Upload grades from Excel to Canvas

Introduction

You can use the Canvas gradebook to present (calculated) grades from an Excel sheet to your students. It is not possible to upload any Excel sheet to the Canvas gradebook. This document will explain the steps you can take to match a (calculated) grades column from your own Excel sheet with the students in your Canvas course and how you can upload this to Canvas. The examples and screenshots are taken from a Windows 10 computer with Microsoft office 2016.

It is necessary that you have some basic Excel and computer skills in order to understand this instruction.
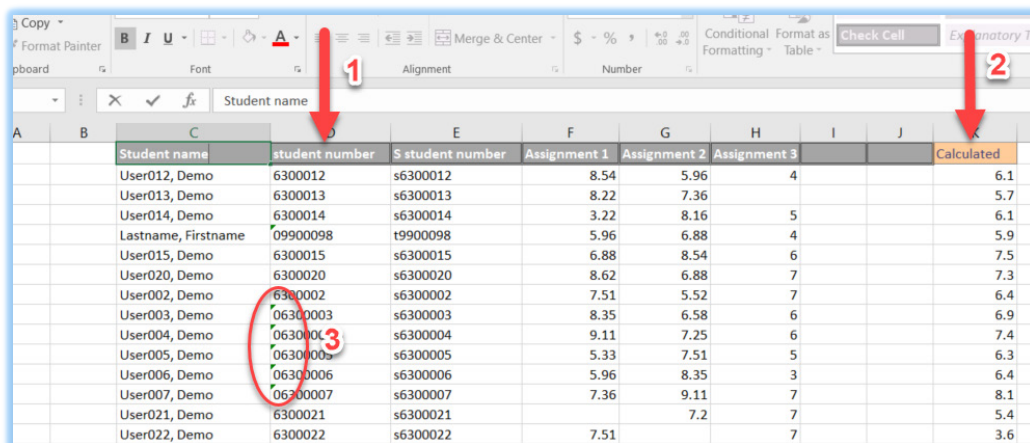
The process outlined

1. Open and prepare your Excel sheet.
2. Download and prepare your Canvas gradebook export CSV file.
3. Match your grades column to the Canvas students in the gradebook export CSV file with the VLookup function.
4. Check and save the results in the CSV file.
5. Upload the CSV file to Canvas.
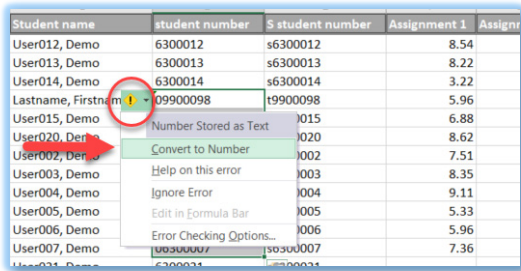
Step by step instructions

1. Open and prepare your Excel sheet that contains the grades you want to present in Canvas. Notice in the screenshot below that the grades column (**2**) is positioned to the right of the identifier column (**1**) you will use to match the right grade to the right student. The identifier column has to be the student number (in the format 1234567 or s1234567). The columns don't have to be sorted. Grades with decimals must have a point as decimal separator.

