click Reply.**
   - The message automatically includes the sender as a recipient, but additional recipients can also be added at this point.
2. **Proceed as with the Sending a Message section above.**

Adding Folders

The Messages tool includes 3 default folders: Received, Sent and Deleted. You can create additional folders to hold messages of a similar topic.

1. At the top of the Messages tool, **Click the New Folder link.**
2. **Type a folder name**
3. **Click Add.**

Moving Messages

You can organize your messages by moving them to folders.

1. If necessary, from the list of tools to the left, **Click Messages.**
2. **Click on the name of the folder where the messages you want to move are located.**
3. **Click the checkbox(es) for the message or messages you wish to move.** See Figure 3.
4. Above the message list, **Click Move** above the list of messages.
5. **Click the radio button for a folder.**
6. **Click Move Messages.**

Deleting Messages

Messages may be removed from any of the folders in the Messages tool. Removed messages are kept in the Deleted folder.

1. From the list of tools to the left, **Click Messages,** if necessary
2. **Click on the name of the folder where the messages you want to delete are located.**
3. **Click the checkbox(es) for the message or messages.** See Figure 3.
4. **Click Delete** above the list of messages.
Oncourse: External Site Communication

Instructors and site owners can send real content through several methods of external communication.

Understanding external communications options

Because of the wide array of external communications tools facilitated by Oncourse, it becomes important to be sure that it is clear when to use each one of them.

In the Messages tool, messages can be copied to recipients' email addresses. You can send Announcements, Resources, and Assignment High Priority Notification messages directly to site participants' email inboxes. These notification messages are generated automatically by the Oncourse tools. These notifications contain actual content, for example: "Due to a family emergency, class has been cancelled."

In addition to these kinds of communications, there is another to discuss, the Email Archive tool, which creates a site email address for a worksite and collects all messages sent to that address.

Understanding the Email Archive Tool

Site owners can choose to activate an Email Archive tool for which a unique site email address must be created. The address functions as an automated distribution list that includes all of your site participants.

You use the list address to send a message to the class distribution list from your email program of choice (such as Outlook, Imail, Umail, Hotmail, etc.). By default, a copy of this message is sent to the email address of all site participants, and the message is always stored in the site’s Email Archive tool, available to all site participants.

Communicating Externally: Control by the Sender

Because of the wide array of external communication methods in Oncourse, there are quite often several different ways to accomplish the important task of corresponding with students and other site participants, and notifying them of important information.

Several variables, such as the urgency of the message, impact an instructor’s or project site owner's decision about which of these communication techniques to use. Several of these techniques, including High Priority Notification messages and messages copied to recipients' email addresses, result in immediate and automatic notification email messages being sent. However, both the sender and the recipients have some control over the way they receive other sorts of email from Oncourse.

When instructors create announcements and post resources and assignments, they choose whether or not to send a notification message to all site participants. If they choose to notify all members, they can send the notification with two different levels of priority. High Priority notifications are sent to all members immediately and cannot be blocked. This would be an appropriate choice for ensuring that all site members know of a class being canceled due to an emergency. On the other hand, site members have the ability to delay or block Low Priority notifications from reaching their email inboxes.

Communicating Externally: Control by the Receiver

Let’s explore the Preferences tool, which is used to globally control the way notification messages and email archive messages are received. The Preferences tool is located in My Workspace.

1. To access My Workspace, in the horizontal tab list of sites, Click My Workspace.
2. To see your current preferences, in the menubar on the left, Click Preferences.
3. To see your current notification preferences, below the horizontal list of sites, Click Notifications.

You see the Notification preferences as they are currently set. These notification preferences apply to ALL sites and are controlled by each Oncourse user personally.

Exploring High and Low Priority Notifications

Oncourse treats High and Low Priority notifications differently. High Priority notifications are sent to all course and project site members immediately. No one has the ability to block reception of these notifications in their email inboxes. These notification settings cannot be altered. Be aware that the speed of delivery depends both on Oncourse and the email provider receiving them.

