Canvas Integration Guide

June,2025

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Overview

The topics in this section cover Canvas Integration with Sentral.

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Bi-directional sync between Sentral and Canvas

Information flow from Sentral to Canvas

Student, teacher, and class details are imported from Sentral into Canvas for account creation and management.

Information flow from Canvas to Sentral

Assessment results from Canvas are synchronised into Sentral markbooks.

Using the data in Sentral

You can use the consolidated assessment data to perform summative assessment and reporting in Sentral's Academic Reports module.

Integration options

The topics in this section outline integration options and provide context for the recommendations. They also include links to relevant Canvas guides for setup instructions on the Canvas side.

Canvas prerequisite setup

Set up a new admin user in Canvas

Overview

Create a new admin user in Canvas.

Sentral uses this for sending data to the Canvas API. This ensures the integration is not dependent on a specific person, which could cause issues if that person's account is removed (for example, if they leave the institution).

Email address

Overview

Use a separate email address for this user.

If you have a generic email address for IT administrative purposes, it may be suitable. Otherwise, create a new email address, such as canvas-sentral@yourschool, to track all actions performed by this user. Alternatively, you can use a temporary email service like EmailOnDeck to create the account.

Canvas guides

Here are the guides for creating a new user and making them an Account Admin in Canvas:

- **Creating a user in Canvas on the People Admin page - See Manage Users**.
- **Add an Admin to an Account**.

Generate API tokens

Overview

Once the new admin user has been created and granted admin permissions, they will need to generate an API token in Canvas.

The API token is used in the Canvas configuration screen in Sentral. It allows Sentral to communicate with the Canvas API using the permissions of the newly created admin user.

Canvas guide

Here is the guide for generating a user API token in Canvas:

- **How do I manage API access tokens as an admin?**

Warning: When setting up the token, do not include an expiry date, as this would cause the integration to stop working on that date.

Tip: Name the token something identifiable like 'Sentral API Token' so you know its purpose. Once the token is generated, copy it to a secure location, as you will need it for the Canvas integration configuration in Sentral.

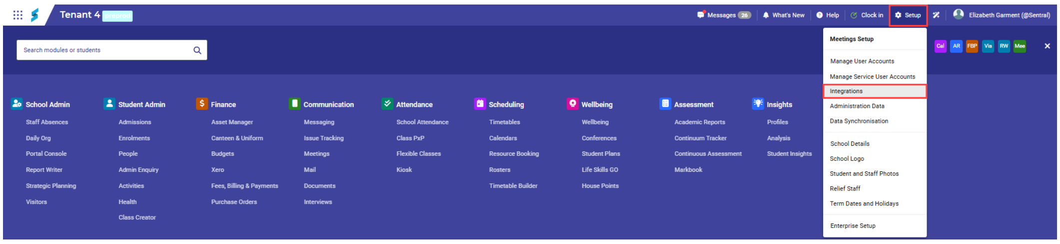
Set up Sentral configuration to sync with Canvas

