Nashville State
Community College

D2L Grades Guide
Faculty guide on managing the D2L gradebook.
Office of Online Learning
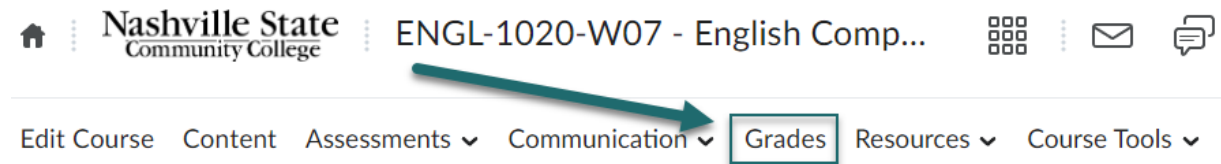
Contents

D2L Grades

In the default Navbar, the gradebook for your course can be found under the **Grades** link.

The most important step toward creating a gradebook is planning. Before you begin to build your gradebook in D2L, we recommend drafting a list like the example below, showing the major graded categories in your course, the number of items in each category, and the percentage or point value of each category, out of the final grade.

Grade Category	Value
Quizzes (12)	15%
Short Writing Assignments (5)	20%
Discussions (5)	15%
Exams (2)	30%
Final Project (1)	20%
Total:	100%

Having this information laid out before beginning your gradebook setup will make creating a gradebook and then linking each assignment to that gradebook a much smoother process.

Setup Wizard

The first step when setting up a new gradebook for the first time is to complete the **Setup Wizard.**

1. Go to **Grades,** then go to the **Setup Wizard** tab at the top.

Enter Grades	Manage Grades	Schemes	**Setup Wizard**
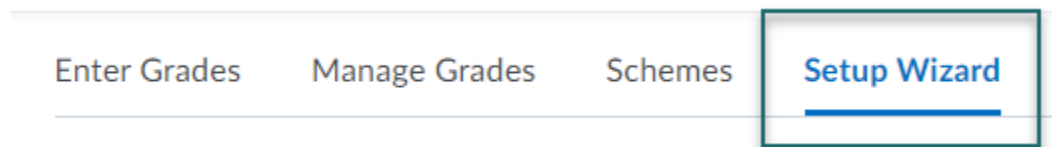
2. Scroll down and select **Start** to begin.

Start

Step 1: Choose Grading System

Choose a **Grading System** from the options below, then select "**Continue**":

- **Weighted**: Use the weighted system if you want grade items calculated as a percentage of the final grade worth 100%. (Final Grade: /100%)
- **Points**: Calculate the final grade by totaling the points users received on grade items. (Final Grade: /250 points)
- **Formula (Not recommended)**: Calculate the final grade using a custom formula that lets you set conditions on grade items.

Step 2: Final Grade Released

Select **Final Grade Release** preference from the options below:

- **Calculated Final Grade**: The grade that is achieved by users based on the grading formula set up in the gradebook. It cannot be adjusted without editing grade item scores.
- **Adjusted Final Grade**: Allows you to modify or adjust user's grades before releasing them.

Note: If you would like students to automatically see a running "**Final Grade,**" check the "**Automatically release final grades**" box, then "**Continue**." **(Recommended)**

Step 3: Grade Calculations

Select **Grade Calculations** preferences from the options below, then select "**Continue**"

Ungraded Items

- **Drop ungraded items: (Recommended)** items that do not have a grade inputted are not counted in the final grade. This option gives students a more accurate "progress report" because the final grade is generated based only on grade items that have been assigned. However, if a student neglects to complete an assignment, the instructor will have to manually put in a 0.
- **Treat ungraded items as 0**: items that do not have a grade inputted are counted as 0 in the final grade. Selecting this option may make all student final grades look very low until the end of the course, because all assignments that have not yet been completed will be graded as 0.

Auto Update (Recommended)

If you would like students to see a continuously updated "**Final Grade,**" check the "**Automatically keep final grades updated**" box, then "**Continue**."

Step 4: Choose Default Grade Scheme

NSCC's version of D2L gives you only one option by default. Select **Percentage** and "**Continue**."

Step 5: Managing View Display Options

Decimals Displayed: This setting controls how many decimals will be displayed to users. The default setting will display a single decimal place. Adjust as desired, then click "**Continue**"

Step 6: Student View Display Options

Select preferences from the options below, then "**Continue**":

- **Grade Details**: select which methods of evaluation will be available to students when they view the gradebook

  - **Points Grade**: shows students the number of points earned on each grade item as well as the maximum points possible. E.g., 6/10
  - **Weighted Grade**: shows students how much the grade item is worth in relation to its category or the final grade. E.g., 90%. This option is only available if you chose the weighted grading system in step 2.
  - **Grade Scheme Symbol**: shows the students the letter grade they received on a grade item. E.g., A, B, C, D, F
  - **Grade Scheme Color**: shows the students the color associated with the scheme level they received. E.g., red, yellow, orange, green, blue.

- **Decimals Displayed:** This setting controls how many decimals will be displayed in the student view of grades.
- **Characters Displayed:** This setting controls the number of characters of a text grade item will be displayed in the student view of grades.
- **Final Grade Calculation:** This setting determines whether students can see details about how their final grade was calculated

Step 7: Grades Setup Summary

Review the **Grades Setup Summary**, then select "**Finish.**"

Note: You can redo the Setup Wizard as many times as needed to change gradebook settings. Revisit the Setup Wizard at any time if you need to make changes to any of the options listed above.
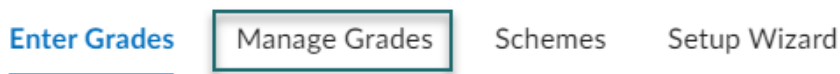
Grade Categories

Once you have completed the **Setup Wizard**, you are now ready to begin building the actual structure of your gradebook.