Although no one can change the way High Priority notifications are received, there are several choices for receiving Low Priority notifications. In the Preferences tool, these options are divided into five sections:

- Announcements
- Resources and Drop Box
- Syllabus
- Email Archive
- Matrices
The options for Announcements, Resources, and Syllabus items are similar, while the Email Archive preferences work somewhat differently, so they will be discussed later. Matrices are used in Portfolio sites. We will not discuss these options in this document. For more information about Portfolios, see the Knowledge Base document at: http://kb.iu.edu/data/arij.html

Currently, preferences for Assignment notifications and Messages sent to recipients' email addresses are not listed. When you choose to send these types of messages, they are always treated as High Priority messages.

There are three settings for the way you receive Low Priority Announcements, Resources, and Syllabus notifications:

- **Send me each notification separately**: You receive notifications the sender considers Low Priority as soon as they are sent.

- **Send me one email per day summarizing all low priority announcements (resource or syllabus) notifications**: An email is sent once a day around midnight containing all Low Priority notifications. This email contains the actual content of the announcement and other information.

- **Do not send me low priority announcements notifications (resource notifications or Syllabus items)**: No Low Priority notifications are sent to your email address. It is important to note that if you choose this setting, you will need to check the Announcements, Resources, and Syllabus areas carefully because you may not have any warning of new content.

At this time, there is no way to adjust your preferences for individual sites. If you choose to receive a daily digest of notifications, the email will include any Low Priority notifications from all your sites.

### Choosing High or Low Priority Notifications

An announcement that you wish to send about office hours could be important but probably not urgent. In this case, it may be wise to send the notification at the Low Priority level.

Some instructors may choose to send all announcements as high priority notifications to ensure that all students receive them. However, there are potential risks to this practice. A student who has several courses using Oncourse may be inundated with notification messages at critical points during the semester and may end up inadvertently deleting or ignoring them. Because everyone can always see notifications by logging into Oncourse and checking the Home or Announcements tool, consider sending only the most urgent and time-sensitive notifications at the High Priority level.

Low priority notifications might be suitable for general reminder announcements or for messages that are not time-sensitive, such as a change in a reading assignment several weeks ahead of time, or for items that may not be urgently applicable for all students or site members.

### Understanding Email Archive Preferences

While you can only block Low Priority Announcements and Resources notifications, you can choose to block ALL email messages sent to the site’s distribution list email address, the address that you created for the Email Archive tool. Because everyone has the ability to block any email message sent to the course distribution list, you may want to consider sending a High Priority Announcement notifications to the site for your most urgent communications, as there is no way to block High Priority notifications.

Here is how these three Email Archive options work for everyone using Oncourse:

- **Send me each email sent to site separately**: All email messages addressed to any of your site distribution list addresses are sent to your email address.

- **Send me one email per day summarizing all emails**: You receive one email each day containing all messages sent to any of your site distribution list addresses.

- **Do not send me emails sent to the site**: No email messages sent to any of your site distribution list addresses are sent to your email address. Remember that this setting holds true across all sites you participate in. Anyone who blocks Email Archive messages from being sent to their email inbox will need to check the Email Archive tool within each of their Oncourse sites to read these messages.

*Note: No matter which preference you have chosen, you can always see a list of all messages sent to any site distribution list address in the site's Email Archive listing.*
Forums: Creating & Organizing

You can create new forums, and topics within them, to organize class discussions.

Creating a Forum

The Forums tool provides shared space for a whole class or a subset of the class to share discussions, without depending on all participants being logged in at the same time. Once a site has the Forum tool activated, Oncourse automatically creates a default Forum and a General Discussion topic for immediate use. Course instructors or project site owners can add additional forums as desired by following these steps.

1. In the list of tools to the left, Click Forums.
2. At the top of the screen, Click New Forum. See Figure 1.

3. In the Forum title field, Enter your forum’s title.
4. In the Short Description field, you may Type a brief description that will appear under the forum’s title.
5. In the Description field, you may Type a description.
6. If you have a file you want to attach to your forum, Click Add Attachments to find your file, or specify a URL for a file on the web.