Overview

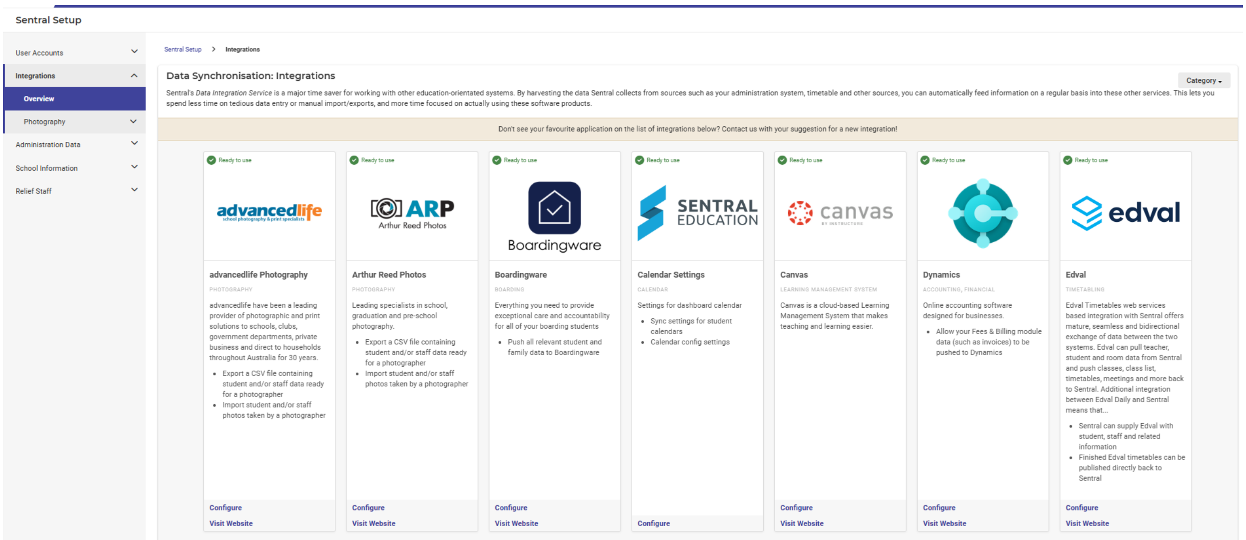
Use the information in this section to set up Sentral configuration to sync with Canvas.

Steps

1. Select the **Setup** on the menu bar and choose **Integrations**.



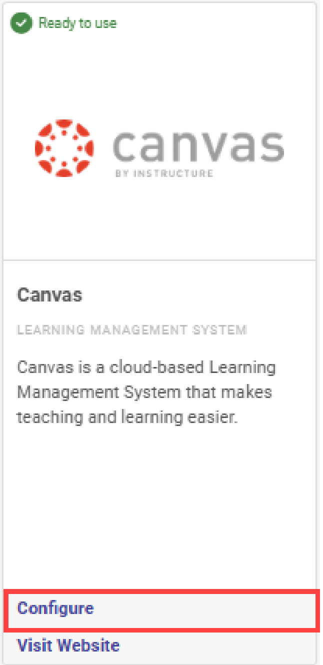
   The Data Synchronisation: Integrations screen displays.



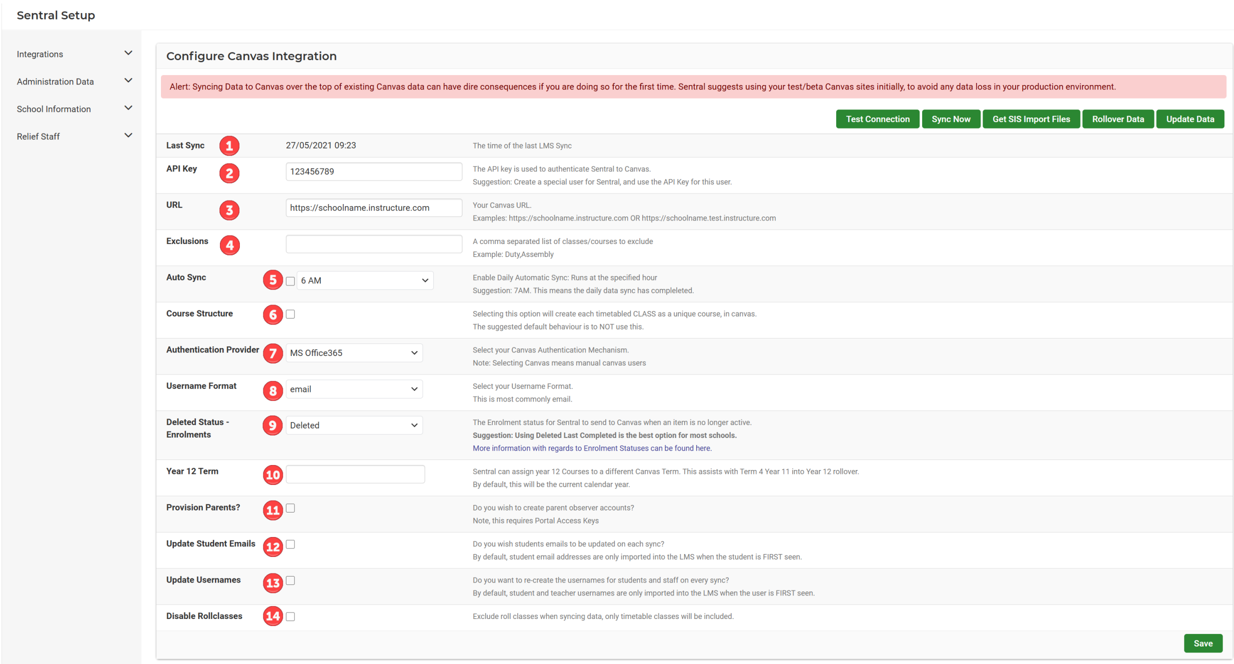
2. Find Canvas in the list of available applications.