It is also important that the student number column contains numbers. The screenshot below shows that some fields have a green triangle in the top left corner (**3**). This indicates that these fields are probably formatted as text. In some cases this is done to keep zero's at the beginning of a student number visible.
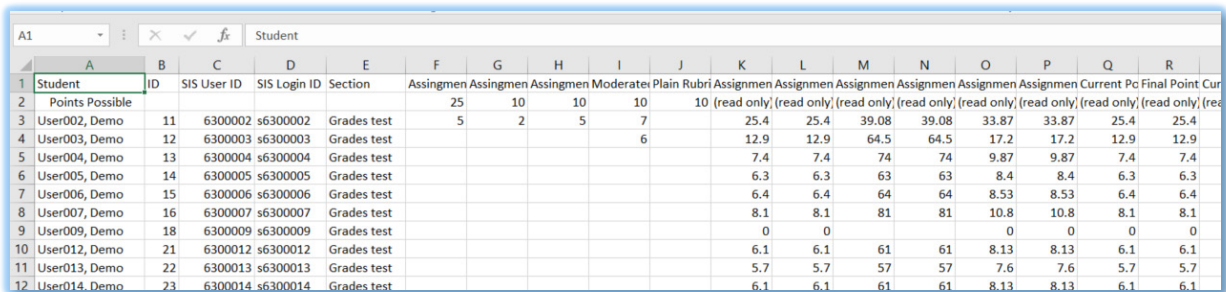
You can convert these fields to numbers by selecting them and clicking on the exclamation mark that appears. A menu will pop up as shown in the screenshot below. Click the option "Convert to number" and all selected fields will be converted from text to numbers.
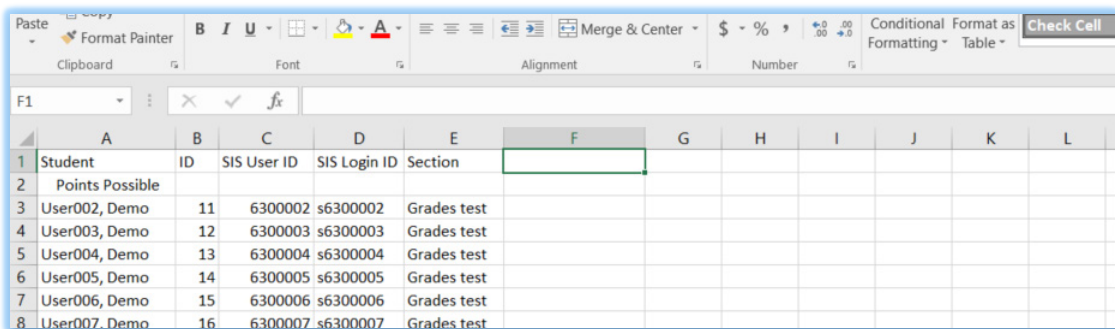

2. Download and prepare your Canvas gradebook CSV file. Open the **Grades** function from the Course Menu. Click on [Export] and select Export Entire Gradebook in the menu that appears. Canvas will create a UTF-8 encoded CSV file that you can save to a desired location. See the document "Canvas gradebook export and import function" on the UTwente Canvas website for extra information.

It is important that you see the columns as shown in the screenshot below after opening the CSV file. If not, you can try to set the list separator of the CSV file to a semicolon by clicking on [Account] in the Canvas Global Navigation Menu, click [Settings] and set the Feature Option "Use semicolons to separate fields in compatible spreadsheet exports" to 🟢 and download the CSV file again.

In case you want to add a grade for which no column exists in the Canvas gradebook yet, you can delete all columns except for the first 5 columns for a better overview (the 5 first columns are mandatory).

In case you want to add a grade for which there already is an assignment column in the Canvas gradebook, you can delete all columns except for the first 5 columns and the assignment column. Use the assignment ID in the column name to check if you are keeping the right assignment column. In Canvas you can see the assignment ID in the lower left corner of the browser window if you place

