Unit Topic: Intelligent Agents

Introduction

The Intelligent Agents tool is a powerful and efficient means of communicating with students that will increase student engagement, deepen your impact as a professor, while also reducing your workload.

An Intelligent Agent is a process the runs in your DC Connect course that identifies students who have met specific criteria and subsequently sends those students pre-scripted emails to their DC Mail accounts. The criteria, message, timing, and frequency of communication is set by you, the professor. In simpler terms, you are telling DC Connect to automatically email students when they have or have not done something in DC Connect.

Content

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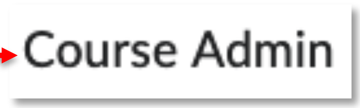
    - Deleting an Intelligent Agent
- Intelligent Agents Settings
    - Setting a Custom From: Name and Reply-To: Email Address

How to Access the Intelligent Agents Tool

To access the Intelligent Agents tool, click on the **Course Admin** link in your course navigation…

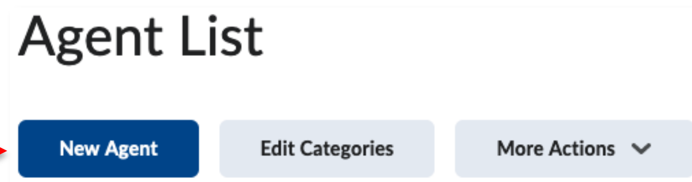


… and then the **Intelligent Agents** link.

Creating & Managing Your Intelligent Agents

Creating an Intelligent Agent

Click on the **New Agent** button of the Agent List page to begin creating a new Intelligent Agent.

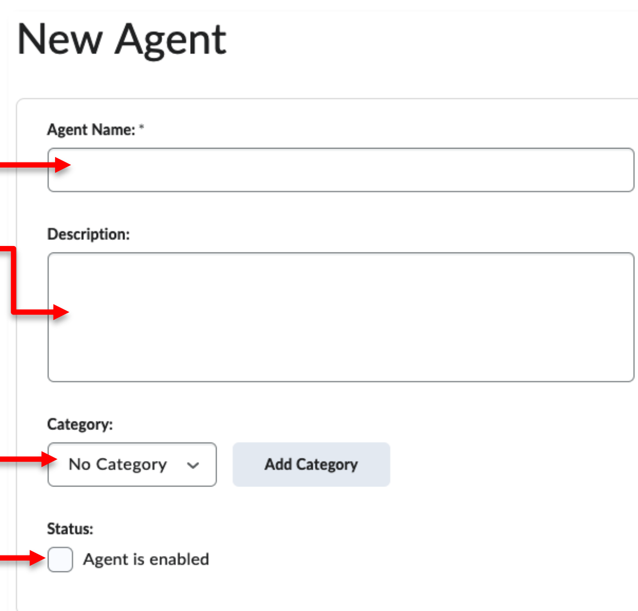


Enter a **Name** for the agent. It is a good idea to use a name that includes the activity it is monitoring (e.g. "Assignment 1 – Reminder)

Having a brief description of the purpose of the agent can be very helpful when managing your agents across semesters.

Create and set a Category if you wish to group your agents by purpose (e.g. "Reminders").

Click the **Agent is enabled** Status box so that your agent is available to run.

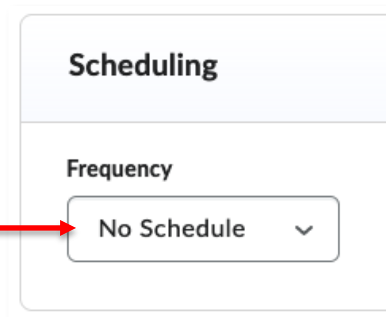


Scheduling

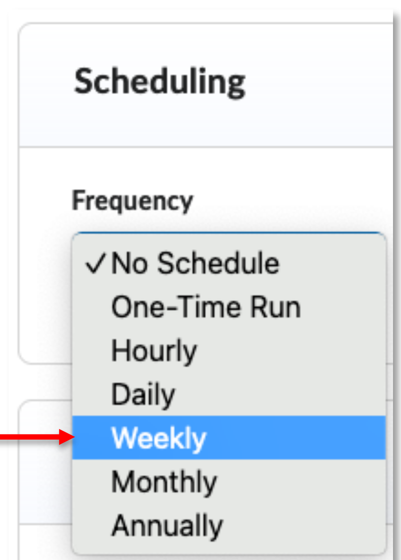
There are two ways to run your agent, using a schedule to predetermine when your agent will run and with what frequency, and manually.

