



## Working with Assignments

### A Blackboard Learning Services Tip Sheet

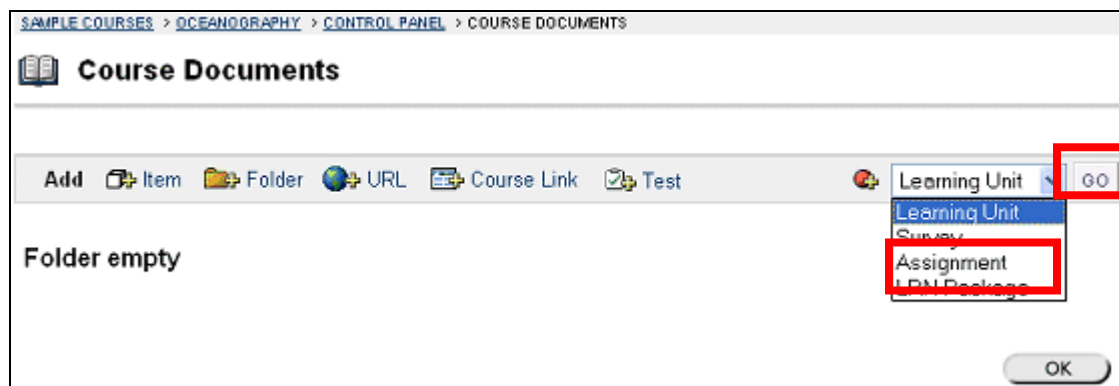
**Introduction** The *Blackboard Learning System* (Release 6) introduces a new content type called an Assignment. This new tool combines the file exchange capabilities of the Digital Drop Box with the organization and management functionality of the Gradebook.

The Assignment content type in Blackboard allows users to post an article or other document with instructions, retrieve the completed assignment from a student, and grade that assignment via the Gradebook. With Assignments, Blackboard provides enhanced item management options, including bulk downloading and cleanup of files.

This tip sheet is designed for Instructors who will be building and teaching courses with the [Blackboard Learning System \(Release 6\)](#).

### Creating an Assignment

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**Procedure:** To add an assignment, perform the following steps:

1. Within your Blackboard course, click on the **Control Panel**.
    - *Course Control Panel* screen appears.
  2. Click on the name of the Content Area where you wish to add the Assignment, for example, **Course Documents**.
    - *Content Area* screen appears.
  3. From the drop-down list on the right side of the page, select **Assignment**, then click **GO**.
    - *Add Assignment* screen appears.
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### Adding an Assignment

From here, instructors have the same options that they have for most other content types, including time-release options.

Assignments can contain file attachments (such as lists of questions for students to answer, articles to read, presentations to review, maps or spreadsheets to analyze), as well as text embedded directly into Blackboard.



**Note:** When adding an Assignment, provide clear and concise directions for the student. Blackboard will automatically create a button that reads “View/Complete,” but this may be confusing for students without supplemental information and directions. As always, the more detailed the instructions, the fewer questions students will have when completing the assignment.

Assignment Availability Dates can help you set submission deadlines. You can schedule the Assignment to disappear, thereby stopping students from turning in late work. To reset the Availability Date after you’ve already added the Assignment (to grant students an extension, for example), click **Modify** next to the Assignment within the Control Panel.

## The Student Experience

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**Student View** A posted Assignment may look like this. A student will click on “View/Complete” link first, to review the Assignment, and then later, to submit their work.



For this example, we have created an Assignment item that contains instructions for the student, as well as an attached file ([Ch1-Questions&Exercises.doc](#)) that the student needs to read as part of the Assignment.


**1 Assignment Information**

**Name:** Chapter 1 - Questions and Exercises

**Instructions:** After reading and reviewing all of the material in Chapter 1, please complete the following assignment.

**To complete the assignment:**

1. download it to your desktop
2. answer the questions
3. save and rename your file
4. browse to your completed assignment
5. and click submit to send it to the gradebook

**Assignment Files:**  Chapter 1 - Questions and Exercises (Ch1-Questions&Exercises.doc)

**Uploading the Completed Assignment** After writing the paper or otherwise completing the Assignment, a student clicks on the “View/Complete” button again to upload their work, and send comments to the instructor. Students will be prompted to Browse their computer to find their files, and they can also post Comments about the Assignment. These comments will appear in your Gradebook.

SAMPLE COURSES > OCEANOGRAPHY > ASSIGNMENTS > UPLOAD ASSIGNMENT: ASSIGNMENT


**Upload Assignment: Assignment**

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**1 Assignment Information**

**Name:** Assignment

**Instructions:** Read the attached document and defend the article in a well reasoned essay.

**Assignment Files:**  Assignment1 (Ch1-Assignment.doc)

**2 Your Files**

**Comments:**

**File To Attach:**

**Currently Attached Files:**

**3 Submit**

Press save to continue working on this assignment later, or submit when you are ready to turn in this assignment.

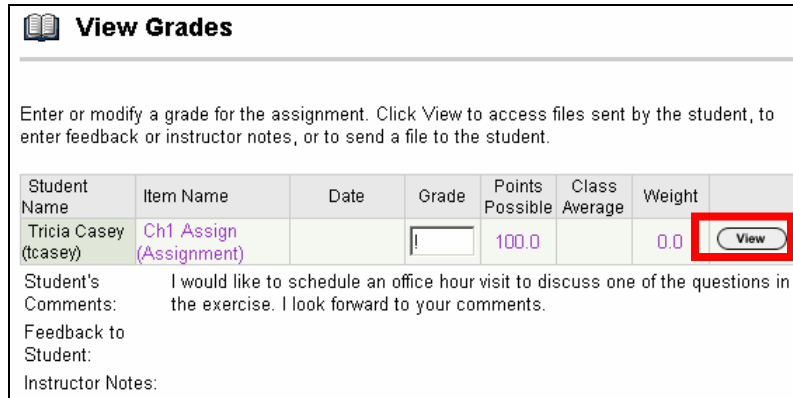


**Note:** Students may click **Add Another File** to submit multiple files for the same project. When accessing these files, they will all appear with one another in the Gradebook (unlike in the Digital Drop Box, where they appear as multiple entries).