your mouse pointer on the assignment (in **Assignments** or **Grades**) as shown on the screenshot below.
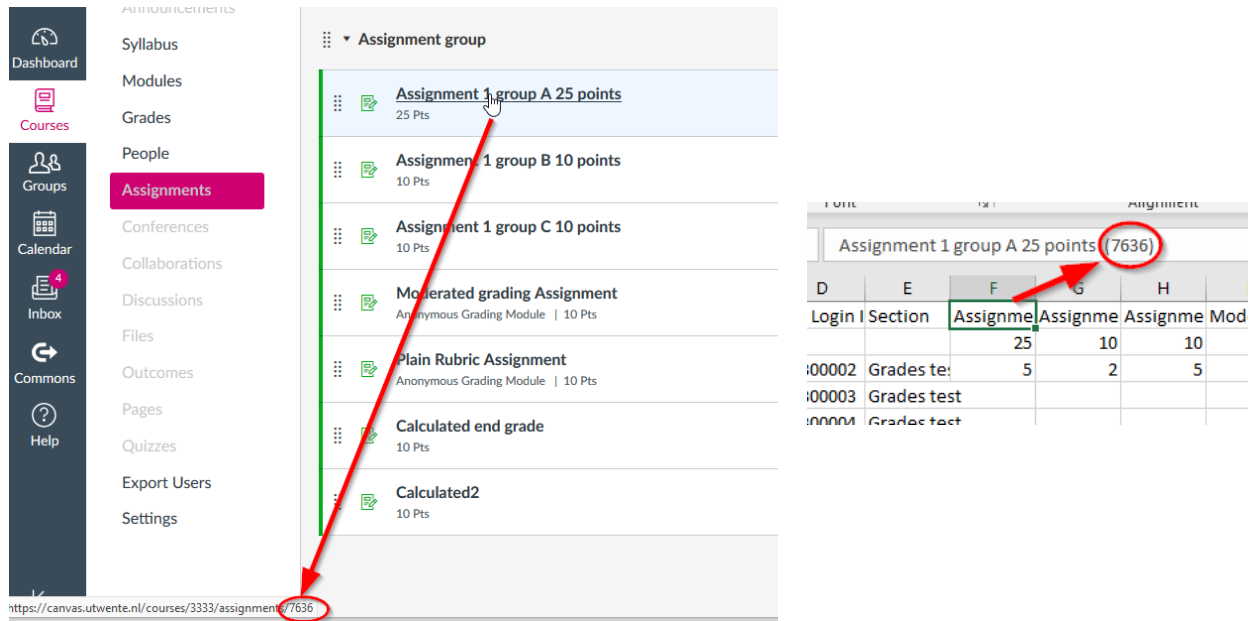
In the example that is shown in the screenshots in this document we are adding a new column.

3. Match your grades column to the Canvas students in the CSV file with the Excel VLookup function. With the VLookup function you can "lookup" a value, in this case a grade, in a range of Excel fields where it is matched based on a corresponding identifier value in both files. See the screenshot below for a graphic presentation.

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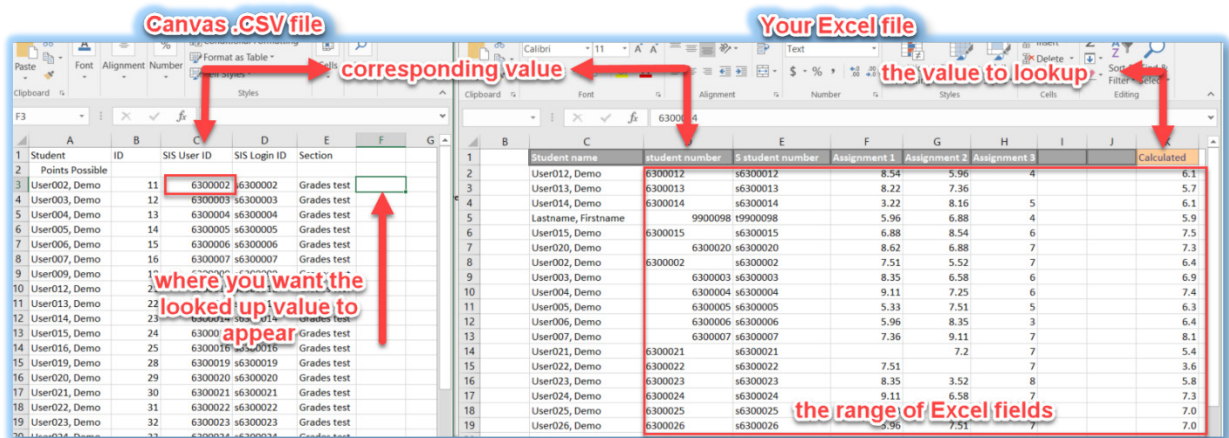
See the screenshot below and follow the steps to start the Vlookup dialog in your Canvas .CSV file.