> **Warning:** Do not select the Canvas logo as this will take you to the Canvas website.

3. Select the **Configure** link under the logo.



The Configure Canvas Integration screen displays.



4. We'll walk through the settings and guide you on the initial setup for your first sync.

   Before proceeding, there are a few tasks you need to complete in Canvas, which are documented within the topic called **Canvas Prerequisite Setup**.

Button descriptions

Test Connection button

When selected, advises if the Canvas connection is successful. If the test connection fails, you should check that your API Key and URL are correct.

Sync Now button

Used to run an 'ad-hoc sync' with Canvas. You should use this when you are first setting things up or if there is some other reason to manually run a sync. Otherwise, the auto sync function should be sufficient once you are up and running.

Get SIS Import files button

Sends you an email with a zip file containing the SIS Import files that were sent to Canvas on the last sync. If there are changes in Sentral that have not yet been synced, you may wish to run an 'ad-hoc sync' using the **Sync Now** button to generate files with the latest data.

Rollover Data button

Used when you need to roll your timetable data from one time period to another. What this effectively does is clears the database that Sentral uses to track the differences in the data being sent to Canvas from one sync to the next. This is how it knows what to do with changes in enrolments when a student changes courses.

> **Note:** You should select this button at the beginning of the year once your new timetable data is in Sentral and then run an **Ad-hoc Sync**.

You will also do this when you roll over from one Year 12 cohort to the next for NSW schools (between Term 3 and Term 4).

Update Data button

Updates the student and timetable data from the source system. If you want the most up to date data sent to Canvas, select this button prior to selecting the **Sync Now** button.

> **Note:** If **Auto-Sync** is set up in the fields below, then this will occur automatically also.

Field descriptions

1. **Last Sync**

   This is the time of the last synchronisation with Canvas.

2. **API Key**

   Paste the API token you just created as the Admin user in Canvas in this field.

3. **URL**

   Paste your school’s instructure.com Canvas URL in this field.

   Make sure when you are doing your first sync to your Canvas instance that you test in your test or beta environments (https://yourschool.test.instructure.com or https://yourschool.beta.instructure.com). That way, if there are any issues with the data, you can fix it in Sentral before it goes into production. The token you created in your production environment will not be available in beta or test until they are refreshed with data from production. This generally happens on the third weekend of the month for test and every Monday morning for beta.

4. **Exclusions**

   Add in any timetabled 'classes' that are in Sentral that are not actual academic courses in this Exclusions field (comma-separated list).

   These are usually things like Duty Rosters, Assembly, etc. This should exclude those from coming across in the data being sent from Sentral to Canvas.

5. **Auto-Sync**

   Once your data looks good in test or beta and you have done an initial manual sync to production, you can turn on Auto Sync.

   This will automatically sync the data from Sentral to Canvas at the time indicated in the dropdown.

   > **Tip:** 7am is an ideal time to set up as this gives Sentral enough time to complete its synchronisation with other systems feeding into it.