The next step is to create **Grade Categories** into which you can place all grade items. Grade categories allow you to keep your gradebook organized and makes setup much easier. Grade Categories are usually grouped assignments of the same type, such as quizzes, discussions, or tests.
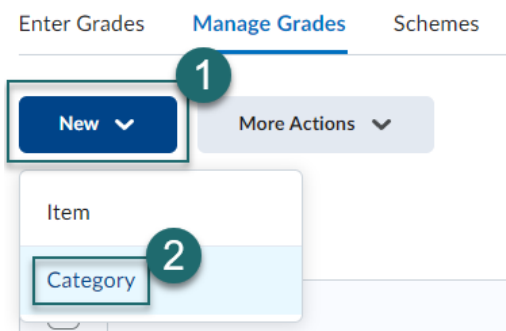
Note: If you chose a **Weighted** grading system in the Setup Wizard, you **must** use grade categories.

Create a New Grade Category

1. After completing the Setup Wizard, go to the **Manage Grades** tab, inside of Grades.

2. At the top, select **New** and then **Category.**

3. Name your **Category**. Remember that this is the category into which your individual grade items will go, so pick a general descriptor, i.e. Tests, Quizzes, Homework, etc.

4. (Optional) give your category a **Short Name**, a shorter name or an abbreviation to display in the gradebook to save space.

5. (Optional) Select "**Show Description**" link to add a description to the category. Unless the "**Allow users to view description**" box has been checked, this description is visible only to the instructor.

Weighted Grade Category Options

Next, you have two different sets of options under **Grading**, depending on whether you chose a **Weighted** or a **Points** based grading scheme in the Setup Wizard.

Read below for **Weighted** instructions. Skip to the next section in this guide if you are using **Points.**

If you are using a **weighted** gradebook,

1. You will need to enter the **weight (%)** that you want the category to contribute to the final grade.

Grading

Weight

10

Allow category grade to exceed category weight

2. If there is a possibility that students will have the opportunity to earn extra credit on a grade item within this category, you must check the "**Allow category grade to exceed category weight**" box.

3. In **Distribution**, select how you would like the weight of this category distributed across its grade items:

   o **Manually assign weight to items in the category**: Select this option if certain items in this category are worth more than others. For example, if you are assigning 3 tests, but would like the last test to carry more weight than the first two, select this option. The percentages must total to 100%.

   o **Distribute weight by points across all items**: if this option is chosen, the points of individual, non-bonus grade items are used to determine the relative weight of each item out of 100%

   o **(Recommended) Distribute weight evenly across all items**: if this option is chosen, each grade item is given an equal weight within the category. For example, if there are 3 items, then each item will be 33.33%. If there are 4 items, then each is worth 25% of the weight of the category. The amount will be assigned to each item in the category. If this option is chosen, you can choose the number of highest non-bonus scores to drop and the number of lowest non-bonus scores to drop for each user.

Points Grade Category Options

See the section above if you are using a **Weighted** gradebook. If you are using a **Points**-based gradebook, follow these instructions.

If there is a possibility that students will have the opportunity to earn extra credit on a grade item within this category, you must check the "**Can Exceed**" box.

Can Exceed

Under **Distribution,** set how you would like the points of this category distributed across its grade items. There is only one option: **Distribute points across all items**.

Enter into the box how many points each item is worth.

You will also have the option to choose the number of highest non-bonus scores to drop and the number of lowest non-bonus scores to drop for each user

Category Display Options

Finally, select the **Display Options** you wish to apply to the grade category (for both Points and Weighted gradebooks):

- o **Display class average to users**
- o **Display grade distribution to users**
- o **Override display options for this item**: Select this option if you want graded users to view grade information for this item differently from other items in the gradebook.

Select "**Save and New**" to save this **Grade Category** and begin the next **Grade Category**, or select "**Save and Close**" to return to **Grades**.

Important: **DO NOT** use the Restrictions tab or set Availability dates when setting up grade categories. You want students to always be able to see the entire gradebook. Due dates should be set in the Availability settings for individual assignment items in the Quizzes, Discussions, or Assignment Dropbox area, **NOT** in Grades.

Manage Grade Categories

1. Once you have finished creating all your grade categories, select the **Manage Grades** tab.

Enter Grades   Manage Grades   Schemes   Setup Wizard

2. You will see your current **Gradebook**, with all the categories you have created in light blue rows in the table.

✏ Bulk Edit

	Grade Item	Type	Association	Max. Points	Weight
☐	Final Project ⌄			0	10
☐	Discussions ⌄			10	10

Note that changes may be made to categories at any time by selecting the drop-down arrow next to any category and selecting "**Edit**"
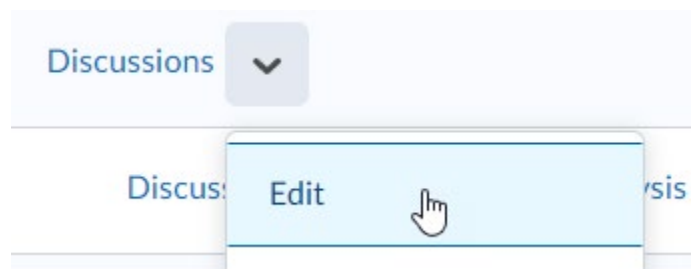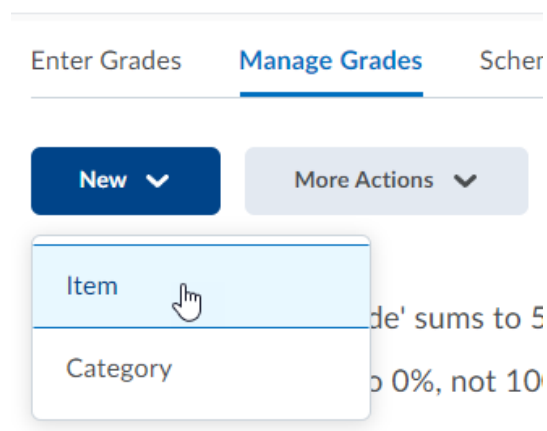

Grade Items

Now that your **Grade Categories** have been created, the next step is to create individual **Grade Items**. These are the grades which correspond to individual assignments (i.e. Quiz 1, Discussion 2, Final Essay, etc.) Each grade item should go into a grade category.