- Click in the cell (**1**) where you want the (grade) value to appear. This is the grade column you want to create in de Canvas .CSV file and upload to Canvas.
- Click on the Functions icon (**2**) left to the Formula Bar.
- In the window that appears type "vlookup" in the search field (**3**) and click [Go] (**4**).
- VLOOKUP should appear in the Function box. Click on VLOOKUP (**5**) and click [OK] (**6**).
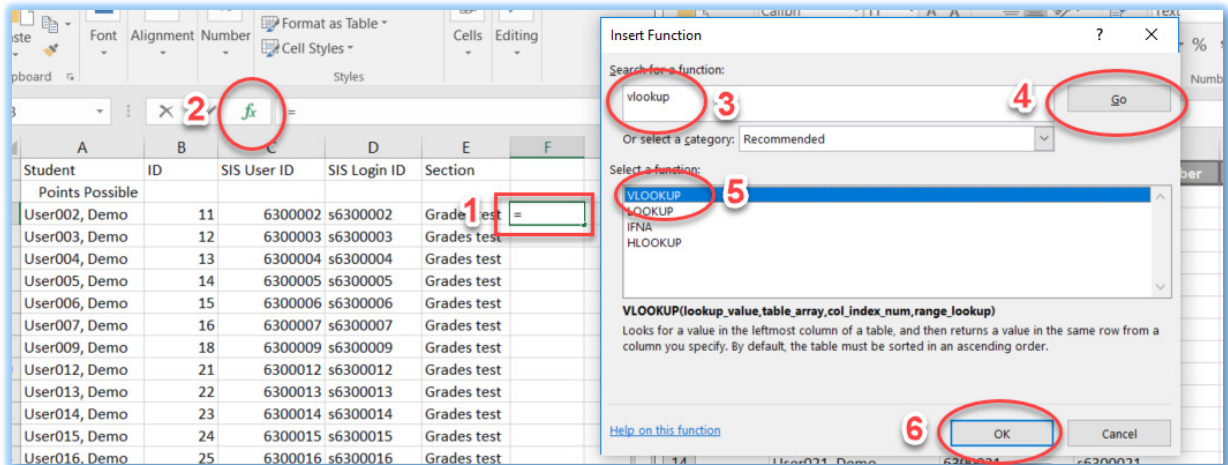
Once the VLOOKUP dialog window has appeared we can build the formula. Notice the cursor is in the "Lookup_value" field in the dialog. Click in the Canvas .CSV file in same row as where you are building the formula, in the cell that holds the corresponding value that has to match with a row in your Excel fields that hold your grades. In this example, the student number that is in the SIS User ID column. The screenshot below shows this is cell C3.
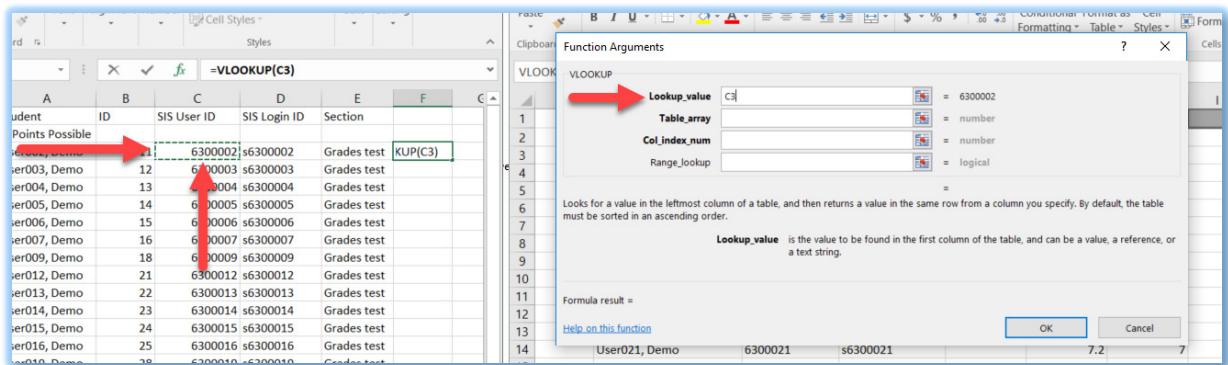
For the next step click in the Table_array field in the dialog. As shown in the screenshot below, select the range of Excel fields in your Excel file where the "corresponding value" is the leftmost column and "the value to lookup" is the rightmost column. In this example the leftmost column is the student number column and the rightmost column is the Calculated column.
