

Essential information for Teaching Assistants on QUERCUS

U of T's new Academic Toolbox



What is Quercus?

Quercus (Canvas) is the University of Toronto's new academic toolbox (replacing Portal/Blackboard) September 1, 2018. Quercus offers an advanced content design, a variety of student communication tools, easy-to-use course administration features and mobile applications for access to key functions from a phone or tablet. You can explore a [feature comparison](#) of Quercus and Portal. Through a number of built-in tools and effective integration of other educational technologies, this powerful "app store" platform allows for greater pedagogical flexibility and engagement. [TA roles and responsibilities in Quercus](#) can vary from developing and managing course content, creating rubrics and adding grades, to moderating various activities. This tip sheet will guide you through the process of getting training, accessing resources, and exploring strategies to enhance your expertise on Quercus.

Accessing Quercus

To access Quercus, visit <http://q.utoronto.ca>. Use your UTORid and password to access the toolbox. To activate your UTORid, visit the [Activation website](#). If you are experiencing issues with your UTORid and password please contact the [Information Commons Help Desk](#). You can also use the [Canvas Teacher App](#) to access and manage Quercus.

Migrating Content from Portal to Quercus

The Portal will cease to be available as of August 31, 2018. You can create an archive of your entire course, or export a package of selected content from your Portal courses and then import that same content (in a zipped file) into a Quercus course you are building. If you or your CI need support for or have questions about content migration from Portal to Quercus, contact q.help@utoronto.ca.

Identifying Local and Central Quercus (and EdTech) Support

Each division at U of T has identified key contact and supports related to Quercus. If you have questions or wish to speak with an individual, please contact your [divisional support representative](#). If your division does not have a key EdTech support contact, does not offer training or technical support, you can reach out to the central office at q.help@utoronto.ca.

Quercus Training

Training and support is offered divisionally and centrally in-person, through online webinars, and self-directed online learning resources. Begin with the "[Quickstart Quercus: a basic introduction](#)" video for U of T faculty and staff.

Quercus training workshops—both in-person session and online webinars—are offered at various locations across the University and they are open to TAs. Explore the [Training Schedule](#) to identify a workshop that will hone your Quercus knowledge and skills.

Online documentation related to Quercus (including tip sheets, guides, and videos), are available through the [Quercus Support Resources course](#).

Online training and self-paced videos are offered through the Canvas Community Training Portal and as well Lynda.com. To access [Lynda.com online instructional videos](#), you will be prompted to provide your UTORid and password. Check out their “Learning Canvas 2018” course or “Canvas: Tips, Tricks & Techniques” course. To access [Canvas Training](#), follow the steps to [create an account](#), which will also allow you to view and register free webinars.

Key additional **external resources** include:

- [Canvas Community website](#)
- [Online Instructor Guide](#)
- [Accessibility within Canvas](#)
- [List of Canvas Basic Terminology](#)

Building and Managing Courses in Quercus

For information related to specific aspects of building and managing course elements in Quercus:

- [Adding staff and students to a course.](#)
- [Announcements and communication.](#)
- [Adding course content](#) and [customizing course setting.](#)
- Setting up tutorials using the [groups](#) tool.
- Managing the [gradebook](#), setting up [rubrics](#) and using [SpeedGrader](#).
- Creating [assignments](#) and [quizzes](#).

Supporting your Students in Quercus

When your students have questions about course access, need an introduction to the toolbox, require instructions on how to find their way around Quercus, view grades, or have other questions, direct them to the [Student Quercus Guide](#) and the blog [Quercus for Students](#). Share with your students the introduction to Quercus video: [“Overview of Quercus for students”](#) to get them started. More documentation related to specific tools integrated into Quercus are available on the [Student Quercus Support Resources](#). Additionally, students can access Quercus using the [Canvas Student App](#).

Technical questions regarding UTORid, email and internet access, wireless connectivity, etc., can be directed to specific help sites: [Information Commons](#); [UTM Help Site](#); and [UTSC Help Site](#).

Integrated Tools in Quercus

There are various built-in tool available in Quercus as well as external apps, which have been integrated into the toolbox. View the [list of Integrated Tools](#) that are available for use in Quercus courses.

If you want U of T to integrate new tools (apps, platforms, software, devices, etc.) into the Toolbox, you can submit an idea on the [Integrate website](#).

