Using the Assignment tool

With the Assignment tool, you can receive and grade students' assignments and send students feedback. The students find the assignment in a content area, read the instructions and any files that you have attached with the assignment, and respond by either typing their responses in a text box or uploading their work. When the students' assignments arrive, you access them in the Grade Center in the appropriate column and row for each student.

You can allow multiple assignment submissions and you can make assignments to groups of students in addition to just individual students.

Instructor – Post the assignment for students

1. Decide to which content area you will post the assignment and click on its link in the Course menu. **(Assignments**, one of the default course menu links, is commonly used, but you might prefer to post assignments within weekly units or another area.)

2. While some faculty include instructions and necessary documents within the assignment itself, doing so can complicate the submission process for you and your students. *We strongly recommend dividing assignments into two parts* that you might post in the same folder:

    - Use **Item** in the **Build Content** menu to post instructions and any documents required for the assignment.

    - Select **Assignment** from the pull-down **Create Assessment** menu to create the link that students will use to submit their work.

    By keeping these two functions separate you can avoid unintended submissions and the need to clear attempts for confused students.

3. In the next window, enter a name and the instructions for submitting the assignment.

    > Students will not see a separate prompt to view or complete assignments. Instead, they will have to click on the name of the assignment (the only available link) to submit their work. You might want to include this text in the Instructions area: **Click the name of the assignment (above) to submit your work.**

4. Be sure to enter the **Points Possible**.

5. Make the assignment available to students by clicking **Make the Assignment Available.**

6. You can allow a single attempt, unlimited attempts, or a specified number of multiple attempts.

If you allow multiple attempts, you will have to determine which grade you will use for grade calculations. In the **Grade Center**, select Edit Column Information from the drop-down menu next to the column name in the header. Select the appropriate option from the **Score attempts using** menu: *Last Attempt, Highest Grade, Lowest Grade, First Attempt, or Average of Attempt Grades*.

7. Limit the availability of the assignment by specifying **Display After** and **Display Until** dates and times. Use the calendar and clock icons.

8. You have the option of tracking the number of views for the assignment.

9. Enter a due date. Submissions received after the due date are marked as *Late*. (The due date is also used for **Early Warning System** notifications if you choose to use these.)

10. You can make the assignment to **All Students Individually** or to **Groups of Students**. If you check Groups of Students you will be asked to select the groups that you wish to include. Click the group name(s) in the **Items to Select** box and click the right arrow to select the group(s).

11. Note that when you create an assignment, a column is automatically set up for it in the Grade Center. This is where you will receive, grade, and comment on the students' work.

By default, assignments created using **Create Assignment** are placed into a category called **Assignment**. If you decide to change the default category, go to the Grade Center (**Control Panel / Evaluation / Grade Center**), find the column for the assignment, select **Edit Column Information** from the drop-down menu next to the column name in the header, and select the new category from the drop-down **Category** menu.

Student – View and submit the assignment

1. The student finds the assignment in the appropriate content area and clicks on its name.

2. In the next window, the student views any attached files by clicking on their names.

3. To complete the assignment, the student either enters a response in the **Submission** area or uploads a response by clicking **Browse for Local File.**

4. Optionally, the student can add comments on the assignment.

5. Finally, the student clicks **Submit** to send the file to the instructor.

Save as Draft allows the student to upload their assignment and store their work on the Blackboard server without submitting it. To submit at a later time, the student should click the name of the assignment and make any desired changes. If they wish to replace an attached document or draft with a revised version, they click **Mark for removal** next to the draft, and then **Browse for Local File** to upload the replacement. Finally, the student clicks **Submit**. You will receive only the latest attachment in the Grade Center.

Instructor – Review and evaluate the student's work

1. In the **Grade Center**, you may either skip to **Needs Grading** to view items awaiting a grade, or you can view any aspect of the gradebook and look for a green exclamation mark icon -- **!** -- indicating a student's submission. If you made the assignment to a group of students you will see the **!** for all students in the group. From the drop-down menu to the right of this icon, select **View Grade Details**.

2. **Grade Details** lists every attempt submitted by the student. Click **Open Attempt** (or **View Group Attempt**) to view the submission, record a grade, add comments, attach files to return to the student, and add Instructor notes (reminders to yourself that the student does not see). Click **Submit** to record the grade.

3. You can allow the student an additional attempt (beyond the originally specified number of attempts allowed) by clicking the **Allow Additional Attempt** button. This can be useful if the student has submitted a draft for your review and you are letting the student make revisions.

4. Click **Edit Grade** to change a grade or to leave feedback for the user regarding the attempt.

5. **Clear Attempt** will remove the student's current attempt, or, if the student had a technical problem submitting their work, will make it possible for the student to submit again if you originally set up the assignment allowing a single attempt.

   > When multiple attempts are allowed, **Clear Attempt** clears the student's current attempt. Blackboard uses the results of the previous attempt as the grade for the item, *unless the grade has been overridden.* ***Overriding a grade supersedes all attempts.***

6. You can use the **Jump to User:** or **Jump to Column**: drop-down menus or the < and > arrows to select other students or assignments to grade.

Downloading all Assignment submissions at the same time

You can also download all assignment submissions for the entire class or for many students at one time and record grades all at once rather than on a student-by-student basis. There are two ways to do this.

- In the **Grade Center**, you can download assignment files from a single drop-down menu for each assignment column in the Grade Book.
- Or, you can skip to **Needs Grading** and select the **Grade All** option to grade all assigments awaiting a grade.

For the first option:

1. In the **Grade Center**, select **Assignment File Download** from the drop-down menu in the column heading for the assignment.

2. Clicking **Select Ungraded** will select *only* the ungraded assignments in the list. Click the box under **Select Users** to select *all* students' assignments (graded or not). If you want to select either ungraded or graded assignments for particular students, click the boxes next to their names while holding down the **Control** key.

3. Click **Submit**, and then click the **Download assignments now** link. Save the file to your local computer. The default file name is the name of the assignment.

4. Unzipping (extracting) the file will create a folder containing all students' assignments with unique file names for each student. Start by double-clicking on the downloaded folder. You should see all of the Word documents or other files that students submitted along with text files of any comments they included with their work. Depending on your operating system and version and the software you have for "unzipping" ("extracting") these files, you can unzip the folder.

How students view their assignment grades

1. The student clicks on **Tools**, then **My Grades**, then on the grade for the assignment.

2. The results and comments on the assignment appear in the student's view. If multiple attempts were allowed, grades and comments on all attempts are listed.