Intelligent Agents (IAs) in Brightspace

This guide was developed based on *Brightspace Community Webinar: Build Your First Intelligent Agent.*

An Intelligent Agent (IA) is essentially a Brightspace tool that assists instructors and acts on their behalf.

Within your module, the IA tool allows you to set up automatic email notifications which can be sent to yourself (as lecturer), fellow lecturers or students when specific activity occurs within the module or when a student does not meet predefined performance criteria within the module (for example lack of logins). IAs agents can be used to acknowledge student achievement (e.g. a successful completion of a quiz) and warn of any issues (e.g. lack of online activity or engagement).

Why are Intelligent agents useful?

In any programme, **communication and engagement** between lecturers and students is crucial. Similarly, extensive research has highlighted the importance of **timely, effective feedback** for students throughout their studies. However, this is often a challenge given intensive academic workloads. IA is a useful tool for

(a) enhancing communication and engagement with your students and

(b) providing timely feedback without requiring a lot of additional effort on your part.

For example, if a student hasn't logged into your module within the last seven days, you could use an IA to automatically send the student an email. If a student achieves a low score in a quiz, you could use an IA to automatically send an email with recommendations for how to get further help with their studies. In this way, IAs can be used to motivate and provide further support for students who are achieving low results, thereby helping to improve retention rates.

Getting started: the basics

Intelligent agents require an initial set up, then they work automatically in the background of your module.
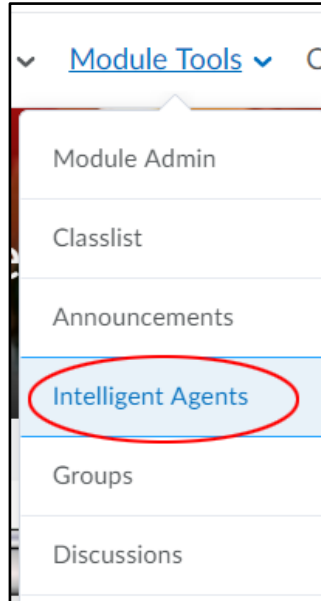
For each IA you will need to specify:

(a) Criteria that the agent will look for
(b) Content of the agent's email notification
(c) How often the agent acts.

Follow the steps below to get started.

Step 1: Open the IA tool

Open the **Module Tools** menu and select **Intelligent Agents**. This will bring you to the **Agent List** for your module.