Create a New Grade Item

1. From the **Manage Grades** tab, select the "**New**" button and select "**Item**"

2. Choose a **Grade Item Type** from the list:

○ **Numeric (Most Common)**: grades users by assigning a value out of a specific total number of points. E.g., 8/10 – This is the most common grade item type
○ **Selectbox**: grades users by selecting the grade scheme level that best matches their achievement. E.g., A, B, C, etc.
○ **Pass/Fail**: grades users using a simple pass/fail grade scheme
○ **Calculated**: calculates users' cumulative achievement across multiple grade items.
○ **Text**: Provide comments in the gradebook that are not calculated in the final grade

3. Next, change **General** settings:

- **Name**: Name your Grade Item. Be specific but succinct. E.g., "Chapter 1 Test."

- **Short Name:** Here, you may enter a short version of the category name or an abbreviation to display in the gradebook to save space, if desired.

- (MANDATORY) **Category**: From the dropdown menu, select the category into which this grade item should be placed. **Forgetting to select a category for an item is the main cause of gradebook errors.**

- If desired, you may also add a description of the category by selecting the "**Show Description**" link. You also have the option to "**Allow users to view description.**"

4. Next, in **Maximum Points,** enter the maximum grade value for this grade item.

5. (**Weighted** gradebook only). If you selected "**Manually assign weight to items in the category,**" during Category setup, then you must manually enter the grade item's weight here.

Weight *

10   ?

6. (**Weighted** gradebook only). If you selected "**Distribute weight by points across all items**," then you see "**Click Save**" appear in the **Weight** textbox. No further action is required.

7. (**Weighted** gradebook only). If you selected "**Distribute weight evenly across all items**," you will notice that the **Weight** textbox contains a weight that is calculated based on how many items are currently in that category. For example, if this is the first grade item in the category, the Weight textbox will contain "100." If this is the second grade item in the category, the Weight textbox will contain "50," etc. **You do not have to make any changes to this - it is automatically calculated.**

8. **Can Exceed**: Select this option if you want to allow users' grades to exceed the maximum points specified for the item. For example, if the grade item is scored out of 100 points and students have the option to answer an extra credit question worth an additional 2 points, then the **Maximum Points** box would read 100, and the "**Can Exceed**" box would be checked.

Can Exceed

☐ ?

9. **Bonus**: Select this option if you would like this entire assignment to be considered extra credit toward the specified category. Bonus items are not included in the maximum points for a category or final grade. They are added on top of the calculated grade. Bonus items cannot make users' grades exceed the maximum points specified, unless the "**Can Exceed**" option was selected in the corresponding category. Note that Bonus Items appear in the gradebook with a gold star.

Bonus
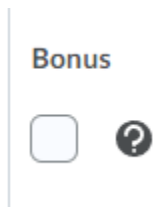
10. **Grade Scheme: Default Scheme**. No further action required.

11. **Rubrics**: if you have created a corresponding rubric in D2L's Rubric tool, select it by clicking "**Add Rubric**."

Rubrics

Add Rubric

No rubrics selected.

[Create Rubric in New Window]
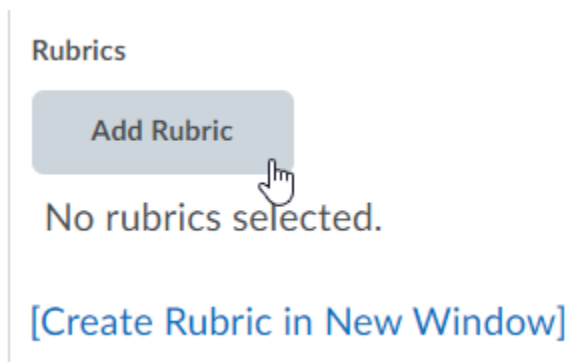
12. Select "**Save and New**" to save this Grade Item and create your remaining Grade Items, or "**Save and Close**" to return to the Grades area.

Important: **DO NOT** use the Restrictions tab or set Availability dates when setting up grade items. You want students to always be able to see the entire gradebook. Due dates should be set in the Availability settings for individual assignment items in the Quizzes, Discussions, or Assignment Dropbox area, **NOT** in Grades.

Manage Grade Items
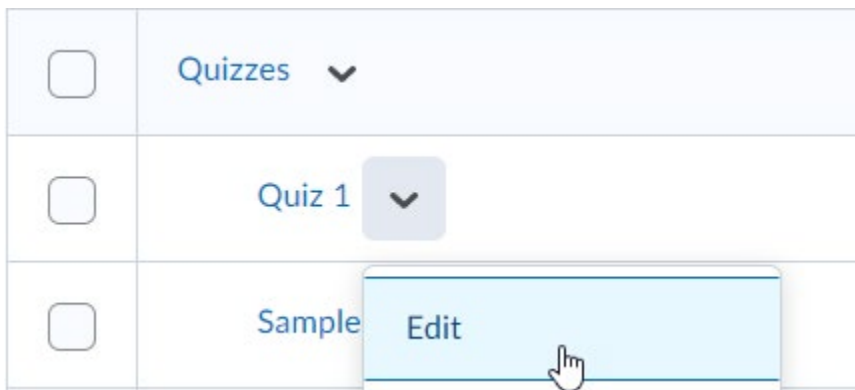
1. Once you have created all of your grade items, select the "**Manage Grades**" tab from the main **Grades** page.

Enter Grades   **Manage Grades**   Schemes   Setup Wizard

2. Individual grade items will be listed on white lines in the grid, beneath the categories they belong to (shown in light blue lines on the grid).

