Grading in Blackboard

Original Experience
Grading in Blackboard
Part II:
Creating an Assignment

A good way to learn how grading works in Blackboard is to go through the steps of creating an online assignment. An online assignment uses many, although not all, of the grading features. Creating an online assignment automatically creates a column in the course Grade Center, and student submissions and instructor’s grades are then tracked in that column.
To Create an assignment, go into any content area, such as Course Material, or any folder within a content area, and click on the Assessments tab near the top. In the menu that pops up, click on Assignment.
The screen for defining an assignment has many parts. At the top, Blackboard asks for a name and a description. The screen provides a variety of editing tools for the description, so the text and images included there can be complex. After filling these in, scroll down to the next parts of the assignment definition.
Instead of or in addition to the description entered above, you can attach one or more files from your computer or from the files already in the course. You’ll usually assign a due date, since students can see due dates in their Blackboard calendar, and if they’re using the Blackboard app they’ll get reminders as due dates approach. If you copy a course from one semester to the next, remember that due dates have to be changed.
The first thing to enter in the Grading section is the number of points possible for the assignment. Setting the Points to 100 effectively makes entering a score identical to entering a percentage. If you’re planning on using a rubric for grading this assignment, and you’ve already defined the rubric in the course, you can click on Add Rubric to select the Rubric to be associated with this assignment. Rubrics can be created under Course Tools. Optionally, you may also change settings in each of the three grading subsections, which are called Submission Details, Grading Options, and Display of Grades. If you don’t open these subsections to inspect or modify them, you are accepting the default values that are managed in each.
Under Submission details, the first option to set is the type of assignment. The default is an individual submission, meaning that each student submits their own work. It is also possible to tell Blackboard that the assignment is submitted by a defined subgroup of students, or -- rarely -- that a multi-course portfolio is to be submitted.

By default, the Number of Attempts is set to Single attempt, meaning that Blackboard will accept only one submission for this assignment from each student. This can also be set to a specific number of submissions or an unlimited number of submissions. If you allow more than a single submission, you’ll also have to tell Blackboard how to score them. Assuming one student makes two or more submissions for an assignment, and assuming that the instructor grades two or more of those submissions, the setting here will tell Blackboard how to arrive at the student’s grade for the assignment as a whole. Blackboard can take the submission with the highest grade, the lowest, the last, the first, or the average. The default value is to take the grade on the latest submission as the one that counts.

Lastly, you’ll need to tell Blackboard whether or not to run each submission automatically through the SafeAssign originality checker before you grade it. You can also decide whether to allow students to see the SafeAssign report or to exclude submissions from becoming part of the database of papers SafeAssign uses to check submissions.

You don’t have to open the Submission Details subsection at all if you accept all the
defaults, which mean an individual submission, single attempt, and no SafeAssign reporting.
The Grading Options subsection is rarely used. You can use it to turn Anonymous Grading and Delegated Grading on or off.

You can choose to hide student names from submission attempts during grading, making them anonymous. You can also choose to delegate grading to multiple graders. Each grader provides separate grades, feedback and notes to students. Users with the ability to reconcile grades may review all the grades given to a submission and set the official grade for the attempt. By default, instructors have reconciling abilities.

- **Enable Anonymous Grading**
  Student names are hidden during the grading process.

- **Enable Delegated Grading**
  Delegate grading responsibilities to one or more additional grader.

The Grading Options subsection is rarely used. You can use it to turn Anonymous Grading on or off for a particular assignment. If Anonymous Grading is turned on, Blackboard won’t automatically tell you the name of the student submitting each paper. To be effective, though, students have to be reminded not to put their name or other identifying information in the contents of a submission.

If you turn on Delegated Grading, you can select specific individuals enrolled in the course to grade specific assignments.
In the Grade Center grades can be entered and displayed as letters, percentages, number of points, or complete/incomplete. What you set here as the value for the Primary display will be the format in which Blackboard will ask you to enter grades for this assignment, and will also be the format in which grades are displayed to you and students. By default, the Primary Display is set to Score, meaning that the grader will enter the number of points earned.

Optionally, you can add a Secondary Display, which is never visible to students. The Secondary Display is typically a conversion between points or percentage and a letter grade. The conversion between the two formats is controlled by a Letter Grade Schema. Each course has a default Letter Grade Schema, and we'll talk later about how that schema can be changed.

The box labelled “Include in Grade Center grading calculations” is checked by default. Removing the check mark from that box means that the grades for this assignment will not be included in the total points or weighted total for the course, or in any other grade center calculations. This can cause confusion, so excluding individual columns from calculations should be used sparingly.

The box labelled “Show to students in My Grades” is also checked by default. Removing the check mark hides the grades for this assignment from students, but allows the values to be used in Grade Center calculations.
The last check box lets you decide whether or not students can look up grade statistics for this assignment. This is unchecked by default, and the instructor has to take the action of checking this box if students are to be allowed to see statistics such as average, median, and range.
As with any other Blackboard content, students can only see assignments that have a status of “Available.” Without a check mark in the box labelled “Make the Assignment Available,” students will never see the assignment. In addition, you can narrow visibility to students by date and time. Since you’ll have to update any availability dates if you copy a course from one semester into the next, use these sparingly.

Also, always remember that you need to click the Submit button to record any changes you’ve made.