## Reviewing and Grading Assignments

**Overview** Instructors can retrieve and grade Assignments through the Gradebook, much like any other kind of assessment. However, Assignments have additional tools that make managing multiple files much easier.

**Reviewing a Single Assignment Submission** To retrieve an individual student's Assignment submission, select the individual entry from the Gradebook. You can enter a grade from this screen, or click **View** to see the student's work.



**View Grades**

Enter or modify a grade for the assignment. Click View to access files sent by the student, to enter feedback or instructor notes, or to send a file to the student.

Student Name	Item Name	Date	Grade	Points Possible	Class Average	Weight	
Tricia Casey (tcasey)	Ch1 Assign (Assignment)		<input type="text"/>	100.0		0.0	<a href="#">View</a>

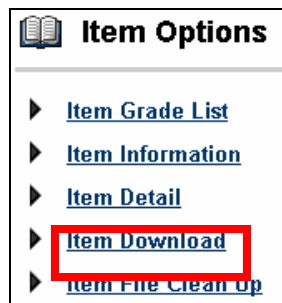
Student's Comments: I would like to schedule an office hour visit to discuss one of the questions in the exercise. I look forward to your comments.

Feedback to Student:

Instructor Notes:

After clicking on **View**, you will be able to download the file/s that the student has submitted, add Feedback that that student will see in his/her Student Gradebook, and add private Instructor Notes that will not be seen by the student.

**Reviewing Multiple Assignment Submissions** One of the strengths of working with Assignments is the ability to download one, some, or all student submissions at once.



**Item Options**


- ▶ [Item Grade List](#)
- ▶ [Item Information](#)
- ▶ [Item Detail](#)
- ▶ [Item Download](#)
- ▶ [Item File Clean Up](#)

To download multiple files at one time, click on the name of the Assignment at the top of the Gradebook column, and then click **Item Download**.



**Note:** Other choices on the Item Options page will allow you to enter all students' grades at once, modify instructions, descriptions, and point values, and to see statistics for an assignment.

You can select one, some or all of the students' assignments.

 **Download Assignment: Assignment**

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**1 Select Students**

[Check All](#) | [Check Ungraded](#) | [Uncheck All](#)

	Student Name	Date	Grade
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ahemich, Samid	2003-11-17 10:09:20.0	90
<input type="checkbox"/>	Casey, Tricia	2003-11-17 10:09:29.0	95
	First, William		N/A
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lewis, Arthur	2003-11-17 10:09:41.0	82

**2 Submit**

Click "**Submit**" to finish. Click "**Cancel**" to abort this process.

After you select the Assignments that you wish to download, Blackboard will create a .zip containing those files, so you can save them to your computer desktop or hard drive. You may need WinZip or another .zip utility to open this file.

### Grading Written Work

One of the ways you can grade a student's assignment is to use Microsoft Word's Reviewing Tools.

To enable the tools, open the document in MS Word. Select **Tools** and then select **Track Changes**.

With the Track Changes feature turned on, each insertion, deletion, or formatting change that you make is tracked. This means that added text is shown underlined or in a different color, and deleted text is noted in a balloon in the margin of the document. You can also choose Insert, Comment to add your own notes in a balloon. By combining your pre-defined own grading style and employing tracking changes, your students will have a clear idea how they were graded for the assignment. This also keeps maintains a file that does not need to be printed out, adding comments, grades, etc...

### Returning Assignments

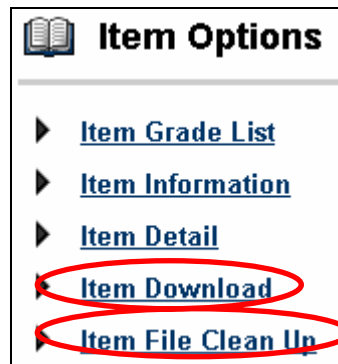
To return a graded assignment, click the individual entry from the Gradebook and then click **View**. In the Feedback to Student section, enter a grade, comments, and attach the graded assignment. Click **Submit**.

## Assignment Tips

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**Assignment Tips** The following are some helpful tips when using Assignments:

**Course Size Management:** If the file size of the course needs to be reduced, you can batch download a copy of submitted student work to your hard drive or a floppy disk. The submitted files can also be deleted from the assignment in the Gradebook through Item Options, and will free up room in your course.



**Note:** The Gradebook will also allow you to enter a grade for the student if they turned in a hard copy of the assignment instead of sending the file within the course.

### Additional Reference Materials

For further information about the use of specific tools in Blackboard, check:

- [Creating Assignments Tutorial](#)
- [Completing and Submitting Assignments Tutorial](#)
- [Grading an Assignment Tutorial](#)
- [Assignments vs. Digital Drop Box](#)
- [Digital Drop Box](#)

### To Learn More...

Blackboard Learning Services offers comprehensive classroom training programs and educational materials for the *Blackboard Learning System™* products. For more information about how Blackboard Learning Services can serve your institution's training needs through on-site events, remote seminars, or via our Certified Education Center partners, please contact your Account Manager at Blackboard or visit the online [Training Center](http://behind.blackboard.com) at <http://behind.blackboard.com>.

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