Frequency

If you would like to set your agent to run automatically at a future point in time, click on the **Frequency** pull-down menu...



…and select the frequency the agent will run at.

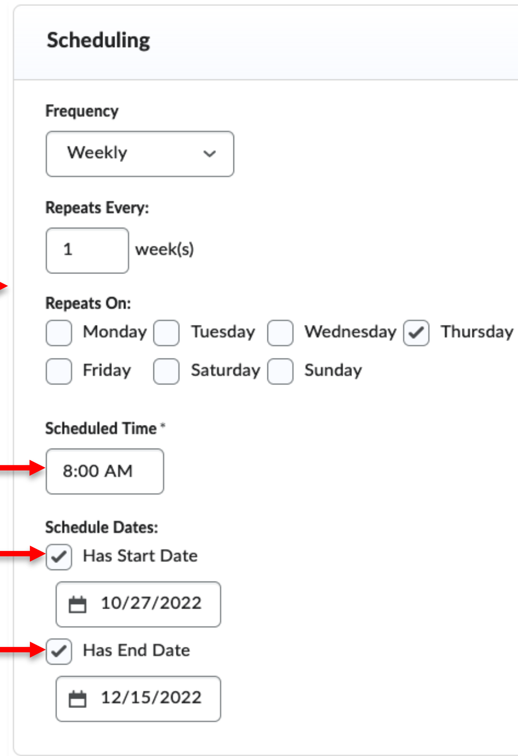


Set the repetition, …

…timing,…

…start date, …

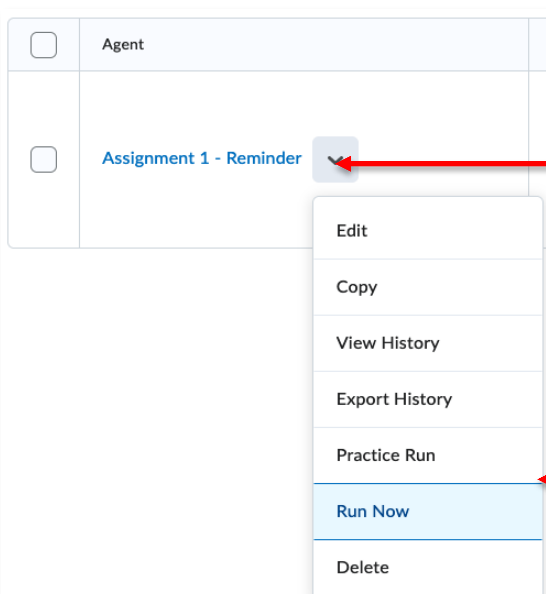
…and end date of the agent schedule.



After setting your schedule, be sure to click the **Save** button to preserve your agent parameters.

Manually

If you prefer to run your agent manually, you can do so from the **Agent List** page.



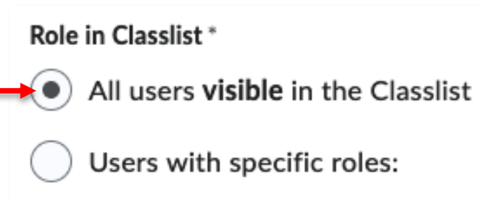
Click the action menu of the appropriate agent and select the **Run Now** option.

Setting the Agent Criteria

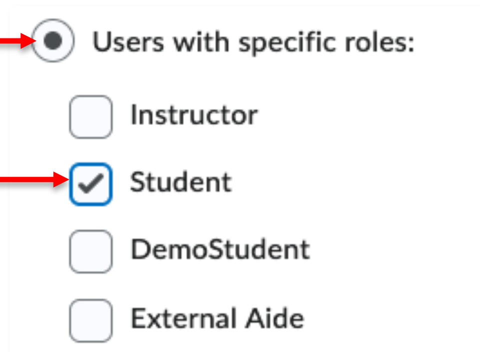
The agent **Criteria** is the user activity that is being monitored and triggers the agent to send its messaging. Begin by selecting who you want to receive emails from the agent.

Role in Classlist

You can select **All users visible in the Classlist** (recommended).

