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Overview of Assignments

Assignments in Canvas show students all of the activities that will be expected of them and the points for each. Assignments could include quizzes, papers, projects, discussions, participation etc… Assignments can also be used to set up grading rules, and weight grades.

Assignments can be used to:

- Set up online submissions that can be quickly graded in the SpeedGrader.
- Grade Discussions, either by the whole class or student groups.
- Create ungraded activities that align with course Outcomes.
- Grade student submissions online as well as on paper, etc...

Keys things about Assignments:

- **Assignments = Gradebook Columns**
  Assignments control the Gradebook columns and calculations.
- Any graded item created in the Assignments will automatically show up in the Grades, Syllabus and Calendar. Any graded assignments created in the Calendar tool will automatically show up in the Assignments, Grades, and Syllabus.
- All gradable items, such as assignments, discussions and quizzes can be created directly via Assignments.
- A non-graded assignment doesn’t have a corresponding Gradebook column.
- Each item created in Assignments needs to be placed within an “Assignment Group”.
- Within Assignments, Discussions, and Quizzes, instructors can assign different due dates for each section of their course. This feature is designed to help instructors when they have sections of a course that meet on different days of the week or in different formats.

Setting up Assignments

New Assignments can be created from a course’s Assignments area.

1. Select the Assignments link.
2. Determine which Assignment Group the assignment should be placed in. You can place all online submission or on paper submission assignments in the default assignments group, all graded discussion assignments to “Discussions” group, and all quizzes to the “Quizzes” group (you need to add those groups first by clicking the + Group button on the top.)
3. In this example, create an essay assignment under the Assignment group. Click on the plus sign on the right of the assignment group name to create the assignment shell first.

4. On the pop up window, select the Assignment Type via the **Type** drop down menu. Since this is an essay assignment, select **Assignment** type.
Assignment Types
There are 5 types of assignments:

- **Assignment**: used for students to submit documents online or off-line or for items which do not require submission such as “attendance or participation”. This type of assignment will show up in the Gradebook, and also on the Syllabus page.
- **Discussion**: used to create a Canvas discussion that will grade student responses to discussion topics. This type of assignment will show up in the Gradebook, and also on the Syllabus page.
- **Quiz**: used to create a Canvas quiz. This assignment type will show up in the Gradebook, and also on the Syllabus page.
- **External Tool**: used to link to a third-party application (e.g., Campus Pack Wiki or Blog) to provide students access to that tool. This assignment type will show up in the Gradebook, and on the Syllabus page.
- **Non-Graded**: the Non-Graded Assignments will appear on the Assignments and Syllabus pages but they will NOT appear in the Gradebook.

5. Enter Assignment name, due date, and the total possible points for this essay assignment.
6. You can click **More Options** to continue or click **Save** to save this assignment.
7. To add the assignment details such as instructions and submission properties, click on the assignment title.
8. Click “Edit” button.

9. In the assignment rich text editor, you can type or upload the instructions for the assignment or link to a document in **Files**.
10. In the **Display Grade as** drop down menu, you can choose to grade display option in the Gradebook for this assignment as **Points**, **Percentage** or **Letter**.
If you select the **Letter Grade** as the grading type for this assignment, the grading scheme will be based on the default course grading scheme you previously defined via **Course Details** under **Settings** on the left menu.

11. Under Submission Type, select **Online** for this essay assignment to enable students to submit electronically. And then select the type of formats that are acceptable for student submissions.

Students could submit their assignments in any of the following ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission Type</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Allow Text Entry, Allow Website URL, Allow Media Recordings, Allow File Uploads, Restrict Upload File Types</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **No submission**: A "No submission" assignment creates a graded column in Gradebook. This could be used for things like attendance, participation, etc.
- **Online**: used for students to submit assignments electronically in different methods, such as “File Uploads, Text Entry, URL and Media Recordings”.
- **On Paper**: for assignments submitted non-electronically.
- **External Tool**: selecting this option will create a link to a third party tool such as Campus Pack Blog, or Wiki, etc... You would need to manually enter grades to the Gradebook since there is no integration between the Gradebook and any third party tool in Canvas yet.

12. Setting varied due dates for different sections.
   If you have multiple sections in the space, you may want to set different assignment due date for students who meet on different days. You can do this by using the “Add Due Dates” feature.
To add a due date for each section:

a. Click add + Due Date button.

b. From the course section drop down menu, select the section for which you want to set the due date and then set the due date from Due Date box.

Repeat the above two steps to set due dates for all other sections.

13. After you are done setting due dates for all sections, click Update Assignment button to update the assignment. This places the assignment in an unpublished state. The assignment instructions page shows the due date for each section in a table format.

14. You are done with setting up the assignment. Yet, this assignment is not available to your students. To make the assignment available to your students, you need to Publish the assignment. To publish an item under Assignment link, click the cloud publish icon on the right side of the item.
The feature of placing assignments in an **unpublished** state is called **Draft State**. Draft State allows content in Assignments, Quizzes, Modules, Pages, and Discussions to exist in an unpublished (draft) state. Unpublished content is invisible to students and excluded from grade calculations.

On the Assignment Home page, instructors can view the state of each assignment. Green cloud icons with a white checkmark indicate the assignment is published. Solid gray cloud icons indicate unpublished assignments. You can change the state of each assignment by toggling the cloud icon.

**Downloading Students Assignment Submissions**

**Downloading Individual Student Submissions**

You can download and view students’ assignment submissions via the Gradebook.

