

How to Use Canvas Lesson 2: Using the SIS Import Tool

In this lesson, you will learn how to add student information system (SIS) data to your account using the SIS Import Tool. The SIS Import Tool allows you to bulk-create a variety of account items using formatted comma separated value (CSV) files.

Notes:

- The SIS Import Tool is a feature that your CSM must enable for your account.
- All CSV file uploads should be tested in your institution's test environment before attempting to upload them to your production environment. You can [learn more about the Canvas test environment](#).
- This lesson outlines a manual process of using the SIS Import Tool. To learn more about using the Canvas API to automatically integrate with your SIS, talk with your CSM and visit the [Canvas Guides](#), review [Canvas API documentation](#), and visit the [Canvas Developers Group](#) in the Canvas Community.

Lesson 2 Outline

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General Account Setup Information

Using the SIS Import Tool allows account admins to upload data to their Canvas account quickly. Bulk uploads may be done at any time and in no particular order. Additionally, there are some risks associated with using this tool. For more details about these risks, please view the [SIS Imports lesson](#).

An admin can manually input all of the data identified below. Learn how to manually [add admins](#) and [course-level users](#) in your account, as well as [terms](#) and [learning outcomes](#).

Download and Format SIS Data

Most Student Information Systems (SIS) export account data as CSV files that can be viewed and configured using spreadsheet software. Once CSV files are [correctly formatted for Canvas](#), you can upload them to Canvas, expediting the process of configuring your Canvas account.

Download and format the following information from your SIS:

- **Admins** (admins.csv): a list of all account-level users
- **Accounts** (account.csv): a list of all sub-accounts in your account; establishes account structure
- **Courses** (courses.csv): a list of all courses in your account, specifying to which sub-account they belong

Though not necessary for account setup, you may find it helpful to include additional information in your initial data uploads. If so, you may also download the following data:

- **Terms** (terms.csv): a list of all terms in your account; a term provides a default set of start and end dates to any course assigned to that term
- **Sections** (sections.csv): a list of all sections in your account; all course sections must be assigned to a specified course; enrollments (via the enrollments.csv) can be assigned to specific sections

Note: The workflow recommended above is general advice. There may be other files you wish to include in your Canvas setup. Please work with your CSM and review [How do I format CSV text files for uploading SIS data into a Canvas account?](#) for more information about uploading SIS data to your Canvas account using CSV files.

Compress CSV Files

When you finish configuring the data files, you can upload each file individually or compress them into a zipped file before uploading them to Canvas.

Compress PC Files

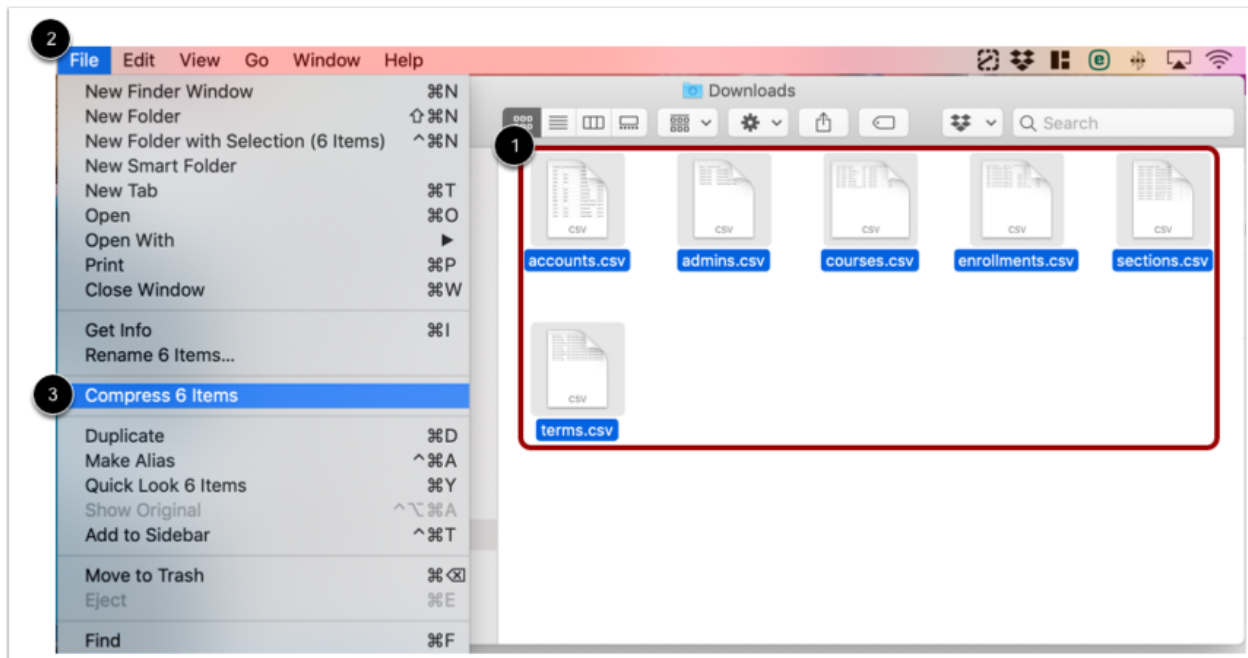
To compress your CSV files on a PC:

1. In My Computer, select all of the CSV files
2. Right click to view the Options menu
3. Select the **Send To** option

4. Select the **Compressed (Zipped) Folder** option

The zipped (.zip) file displays in My Computer

Compress Mac Files



To compress your CSV files on a Mac:

1. In Finder, select all of the CSV files
2. Click the **File** link
3. Click the **Compress Items** link

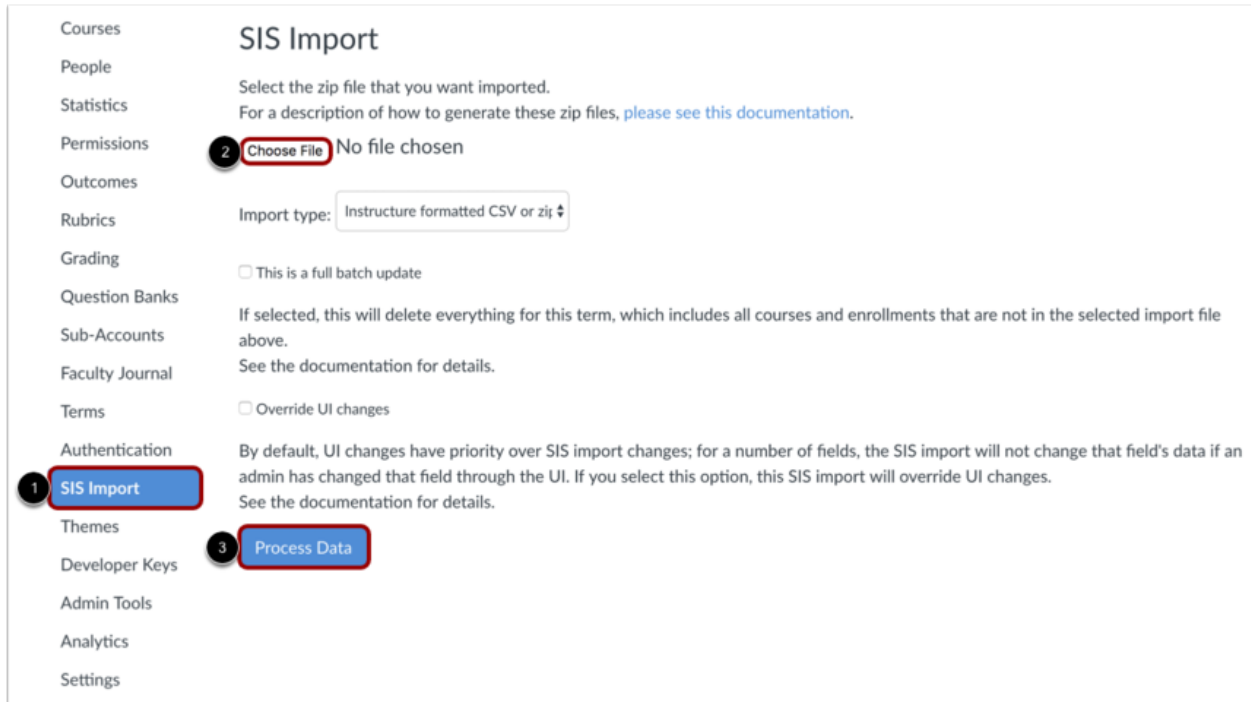
The zipped (.zip) file displays in Finder.

