Gradebook Best Practices

Introduction

Before the term begins, it is wise to decide on an overall grading strategy for your course, plan an efficient and consistent grading workflow, and develop a strategy for sharing grades with students. Presented below are some grading and gradebook best practices and discusses some relevant Moodle features.

Plan Ahead

It is best to build your gradebook before the first week of the term. Not only will this help you economize time during the busy term, but students will immediately be able to see, in their own gradebook view which assignments are gradable and the respective weights in relation to the course total. Doing so requires creating all activities ahead of time so that they have a place in the gradebook. Keep in mind that after creating an activity, you can always expand or edit it later.

Naming Convention for Activities

When naming activities, such as assignments, quizzes, discussions, etc. it is important to keep in mind what will be the easiest for you, the instructor, and the students to know what assignment it is. For example, when naming a quiz, though the quiz is in the week 1 section it is best to identify that it is week one's quiz instead of just quiz. It is also important to not include dates in the assignment. When the course is copied for another term the dates in the assignment name with transfer and will cause all assignments to be renamed.

Naming Convention for Categories

When naming categories in the gradebook, it is best to use the categories listed in the breakdown of grades listed in the syllabus. For example, quizzes, participation, test, etc.

Be Fair

To ensure that students receive fair grades it is necessary to accurately aggregate individual assignment grades when calculating a student's total grade. It is especially important to be aware of the "exclude empty grades" setting is applied. If so, you should make sure that missing assignments are given zeros. Otherwise, a student's grade might drop suddenly later in the term when you realize that missing work has not been accounted for. If you need to change a student's grade retroactively, it is best to use a "gradebook override" in which you can leave a comment to the student. It's also important to make sure that the weights assigned to each activity in the gradebook honor the weights specified in your course syllabus, and that these weights do not change over the course of the term.

Another aspect of fair grading is the timing of feedback. You may risk losing impartiality if some students receive grades and feedback long after others. Understandably, it often takes instructors several days to completely grade all the student submissions for a given assignment. If this is the case for you, we recommend using the grading workflow feature when grading assignment activities in order to release all student grades and feedback at the same time. Or if you do not want students to see grades for a certain assignment, you can hide the corresponding grade item in the gradebook without hiding the activity on the course page. Doing this will allow all assignment grades to be released to students at the same time.

Subconscious biases are also a threat to fair grading. Moodle's assignment and forum activities allow you to

grade student work according to a rubric. A carefully thought-out rubric composed of distinct criteria and easily distinguishable levels can both ensure fair treatment and say you a lot of time. Also noteworthy is the "blind grading" option in the assignment activity, which can mask the identity of students until grading is finalized.

Be Transparent

It's crucial that students know where and when they can find their grades. Instructors may be tempted to assign all grades directly in the gradebook "Grader Report" or "Single View", however this is not recommended, Recall that each activity has its own corresponding grading interface where students are used to checking for their grades and feedback. For example, assignment activities should be graded in the assignment grader interface. Forum activities may be graded in a variety of ways, but most common is to give a rating or whole forum grading to each individual student post. Quiz essay questions can be grades through the quiz manual grading interface.

Also, take care not to hide activities on the course page unnecessarily- their corresponding grade items will disappear in the gradebook too. For example, quizzes do not need to be hidden prior to the open date/time because questions will not be available to students until the quiz opening date/time.

Appendix

Below helpful information mentioned in the best practices but not necessarily required.

1	**Aggregation** There are two aggregation types that GGU uses for gradebook setup. The first is "Natural Weighting" and the second is "Weighted Categories. An explanation of the two types of aggregation can be seen by viewing the document linked below. **Natural v. Weighted Gradebook**
2	**Exclude Empty Grades** An explanation of excluding empty grades can be seen by viewing the link below, section 5.3. Exclude Empty Grades
3	**Gradebook Override** An explanation of gradebook override can be seen by viewing the link below, section 2.1. Gradebook Override
4	**Workflow** An explanation of work flow can be seen by viewing the link below, section 4.2. Workflow
5	**Blind Grading** An explanation of blind grading can be seen by viewing the document linked below. Blind Grading
6	**Grader Report and Single View** An explanation of grade report and single view can be seen by viewing the document linked below. Grader Report
7	**Hiding Assignments in the Gradebook** An explanation of hiding assignments in the gradebook can be seen by viewing the document linked below. Show/Hide Items or Categories in the Gradebook

8	**How Students Access Grades**
	An explanation of how students access grades can be seen by viewing the document linked below.
	[Student Access of Grades](#)