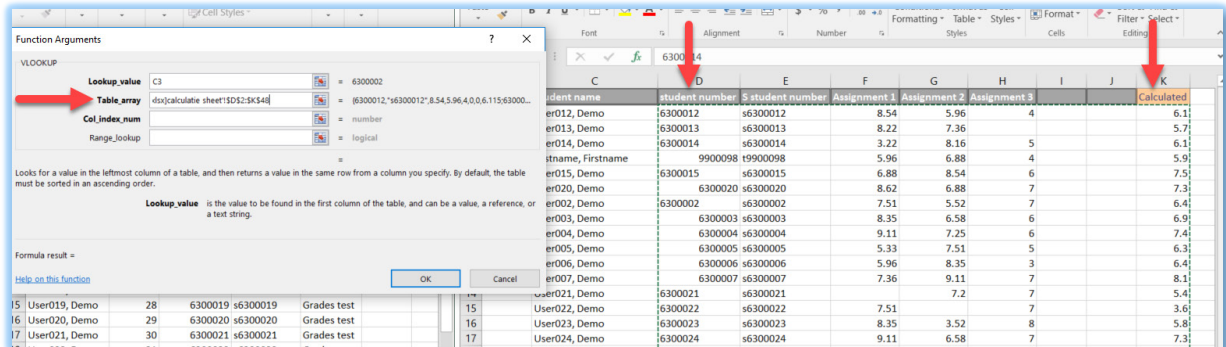
Click in the Col_index_field in the dialog and give in the number of columns from the corresponding value to the value you want to lookup including these columns. In this example this is 8 columns, from column D to column K. Hidden columns should also be counted!
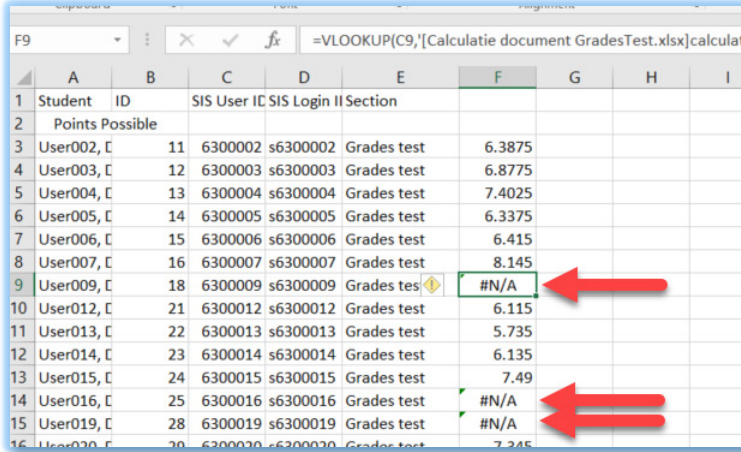
Click in the Range_lookup field in the dialog and type "FALSE", since we want an exact match between our corresponding values. Student numbers should be exactly the same for matching the grades from our Excel file to the Canvas CSV file. Click [OK] to close the dialog.
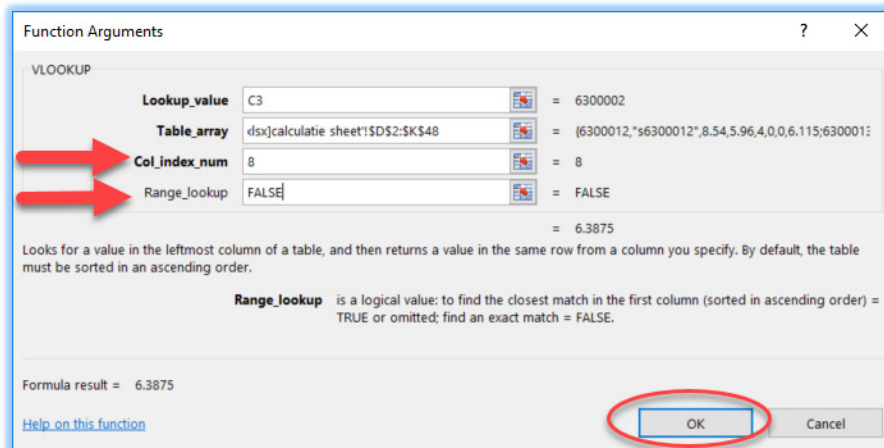
The formula should now show the grade that is listed in your Excel sheet for the student with this student number (see screenshot below). You may also see #N/A, in case there's no grade for this student in your Excel sheet. It is correct that the looked up value has all decimals shown, unlike the source, that is rounded to one digit after the decimal point.