6. **Course Structure**

   Ticking the Course Structure box is usually not recommended. It affects how courses come into Canvas from your timetable data in Sentral. This is best controlled by the way you set up course codes in your timetabling software, which is discussed in the **Blueprints in Canvas** topic.

7. **Authentication Provider**

   Select the authentication provider you use to log into Canvas.

   Most schools utilise Single Sign On (SSO) authentication.

   For NSW DoE schools, we recommend using MS Office 365 as your SSO provider rather than Google as Google can sometimes have conflicts when students are already logged into the browser with their own Gmail accounts.

8. **Username Format**

   Select the username format.

   This is the format of the username that users will need to enter to log into Canvas. For Canvas, Google and Microsoft Office 365 authentication, this should be an email address. For other methods, it may still be an email address, but may also be one of the other options, depending on your SSO setup.

9. **Deleted Status – Enrolments**

   Select the status of an enrolment when a student is removed from a course.

   We recommend either **Completed** or **Inactive**, unless it is very early in the school year.

   > **Note:** More information with regards to Enrolment Statuses can be found here.

10. **Year 12 Term**

    The Year 12 Term is used to set up a separate Canvas Term for the Year 12 courses coming into Canvas. The course codes in your timetabling software need to start with either a 12 or Y12 to be recognised as Year 12 courses. This is mostly used in NSW where Year 12 begins in Term 4, but some schools do something similar in other states too.

    > **Note:** For more information on Terms, you can visit this guide on Terms in the Canvas Community, but the short version is that Terms generally correlate to an academic year for most schools. We encourage you to discuss Terms further with your Canvas CSM.

11. **Provision Parents?**

    This tick box creates parent user accounts in Canvas (as Observers), based on the relationships you have set up in Sentral. Parent accounts use Canvas Authentication to log into Canvas. Speak to your Canvas CSM about the best way to set up the different pathways for parents to log into Canvas and to set up a separate listing in the Canvas mobile apps for parents.

12. **Update Student Emails**

    Student email addresses are only updated the first time a student is seen in the sync files being sent to Canvas.

    Select this box to force the sync to check the email address of the student and update it in Canvas to what is currently recorded in the Sentral data for that student.

13. **Update Usernames**

    By default, student and teacher usernames are only imported into the LMS when the user is FIRST seen. If you want to re-create the usernames for students and staff on every sync, then select this box.

14. **Disable Rollclasses**

    Select this box if you want to exclude roll classes when syncing data. Only timetable classes will be included.

> **Warning:** Make sure to select **Save** when you make any changes to the settings on the Configuration screen.

Sub-accounts in Canvas and using Sentral CSV files

Overview

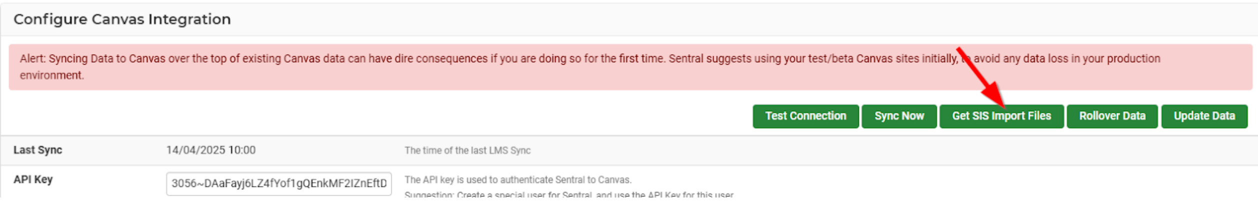
Canvas uses the concept of sub-accounts to divide courses into administrative accounts within your Canvas instance. These usually reflect the structure of the institution from an administrative perspective. For example, in a Junior School, these accounts might be Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, etc. In a Senior School, this might be English, Mathematics, Science, etc. Creating sub-accounts allows you to assign courses to those sub-accounts within Canvas. You can then create admin roles for those individual sub-accounts, allowing those users you have given admin roles in those accounts to have insight into the courses being delivered that belong to that specific sub-account, including the ability to run reports and analytics just for that account.