Step 2: Define IA settings

If this is the first time you have opened the IA tool for your module, there will be no agents on your list. Before you create your first IA, you need to confirm the settings for your IAs within this module. Click **Settings**.
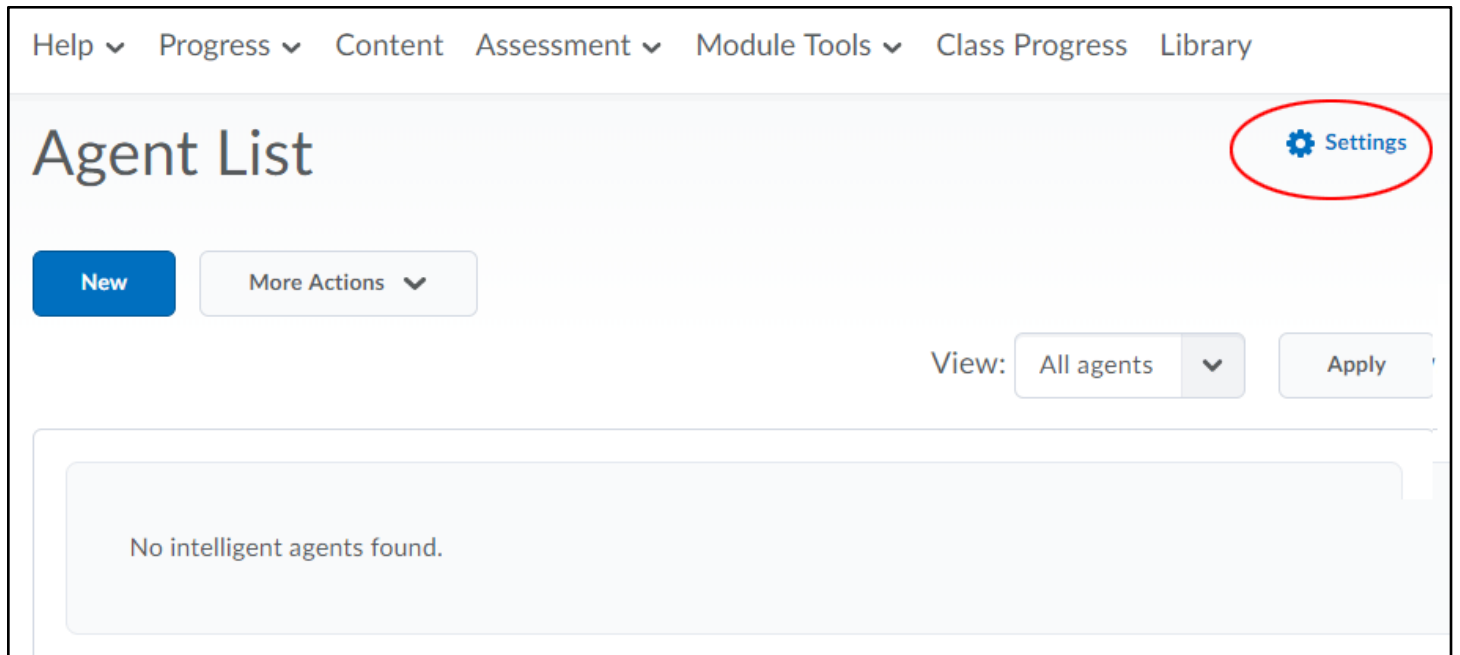
The default settings for IAs mean that all emails sent via IAs come from an anonymous system email address: "Brightspace Auto Messages - No Reply". It's recommended that you change these settings to ensure that all automated emails sent via IAs in your module come from your institutional email address. To do this select "Set custom values for this module." Then enter your full name and your institutional email address.

Click **Save**.

Step 3: Create a new IA

To create a new IA, click New.

Give your agent a name and a description.
Make sure to check the box beside **Agent is enabled** to activate the agent for use after you save it.

Step 4: Enter agent criteria

Next you need to enter the agent criteria which means defining the activities for the agent to monitor. A description of each criteria, and when you might use it, is provided below.

Role in Classlist	Identifies the users you want to target with this IA.
Login Activity	Monitors when users are logging in to Brightspace and sends an email if targeted users have not logged into Brightspace within your specified time periods. (Note: this does not monitor logins to your module specifically but monitors all logins to Brightspace itself.)
Module Activity	Monitors when users are logging in to your module and sends an email if targeted users have not logged into your module within your specified time periods.
Release Conditions	Use this option to select send an email alert in other more specific circumstances. For example: you could use this option to send an automated email reminder to all users who have not yet completed a required quiz or assignment in the module.

In the example below, we are creating an agent which will send an automated email to all users visible in the classlist if they have not logged in for at least 5 days.

Step 5: Define Actions

The **Actions** section allows you to choose whether to send the email the **first time** or **every time** the criteria is met.

- When you select "Take action only the first time the agent's criteria are satisfied for a user" - all users that satisfy the agent's criteria receive only **one email** no matter how many times the agent is evaluated.
- When you select "Take action every time the agent is evaluated and the agent's criteria are satisfied for a user", the agent sends an email to all users that satisfy its criteria **every time** the agent is evaluated.

Step 6: Create the email

The next step is to create the email which will be sent each time the agent runs (and when a user meets that agent's criteria).

In the **To:** field, enter the address the email should be sent to. For example, If you want the email to go to the user who triggered the agent (for example, the student who didn't login for the past week), enter **{InitiatingUser}** instead of an email address.

Then fill out the email **subject** and **message**.

For a list of other strings you can use in these fields, see Brightspace's guide on how to Replace Strings for Agents.