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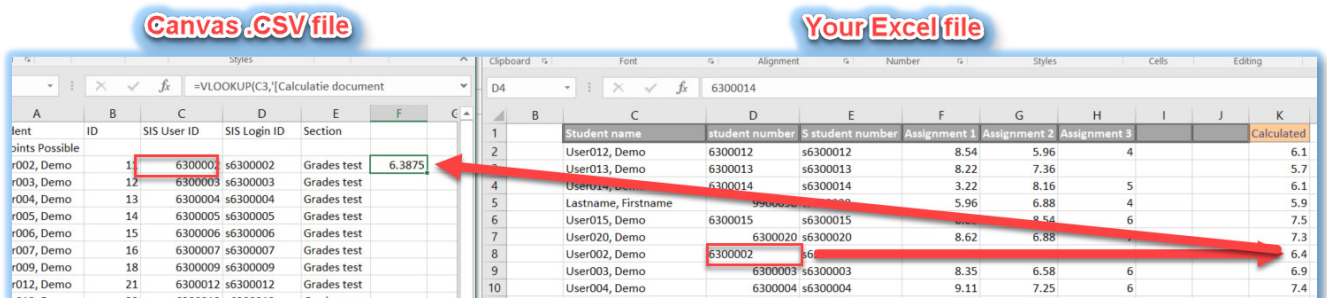
You can copy the formula to the rest of the cells in the Canvas .CSV file where you want the grades to appear. As shown in the screenshot below, some cells might show #N/A, meaning a value could not be found. In this case it is because the Excel file does not contain the student numbers 6300009, 6300016 and 6300019 so this is correct. In the gradebook Canvas will interpret #N/A, or any other text, as a no grade.
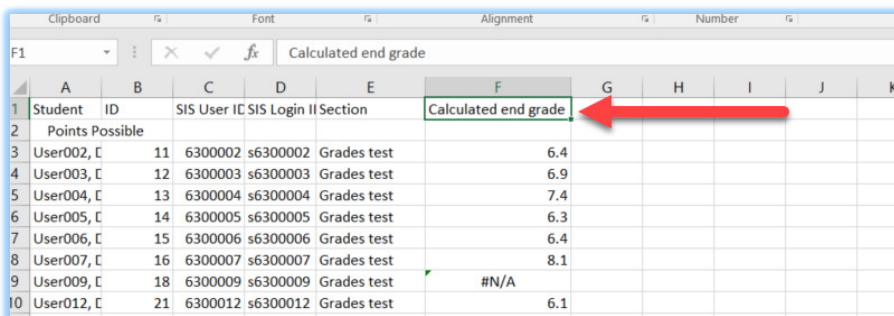