	Grade Item	Type	Association	Max. Points	Weight
☐					
☐	Final Project ⌄			210	10
☐	First Draft ⌄	Numeric	-	100	33.333333333
☐	Final Draft ⌄	Numeric	-	10	33.333333333
☐	Annotated Bibliography ⌄	Numeric	Dropbox ❓	100	33.333333333
☐	Exams ⌄			❓	60
☐	Exam 1 ⌄	Numeric	-	100	20
☐	Exam 2 ⌄	Numeric	-	100	20

3. Note that changes may be made to grade items at any time by selecting the drop-down arrow next to any item and selecting "**Edit**"

☐	Quizzes ⌄
☐	Quiz 1 ⌄
☐	Sample Edit

Sort Grade Items into Categories

1. To quickly move a grade item into a category, go to the **Manage Grades** tab.

2. Check the top check box at the top of the list of grades to **select all.** Then, select the **Bulk Edit** button.

3. In the **Category** column on the right, use the drop-down menus to change the category into which each grade item is sorted.

Reorder Grade Items

1. To reorder items or categories in the list, go to the **Manage Grades** tab.

2. Select **More Actions** at the top of the **Manage Grades** screen and then **Reorder.**
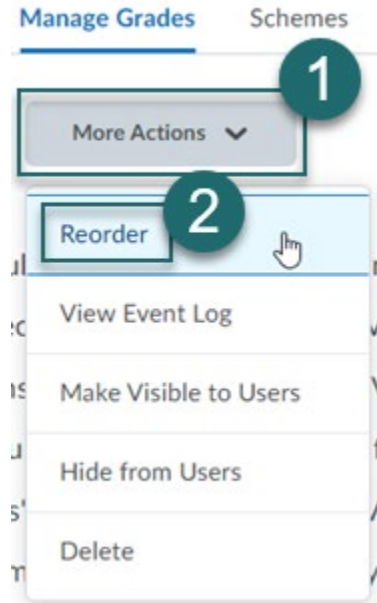
3. Use the **Sort Order** drop down menus to change the numerical order, from top to bottom, in which grade items and categories appear.

Delete Grade Items

The "delete" button in the gradebook is hidden in an unusual spot. This is to create a failsafe against data loss. To delete grade items:

1. Go to the **Manage Grades** tab.

Enter Grades   **Manage Grades**   Schemes   Setup Wizard
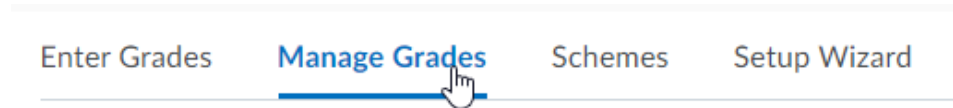
2. Click on **More Actions** at the top, and then **Delete.**

Enter Grades   **Manage Grades**   Schemes   Se

New ⌄   More Actions ⌄

Reorder

Bulk Edit

View Event Log

Make Visible to Users

Resear

Hide from Users

Projec   Delete
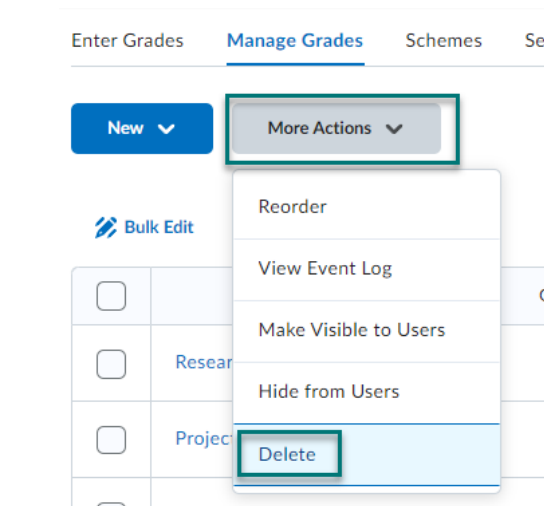
3. This will take you to a separate page where you can select any categories or items you want to delete.

☑ Extra Credit

☑ Extra Credit

☑ Extra Credit(1)

Delete   Cancel

Note: To delete a grade item you must first "unlink" it from any assignments in the course. If the delete option is grayed out, you must first go to the corresponding Assignment Dropbox, Quiz, or Discussion and then detach the grade item from that assignment.

Associating Grade Items with Assignments

If you want to grade assessments like Discussions, Quizzes, or Dropbox submissions in NS Online, you will need to **associate** the appropriate grade item with that assessment. It does not happen automatically.

Associating grades is highly recommended. It will allow you to grade each assessment inside of its own respective tool, and then simply publish those grades to the gradebook. No switching back and forth between student submissions and the gradebook!

You will know if a Grade Item is associated with an assessment from the **Manage Grades** tab. Under **Association**, the type of assessment associated and a question mark will appear next to the Grade Item.

	Grade Item	Type	Association	Max. Points	Weight
☐	Discussions ⌄			10	10
☐	Discussion #1: Primary Source Analysis ⌄	Numeric	Discussions ❓	10	10

Associate a Grade Item with a Quiz

1. Go to the **Quizzes** page.

2. Select the quiz you want to have an associated grade item. Select the drop-down arrow next to its name. Select **Edit**.
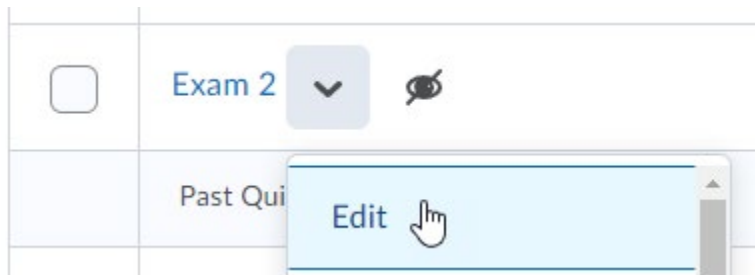

