Canvas LMS Training Guide for AI Conversational Assistant

Objective

This document provides structured information to train an AI-powered assistant to help project teams understand and navigate **Canvas LMS**, including its core features, user roles, and integrated third-party tools. The AI should deliver **accurate, contextual, and structured guidance** to ensure consistent and goal-aligned support.

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1. Overview of Canvas LMS

Canvas LMS is a **learning management system** (LMS) used for course management, content delivery, and student engagement. It supports educators, students, and administrators with tools for **course creation, assessments, collaboration, and reporting**.

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2. Core Features & Navigation

2.1. Site Administration

- **Site Admin Access**: Provides full control over users, courses, and settings.
- **Access Methods**: Login via **Canvas Tile in Okta** or directly via **siteadmin.instructure.com**.
- **Sandbox Environment**: A test environment for admins to practice configurations.
- **Canvas URL Structure**:
    - Each instance has a unique URL: `[institution].instructure.com`
    - Example paths:
        - `/courses/12345/assignments/67890` → Assignment Page
        - `/accounts/self/settings` → Account Settings

2.2. Course Management

- **Creating a Course**:
    - Instructors can create and customize courses.
    - Modules, Assignments, and Discussions can be structured within a course.
- **Course Storage & Visibility**:
    - Manage file storage quotas and file access settings.
    - Publish/unpublish courses for student access.

2.3. User Management

- **User Roles & Permissions**:

- o **Admin**: Full control over the Canvas instance.
- o **Instructor**: Manages course content, grading, and student interactions.
- o **Student**: Engages with course content and submits assignments.
- o **Observer**: Limited viewing access, often used for parents or mentors.
- **Adding Users to Courses**:
  - o Admins can add users manually via **People Page**.
  - o Email-based user creation with aliasing for test accounts (`name+alias@instructure.com`).

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3. Assignments, Grading, and Assessments

3.1. Assignments & Submission Settings

- **Types of Assignments**:
  - o **Online Submission**: Students upload files, enter text, or submit links.
  - o **On Paper**: No digital submission, for in-class tasks.
  - o **External Tool**: Uses third-party integrations (e.g., Google Drive, Turnitin).
- **Grading & Feedback**:
  - o **SpeedGrader**: Allows quick grading with rubric support.
  - o **Gradebook**: Displays grades, applies weightage, and tracks submissions.
  - o **Late & Missing Policies**: Auto-penalties for late submissions.

3.2. Quizzes & Assessments

- **Classic vs. New Quizzes**:
  - o **Classic Quizzes**: Traditional quizzes using predefined question banks.
  - o **New Quizzes**: Enhanced options including **categorization, hot spot, and ordering questions**.
- **Moderation & Logs**:
  - o **Quiz Logs** track student activity during a test.
  - o **Item Banks & Question Banks** store reusable assessment questions.

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4. Collaboration & Communication

4.1. Announcements & Discussions

- **Announcements**:
  - o Used by instructors to send course-wide notifications.
  - o Can be scheduled for future posts.
- **Discussions**:
  - o Can be graded or ungraded.
  - o Support threaded replies and instructor moderation.

4.2. Groups & Peer Reviews

- **Creating Groups**:
  - Students can be placed into project groups for collaborative work.
  - Groups can have their own discussion boards and assignments.
- **Peer Reviews**:
  - Assignments can include peer evaluation settings.
  - Anonymity can be enabled for blind grading.

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5. Advanced Features & Integrations

5.1. External Tools & LTI Integrations

- **Common Integrations**:
  - **Google Drive**: Embeds documents and allows submissions.
  - **Turnitin**: Checks for plagiarism.
  - **Zoom**: Enables virtual meetings within Canvas.
- **Enabling Third-Party Tools**:
  - Tools are added via **Course Settings > Apps**.
  - Admins can enable tools globally for all courses.

5.2. Modules & Course Structuring

- **Modules help organize content**:
  - **Sequential Unlocking**: Students must complete modules in order.
  - **Auto-Completion Rules**: Requires interaction before moving to the next module.
- **File & Content Management**:
  - Files can be restricted by visibility settings (published/unpublished, date-based access).

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6. Admin-Level Features

6.1. Account-Level Management

- **Permissions & Sub-Accounts**:
  - Admins control user roles, feature access, and institution-wide settings.
  - Sub-accounts help organize institutions by department or faculty.
- **SIS Imports & Automation**:
  - Admins can bulk upload users and courses using **CSV files**.
  - Automated SIS (Student Information System) integrations streamline data flow.

6.2. Analytics & Reporting

- **Gradebook Insights**:

- o Identify trends and student performance metrics.
- **Student Engagement Tracking**:
  - o View page visits, interactions, and quiz attempts.
  - o **Access Reports** provide a history of student activity.

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7. Troubleshooting & AI Guidance

7.1. Common Issues & Resolutions

Issue	Resolution
Unable to access course	Ensure course is published and term dates are active.
Submission not visible	Check assignment availability and submission type.
Gradebook not updating	Ensure assignments are included in weighted categories.
User unable to login	Verify user enrollment status and authentication method.

7.2. AI Conversational Flow & Guidelines

- **User Query → Identify Role** (Admin, Instructor, Student, Observer).
- **Context Awareness**:
  - o Recognize module dependencies (e.g., assignments need grading settings before appearing in Gradebook).
  - o Provide **step-by-step guidance** based on user role.
- **Reliable Responses**:
  - o Source data from this structured guide.
  - o Cross-check with Canvas Help Docs for accuracy.

Conclusion

This document ensures the AI-powered assistant can **effectively guide users** through **Canvas LMS operations**, covering **navigation, course management, assessments, integrations, and troubleshooting**.

By implementing **context-aware assistance and structured responses**, the AI can provide **reliable, scalable, and efficient** support for project teams working within the Canvas ecosystem.