Using SpeedGrader in Canvas

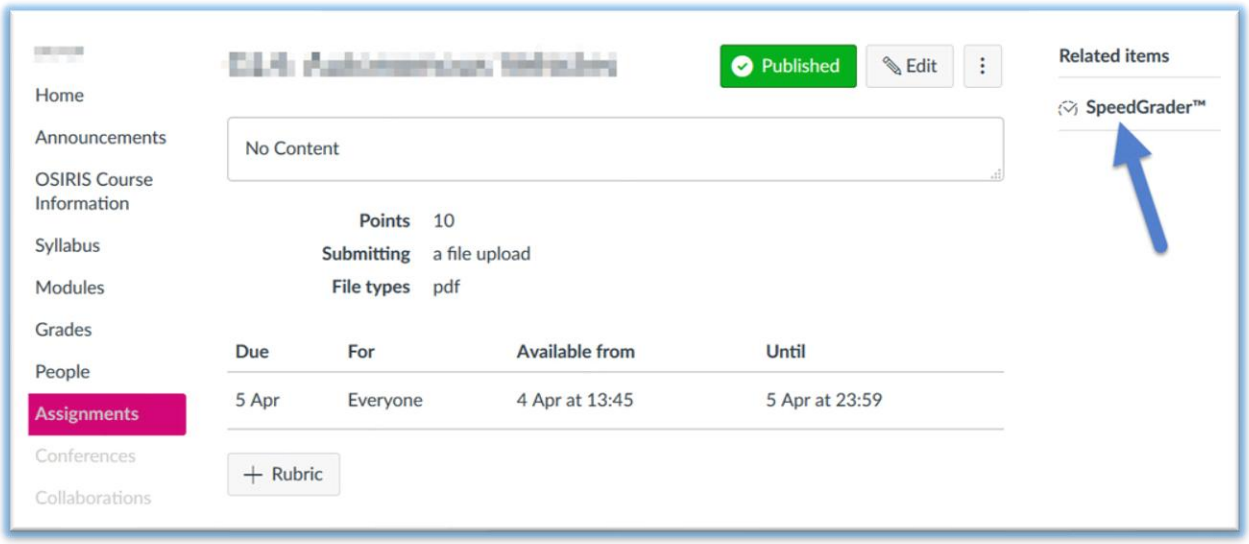
Introduction

In Canvas you will find a comprehensive toolset for a complete online process for creating and grading assignments, and providing feedback to your students. This document provides some best practices for grading submissions from your students and providing feedback by using the SpeedGrader functionality. If you want to learn some best practices for creating an assignment, then please check out the best practice document "Digital assignments" on our Canvas website.

The process outlined

Once submissions start coming in for an online assignment, you can get started right away to review the submissions and provide grades and / or feedback to your students. You can access the SpeedGrader from several locations in Canvas, such as:

- the detailed view of the Assignment (see figure below);
- the options menu for an assignment on the Assignments page, in a Module, or in a Gradebook column