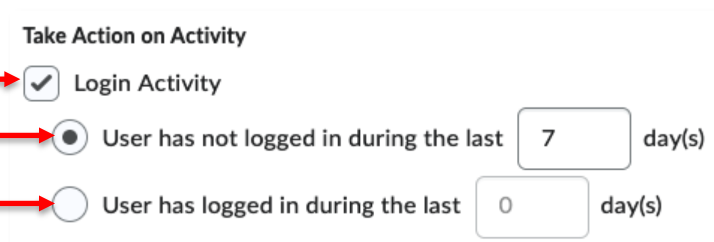


Or **Users with specific roles:**



Login Activity

If you wish the agent to take action based on how often students log into DC Connect, click the **Login Activity** checkbox under the **Take Action on Activity** title.

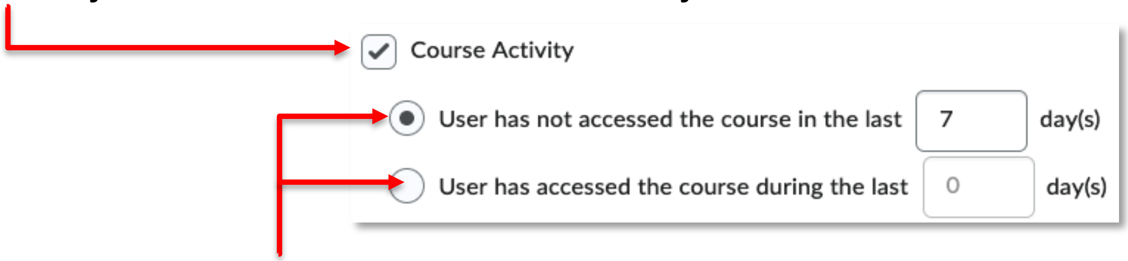


Then click the desired **User has not / has logged in**… radio button and set the number of days that must pass before the agent acts.

NOTE: This agent criteria monitors student logins to DC Connect, system wide. It is not course specific. We DO NOT recommend using this criteria for your agent.

Course Activity

If you wish the agent to take action based on how often students access your course, click the **Course Activity** checkbox under the **Take Action on Activity** title.



Then click the desired **User has not / has accessed course** … radio button and set the number of days that must pass before the agent acts.

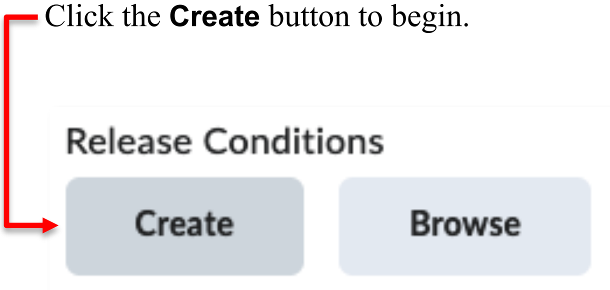
> **GOOD PRACTICE:** It is critically important for students enrolled in hybrid and online courses to engage with their courses on a frequent basis. If you are teaching a hybrid or online course, it is strongly recommended that you create an agent that monitors your students' course activity and prompts them when they do not access your course with the desired frequency. Input the number "7" to prompt students who are "asbsent" for more than a week.

Release Conditions

Release conditions are conditional requirements that restrict access or visibility to specific content, resources, or activities within DC Connect. Students must satisfy the conditions before the restrictions are removed. Stated more simply, students can't see or interact with the course content or activity unless they have done (or not done) what the condition describes.

When you use **Release Conditions** as the Criteria for an Intelligent Agent, the action or inaction described by the condition controls whether students receive the agent email or not. There are many, many options for what can be used as a condition. A comprehensive description of each **Condition Type** and their subsequent **Condition Details** is beyond the scope of this document. However, some excellent examples, especially for an Intelligent Agent, are: has/has not submitted to an assignment submission folder, has/has not viewed content topics, has/has not completed a checklist, has/has not achieved a certain grade on an assessment.

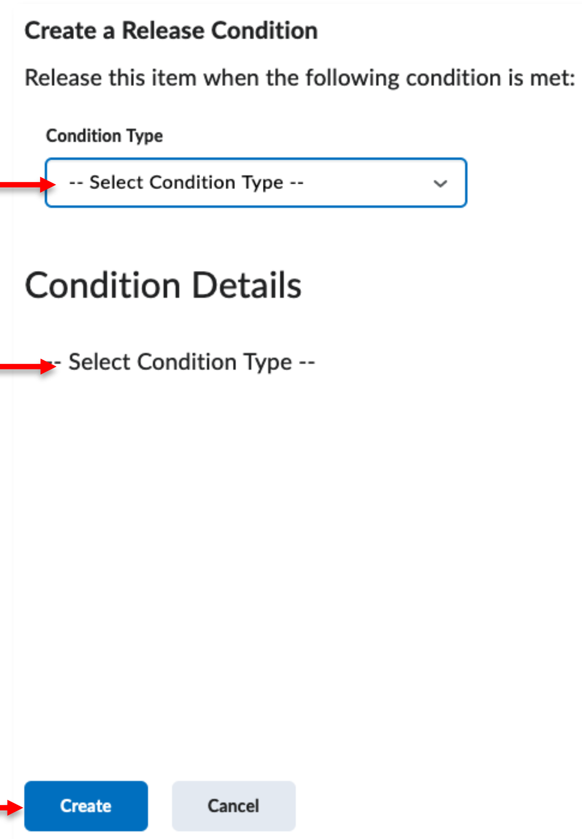
Click the **Create** button to begin.



