

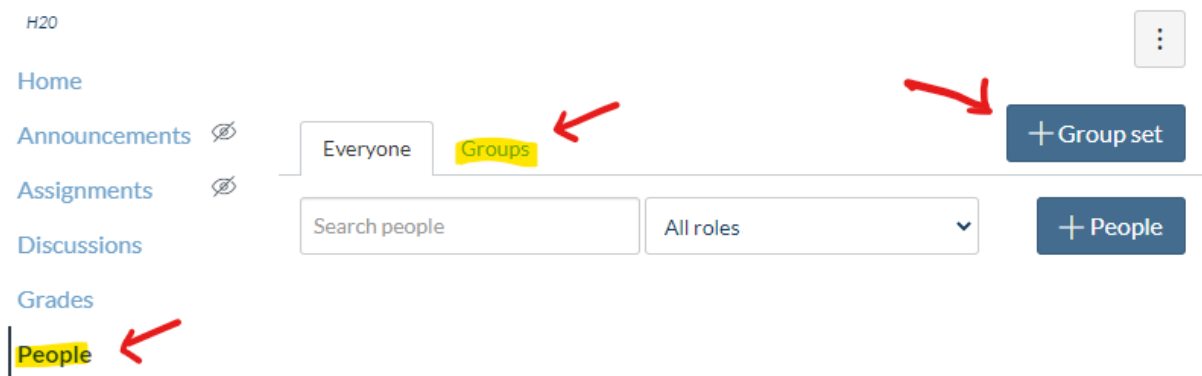
Using Canvas for room capacity management

The “Group set” functionality in Canvas allows for grouping students for various purposes and can also be utilized as a tool for managing room capacity issues.

In this document I will go through the basics of creating a group set, then present you with a few examples.

The basics

You have the possibility to create group sets from the “People” menu item in your course, selecting “+ Group set” in the top right corner.



When creating a new group set, you are presented with the following options:

1) **Allow self-sign-up**

If selected, this option allows your students to sign up for their preferred group themselves. Please note that if the group has limited capacity, this will work at a first come first serve basis.

Subsequently, you will be asked to specify the number of groups you would like to create and the size limitation (max number of members in each group).

Please note that after creating the group set, you can edit each group separately – e.g. to adjust the group size limitation and/or change the group name.

2) Should you not want to allow self-sign-up, you can either:

- a. **Split your students randomly** into N groups, or..
- b. **Create groups manually**

If you select option (a), you are presented with the option to “require group members to be in the same section”. As we do not utilize sections, you can leave this option unchecked.

If you select option (b), you will be able to create each group individually, setting your preferences for each group. You do this by clicking the tab with the name of your group set, then selecting “+ Group” to add groups.

Example 1 – Self sign-up

In this example, the lecturer has a class of 80 students of which only 40 are allowed in the auditorium due to capacity restrictions. Live campus lectures are Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The lecturer would like to split the class into 2 groups, each with a maximum capacity of 40 members. The first group will be able to attend the Tuesday lectures, the latter will be allowed to attend Thursdays.

The lecturer would like the students to select for themselves which day is most suitable, and thus would like to organize this by self-sign-up.

1) Creating the group set

From the “People” menu item and “+ Group set”, the lecturer creates a new group set as follows:

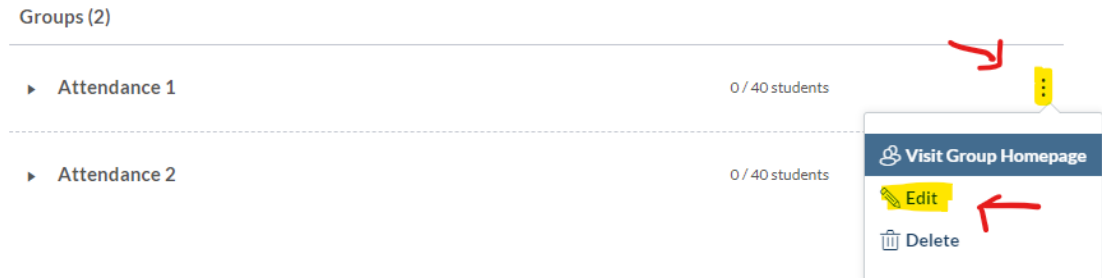
The screenshot shows the 'Create Group Set' dialog box with the following fields and options:

- Group Set Name:** A text input field containing the word 'Attendance'.
- Self sign-up:** A section with two options:
- ☒ Allow self sign-up (?)
- ☐ Require group members to be in the same section
- Group structure:** A section with two options:
- Create groups now
- Limit groups to members (Leave blank for no limit)
- Leadership:** A section with three radio button options:
- ☐ Automatically assign a student group leader
- ☒ Set first student to join as group leader
- ☐ Set a random student as group leader
- Buttons:** At the bottom right, there are 'Cancel' and 'Save' buttons.

After clicking “Save”, the new “Group set” is created and can be accessed from its own tab on top of the screen. The two groups are listed as “Attendance 1” and “Attendance 2”.

2) Renaming the groups

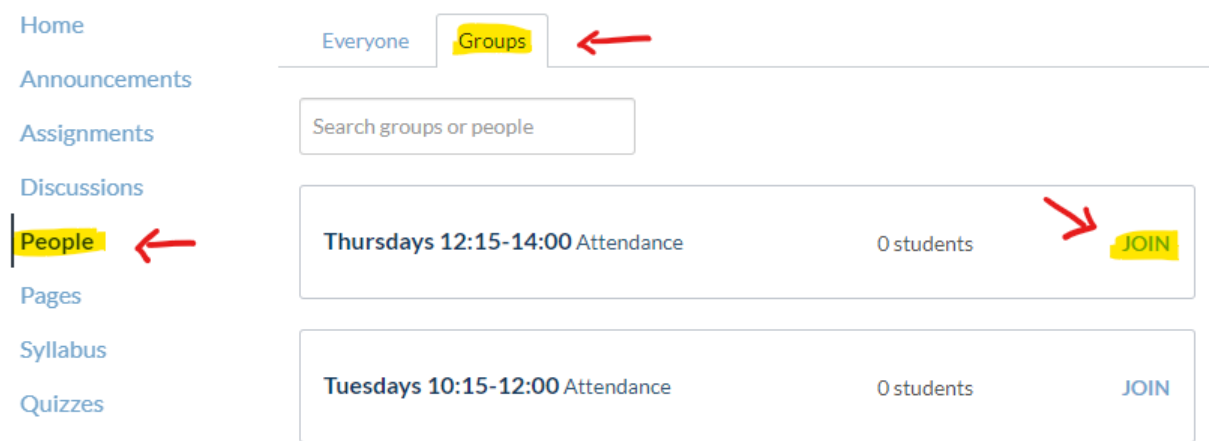
To make the group names more intuitive, the lecturer would like to rename these and clicks the dotted vertical line to the right of the group name, selecting “Edit” from the menu:



This brings up a box from which it is possible to rename the group and change the group size. The lecturer renames the two groups to represent the two available lecture days:



The groups are now available to the students, and they can start selecting which group to attend. They do this simply by clicking “People”, selecting the “Groups” tab, and joining the appropriate group. From the student’s view it will look like this:



If there is capacity, the students can switch between groups.

Tip! If you at a later stage would like to “freeze” the groups, simply edit your group set and untick the option for self-sign-up. This will lock the groups at their current state.

Example 2 – Adding extra groups (if needed)

In this example, the lecturer has a class of 600 students of which only 200 are allowed in the auditorium due to capacity restrictions. Live campus lectures are Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The lecturer expects that a significant number of students do not wish to attend campus lectures at all and expects 2 groups with a capacity of 200 each to be sufficient. However, he/she would like the students to actively indicate if they do not wish to attend.