1. To access the Gradebook, click the **Grades** link on the left.

2. After students submit their assignment files, you will see icons in the Gradebook assignment column indicating different types of submissions. A pink cell on the Gradebook indicates a late submission.
3. To download an individual student submission, move your cursor over the title cell and then click on the blue icon on the right top corner.

![Image showing the process of downloading an individual student submission.]

4. The assignment detail window opens. You can download the submission for this student and add comments here. You can also access the SpeedGrader to view and grade the submission directly.

![Assignment 1 detail window showing submitted files and options to add a comment and view more details in the SpeedGrader.]

**Bulk Downloading Students Assignment Submissions**

You can bulk download assignment submissions for the whole class via either the Assignments link or the Gradebook.

1. Click on the **Assignments** link.
2. Click on the assignment title.
3. On the right pane, click **Download Submissions**. The submissions will be compressed to a .zip file you can download.

![Download Submissions button]

You can also bulk download assignments via the Gradebook.

1. Click the **Grades** link on the left menu to access Gradebook.
2. Move the cursor on the assignment title cell and then click the down-side arrow underneath the assignment title.

![Assignment title with Download Submissions button]

3. From the menu, select **Download Submissions**.
4. The students’ submissions will be gathered.

   ![Image of download assignment submissions]
   
   Your student submissions are being **gathered** and compressed into a zip file. This may take some time, depending on the size and number of submission files.

   After this process done, you should be able to download the zipped file to your local computer. Unzip the file to read the individual assignment submission files.

   ![Image of download assignment submissions]
   
   Click here to download 217.5 KB

**Bulk Uploading Students’ Submissions with Instructor’s Comments**

After you are done with grading students’ submissions, you can bulk upload the student submission files with your comments back to Canvas. You will need to zip them back up and upload the zip. Make sure you don’t change the names of the submission files so Canvas can recognize them.
Student Accessing Submission Files with Instructor’s Comments

To access instructor’s comments, students go to the Grades link and click on the comment button to see instructor’s comments and download the commented file uploaded by their instructor.

Grading Students Assignments

Besides entering the score directly in the cell within the Gradebook, you can grade students’ assignments using SpeedGrader.

Using SpeedGrader

The SpeedGrader in Canvas allows instructors to grade each student’s submission on one screen and displays a preview of students’ submissions. If the submissions are in .docx/.docx, .pdf, .ppt, .pptx formats, instructors can annotate inline directly on those assignments submissions.

Using the SpeedGrader, instructor can also grade student submissions using a Rubric shown up alongside each submission. The scores typed in SpeedGrader are automatically recorded in the Gradebook.

Besides that, instructors can add comments in both text and media formats and send students file attachments inside the SpeedGrader.
Below is a screen capture of a submission in .doc format opened in SpeedGrader with instructor’s comments. Students can save the annotation and download it as .pdf.

You can access the SpeedGrader in two ways:

**From the Assignments link:**

1. Select the **Assignments**.
2. Click on the assignment title.
3. On the right pane, under Submissions, you see the total number of submissions.
4. Click on **Speed Grader** to launch the Speed Grader in another window.
From the GradeBook:

Instructors can directly jump to SpeedGrader for a specific assignment via the Gradebook.

![Gradebook Interface](image)

Students Accessing Instructor's Annotations

To access instructor's annotations or markups made in SpeedGrader, students need to do the following:

1. Select the Grades link.
2. Click on the title of the assignment to access the Submission Details page.
3. Click on the View Feedback button to access instructor's comments and feedback.

Weighting and Grading Rules with Assignment Groups

Setting up Assignment Groups

In Canvas, grade weighting is done via the Assignment Groups. Assignment Groups let you to categorize multiple assessments and set grade weights for different groups.

To add an Assignment Group:

1. Select the Assignments link
2. Click **+Group button** to add an assignment group. For example, you can add a “Quizzes” group to group all exams and a “Discussions” group to group all discussions.

**Weighting Final Grade**

1. Click the Assignments Settings gear to open the pop up window.

2. Check the checkbox on the left of the **Weight final grade based on assignment groups**.
3. Enter the percentage weights for each of the different Assignment Groups you have created. Canvas uses the percentage weights you specify here to calculate the final grade as percentages. Weights should equal 100%, but can exceed 100% for extra credit.

 Setting up Grading Rules

You can set up grading rules such as dropping lowest or highest numbers of scores for an assignment group.

1. Click the Gear icon on the right of the Assignment group header area and then click **Edit** to edit the Assignment group.
2. Then you can drop lowest or highest numbers of scores.

Setting Up Extra Credit Assignments

Setting up an Extra Credit Assignment

You can create a new Assignment just for extra credit: using this option ONLY if your extra credit assignment is a manually graded assignment, such as a paper assignment.

1. Create a new extra credit assignment. You can put it in any assignment group.
2. Make the total points worth zero and add extra credit points manually in the Gradebook (Note: if your extra credit is a quiz, which has points by default, you will need to use option 2 below.)
Setting Up an Extra Credit Quiz Assignment

Set up an Extra Credit Quiz Assignment using the Assignment Group. In this approach, you add the extra credit quiz in its own assignment group.

1. To award extra credit, make sure you first organize all other required assignments into assignment groups.
2. Create another assignment group for the extra credit assignment only beyond 100%.
3. Add one extra assignment under the extra credit assignment group.
4. Make the required assignment groups equal 100%.
5. Make the extra credit group worth the desired percentages. This allows the assignment groups’ total to exceed 100% without penalizing students who do not participate in the extra credit assignment.
6. Mute the extra credit quiz column in Gradebook until all required columns have grades entered.