Click the **Condition Type** pulldown menu and select the interaction you wish to monitor.

In the subsequent **Condition Details** pulldown menu (it will appear, I promise), select the action or inaction that triggers the agent to execute.

Click the **Create** button to affix the Release Condition as the Criteria for your agent.



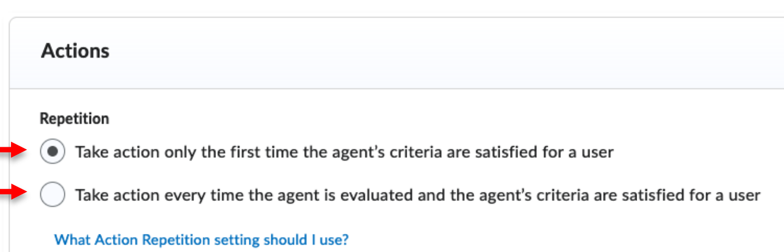
Setting the Agent action

The agent **Actions** determine the frequency of the agent's action and whether an email is sent or not.

Repetition

The **Repetition** determines how many emails an agent sends to users who satisfy its criteria.

When you select this setting, all users that satisfy the agent's criteria receive only one email no matter how many times the agent is evaluated.

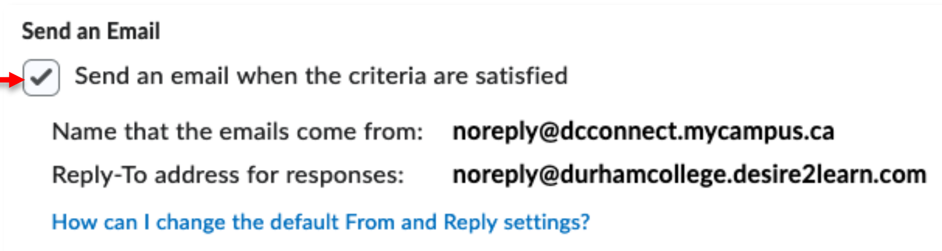


When you select this setting, the agent sends an email to all users that satisfy its criteria every time the agent is evaluated.

Send an Email

NOTE: Although it is possible to use the Intelligent Agent tool to quickly identify students who meet a particular Criterion, we strongly recommend using the tool for communication.

Click the **Send an email when the criteria are satisfied** checkbox.

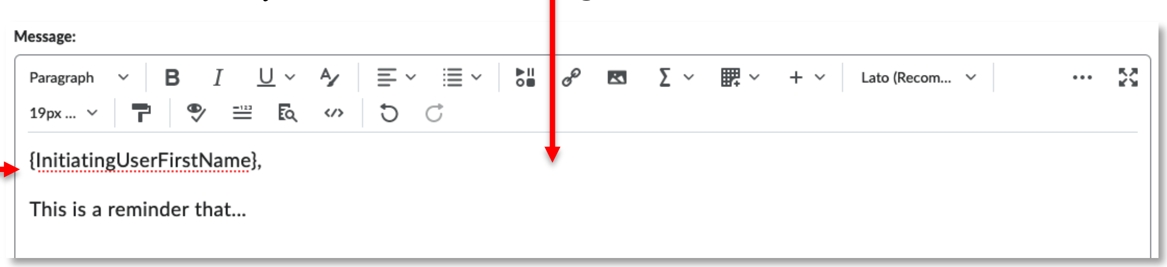


You will need to use a special code (called a replace string) in the **To:** field so that each student who satisfies the agent's criteria receive an individual email.

Type **{InitiatingUser}**, including the brackets, into the To: field.

Enter an appropriate **Subject:**. "Assignment 1 – Reminder", for example.

