What you may not realize: Left alone, the default settings for your Canvas course likely allow your former students to VIEW content in your course in a read-only state long after the course is over.

Why you may want to keep reading. Two scenarios:
1. You need to give participation access to students with Incompletes. Jump ahead to read how.
2. You want to allow or prevent access/participation to your course outside of campus default dates.

TERM OR COURSE?
In 2021, the parent company of Canvas (Instructure) redesigned the “Start/End dates” section under the Settings --> Course Details tab and added a new option: Term.

TERM
Canvas introduced a "Term" option that has Start and End dates for when students can view and participate in your course.
- Term is the default setting in your course.
- The Term’s Start date is not set by OIT. It’s empty. It is essentially the day that you publish your course.
- The Term's End date is set by OIT and cannot be modified. It will always be the day grades are available to students (i.e., a day after the term's grade submission deadline).
- !!! Beware that “End date” still allows students to view your course in a read-only state after the course is over.
- If you do not want these above options, you can switch from Term to Course (keep reading).

COURSE
There's also a "Course" option that allows you to specify a Start and End date of your choosing. Why do this?
- You want to prevent students from viewing your course in a read-only state after the course concludes.
- You need to give participation access to an Incomplete Student

Here's a Canvas help guide that explains the two options in more detail.
OTHER SETTINGS
As mentioned above, by default students can still view your course in a read-only state after the end of a term.

The above two “Restrict” options will govern students' access to Canvas and override the default options. If you do not want students to access your course after the term ends, then you’ll need to check the option “Restrict students from viewing course after course end date.”

INCOMPLETE STUDENT ACCESS
Allowing Access to an Older Canvas Course to a Student with an Incomplete
When a student contacts you about an incomplete from a prior term and you need to allow them participation access to that term’s Canvas space, follow these steps.

1. Set the Participation to Course (if not already true; see above) and specify an End Date of your choosing. Note: extending the End date will “re-open” the course for all students. All students may see this course reappear on their Canvas dashboard; however this will disappear after the End Date has passed.
2. Assign the Incomplete student a different availability/due date for the missing assignments. To do this, click the "+Add" button in the edit area of the assignment. Here's a help article you can refer to about that process.

Alternate Approach: Add the Incomplete Student to a Newer Version of Your Class
Assuming the same course is offered again with the same assignments, you could instead add the Incomplete Student to your current Canvas course.

➔ If the Incomplete student is needing to make up many assignments such that you want them to have an accurate accounting of their new grade, you would want to manually update the gradebook with the grades they previously earned.
➔ However, when you go to WebGrades to submit grades for the entire class at the end of the course, the Incomplete student will not be in the Registrar’s List.
➔ Hence, to submit grades for the Incomplete student, you will follow the standard WebGrades procedure for requesting a grade change for this student.