   The forum posting options allow you to lock the forum, turn on moderation and to require students to post before they can read other responses. The default settings allow participants to post to new forums as they are created.

7. To review all postings before they are made public, Click the Yes radio button for Moderate Topics in Forum.
8. If desired, to change the availability, Click the “Specify date to open (show) and/or close (hide)” radio button. The default settings make the new Forum visible immediately.

9. If you want to link this forum to a previously created Gradebook Item, Select the Gradebook Item from the dropdown list.

   In the Permissions section, you can adjust the Permission Level for each role or group. The permissions apply to the discussion forum and all associated topics. These settings control what individuals can see or do in the forum depending on their role. Anyone you designate as moderator will have the chance to read and screen each participant’s forum postings before they are released to the rest of the class or group.

10. Choose the Customize drop-down menu next to the role you want to change. See Figure 2.

   Click Customize next to the role you want to change.

   Click here to give everyone in this role the ability to moderate messages.

11. When you are done entering your settings, you can then Choose from the following options:
• **Click Save** to create your forum and return to the Forums main page.
• **Click Save Settings & Add Topic** to jump to the Topic creation page within your forum.
• **Click Save Draft** if you wish to keep your forum hidden for now. You can return to edit your settings later.

### Creating Topics within a Forum

Once you have created a forum, you can add one or more topics. Forum topics are where students can post responses.

1. **Click New Topic** to the right of the Forum title.  
   *Note: If you clicked Save Settings & Add Topic after creating a forum, this step is unnecessary.*

2. **Enter a Topic Title**.

3. **Follow the steps similar to creating a forum** to create settings specific to this particular topic.  
   You may leave these settings unchanged if you want to use the settings for the parent forum. You may also choose to restrict the topic with different groups in your worksite.

4. **Click Save** to save your new topic.  
   *Note: To save your work and add another topic, **Click Save Settings & Add Topic.***

### Organizing Forum Topics

By default, as new topics are added in each forum, they are added to the top of the list. You may want to re-arrange your topics so they appear in a different order.

1. To access the organization feature, from the links at the top of the screen, **Click Organize**. See Figure 1.
2. To rearrange the topics, in the drop-down box next to a topic, **change the order value**.
3. **Click Save** when you are finished organizing your forums.

To learn how to post messages, reply and watch conversations, see **Forums: Participating in Conversations**.
Chat Room: An Overview

The Chat Room tool allows Oncourse users in different locations to communicate in real time.

What is a Chat Room?

Chat rooms allow synchronous or real time communication for two or more users. In order for real time communication to occur, users must be logged on at the same time. Be aware that connecting to Oncourse using a slow internet connection may cause serious delays in the appearance of chat messages.

The power of the Chat Room tool is to allow users to communicate in real time, but because all messages posted to the Chat tool in Oncourse are archived and visible to students, it can also potentially function as a kind of discussion forum. Unlike discussion postings, there is no text editor for chat messages, and you cannot attach files to messages. It is generally used for less formal conversations than those posted in the Forums tool.

One potential use for the Chat Room tool is for instructors to maintain an Online Office Hours Chat Room for students' questions and answers. In addition, dispersed members can use the room as a space to have conversations across distances or to catch up with conversations they may have missed.

Using the Chat Room as a Participant

All participants in a chat use the Chat Room tool in the same way, whether as course instructors/project owners or students/project members.

1. To open the Chat Room tool, in the menubar on the left, Click Chat Room.
   
   You will see the Chat Room tool interface. A blinking cursor in a blank text field near the bottom of the screen allows you to post messages that are displayed in the upper portion of the screen. A list of all users with the Chat Room tool open appears in a list along the right side of the window.