Upload CSV Files

All CSV file uploads should be tested in your institution's [test environment](#) before attempting to upload to your production environment.

Once your files are formatted and compressed, you can upload them using the SIS Import Tool.

Upload SIS Data



Courses

People

Statistics

Permissions

Outcomes

Rubrics

Grading

Question Banks

Sub-Accounts

Faculty Journal

Terms

Authentication

SIS Import

Themes

Developer Keys

Admin Tools

Analytics

Settings

SIS Import

Select the zip file that you want imported.
For a description of how to generate these zip files, [please see this documentation](#).

Choose File No file chosen

Import type: Instructure formatted CSV or zip ↓

This is a full batch update

If selected, this will delete everything for this term, which includes all courses and enrollments that are not in the selected import file above.
See the documentation for details.

Override UI changes

By default, UI changes have priority over SIS import changes; for a number of fields, the SIS import will not change that field's data if an admin has changed that field through the UI. If you select this option, this SIS import will override UI changes.
See the documentation for details.

Process Data

To upload your file:

1. Click the **SIS Import** link in Account Navigation
2. Click the **Choose File** link and select a file from your computer
3. Click the **Process Data** button

View Upload

Canvas displays a status bar as your data uploads. Large uploads may take a few hours to complete. Once your upload completes, Canvas will verify the success of your data upload.

View Last Batch Report

Courses
People
Statistics
Permissions
Outcomes
Rubrics
Grading
Question Banks
Sub-Accounts
Faculty Journal
Terms
Authentication
SIS Import
Themes
Developer Keys
Admin Tools
Analytics
Settings

SIS Import

Select the zip file that you want imported.
For a description of how to generate these zip files, [please see this documentation](#).

Choose File No file chosen

Import type:

This is a full batch update

If selected, this will delete everything for this term, which includes all courses and enrollments that are not in the selected import file above.
See the documentation for details.

Override UI changes

By default, UI changes have priority over SIS import changes; for a number of fields, the SIS import will not change that field's data if an admin has changed that field through the UI. If you select this option, this SIS import will override UI changes.
See the documentation for details.

Process Data

Last Batch

Started: May 17 at 9:57am
All SIS data was successfully imported.

- Imported Items
 - Accounts: 13
 - Terms: 0
 - Courses: 0
 - Sections: 0
 - Users: 0
 - Enrollments: 0
 - Crosslists: 0
 - Admins: 0
 - Group Categories: 0

View a summary of the most recently uploaded information.

View Upload Fail

SIS Import

The import failed with these messages:

- Errors that prevent importing
- null - Error while importing CSV. Please contact support. (Error report 97580000000178743)

[Try import again](#)

Last Batch

Started: May 17 at 9:57am

All SIS data was successfully imported.

- Imported Items
 - Accounts: 13
 - Terms: 0
 - Courses: 0
 - Sections: 0
 - Users: 0
 - Enrollments: 0
 - Crosslists: 0
 - Admins: 0
 - Group Categories: 0
 - Groups: 0
 - Group Enrollments: 0
 - User Observers: 0
 - Change SIS IDs: 0

Canvas displays an Import Failure message when it cannot process your data upload. You will need to correct the errors in your CSV files before attempting to re-upload.

