This document includes some of the most frequently asked questions about pairing codes, organized by user role. If your question is not answered below, please reach out to Canvas Support for assistance.

All Users

What are pairing codes?

Pairing codes are six-digit codes that are used to link students to observers in Canvas. Pairing codes are alphanumeric and case sensitive.

Who can generate pairing codes?

Pairing codes can be generated by a student or on behalf of a student by another user with the appropriate permission. Once generated, the pairing code can only be used to link the student who created the code or had the code created on their behalf. Additional pairing codes must be created for each student that will be linked to an observer.

Pairing codes are only available to users at institutions that have enabled self registration. If your institution has not enabled self registration and you need assistance linking an observer to a student, reach out to your institution for assistance.

How long are pairing codes valid?

Pairing codes expire after seven days or their first successful use.

How many pairing codes can be active for a student at one time?

A student can have five active pairing codes at one time. If a student has five active pairing codes and a new pairing code is generated, the oldest pairing code will become inactive.

Observers

Can I generate a pairing code as an observer?

No. Observers cannot generate pairing codes. In order to receive a pairing code, observers have two options:
1. Ask the student they want to observe to log into their account and generate a pairing code.
2. Ask the student's teacher, school admin, or other user with appropriate permissions to generate a pairing code for the student.

Note: Depending on institution permissions, teachers may not be able to generate a pairing code.

Can I generate a pairing code from the Parent app?

No. The Parent app does not support generating pairing codes.

How do I use a pairing code as an observer?

Observers can link to one student using a pairing code when creating an account in the Canvas Parent app or web browser. Observers can link to additional students using pairing codes from their User Settings in a web browser. Learn more about these options in the lessons below:

- Account Creation (Canvas Parent app - Android): How do I create an account in the Canvas Parent app on my Android device?
- Account Creation (Canvas Parent app - iOS): How do I create an account in the Canvas Parent app on my iOS device?
- Account Creation (Web): How do I sign up for a Canvas account as a parent?
- User Settings (Web): How do I link a student to my user account as an observer?

What happens after I use a pairing code as an observer?

After an observer enters a valid pairing code, the observer will be linked to the student. The observer can then view course content for the student. For more information, view the Observer Visibility and Participation PDF.

Can I link to multiple students using pairing codes as an observer?

You can link to multiple students as an observer, as long as you use a unique pairing code for each student. When creating an account, you will only be able to enter one pairing code. Additional pairing codes can be entered from your User Settings.

Students

Can I generate a pairing code as a student?

If self registration is enabled at the institution, students can generate pairing codes from their User Settings. Students can have up to five active pairing codes at one time. For more information, view the lesson How do I generate a pairing code for an observer as a student?.

Can I generate a pairing code from the Student app?

No. Students can only generate pairing codes from a web browser.

How can I use a pairing code as a student?

Students cannot use the pairing code to link to an observer from their own Canvas account. They must give the pairing code to the Canvas observer who will link to their account. An observer may be a parent, guardian, mentor, counselor, or another individual who needs to view the student's Canvas courses.

What does it mean if the Pair with Observer button doesn't display in my User Settings?

If the Pair with Observer button doesn't display in your User Settings, self registration has not been enabled in your account. For assistance with pairing with an observer, please contact your institution.