Sentral does not currently pass through sub-account information to Canvas, but you can still allocate courses to sub-accounts using the CSV files that are generated by Sentral.

SIS import files

After you have completed a sync from Sentral to Canvas, select the **Get SIS Import Files** button to get an email sent to you containing a zip file. The zip file contains the CSV files being sent to Canvas.

> **Note:** The information in the CSV files reflects what was sent in the last sync.



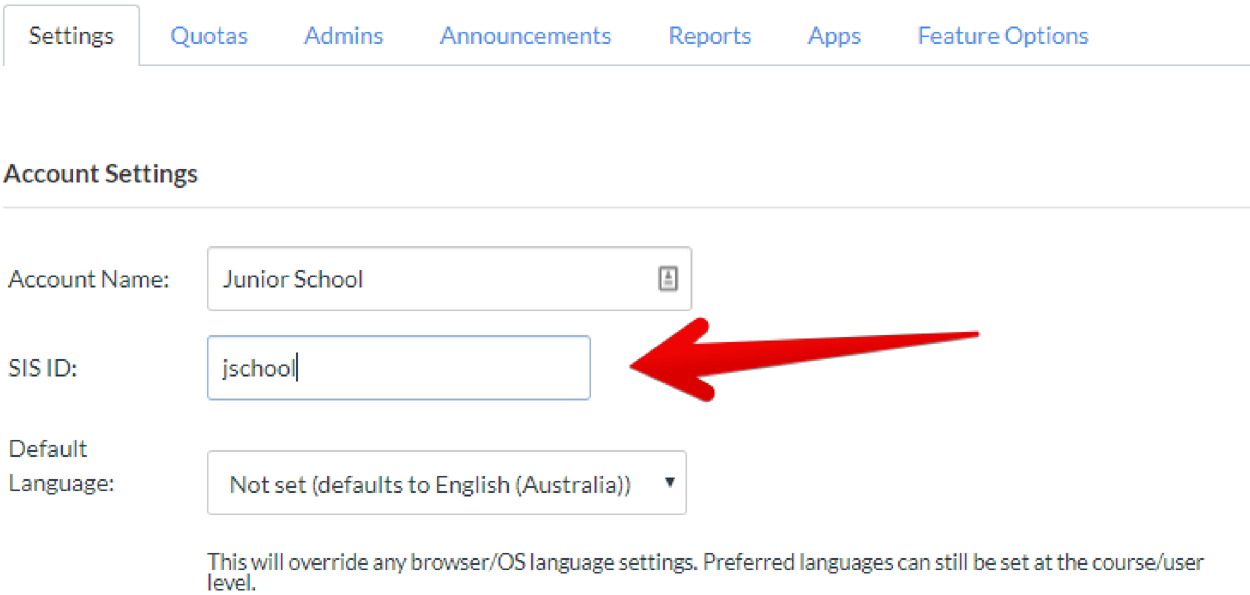
The courses **.csv file** may not contain the column that you will need to add the account details that you want each course to live in. This column has a header called **account_id** and should contain the SIS IDs of the accounts that you want to link each course to. If you do not enter a value in this column next to a course, that course will be in the root account of your Canvas instance.

Creating CSV files to import into Canvas

You can create account SIS IDs either in the user interface or by creating an accounts **.csv file** to import into Canvas.

Tip: Here is the guide for creating CSV files to import into Canvas: **How do I format CSV text files for uploading SIS data into a Canvas account?**

You can also modify the SIS ID of an account **in that account's settings in Canvas**:



Adding the **account_id** to courses only needs to be completed once for each new course being added to Canvas, which is usually at the beginning of the year or in the middle of the year for courses that don't start till the second semester. Sentral will not override the account information when it syncs data to Canvas.