3. At the top of the quiz editor, under the title, select the button that says **Not in Grade Book**. Then, from the drop-down menu select **Edit or Link to Existing**.
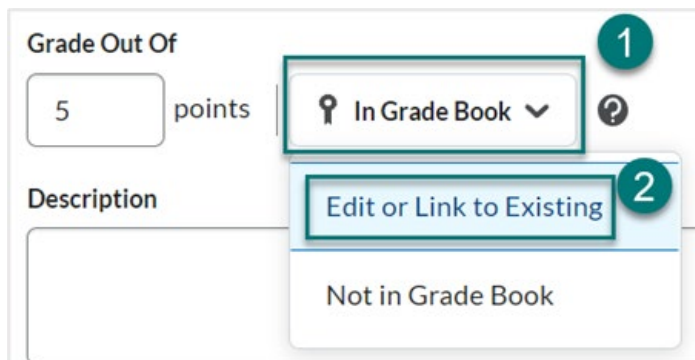
4. In the window that opens, select **Create and link to a new grade item,** if one does not already exist for this quiz in the Grades area. This will add a grade item with the same name as the quiz to the grade book. Alternatively, select **link to an existing grade item** to link the quiz to a grade item that already exists. Click **Ok.**
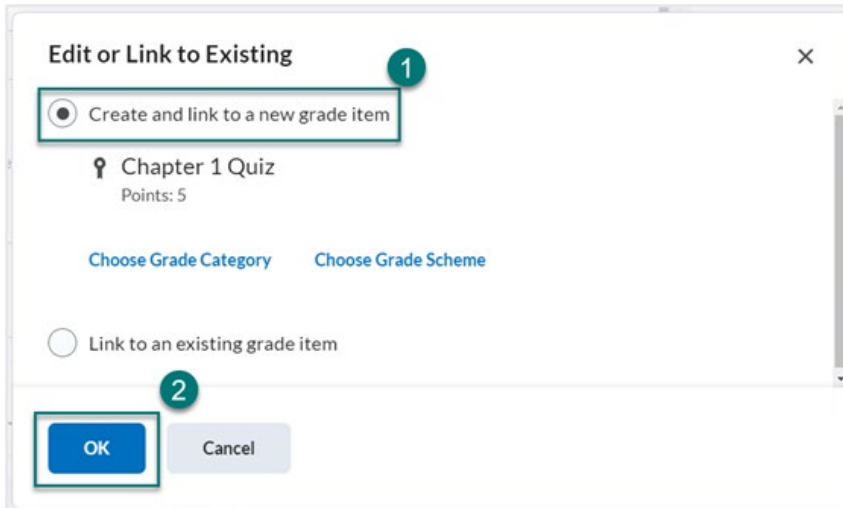
5. Enter the points the quiz is worth into the box under **Grade Out Of**.

6. Next, open the **Evaluation and Feedback** menu in the right sidebar of the quiz editor. Select the boxes next to **Auto-publish attempt results immediately upon completion** and **Synchronize to grade book on publish** to allow users to see their score as soon as they submit their attempt.
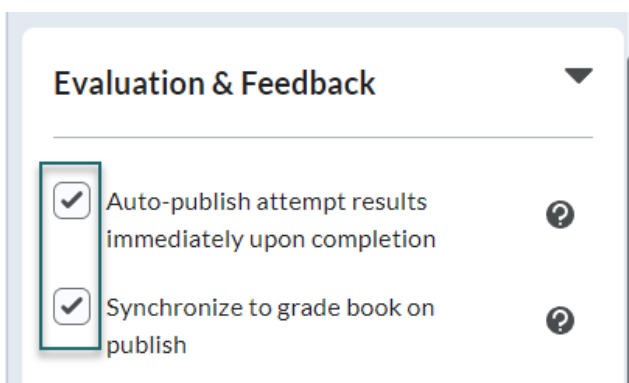
7. Select **Save and Close.**

Associate a Grade Item with a Dropbox

1. Go to **Assignment Dropbox**. Select the Dropbox folder you want to have an associated grade item. Select the drop-down arrow next to its name, then **Edit Folder**.
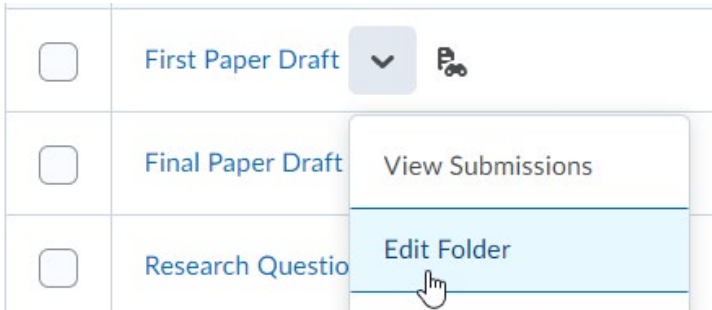
2. Under **Grade Out Of,** enter the desired point value in the **Points** field. It will read as "Ungraded" by default. Then, open the **In Gradebook** drop down list and select **Edit or Link to Existing.**
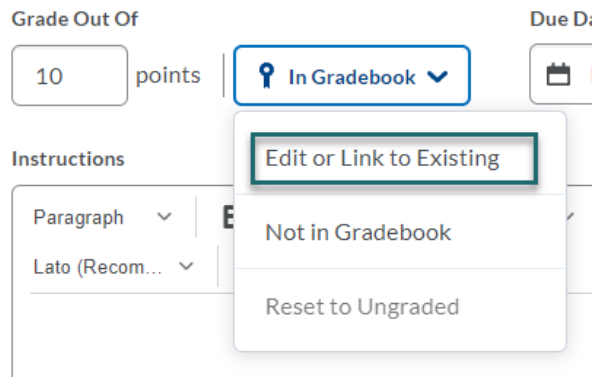
3. Select either **Create and Link to a New Grade Item** to create a new grade item in the gradebook. Or, to link to an existing Grade Item, select **Link to an existing grade item.** Choose the desired Grade Item from the drop-down list.
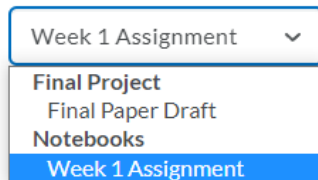
4. Select **OK** and then **Save and Close**.