> **TOP TIP!**
> It is best to copy and paste the relevant string from within Brightspace, as this will avoid any typing errors. To access the strings for the To/CC/Bcc fields, click on What special email addresses can I use? To access the replacement strings for the subject and message itself, click on What replace strings can I use in the subject and message?
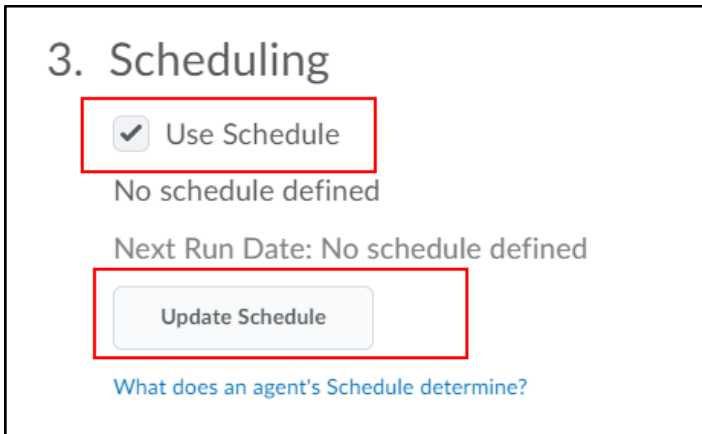
Step 7: Set the Schedule

The agent's schedule determines how frequently agent's criteria is evaluated and acted upon. If no schedule is defined for the agent, you must manually run the agent to evaluate its criteria and initiate the associated action.

To set a schedule for how frequently to run a check for the selected criteria, select the **Use Schedule** checkbox and then click the **Update Schedule** button.

You can select
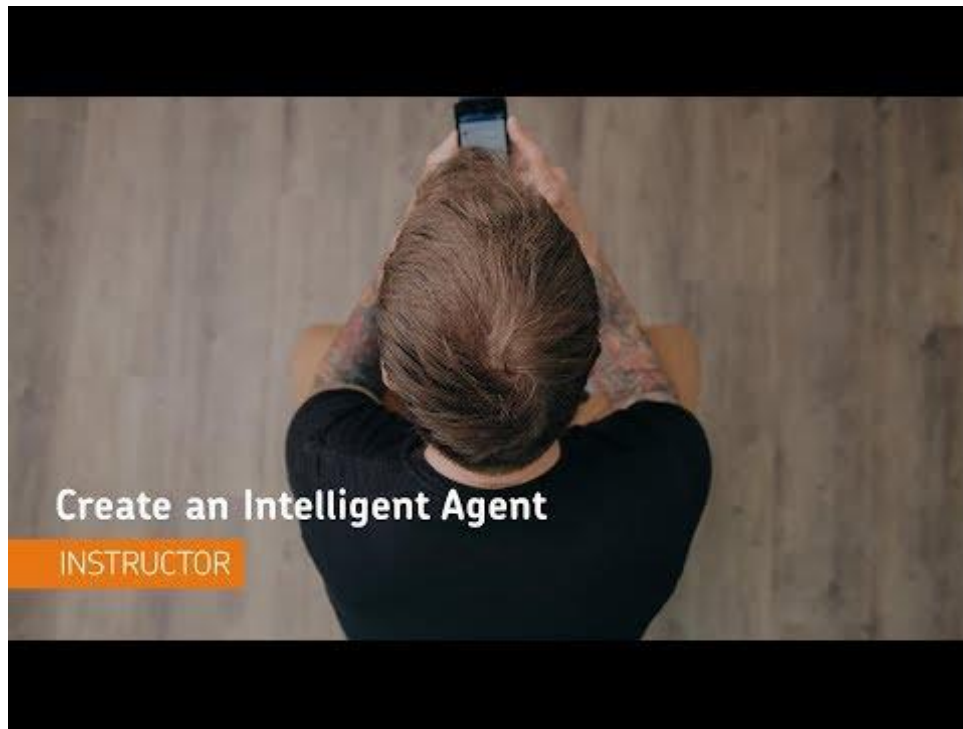- whether the repetition is daily, weekly or monthly
- repeat cycles
- start and end dates

When you have selected your preferred schedule, click **Update to** save the schedule. Then click **Save** and **Close** to complete the intelligent agent.

You have now created an intelligent agent which is enabled and which will send notifications to users as necessary.

Useful Resources

[Create an Intelligent Agent D2L instructional video](#)

Additional help can be sought from the D2L's Brightspace End User Support Team. Access them via the support widget in Brightspace.