MyECU

The Blackboard™ Assignment Tool
A guide for academic staff at ECU

The Assignment tool in Blackboard allows you to create assignment items for students to complete. These assignment items reside in content areas such as "Course Documents" and allow students to retrieve documents associated with the assignment, submit their own completed assignment, and view feedback and grades.

From the instructor's point of view the Assignment tool is easier to manage than the Drop Box. Assignment items are automatically listed in the Gradebook, and grading and feedback can then occur on an individual basis in the Gradebook. This will allow you to effectively manage grades across a unit from within Blackboard. The assignment tool also gives you the opportunity to attach and return documents to the student at the same time as entering grades and comments.

Creating an assignment item

Creating an Assignment item is the first step to using the Blackboard assignment tool. The Assignment item will provide your students with information on assignment parameters and provide a link to the tools for submission and feedback.

To create a new assignment item:

1. From the control panel, enter the content area where you wish to place the assignment item.

2. Select "assignment" from the additional content types available in the drop-down menu on the right (*see fig. 1*) then click "GO". You are now taken to a page where you can enter information about the assignment.

3. In the appropriate spaces, provide a name for the assignment (e.g.. *Assignment 1*, or *Essay on Existentialism*), specify the number of points, and provide clear instructions for students on the nature of the assignment and any submission criteria.

4. If desired, specify when the item will be displayed to students and optionally upload a document.
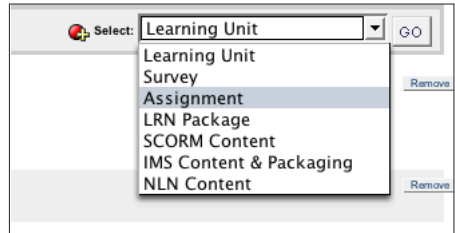
5. Click "Submit".

Figure 1. Choosing "Assignment" from the additional content types menu.

Figure 2. Entering assignment details.

Tips

■ The assignment item you have created will automatically appear as an item with the same name in the Grade book.

■ Provide clear instructions to students including, if necessary, instructions for using the assignment feature to submit assignments.

■ Uploaded documents could be assignment instructions, electronic copies of cover pages, supporting materials such as readings, or grading rubrics.

■ On successful completion of all required fields you should receive a message which says, "The assignment has been updated".

Modifying an assignment item

You will occasionally have a need to go back and alter or add to the information you have provided students in your Assignment item. This can be done in a similar manner to that with which you modify any content area item in Blackboard.

Figure 3. The "Modify" button appears alongside each item on the content page.

To modify an existing assignment item:

1. From the control panel, enter the content area where you originally created the assignment item.

2. Click on the "Modify" button on the right next to the item.

3. Alter the name, points possible, description, availability or attached documents as required.
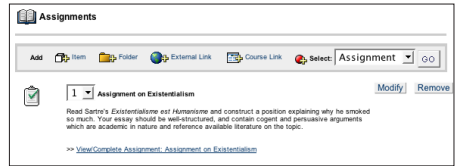
4. Click "Submit".

Tips

■ The most common uses for editing an assignment item will be to add further instructions, attach additional documents or to extend availability.

■ Editing the assignment name will not update the name of the item in the Gradebook. If you wish to update the name of the item as it appears in the Gradebook you will have to do that from within the Gradebook itself. *See page 269 of the Blackboard user manual for instructions on editing the Gradebook item.*

Retrieving Student Submissions

You can retrieve student submissions for grading either individually or as a batch. You can easily see which students have submitted assignments for grading by viewing the Gradebook. The Gradebook will also allow you to retrieve student submissions.

Figure 4. Assignment item columns in the Gradebook showing individual student submissions and grades.

To retrieve an individual student assignment submission:

1. From the Control Panel, click on the Gradebook.

2. In the assignment column, click on the ! symbol next to a student to see the details for that student's assignment.

3. Click on the View button on the far right. The "Grade Assignment" page appears.

4. On the "Grade Assignment" page, the student's submission will be available under section 2, *Student's Work*. Click on the link that appears next to the item "Student's Work" to retrieve the file.

Figure 5. The view button appears on the far right of the student assignment on the "Modify Grade" page.
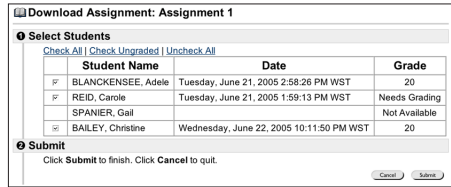
Figure 6. Click on the document links under "Student's Work" to retrieve student assignment submissions.