4. Check and save the results in the CSV file. It is good practice to check for two or three grades if they transferred to the right student in the Canvas .CSV file.

If you are adding a column that does not exist yet in the Gradebook, give the looked up column an appropriate name, as shown in the screenshot below. Do **not use** a name that is equal to one of the default read only columns in the export file (such as Current Score, Current Points, Final Score, Final Points, or Final Grade), because columns with these names will be ignored in the import.
You can also format the grades to show one decimal. If you don't format your grades, Canvas will round the grade to two digits after the decimal point.

Does the column contain cells with value '0'? If your Excel file contains students who don't have a value in the column from which you have added the grades (for example students that didn't show up for the exam), the result of the VLOOKUP formula will be a 0. If you don't want the 0 listed as the grade in Canvas, you have to change the following: in Excel, click on File and then Options. Click Advanced. Scroll down to the section 'Display options for this worksheet'. Uncheck the box 'Show a zero in cells that have zero value'.
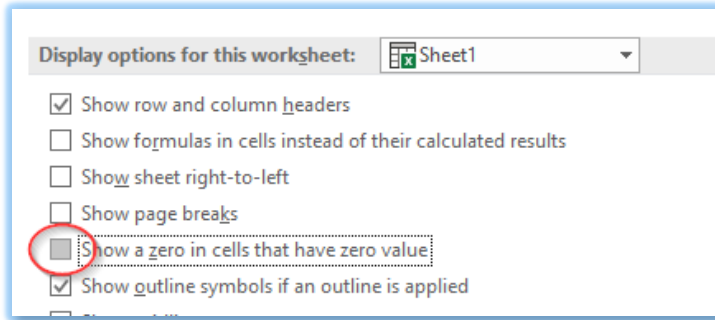

It is important that you just save with CTRL-S and not change file type or encoding. In some cases Excel will show a dialog stating *"Some features in your workbook might be lost if you save it as CSV (Comma delimited). Do you want to keep using that format?"*. Click [Yes].

As long as the Canvas .CSV file is opened in Excel, we will still see the lookup formula. After closing the Canvas .CSV file, only the values will be stored.
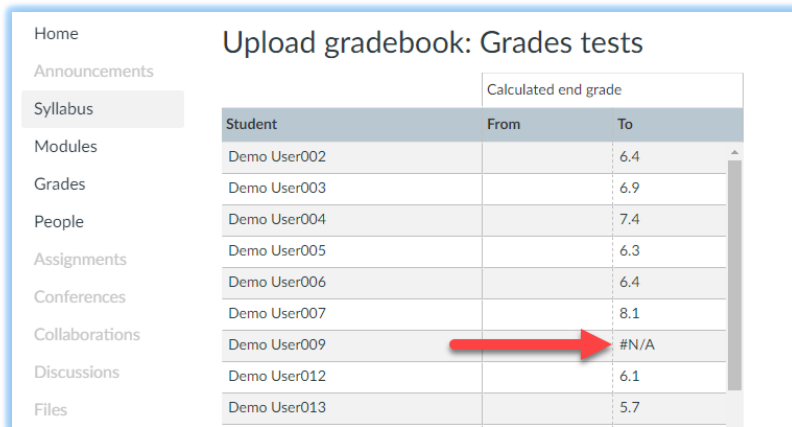
5. Upload the CSV file to Canvas. Open the **Grades** function from the Course Menu and click on [Import]. Canvas will present a [Choose File] button. Click it and navigate to the Canvas .CSV file you saved in step 4. Select the file and click the [Open] button. Then click the coloured [Upload data] button. If you are adding a new column, Canvas will upload the file and come up with a dialog that asks what to do with the new column, as shown in the screenshot below. Notice that the name "Calculated end grade" is shown (1).