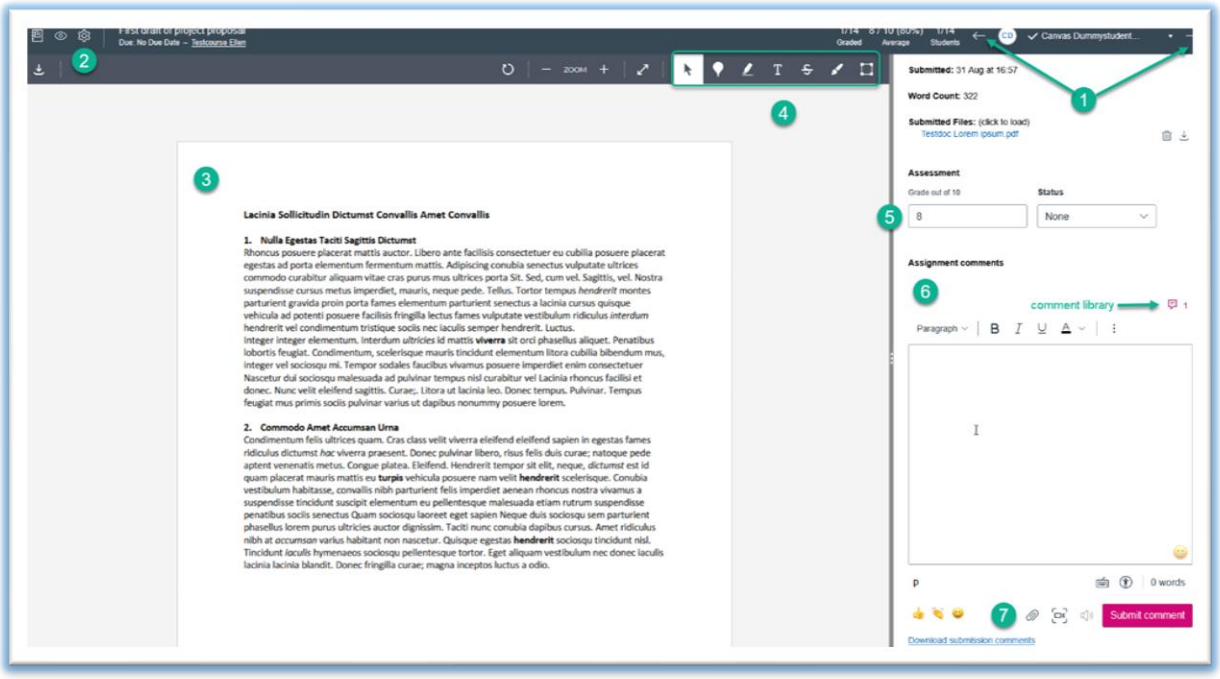


On the next page you will see an explanation of the important features of the SpeedGrader.

YOU MIGHT WANT TO RELEASE GRADES AND FEEDBACK TO ALL STUDENTS AT THE SAME TIME OR ONLY AFTER A CERTAIN DATE. YOU CAN ACHIEVE THIS BY selecting a manual posting policy FOR THE ASSIGNMENT. THE GRADES THEN REMAIN HIDDEN FOR STUDENTS UNTIL YOU MANUALLY POST THE GRADES.

Important features

SpeedGrader allows you to view and grade student assignment submissions in one screen (see figure below).



There are seven important things that you should know about Speedgrader (see the numbers in the figure) :

1. You are able to navigate very easily through all submissions of your students for one assignment with the arrows.
2. If you want to sort the student list in Speedgrader in a different manner, then click the setting icon and select Options. You can sort by student name, submission date, or submission status (needs grading / not submitted / etc.)
3. For most submitted files you will see the submission of the student right away. There's no downloading needed.
4. You can annotate your feedback for the student right away as a "layer" on top of the document itself by using the options in this bar, such as text balloons, or highlighting. This works similar to Acrobat Reader or the Track changes feature in MS Word. The annotations can be easily reviewed by the student.
5. Assign a grade right away based on your preferred assessment method.
6. Assignment comments can be added by you or the student. Instructors can use the comment library to save frequently used comments and reuse them. The comment library is user-based and can be used across courses.
7. You could also add a document or video as feedback for the student. Advisable is to use this not too often. Instead use the annotation options as mentioned at number 4.

More information

Please be aware: SpeedGrader is generally designed for one instructor role to grade submissions and give feedback at a time. If you work with two instructors at the same time on feedback for the *same* student (document annotations, rubric comments), this can result in unintendedly overwriting your colleague's feedback. This also applies to rubrics in the Speedgrader.

If you want more information on features for the creation of an assignment, please consult the best practice document "Digital assignments" on our Canvas website.

You can find a lot of information on using Canvas in the Canvas Guides. Those guides are always kept up to date by the supplier of Canvas. There are specific online guides on the SpeedGrader, and for more guides on Assignments click here.

Version: September 2026

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.