2. To add a message, in the field labeled "Enter chat message", Type your message.

3. To post the message, Click the Add message button.

   After a few seconds, your post appears in the list of messages on the screen. You can then repeat this process to respond to other participants' posts.

Editing a Room

A Chat Room has options that can be changed including the title of the room, adding a description, and display options.

1. To access the options, Click Chat Room.

2. Click Options at the top of the screen. See Figure 1.

3. Find the name of the room you wish to edit on the list, Click Edit under the room's name. See Figure 1

   ![Figure 1](image1.png)

On the Edit Room page you will see the options that can be changed. See Figure 2.

4. When you are done updating the room, Click Update Options.

   ![Figure 2](image2.png)
Changing Chat Room Permissions

1. To return to the Main Chat Room, Click Chat Room.
   For a basic understanding of roles and permissions, see Site Setup: Setting up and Organizing a Site
2. At the top of the screen, Click Permissions.
3. Set the Permissions as desired. See Figure 3.

4. If you wish to undo any of the changes you've made, Click Undo changes.
5. Once you have set the permissions, Click Save.

Creating additional rooms for chats

The Chat Room tool allows for multiple rooms, giving an instructor or site owner power to create areas for specific kinds of chats - although participants can only be active in one of these rooms at a given time. As long as there are messages stored in a named chat room, they will be saved. These additional chat rooms can be created using the Options feature.

1. To return to the main chat room, Click Chat Room.
2. To access the Chat Options, Click Options.
3. To create an additional chat room, Click Add Room
4. Add a Title for the new room.
   You may also add a description if desired.
5. Click Update Options to finish creating the new chat room.
6. To enter the room you created, Click "Back to room".
   Note: You can enter another room by clicking the name of that room.

Changing the Default Room

If you have more than one room available, you can set which room is the default.

1. To access the options, Click Chat Room.
2. Click Options.
3. Under the name of the room you wish to use, Click Set as Default. See Figure 4.
   Note: The Set as Default option only appears for rooms that are not currently the default room.
4. When you are done, Click "Back to room".
Deleting Individual Chat Messages

The default Chat Room permissions allow site owners to delete any message.

1. To delete a single chat message, next to the item you wish to delete, Click the trash can icon. See Figure 5.
2. Click Delete to confirm.

![Figure 5: Currently viewing messages for 'Main Chat Room'](image)

Click to delete the message.

Clearing All Chat Messages

You may also clear all messages from a chat room.

1. Click Options near the top of the page.
2. Click Clear History under the appropriate chat room name.
3. Click Delete to confirm deletion of all messages from this chat room.
4. To return to the room, Click "Back to room".
Wiki: An Overview

Wiki is a tool for collaborative authoring within a course or project site.

Adding and Editing Wiki Pages

The Wiki tool has a single default page titled Home. You will want to edit this Home page to create the content you want. Additional Wiki pages are created by creating links to them from existing wiki pages. Editing and page creation are the same process. Participants with permissions to update can edit existing pages or create new ones.

1. In the menubar on the left, Click Wiki.
   Note: You may have to add the Wiki tool from Site Setup, as it does not appear in the list by default. See Site Setup: Setting up and Organizing a Site for more information.

2. To edit this page, Click Edit. See Figure 1.

3. To insert a link to a new page, Click in the editing field. See Figure 2.

4. Delete the default text.

5. Add your new text.
   You can create headings by adding h1 through h6 in front of any text. To bold items, put double underscore characters before and after the word(s) you want bold. To make something italicized, put double tilde characters before and after the word(s) you want italicized. See examples in Figure 2.

6. Type the title of a new page and surround the title to be linked with square brackets in the form of [NewPageTitle].
   Note: For a new page, the name must be unique. You can create link to an existing page using its title in brackets.

7. To save your changes, Click Save.
   Your new page name will become a link with a question mark (?) after it. The question mark indicates that the new page needs to be created. See Figure 3.
8. **Click the link with the question mark.**
   A new page has been created for you to edit. Once you add content to the new page, the question mark will disappear.

