

# Release Conditions - Best Practices

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- **Set up conditions before students access the course:** Create all of your course materials and set up your release conditions before the course opens to students. This gives you a chance to check for mistakes in the conditions or for circular, contradictory, or unnecessary conditions. If you add new release conditions after students have accessed the course, students might be confused by resources disappearing. Since conditions cannot be reset, you also risk having students meet conditions before your resources are ready (for example, accessing a content topic before it is finished).
- **Avoid unnecessary conditions:** Each condition you associate with a tool takes additional time for Brightspace to process. Using as few conditions as possible to set up a learning path minimizes the amount of time that students spend waiting for pages to load. For example, you set up a content topic, a quiz, and an assignment for the second week of class. You want students to read the topic before taking the quiz, and you want them to read the topic and attempt the quiz before submitting the week's work to the assignment. For the assignment, you only need to attach the condition that students attempt the quiz. Since students must read the content topic before they can take the quiz, it is not necessary to add this condition to the assignment.
- **Avoid circular references:** A circular reference makes it impossible for students to satisfy a set of conditions. For example, if you set the condition that students must view a content topic before they can access an assignment, and then set a condition that they must submit a file to the assignment before they can access the content topic, you have a circular reference. Students can't satisfy either condition without satisfying the other one first. Circular references are more likely to occur with long chains of conditions. For example, a content topic that depends on a quiz that depends on an assignment that depends on a checklist that depends on the content topic.
- **Avoid impossible conditions:** Ensure that your conditions are not impossible for students to satisfy. For example, a condition that students must achieve greater than 100% on a grade item would be impossible (unless the grade item is set to *Can Exceed*). If students are unable to satisfy a condition, they are unable to access the content or tools to which the condition is attached.
- **Avoid contradictory conditions:** Contradictory conditions occur when two or more conditions that cancel each other out are associated with an item. For example, the conditions *Student must achieve greater than 49.9% on Grade Item 1* and *Student must achieve less than 50% on Grade Item 1* are contradictory. Students cannot satisfy both conditions at the same time; they would not be able to see the item associated with these conditions.
- **Release content based on learning ability and course performance:** Include additional content in your course specifically for students who need extra help and release this content to students who score below a specified threshold on a quiz or grade item. Alternately, release a special survey to students who attain a high score.
- **Release content in stages:** To reveal content topics to students only after they have read prior content, attach release conditions on the subsequent topics or modules that require

students to view earlier topics. This can provide a clear path through the material and prevent students from becoming overwhelmed by a large table of contents at the start of the course.

- **Release content based on enrollment date:** If your course has rolling enrollment, you can set course materials and assessments to become available relative to a student's enrollment date. This allows you to provide a structured path through the course for every student regardless of their enrollment date. For learners who have been enrolled more than once in the course, you can choose whether you use the first time or the last time they were enrolled.
- **Customize content for groups within a course:** If your course has group projects and you want to provide different instructions or resources for each group, you can create separate content topics or modules for each project and attach release conditions based on group enrollment. Group members working on one project will see content related to their work without being distracted by content not relevant to them.
- **Use a checklist to organize activities:** You can create a checklist that lists the activities students should complete throughout the course. For example, a checklist for the first week might include reading the course's introductory content, posting to an introductory discussion topic, and submitting a list of learning goals to assignment. You can set release conditions based on students checking off items from their checklist. For example, you might release an Announcements item on your course's homepage once students check off that they have completed the first week's activities.
- **Use intelligent agents to monitor student activity or non-activity:** You can set up intelligent agents with release conditions using the *not* operator to intervene with students who have not completed course work. For example, create an intelligent agent that sends a reminder email to students who have not yet completed a quiz attempt or submitted an assignment to an assignment.

Contact your [LSC-Online Instructional Designers](https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/meet-your-designers) (<https://vtac.lonestar.edu/help/meet-your-designers>) for help setting up Release Conditions.