Associate a Grade Item with a Discussion

1. Go to the **Discussions** area. Select the topic you want to have an associated grade item. Select the drop-down arrow next to its name, then **Edit Topic.**
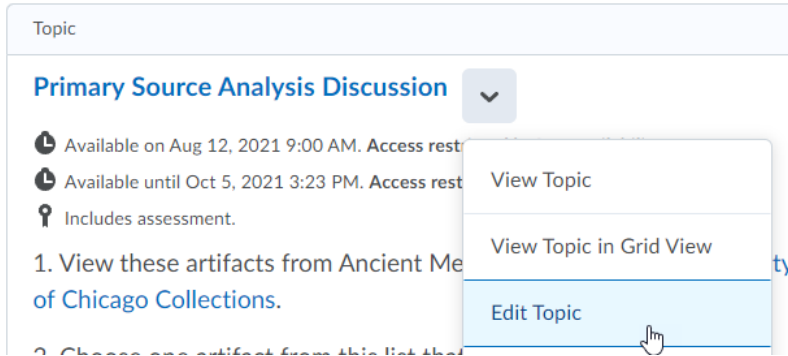
2. Go to the **Assessment** tab.

3. Choose the **Grade Item** from the dropdown list you want to associate with the discussion. Or, select **New Grade Item** to add a new grade item to the gradebook.
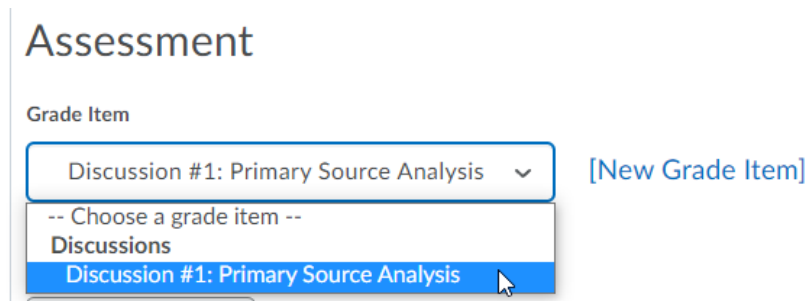
4. Under **Score Out Of**, set the point value of the discussion to equal that of the Grade Item.
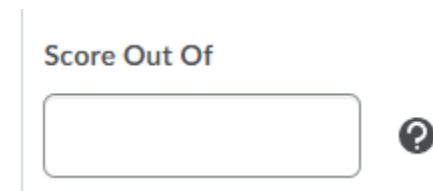
5. Select **Save and Close**.

Manually Enter Grades

Associating grade items with D2L assessments means you can grade each item inside its respective tool, and then publish that grade to the gradebook. No further action is required.

You can also choose to manually enter grades directly into the gradebook. There are several reasons you might do this:

- Some grade items are not tied to a specific assessment (i.e. "Participation" or "Attendance")

- You are teaching an in-person class and accept some or all submissions in person, but want to keep track of grades in D2L

- In the **Setup Wizard**, you selected **Drop Ungraded Items**. For students who did not submit assignments, you will have to manually input 0 grades.
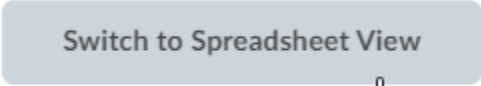
Manually Enter Grades into the Gradebook

1. Navigate to **Grades**. Select the **Enter Grades** tab.
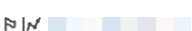
2. If there is a button near the top that says **Switch to Spreadsheet View**, select it. If it says **Switch to Standard View**, you are already in Spreadsheet View.

3. Locate the appropriate grade item, then place students' grades in the blank fields beside their names.

Last Name ▲ , First Name	Discussions ⌄		
	Module 2: Objectives and Alignment ⌄	Module 3: Applying a Backwards Design Model ⌄	Module 4: Accessibility ⌄
⚑ 〰 ⌄	1 / 2	/ 2	/ 2
⚑ 〰 ⌄	/ 2	/ 2	/ 2
⚑ 〰 ⌄	1.5 / 2	/ 2	/ 2

4. Select **Save** after all grades have been inserted.

Alternate Method

You can also manually enter grades in the **Standard View** by selecting the drop-down arrow at the top of a grade column and selecting "**Enter Grades**."
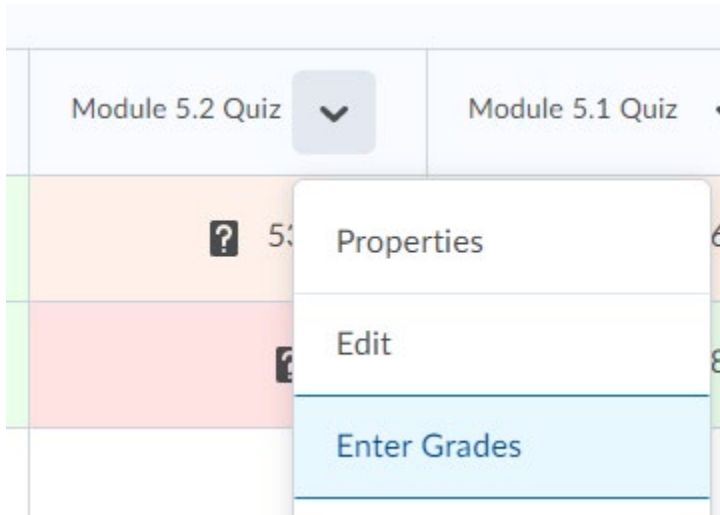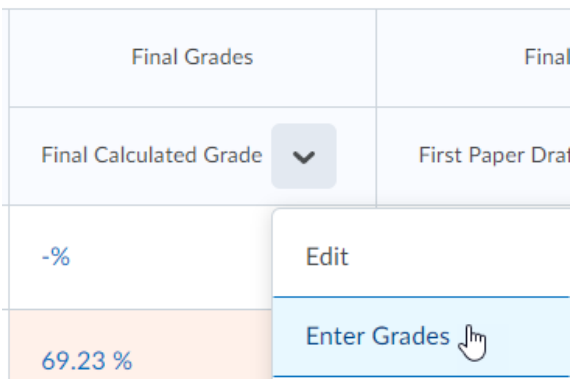
Release Final Grades

In order to release student final grades, you must follow the steps below to make final grades visible to students. This applies even if you selected the "**Release the Calculated/Adjusted Final Grade**" and "**Automatically Release Final Grade**" options when you completed the gradebook Setup Wizard.