9. To edit this page, **Click Edit.** See Figure 1.
10. **Delete the default text.**
11. **Add your new text.**
12. **Click Save.**

### Understanding Wiki Permissions

Because of the collaborative intent of the Wiki tool, there is a different permissions structure for this tool than others in Oncourse.

1. To access permission, **Click Info.**
   Each page in the Wiki has its own permissions settings. To change permission settings for the entire Wiki (i.e. all Wiki pages), you must edit the site permissions. See Figure 4.

   ![Page owner admin checkbox.](image)

   ![Click to edit site permissions](image)

   **Figure 4**

   *Note: As the page owner, you have full admin access to the wiki. Unchecking the Page Owner Admin checkbox will cause errors when you try to access the wiki. You will need to contact the Oncourse administrators to reset the permissions.*

2. To edit site permissions, **Click edit site permissions.**

   ![The section: site/](image)

   ![Save](image)

   **Figure 5**

   The permissions available for the Wiki tool are as follows:
   - Create: Create a wiki page
   - Read: View a wiki page
   - Edit: Edit the contents of a wiki page
   - Admin: Edit the permissions of a wiki page, and restore older version of a wiki page
   - Super Admin: Access to all permissions

3. **Change the permissions** as you desire.
4. **Click Save.**
Understanding the Wiki History Tool

Due to the collaborative nature of wiki page creation and modification, site owners may want to see the evolution of a particular page – when it was created, and when and by whom subsequent modifications were made. On occasion, it may also be desirable to roll back a wiki page to a previous version, much like using the “undo” function in a word processing application.

1. To access the History view of a page, at the top of the Wiki page, **click History**. See Figure 1. A table shows the history of any changes made to the current page. See Figure 6.

![Figure 6](image_url)

2. To see a side-by-side comparison of two versions, next to any version, **click Current in the “Compare to” column**. See Figure 7.

   *Note: Changes to the older version are highlighted in yellow, new content is highlighted in green, and deleted content is highlighted in red. By using this History tool, you can see exactly who made what changes to a particular page and when they made the changes.*

![Figure 7](image_url)

3. To return to the History page, **click History**.

4. To restore a previous version, next to the version you wish to use, **click Revert to this version**.

Adding an External Link

Wiki pages allow you to create links to web pages. These pages will open in a new tab or window in the browser.

1. To add an external link from a Wiki page, **click Edit**.

2. At the point you want to insert a link, **click in the editing field**.

3. **Type a description followed by the URL**, for example:

   Visit the Indiana University Website, http://www.iu.edu

   *Note: You must always include the http:// portion of the URL for the hyperlink to work properly.*

4. **Click Save**.
Adding a link to a File in Resources

You can also add links to files located in the Resources tool.

1. To add a link from a Wiki page to site Resources, Click Edit.
2. At the point you want to insert the link, Click the editing field.
3. In the tool bar above the editing field, Click the Link icon. See Figure 8.

![Click to create a link to a file in Resources.](image)

Click here to create a link to a file in Resources.

This will bring you to a list of files located in that site’s Resources folder.

4. To the right of the chosen file name, Click Select.
5. Click Continue. 
   You will see the name of your file within some Wiki markup, for example: 
   `{link:filename.doc|worksite:/filename.doc}`.
6. Click Save.

Monitoring Activity on a Page

To monitor the activity on a page, you can set up email notifications to alert you when someone has edited the page. Email notifications are sent to your authorized email address; see Changing your authorized email address.

1. Navigate to the wiki page you want to watch.
2. At the top of the page, Click Watch. See Figure 1.
3. To select your notification preferences, Choose from the following: (Figure 10)
   • Each time a page is changed in this wiki (or wiki sub-sections), send a separate email
   • Send me one email per day summarizing all changes in this wiki (or wiki sub-section)
   • Do not send me emails when pages changed in this wiki (or wiki sub-section)
   • (For wiki sub-sections only) Just do the same as for the main wiki notifications
4. Click Save to save your changes.