Tips

■ Retrieving assignments one by one using the individual method allows you to enter grades directly into the Gradebook as you go.

■ Keep the "Grade Assignment" page open so that you may enter the student's grade and return their paper once you have marked it.

■ If a student has not submitted any work for a particular Assignment item, a dash will appear next to their name in the assignment item column. There will also be no view button next to the item on the "Modify Grade" page.

To retrieve multiple student assignment submissions:

1. From the Control Panel, click on the Gradebook.

2. Click on the assignment name at the top of the assignment column.

3. Choose "Item Download" from the available choices.

4. Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the student names whose submissions you wish to download.

5. Click "Submit".

6. The assignments will be exported into a .zip file. Click on the link that appears to download the .zip file containing the student submissions you selected.

Download Assignment: Assignment 1

❶ Select Students

Check All | Check Ungraded | Uncheck All

	Student Name	Date	Grade
☑	BLANCKENSEE, Adele	Tuesday, June 21, 2005 2:58:26 PM WST	20
☑	REID, Carole	Tuesday, June 21, 2005 1:59:13 PM WST	Needs Grading
	SPANIER, Gail		Not Available
☑	BAILEY, Christine	Wednesday, June 22, 2005 10:11:50 PM WST	20

❷ Submit

Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

Cancel   Submit

Figure 7. Select which assignment submissions you wish to download on the "Item Download" page.

Download Assignment: Assignment 1

The assignments have been exported. Download assignments now. (14 KB)

Thursday, August 11, 2005 11:05:04 PM WST

OK

Figure 8. The files will be delivered to you as a link to a .zip archive.

Tips

■ Use the batch download function with caution. If you wish to use it, encourage students to clearly identify their files in the file name. For example: *myname_unitcode_assignment1.doc*

■ If a student has not submitted any work for a particular Assignment item, a dash will appear next to their name in the assignment column. There will also be no checkbox next to their name on the "Download Assignment" page.

Entering Student Grades

Student grades may be entered either while retrieving submissions, or at a later time by returning to the Gradebook. In addition to grading student work, you may also provide comments or formative feedback to the student, or even return a file.

To enter a student grade:

1. From the Control Panel, click on the Gradebook.

2. In the assignment column, click on the ! symbol next to a student to see the details for that student's assignment.

3. Click on the "View" button on the far right.. The "Grade Assignment" page appears.

4. On the "Grade Assignment" page, the grade and comments can be entered under section 3. Enter a grade and then your comments on the student's work.

5. Optionally, you may also return a file to the student by using the "File to attach" function.

6. If desired, add instructor notes in section 4.

7. Click "Submit".

Figure 9. Entering student grade and comment in the "Grade Assignment" page.

Tips

- Files you return to the student may include such items as marking rubrics, annotated submissions or exemplars of correctly completed work.

- The student will view your comments and retrieve any attached files by clicking on the Assignment item in the content area.

- Instructor notes are not seen by the student. These are merely for yourself or other instructors/tutors to keep track of grading decisions.

- Ensure student grades appear correctly upon returning to the Gradebook.

Allowing Second Attempts

Once a student submits a piece of work via the Assignment item, they are no longer able to update their assignment or submit further work for that item. At times, however, you may wish to allow a student to make a second attempt. To do this you must first clear their existing submission.

To clear a student attempt at an assignment:

1. From the Control Panel, click on the Gradebook.

2. In the assignment column, click on the ! symbol next to a student to see the details for that student's assignment.

3. Click on the "View" button. The "Grade Assignment" page appears.

4. Under section 1, click on the "Clear Attempt" button. You will be prompted to confirm your decision.

5. Click on the "OK" button to confirm the deletion.

6. You will receive a message which states, "This assignment attempt has been removed". Click "OK".
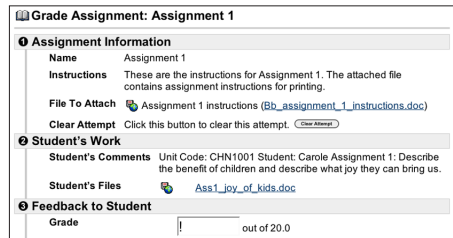
7. Click "Cancel" to return to the Gradebook.

Figure 10. Remove a student attempt by clicking on the "Clear Attempt" button under section 1.

Tips

■ Clearing a student assignment attempt will delete all files associated with that attempt. Ensure you have downloaded all files first if you need them.

■ On returning to the Gradebook you should now notice the student has a "-" next to their name for that item.

■ Be sure to inform students they may now make a second attempt by using either the email function for individuals, or by making an announcement if this applies to the entire class.

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