1. Go to the **Enter Grades** tab of the **Grades** area.

Enter Grades	Manage Grades	Schemes	Setup Wizard
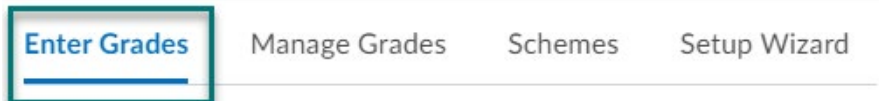
2. Select the drop-down arrow next to the **Final Calculated Grade** and select **Enter Grades.**

3. On the next page, select the drop-down arrow next to the **Final Grades** title at the top of the screen. Then, select **Recalculate All**.
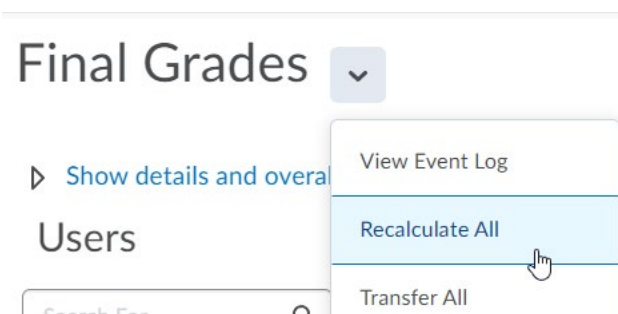
4. Check all grade items in the window that opens and select **Calculate**. This will transfer scores from the **Final Calculated Grade** to the **Final Adjusted Grade** column for all students.
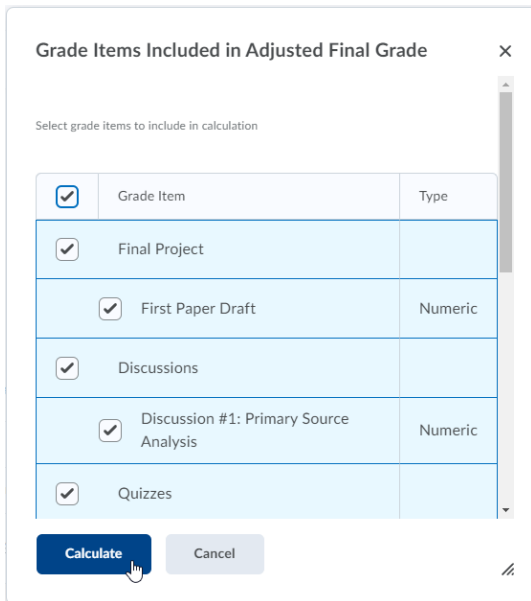
5. Below is a screenshot of the results of recalculating all grades, so that the **Final Calculated Grade** is populated into the **Final Adjusted Grade** column.

Final Calculated Grade		Final Adjusted Grade			Feedback	
Grade	Scheme	Grade		Scheme		
- / -	-%	☐ / ☐ > 🖩		-%	No feedback provided.	✏
13.85 / 20	69.23 %	13.84615 / 20 > 🖩		69.23 %	No feedback provided.	✏

6. (Optional) The value in the **Grade** column, under **Final Adjusted Grade,** can now be adjusted manually, if you enabled this option in Setup.

Final Grades	
Final Calculated Grade ⌄	Final Adjusted Grade ⌄
-%	☐ / ☐ 👁
69.23 %	13.84615 / 20 👁

7. (Optional) You may also provide Feedback in the **Feedback** column if you wish.

8. To release final grades so that they are visible to all students, select the arrow next to the **Final Grades** title and select **Release All**.
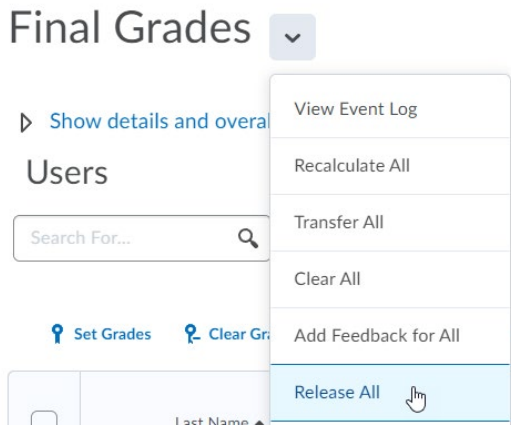
9. The box will be checked in the **Released** column if the grade has been released.

10. Select **Save and Close** to return to the **Enter Grades** tab of the gradebook. At the far right end of the gradebook, the **Final Adjusted Grade** will have an eye icon next to it if it is visible to students and an eye with a slash through it if it is not visible.

Note: Final grades calculated or entered in D2L are not official. Instructors must also enter final grades into myNSCC (Banner) at the end of the term. You should receive instructions on how to do this in your email towards the end of term.

Common Gradebook Issues

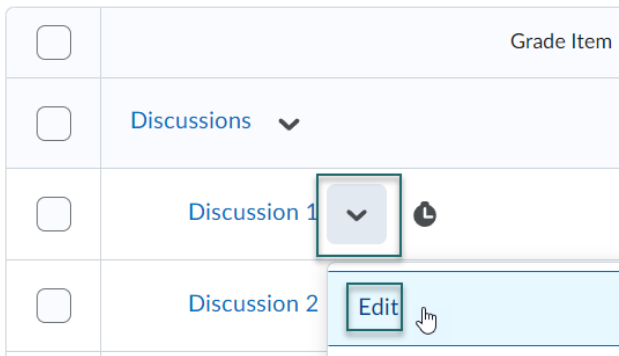## Students cannot view a grade item in the gradebook

Instructors very often set "**End Dates**" on grade items, when what they mean to do is set an End Date on the *assignment*. Setting dates in the gradebook, instead of on the assignment page, will cause the grade item to disappear from the gradebook once that date passes.