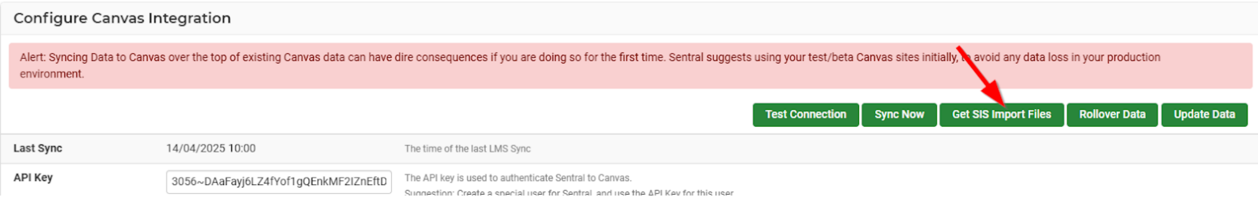
Blueprint courses and Sentral

Overview

As an institution, you may want to sync **Blueprint courses** to the courses that have been created by the Sentral integration. As Blueprints are a Canvas concept unique to Canvas, Sentral does not have this concept built into the integration. However, as with sub-accounts, you can attach Blueprint courses to the courses created by Sentral by downloading the SIS import files and adding in the appropriate information to the courses file.

SIS import files

After you have completed a sync from Sentral to Canvas, select the **Get SIS Import Files** button to get an email sent to you containing a zip file. The zip file contains the CSV files being sent to Canvas).



> **Note:** The information in the CSV files reflects what was sent in the last sync.

The courses**.csv file** will not contain the column that you will need to add the Blueprint Course SIS IDs of the Blueprint courses. This column has a header called **blueprint_course_id** and should contain the SIS IDs of the Blueprint courses you want to link each course to. If you do not enter a value in this column next to a course, that course will not be associated with a Blueprint course.

> **Note:** The Blueprint course(s) must be created before you can associate any other course(s) with them. Make sure to give each course a SIS ID so that you can associate them using the Sentral SIS Import CSV files. You can create new courses either in the Canvas user interface or via CSV files - they are created as regular courses initially, so you will need to go into the course settings and enable them as Blueprint courses as well.

Start of year (rollover) process

Overview

Use the information in this topic to perform the rollover process. At the start of each Academic year, you will need to **reset** the database that holds all of the Sentral data that is being sent across to Canvas. This is a very simple process.

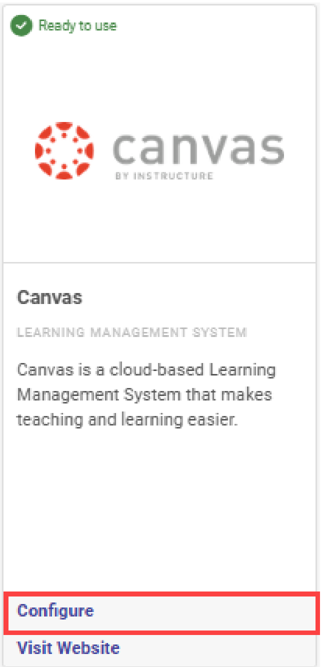
Before you begin

Make sure that you have rolled over your timetable data in Sentral so that the new year's timetable data will be used in the next sync.

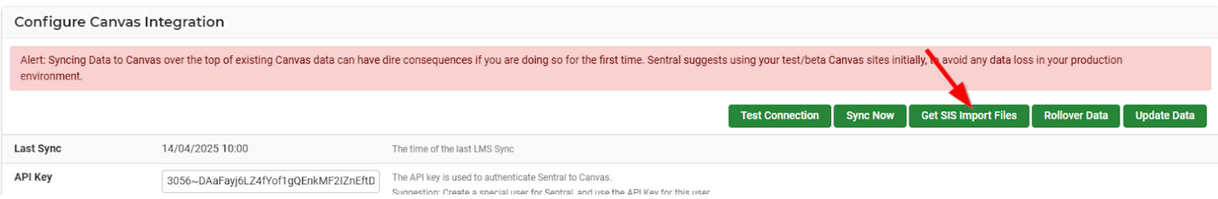
Steps

1. Select the **Setup** on the menu bar and choose **Integrations**.

   The Data Synchronisation: Integrations screen displays.
2. Find Canvas in the list of available applications.
3. Select the **Configure** link under the logo.



