Using digital assignments in Canvas

Introduction

Canvas is full of features for making digital assignments. Canvas also makes it easy to provide feedback digitally (and thus directly) to your students. These are the highlights:

1. Assignments can be assigned to all students, selected students, groups, or sections.
2. Submission by your students can be done online using multiple formats, such as text entry or file upload. Most likely you will only use the file upload possibility.
3. For students the Syllabus lists all deadlines for all assignments, and the grades for assignments will appear on the personal Grades page.
4. Providing feedback, marking and grading is quite easy, by using the SpeedGrader. There is a separate best practice document available for this feature on our Canvas website called "Easy marking and grading with SpeedGrader".

The process outlined – creating an assignment

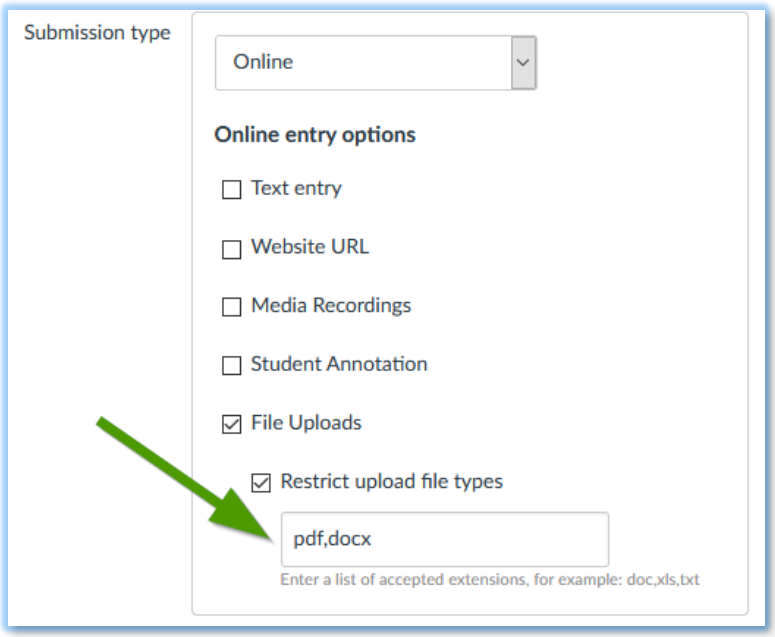
You can create an assignment by using the **Assignment** option from the Course menu. You then choose different options for your Assignment. Choosing the right options helps you to make it very clear for your students what you expect from them.

1. Start writing out what the assignment is about. Be precise in what you expect from the students in what they should do and how and when the assignment submission should be done. Write down, for example, how many words, or pages, you expect. Or the number of arguments for a certain case. Or, if your assignment is some sort of calculation, please make clear if you are just interested in the final outcome, or also in the calculation steps.

2. Please select the method you want to use for grading (Display grade as). You can grade your assignment by percentage, points, but also with complete/incomplete, or a grading scheme. Use a grading scheme if you want to grade assignments with a textual 'score' of your own choice, such as good/average/bad. Instruction on how to do that, can be found in the best practice 'Assign text grades instead of numerical grades' on our Canvas website.
   Beware: if you select the option 'Not graded', then students can't submit the assignment and no column will be created in the Gradebook. It can be useful however if you want to create a 'To do' item for students with a due date or a reminder that will show in the Calendar, To do list and Syllabus (for example a request to sign up for groups).

3. You should provide clear information on how the submission of the students will be evaluated. It would help the students a lot if you provide assessment criteria. This can be done by using rubrics, where you specify what elements of an answer will be evaluated.

4. You can choose different types of submission for an assignment. Typically you should choose the submission type Online (see *figure*). This means that students should hand in their submission through Canvas. This makes it very convenient for you to mark and grade. Furthermore you can select which type of online submission students can do, and for file uploads you can set restrictions for the file types that students can submit.



5. If the selected submission type is 'Online' in combination with 'File uploads', you can select that plagiarism detection should be done on the submitted documents. More information can be found in the best practice 'Using SimCheck plagiarism detection in Canvas assignments' on our Canvas website.

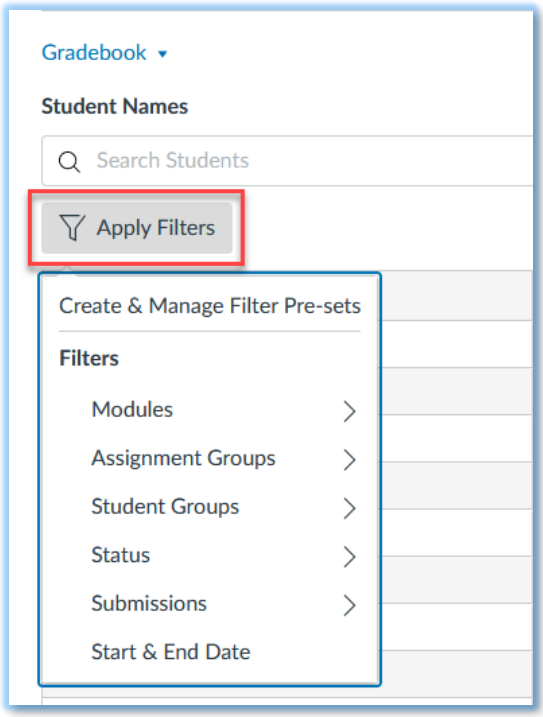
6. You can set a due date for the assignment, so students can see when they should finish the assignment. Every student will be informed on due dates through the Syllabus of your course. Student can still submit after the due date, but these submissions will be marked as Late in the Gradebook. You furthermore have the option to set availability dates for each assignment. With availability dates you can restrict the dates that an assignment is visible and can be submitted.