View Upload Errors

SIS Import

The SIS data was imported but with these messages:

- Warnings
 - attachment_64208220180605-27797-1j7hgw3.csv - No login_id given for user 1555559
 - attachment_64208220180605-27797-1j7hgw3.csv - Improper status for user 1555554
 - attachment_64208220180605-27797-1j7hgw3.csv - Improper status for user 1555553
 - attachment_64208220180605-27797-1j7hgw3.csv - No user_id given for a user
- Imported Items
 - Accounts: 0
 - Terms: 0
 - Courses: 0
 - Sections: 0
 - Users: 6
 - Enrollments: 0
 - Crosslists: 0
 - Admins: 0
 - Group Categories: 0
 - Groups: 0
 - Group Enrollments: 0
 - User Observers: 0
 - Change SIS IDs: 0

Last Batch

Started: Jun 4 at 3:02pm

The import failed with these messages:

[Download the complete list of errors and warnings here. !\[\]\(8d0f0e0fe25b320c33272c52aec1fbca_img.jpg\)](#)

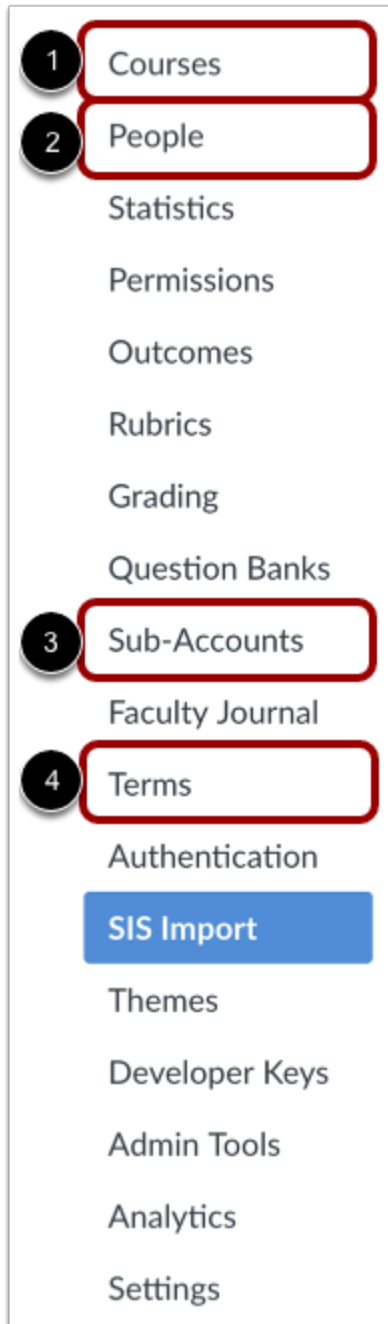
When Canvas cannot process specific lines in your data upload, it displays an import warning. Click the [Download the complete list of errors and warnings here](#) link to download an error list that identifies the location and type of errors in your data upload. You will need to correct the errors in your CSV files before attempting to re-upload.

Learn more about manually [uploading SIS files](#) into Canvas and about generating [SIS Import Error](#) reports.

Account Information

You can view your uploaded information in your Canvas account.

View Account Information



1. **Courses:** View courses created by the courses.csv and sections.csv imports
2. **People:** View users in your account created by the users.csv and admin.csv imports

3. **Sub-Accounts:** View your account organizational structure created by the accounts.csv import
4. **Terms:** View terms created in your account by the terms.csv import

Additional Resources

Canvas Guides

For more in-depth information about the topics covered in this chapter, check out the Canvas Admin Guide chapter on [SIS Imports](#).

You can also watch the Canvas Admin overview video about the [SIS Import Tool](#).

Canvas Community

The [Canvas Community](#) is an online community of Canvas users from around the world. It houses a space for [Questions and Answers](#) about Canvas, and a variety of groups, including the [Canvas Administration group](#).

Up Next in Lesson 3: Course Access and Grade Reporting

Once you're finished uploading data to your account, you can further align your account to your institution's grading and registration periods. In [the next lesson](#), you will learn about the following:

Terms:

- Terms define course start and end dates, and term access dates specify when users can access courses.
- If you created terms using the SIS Import Tool, you can learn about adjusting term access dates.

Grading Periods:

- Grading periods specify date ranges used for student grade reporting. You can also use grading periods to maintain your institution's post-term-end grade modification policies.
- Grading periods must be added manually.