If needed, a third group will be created.

1) Creating the group set

The lecturer creates a group set as described previously, naming it “Class”, creating 2 groups with a limit of 200 members. The option to “Allow self-sign-up” is ticked.

2) Creating an extra “not attending” group

To allow the students to actively indicate if they do not wish to attend lectures at campus, the lecturer clicks “+ Group” in the “Class” group set to add an extra group labelled “Not attending”. The available groups now look as follows:

Groups (3)		
▶ Class 1	0 / 200 students	⋮
▶ Class 2	0 / 200 students	⋮
▶ Not attending	0 / 200 students	⋮

The students will now be able to sign up as described in example 1. If Class 1 and 2 both fill up to capacity, a third group – “Class 3” – could be created repeating step (2).

Tip! Monitor the groups as they fill up. You can adjust your group set at any time, increasing/decreasing capacity and/or adding more groups if needed.

Important! Avoid editing the whole group set after making individual changes to your groups as this might override the changes you have made.

Example 3 – Random distribution

In this example, the lecturer has a class of 100 students who should attend weekly lab sessions. Due to capacity restrictions, only 20 students can attend at once, so the lab sessions will be offered at 5 various timeslots.

To make things easy, the lecturer would like to distribute the students randomly.

1) Creating the group set

The lecturer creates a group set as described previously, naming in “Session”, but this time with no “self-sign-up” ticked. Instead, he/she opts to split the students into 5 groups like this:

Create Group Set

Group Set Name

Self sign-up ☐ Allow self sign-up [?](#)
☐ Require group members to be in the same section

Group structure ☒ Split students into groups
☐ Require group members to be in the same section
☐ I'll create groups manually

Leadership ☐ Automatically assign a student group leader

Cancel Save

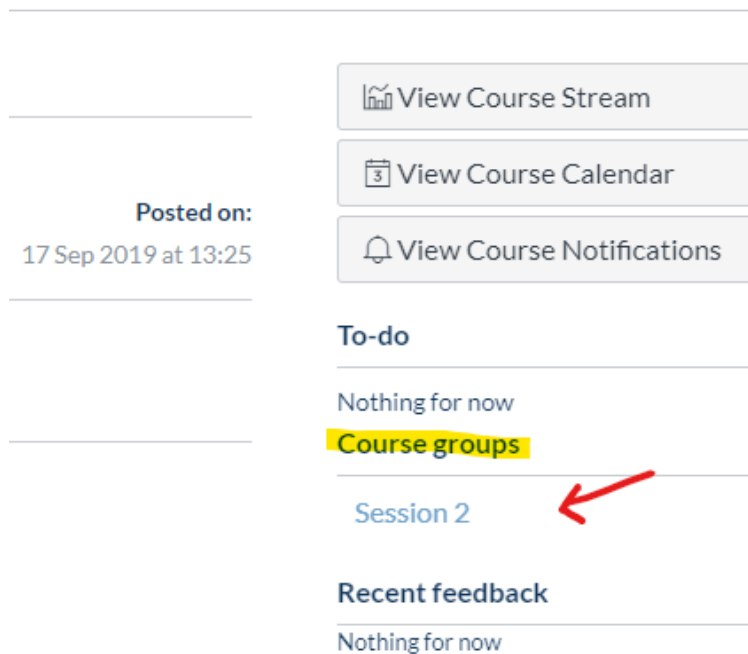
When clicking “Save”, Canvas will randomly assign the students to groups. Please note that this might take a while. You should see a progress bar like this:

Session

Randomly assigning students

2) How will the students notice which group they are assigned to?

On the course home page, in the right-hand side menu, the students will see a list of their groups. In this case, the student has been assigned to "Session 2":



Final comments

These are only but a few examples of how you can use group sets to plan attendance. Hopefully, you will be able to create a variant that is suitable to your needs. If not, feel free to get in touch with me.

Good luck!

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