The Configure Canvas Integration screen displays.



4. Select the **Rollover Data** button.

Manually add new staff (NSW DoE schools)

Overview

At the start of each school year, there are often new staff members starting at NSW DoE schools. With some of the changes that the Department has made to their systems, there have been delays in this data flowing to other systems at the start of the school year, including payroll. This has resulted in staff not being able to access systems within a school such as library systems, printers, etc. This has also affected the data that the Sentral sync relies on, which means that the data coming through in the Canvas sync is not complete. You can manually add those staff members into Canvas, but be aware that there are flow on effects for doing so. You may have conflicts when the data does start flowing from the sync into Canvas as the email address of the user is likely to have been taken by the user you set up manually.

Warning: If you do set up users manually in Canvas, please ensure that you give them a SIS ID on their user profile.

Tip: This is much easier if you have created them via a CSV import into Canvas.

Changing the SIS ID

Once the data does start coming through from Sentral for that user, you then need to simply change the SIS IDs of those new staff in Canvas to the SIS ID coming from Sentral. This is done using the **change_sis_id.csv** file.

NSW year 12 rollover process

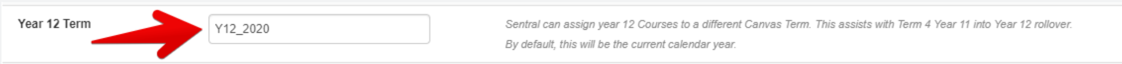
Overview

In NSW, Year 12 begins in Term 4 of the year that a student commences Year 11. This means that the classes during that term are 'out of sync' with the rest of the school. As such, most schools create a separate **Canvas Term** for Year 12.

If you are unsure of what a Term is in Canvas, please reach out to your Canvas Customer Success Manager to discuss further, but there are also **guides on Terms in the Canvas Community**.

Sentral integration

Sentral creates Terms for each academic year by default. The Sentral integration includes a field to create a Year 12 Term separate to the other Terms.

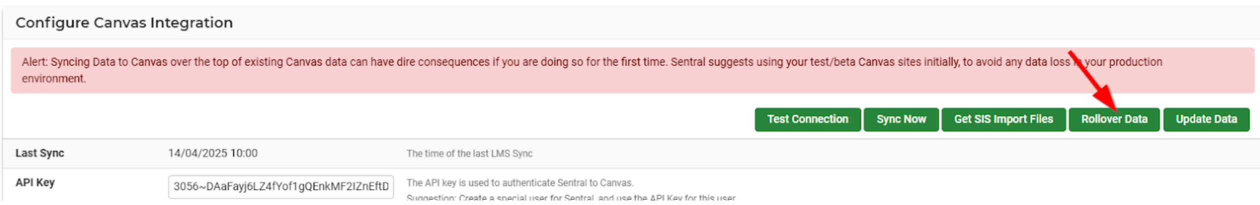
> **Tip:** Simply name the term so that it is easily identified as the Year 12 Term.
>
> 
>

Once this has been created, go into Canvas and set the Term dates as appropriate for those students.

> **Example:** For students who will be doing their HSC in 2025, you would have Term dates going from the start of Term 4 2024 to the end of Term 3 2025. Students will still be able to access their courses after the end of the Term in Canvas in a read-only state.

Between Term 3 and Term 4

In the break between Term 3 and Term 4, stop the automatic daily sync for the integration and make sure to update your timetable to the new Year 12 classes. Once the timetable is updated, you can then select the **Rollover Data** button to clear the Sentral integration database.



After you have checked that the sync is sending through the new data, you can then turn the automatic daily sync back on in the Sentral Canvas integration settings.