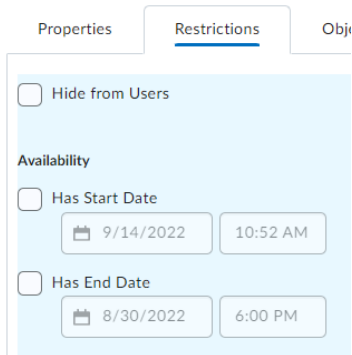To fix the issue, go to **Grades** > **Manage Grades** and make sure that no grade item has a stopwatch symbol next to it.
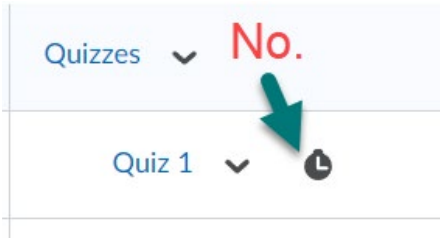
To remove the end dates,

1. Click the drop-down arrow next to the grade item, then select **Edit**:

2. Go to the **Restrictions** tab at the top. **Uncheck** any boxes next to **Start/End Date**, then **Save and Close**:

3. Repeat for all of the grade items that have a stopwatch icon showing.

Students cannot view their grades for an assignment

To have published grades appear in the gradebook, the setting **Synchronize to Grade Book** has to be enabled. This setting can be found by going to **Edit** the assignment:
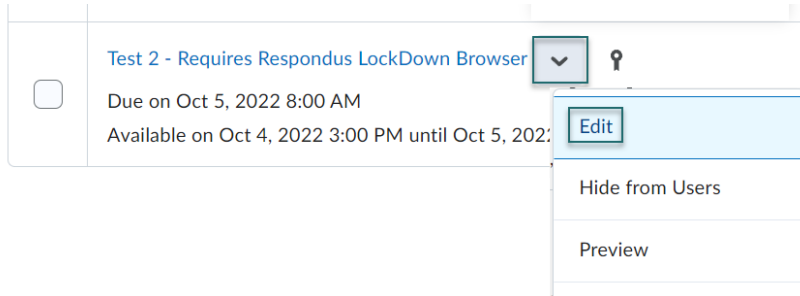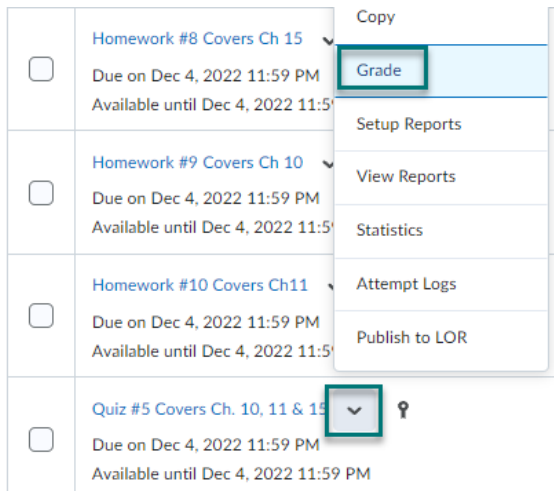

Then, under the **Assessment** tab, check the box next to "**Automatically update evaluations in grade book when published**."

After enabling this setting, you may need to go back and "Publish" the assignment grades again. To do so,

1. Go to the grading area for the Quiz/Assignment Dropbox/Discussion in question:

2. Check the box at the top to select all student submissions. Click **Publish**. This will manually push grades to the gradebook.
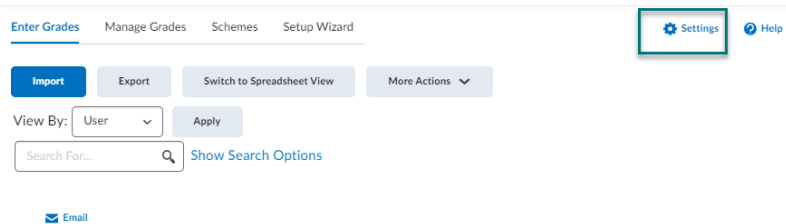
All students in a class have a very low overall grade. This cannot possibly be correct.

You may have your gradebook set to "count ungraded items as zero." That means everything that is not graded has been counted as 0, even assignments that are not yet due.

To change this, go to **Settings** in the upper right corner of the gradebook,

Then, go to the **Calculation Options** tab and scroll down to **Ungraded Items**. Change the setting to **Drop Ungraded Items**.
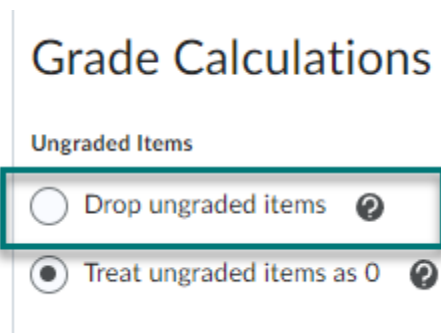
Be aware that this will drop all ungraded items from the final grade calculation. You will have to manually put in 0s for any students who did truly earn a 0 before you can get an accurate final grade.

Students can only see their points grade, not their percentage grade.

In order to display the percentage grade, from the **Grades** area, go to **Settings** in the upper right-hand corner.

⚙ Settings

Go to the "**Org Unit Display Options**" tab. Under "**Student View Display Options**" > "**Grade Details**", check the box next to "**Grade Scheme Symbol**."

Personal Display Options	Org Unit Display Options	Calculation Options

Managing View Display Options

Decimals Displayed *

Number of decimal places to display [2] ⊘

Student View Display Options

Grade Details

☑ Points grade ⊘

☑ Grade scheme symbol ⊘

☐ Grade scheme color ⊘

The percentage grade will display to students now.