Choose for "A new assignment" in the pull down menu (2). Give in the number for "Point possible". In this example this is 10 points (3). Click on the [Continue] button.
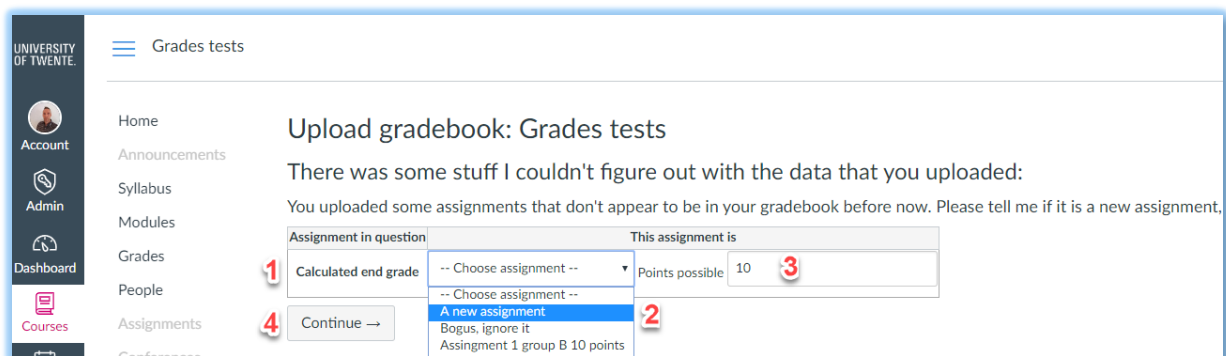
Canvas will show the grades for the new assignment "Calculated end grade" that will be created with a From and To column (If you are adding or changing grades for a column that already exists in the Gradebook, you will see this right away after uploading). Since it is a new assignment the From

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column is empty. Notice in the screenshot below that #N/A is still visible in this window. Click on the [Save changes] button at the bottom.
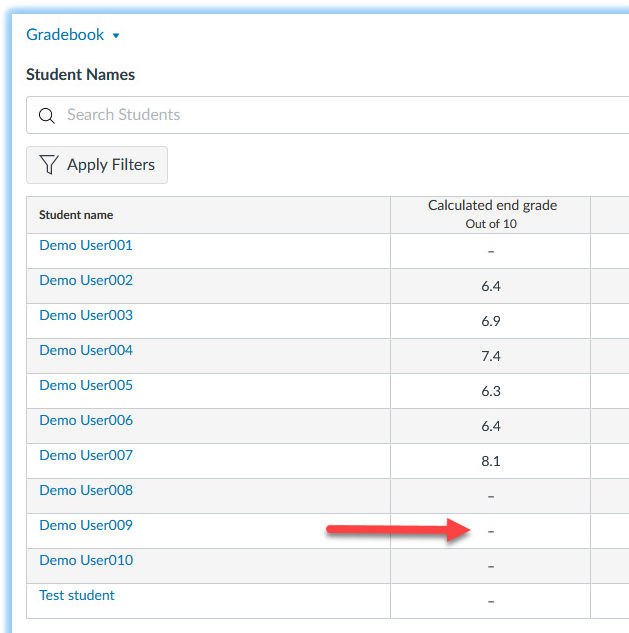

Canvas will show a dialog that informs you will be redirected to the Gradebook. Click the [OK] button. Now you will see the Gradebook with the new "Calculated end grade" column. When you import a lot of grades, it might take some time to fill all the cells. Click F5 to see the progress.

Notice in the screenshot below that any #N/A text has now been replaced by a dash. You can place the new column to any position in the gradebook columns by clicking in the column name field and, while holding the mouse button down, dragging to the left or right.

If you use Assignment groups, please check if the new assignment is placed in the desired group. By default a new assignment will be placed in the first assignment group in the **Assignments** menu.

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