End of year process

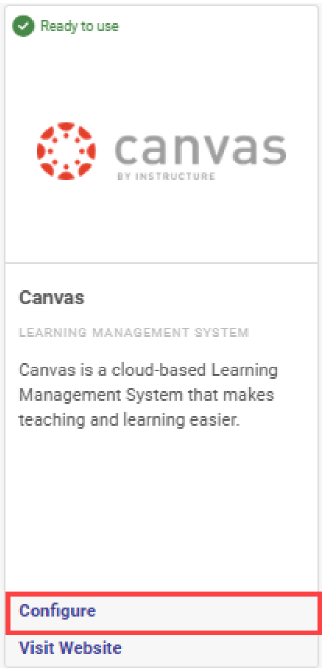
Overview

At the end of the year, it is important to turn off the automatic sync in the Sentral Canvas configuration screen so that any timetable updates that happen in the holidays don't get mixed up with old data.

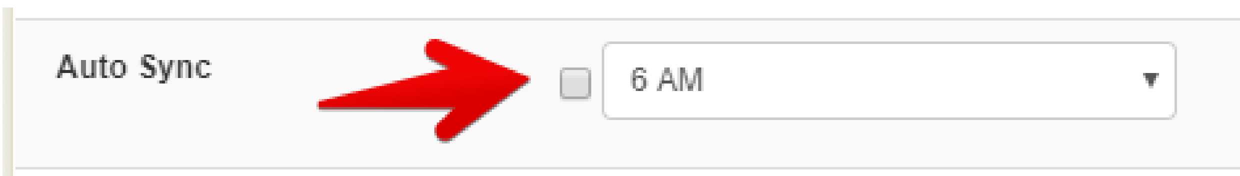
Steps

1. Select the **Setup** on the menu bar and choose **Integrations**.

   The Data Synchronisation: Integrations screen displays.
2. Find Canvas in the list of available applications.
3. Select the **Configure** link under the logo.



   The Configure Canvas Integration screen displays.
4. Untick the checkbox next to **Auto Sync**.



Note: In the new year, follow the Start of Year process.

Canvas FAQs

Why are some parents not showing when I include them in the CANVAS sync?

Sentral uses the Sentral parent portal for provisioning of parents, not the student profile data (which comes from ERN for NSW public schools).

You will need to ensure that parents have created an account in the Sentral parent portal for them to be included in the sync to Canvas.

Why are Some Year 12 students still appearing in courses after they have changed subjects. The timetable in Sentral is correct, but they are not being removed or having their status in CANVAS changed to 'Completed'

When the Sentral Canvas integration was first made, the option to set a status to 'Completed' was not part of the integration. The schools that informed the direction for the integration wanted their Year 12 students to still have access to the courses they were in previously, so asked for Year 12 students to not be removed from prior subjects. Sentral also requires student status in Canvas to be 'Active' in order to provide the syncing of marks and outcomes from Canvas to Sentral.

You should be able to manually remove students from the course as an Admin in Canvas after selecting the Rollover Data button and the sync will no longer add those students back into those previous courses. The rollover at the start of the school year generally should take care of this.

Why are users who were in a course in the previous school year showing up in the new classes created for this year?

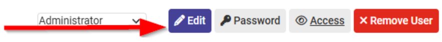
This usually happens when you have not gone through the rollover process by pressing the Rollover Data button in the Sentral Canvas integration configuration screen. Make sure you press the Rollover Data button to clear the old data from the Sentral integration database.

Why are some staff not coming through in the enrolments file from Sentral into Canvas?

The most common cause for this is because they don't have an email address, either in the staff record, or the associated user account in Sentral. You should also ensure that you have connected your staff to your administration system.

Steps

1. Select Setup on the menu bar and choose **Manage User Accounts**.
2. Select **Edit** next to the user you want to edit.



3. In User Details, enter their email address and search for the teacher in your administration system so that they are connected correctly in Sentral.