# Steps for Preparing your Course for the New Semester

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Be Sure the Course Copy Process is Finished

- There will be a top orange bar on the course landing page that will tell you if the copy is done. If not don’t start working in the course until done.

Check the Content Collection

- Make sure all your files came over properly.

- Choose the first course in the list (it will be the name of your course).

- If your Content Collection is showing as empty do not recopy the course. Check with your Educational Technology Director for next steps.

Review and Clean You Your Course Menu

- Hide or unhide course menu buttons as needed.

- Remove duplicate menu buttons that appear on the menu.
• Remember: Every college’s course template (each college’s template is different).

Be sure to remove items from the template that you are not using, by clicking the dropdown arrow next to each menu item and then deleting the duplicated button.

• Below is a picture of what one copied course’s Course Menu looked like after copying into the template shell! As you can see, work needs to be done to clean up this menu to delete unused and duplicated items!
Review All Content and Tools in Your Course

Now it’s time to click on each button on your course menu and check the tool or content it leads to.

Update Announcements

- Be sure to delete or modify the default announcement that appears in your course template, and create your own personalized “Welcome” announcement to tell students how to get started.

- If you copied your Announcements from a previous term and you plan to re-used them, check them carefully to be sure outdated information is not included.
  - **Time-saving Tip:** Think about ways that you can modify your announcements to eliminate the need to always change due dates or times each term. Can you remind students about an upcoming submission without referencing the specific date? If not, be sure to always put information that needs to be changed in a specific color or font, so that it will be easy to spot and change each time you copy the announcements.

- Delete any announcements that are no longer needed.
  - If you copied your Announcements from a previous term, you can use the Date Management tool (Control Panel > Course Tools > Date Management) to automatically change all of the announcement release dates.
  - Use Student Preview to make sure only the correct announcements are displaying to students.

Add a new Syllabus

- Upload your current syllabus and be sure old ones are deleted.

- Be sure to include current Contact information and Office Hours.

- Confirm textbook/materials information is up to date.

Check Course Materials and Activities

- Is all content visible to students that should be for the start of the course (folders, modules, documents, etc.)?

- Make sure all documents open correctly (if you see “Invalid link” after a document that file will need to be relinked in that area).

- Make sure all Web Links are valid, using the Link Checker Tool

- If you type date information into the titles of folders, modules, or documents, be sure these are updated.
  - **TIME SAVING TIP! When naming Content Folders, Learning Modules, and Items etc. we highly recommend that you not include dates specific to one term.** Doing so will make cleanup of your course for the following semester much more time
consuming. In the example below, the folder could be named just *Week 15*.

**Week 15 12/07/15 - 12/13/15**

- **Your Course Syllabus should be the “Dates Bible” for students:** Instead of replicating dates in items, folders, tests, assignments, etc., simply include ALL course dates (release dates, due dates, etc.) in your course Syllabus and remind students that they MUST check that. *Then you just have to update dates in ONE PLACE at the beginning of each term. This can also avoid errors.*

- **If you also teach the course in the summer, naming by week can also be problematic**—consider naming folders or modules “Unit 15” or “Module 15” instead.

**Discussion Boards**

- **Sometimes when a course is copied, the button to “Discussions” that had appeared on the course copied course’s menu is NOT copied, but the discussions themselves ARE copied.**
  - It’s easy to check this by going to Control Panel>Course Tools>Discussion Board. If your forums are there, then just the button is missing.  
    **WATCH A VIDEO: Discussions Not Displaying After Course Copy**

  - To fix this, just add back the button to the Discussion Board tool on your menu.

  ![Add Tool Link](image)

  - Be sure to drag the button from the bottom of the course menu to the correct location on your menu, with other tools.

- **When you copied your course, you were asked to select from two options:**
  - *Include starter posts for each thread in each forum (anonymized):* If you selected this option, you may wish to go into each forum and select yourself as the poster. Alternatively, if you selected this option in error, you may wish to DELETE the starter posts.
  - *Include only the forums, with no starter posts:* If you selected this post, you should check your discussions but you should not need to update anything.
• Be sure to check any Group discussion forums as well--this can only be done via the "Groups" tool. You may need to clean up old discussion posts in them, as well.

• If you use date availability settings on your discussions, ensure that your dates are set and match the dates in your syllabus.

**Assignments**
- Make sure all Assignments copied over correctly.
- Check assignment directions. Changed/update these directions in the instructions field, as appropriate.
- Adjust the dates and times at which assignments appear (“display after”) and disappear from students’ view (“display until”) to reflect the dates of the current semester.
  - Note: You can manually update all dates, OR you can use the Date Management tool (Control Panel>Course Tools>Date Management). It will update all assignment Due dates, OR you can update them manually.
  - Note: The Due Date is the date and time after which assignments are marked as late. Setting a due date does not prevent a student from viewing or submitting an assignment late.

**Tests, Quizzes, Exams**
- If you are using the Date Management tool, it will update all Test dates, OR you can update them manually.
- Be sure to check and adjust all release dates and/or adaptive release settings -- the dates and times at which tests appear (or display after) and disappear from student view (or display until) to echo the stated dates in your syllabus.
- Update test due dates as required (dates and times at which test are marked as late), if applicable. Note: setting a due date does not prevent a student from attempting a test/quiz after that date and time.
- Check test instructions to be sure they are OK as is.

**Check “My Grades” and “Grade Center”**
- Using Student Preview, check “My Grades” to be sure grade columns are not showing that you do not want students to see. If there are redundant, old, or erroneous columns showing to students, hide them from students (Show/Hide to Users) or better yet delete them. See your local Ed Tech director for assistance if needed.
- If you manually create your grade center columns, be sure that any changes to point values that you have made have been updated in the accompanying Grade Center column.
- If you manually create your grade center columns, be sure that you have created columns for any NEW gradable activities.
- Make any adjustments to grade weighting, if need be.
• Reorder grade columns so students see them (top to bottom) in My Grades in the correct date order for the course.

Review Date Management to Resync Release Dates
• You can update ALL dates in your course using the Date Management tool:

You can update your Availability/Adaptive Release dates by term, number of days, or start of course date. After selecting submit you will see this process message.

In the example below, the release date of the folder has been updated. But the name of the folder will have to be changed because it has specific dates in the name. **Note:** When naming content folders, learning modules, items etc. don’t put dates in the name. Doing so will make clean-up the next semester much more time consuming?
Use *Student Preview* to Check Your Course from a Student’s Perspective!

- Make sure everything that should be showing to students is showing (content files, tools announcements). Note: Every time you add new content or tools to your course you should always check *Student Preview* when you are done. This confirms that Students are viewing the correct information.

Now You Can Make New Revisions or Course Updates

- You should now be set to focus on anything new that will be added to your course for the new semester!