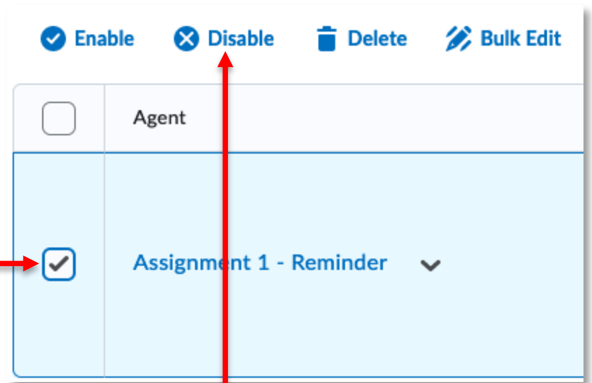
Enter the content of your email in the **Message:** field.



Here is an opportunity to personalize your communication. We recommend using the **{InitiatingUserFirstName}** replace string. Each student receiving the email from the agent will see their own first name as the salutation of the message.

Enabling or Disabling an Intelligent Agent

On the **Agent List** page, click the appropriate checkbox to select the Agent…

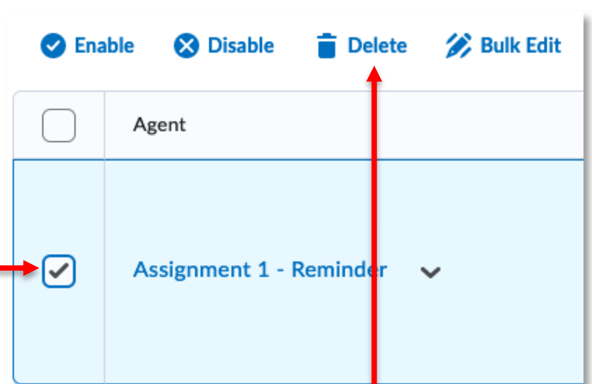


… then click the **Enable** or **Disable** link at the top of the list.

NOTE: Agents copied forward from one semester to the next will automatically disable. It is recommended practice to review the content and schedule of each copied agent before enabling it.

Deleting an Intelligent Agent

On the **Agent List** page, click the appropriate checkbox to select the Agent…

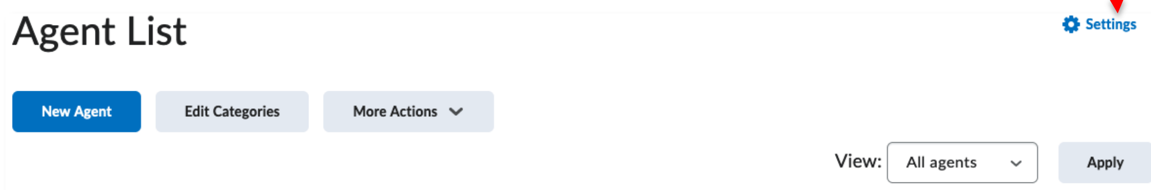


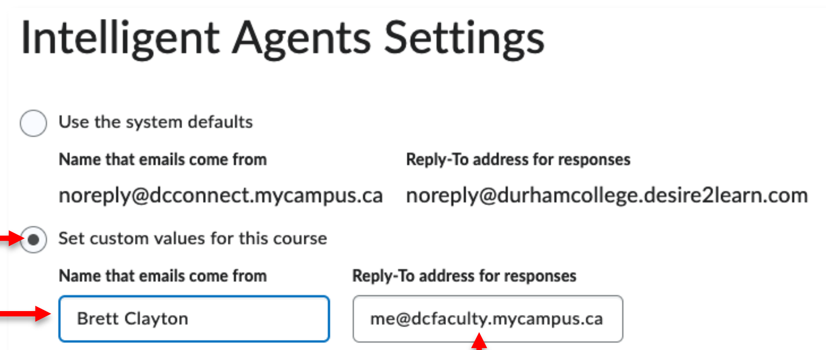
… then click the **Delete** link at the top of the list.

Setting a Custom From: Name and Reply-To: Email Address

By default, the name from and reply-to address of emails sent by Intelligent Agents is noreply@dcconnect.mycampus.ca. However, you may wish to facilitate communication with your students by providing a functional address that they can use to correspond with you.

On the **Agent List** page, click the **Settings** link.





Click the **Set custom values for this course** radio button.

Type in your name.

NOTE: **Do not** use your @durhamcollege.ca email address in the **Reply-To** field. The reply from your student will be blocked without any notification to you. Be sure to use this format: **first.last@dcfaculty.mycampus.ca**

Click the **Save** button to affix your Intelligent Agents Settings.