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.

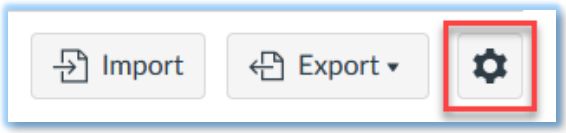
Guidelines and tips – grading and marking

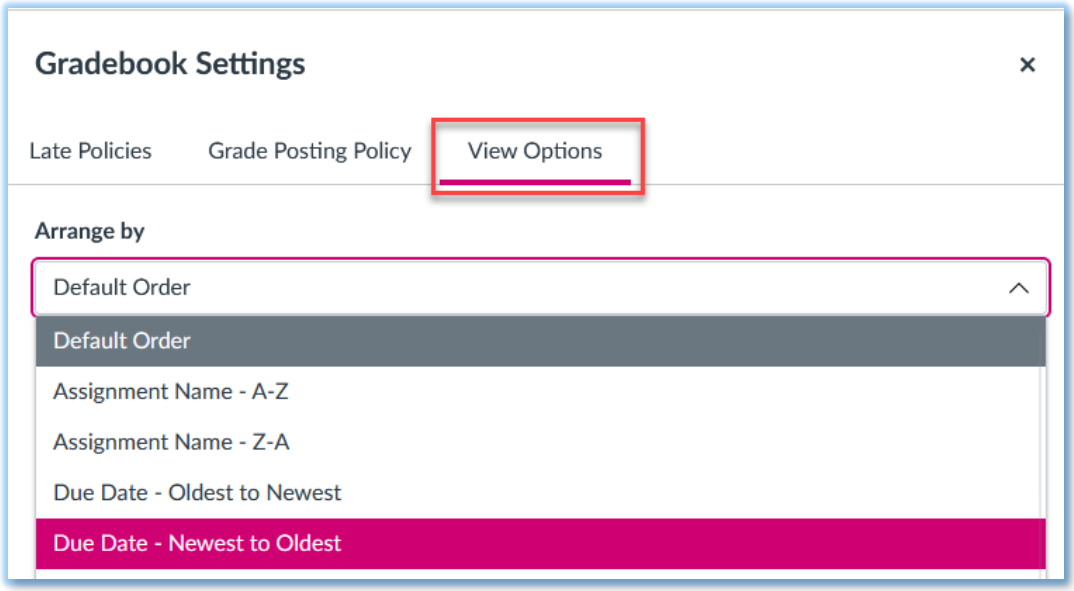
If your students submit their work for an assignment online, you are able to mark and grade their work from the **Grades** in the Course menu.

You can filter the gradebook in different ways by using the [Appy filters] button. This makes grading easier in case lots of students are submitting their work for different assignments. To create a filter that can be reused, click on 'Create & Manage Filter Pre-sets'.

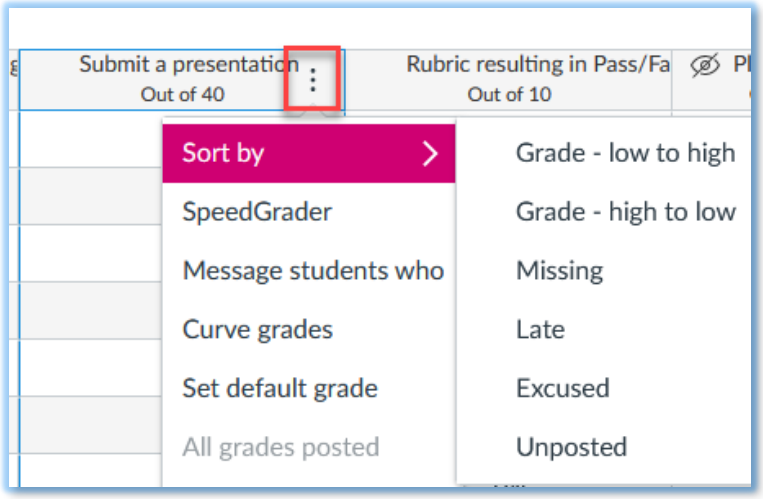


You can determine the order of the assignments - for example by due date - in the gradebook by clicking on the cogwheel icon, then click on View options and select an option under 'Arrange by'.





You can also sort every *individual* assignment based on multiple sorting options. (the options menu is indicated by 3 vertical dots; see figure on the right). For example you could use this to quickly sort those submissions from students that still need to be graded by you.



Be aware that columns in the Gradebook are only created if you have added assignments in Canvas. If you need to create a column in the Gradebook to use for manual grading, you can create a No Submission or On Paper assignment.

THINK TWICE BEFORE DELETING AN ASSIGNMENT. THE ACCOMPANYING SUBMISSIONS FROM STUDENTS WILL ALSO BE DELETED. IF YOU WANT SUCH AN ASSIGNMENT TO BE UNAVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS, PLEASE SET THE AVAILABILITY DATES SO THAT THE ASSIGNMENT IS NOT VISIBLE ANYMORE FOR STUDENTS.

More information

You can find more information on using Canvas in the Canvas Guides. For the guides on Assignments click here.
For guides on using the Gradebook, click here.

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