



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
School of Professional Studies

Title: Adding Observers to Online Course Platforms such as Canvas Policy

Responsible Unit: Online Support

Approval by: Academic Excellence Committee, Dean's Council

Effective Date: December 15, 2018

Policy

Columbia University's digital learning platforms, such as Canvas, are spaces designed to be used by faculty, associates, teaching assistants and registered students for the purposes of teaching and learning. Like face-to-face classrooms, these online spaces are designed to create safe and respectful communities for students and faculty.

In order to maintain the integrity of these learning spaces, only people with the following designated roles can be added to these platforms:

- All faculty, associates and teaching assistants registered to teach the course
- All students who are formally registered for the course
- All students who are formally auditing the course <http://sps.columbia.edu/auditing/general-auditing-program>.

Exceptions (approval required)

Requests to add observers who do not have the above-mentioned roles need to be submitted via email to the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs for approval. Known exceptions include:

- An instructor of a course wishing to review a previous/current version of that course to help him/her prepare
- An associate of a course wishing to review a previous/current version of that course to help him/her prepare
- A Guest speaker who will be presenting to a class
- A Mentor or Capstone Sponsor who may be working with students for an external class project

The process for adding an observer to a course platform for an individual who is not formally registered as a student, instructor, associate, or teaching assistant is as follows: The instructor will submit a short rationale explaining why s/he would like to observe the course to the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs for approval. If necessary, the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs will be consulted. Upon approval, the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs will submit a zendesk ticket to the Online Support Team requesting that the individual is added to the course.