

PGA of America

Supporting One of the World's Largest Sports Organizations with Canvas LMS

 Frisco, TX  28,000+ Users  Adopted Canvas: 2018



Managing the education pathways for one of the largest sports organizations in the world takes commitment, dedication, and a reliable learning management system (LMS).

For over five years, the [Professional Golfers' Association of America](#) has utilized Canvas LMS to support its learning programs serving more than 28,000 golf professionals worldwide.

THE CHALLENGE

PGA of America is comprised of professionals who work daily to grow interest and participation in the game of golf.

For membership with the PGA, candidates must first complete the [PGA Associate Program](#) by working through milestones that include a background check, qualifying test, and playing ability test.

The association also offers a [PGA Golf Management University Program](#) that provides classes, internships, and opportunities for player development to aspiring PGA Professionals. Offered at 17 universities nationwide, the program allows students to earn a degree in areas such as Marketing, Business Administration, Hospitality Administration, Recreation and Park Management, providing them with the knowledge and skills to succeed in the golf industry.

Key Insights

- As the association grew, its homegrown learning system became cumbersome to maintain, both in cost and effort.
- Choosing Canvas LMS provided PGA of America with the reliable support and technology it needed to offer seamless portfolio development to members across the globe.
- The association found Canvas LMS easy to use, and its integrations have made testing more cost-effective and simple for its students, associates, and education staff.
- Collaborating with its university partners is now easier because many of them use Canvas, too.

For several years, PGA of America used a homegrown system built on older technology to manage its education programs. Over time and as the association grew, the system became cumbersome to maintain, both in cost and effort. The association realized its system couldn't grow to meet the needs of its staff, faculty, and program members, and knew it was time for a different approach.

“With Canvas, the price point was right, and it just seemed like a really good fit for what we needed. Another draw for us: Canvas was so user-friendly, we found half of our 17 university partners were already using it.”

Martha Paben, PGA Education Faculty



THE SOLUTION

As the search for a new system began, PGA’s selection team looked at several different LMSs, including BlackBoard, Moodle, and several others.

Ultimately the team wanted a robust system that was ready to go out of the box and could support the high volume of traffic generated by its users.

“We needed something that could handle everything we wanted it to do, including making it easy for students to take their tests as part of our program,” said Martha Paben, PGA Education Faculty.

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A robust communication effort designed for the implementation team, staff, faculty, and participants helped to ensure the go-live went smoothly.

Staff participated in several one-hour seminars and received ongoing training to encourage adoption and engagement.

Initial resistance to using downloadable documents for assignments was overcome as staff realized that this ability gave students more flexibility in completing their requirements in a way that worked for them.

THE RESULTS

Today, the organization uses [Canvas LMS](#) and its dynamic set of learning and development tools to help staff manage and scale its programs and engagement.

With Canvas LMS, students have an easy-to-use platform to complete their assignments and portfolios, while staff, faculty and IT can create courses, grade portfolios, and integrate the systems they need to support members and associates globally.

“We really appreciate the ability to integrate Canvas with our proctoring partners for testing. It has saved our students and associates so much time and money and enabled us to lower our testing fees.”

Martha Paben, PGA Education Faculty



SIMPLIFYING PROCTORED EXAMS WITH CANVAS

For participants, test taking has never been simpler. Through Canvas' open API, PGA is able to integrate Examity with Canvas LMS, which connects with the proctor for testing, providing a secure and reliable way to ensure that associates and students are progressing through the programs.

“We really appreciate the ability to integrate Canvas with our proctoring partners for testing,” Paben said.

Now, instead of having to make an appointment with a testing center, sometimes in an inconvenient location, then take their test and wait for the results, students and associates can take their tests at home online directly within the LMS.

“It has saved our students and associates so much time and money and enabled us to lower our testing fees,” Paben added.

READY FOR THE UNEXPECTED

During the pandemic, PGA of America had Canvas and were ready. “We were able to keep our program afloat since we could use the BigBlueButton conferencing tool within Canvas to conduct our seminars (levels 1-3) virtually and keep our students engaged and on track. And today, we continue to use it for our level one seminars.”

Use of Canvas continues to evolve for PGA of America program members and associates. Currently, staff and faculty are moving away from using static PDF course materials and incorporating interactive coursework elements using Articulate 360 - things like matching activities and multiple choice quizzes, for example.

“It's a better experience that helps students engage and understand coursework better,” Paben said.

Ultimately, for PGA of America and its members, that's exactly what's needed to help grow interest and participation in a sport that's revered worldwide.

PGA Professionals are the leaders in the business of golf and can be found working at numerous facilities and companies across the world in a variety of career paths including Golf Operations, Executive Management and Teaching & Coaching.

Learn more about PGA of America and its lifelong learning programs at [PGA.org](https://www.pga.org).