

## Unit Topic: The Grades Tool

### *Introduction*

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Students use the Grades tool to check their marks on assignments, quizzes, and tests. They can see their individual marks and feedback and may see class averages if they are made available. They can also view their final grade and the grade formula used to evaluate them if these have been made visible.

Professors can set up grade books that reflect their approach to evaluation. They can control the grading formula used to calculate grades; what projects, assignments, tests, etc. are graded; how grade items are associated with other tools; and when grades are released to learners and what information they see.

### *Content*

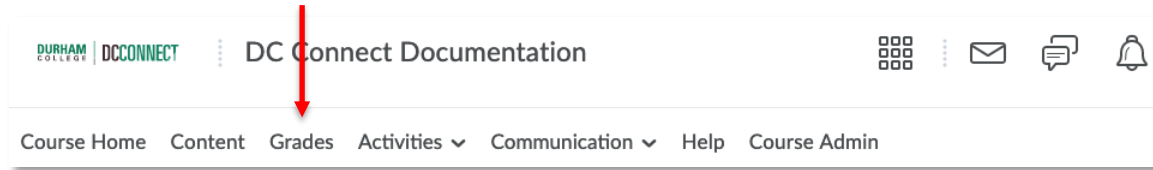
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This document covers the following topics:

- How To Access Grades
- The Manage Grades View
  - Create New Grade Items
  - Grade Item Properties
  - Grade Item Restrictions
  - Edit A Grade Item
  - Reorder Grade Items
  - Grade Categories
- The Enter Grades View
  - How To Enter Grades
  - Reviewing An Individual Student's Grades
- A Note Regarding the Final Adjusted Grade

## How to Access Grades

Click the **Grades** option in the navigation bar of your course.

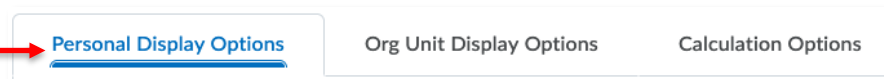


The **Default Grades Area** will open. If the course is brand new, this will be the **Setup Wizard**.

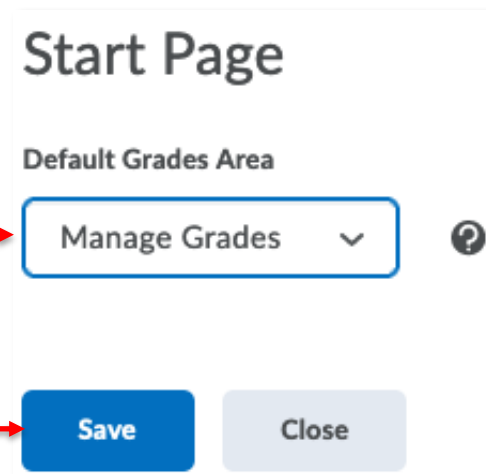


To change the **Default Grades Area**, click the **Settings** link.

Then click on the **Personal Display Options** tab.



Scroll down the page and then select the desired area from the pull-down menu under the **Start Page** title.



Be sure to click the **Save** button to affix your changes.

**Manage Grades** is used to add and organize grade items.

**Enter Grades** is used to view and enter students' marks into the grade area.

Although this document does not cover the Settings, Schemes and the Setup Wizard, they perform the following functions:

- **Settings** provides grade display options and grade calculation options
- **Schemes** is used to create and edit grade schemes. In most cases, it is *not necessary to change the default scheme* (Percentage – DC Standard)
- **Setup Wizard** presents six pages where the grades settings can be adjusted in response to your input.

## The Manage Grades View

Durham College course outlines, in the Evaluation Criteria section, typically describe a *weighted* system.

### Evaluation Criteria:

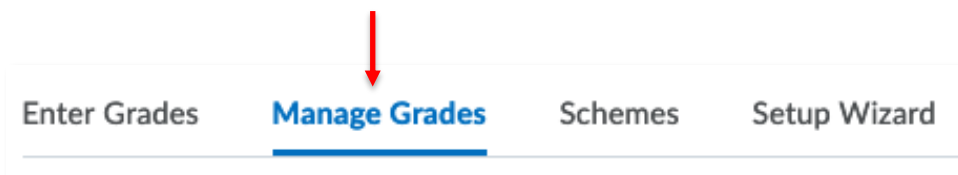
The Course Learning Outcomes and Essential Employability Skills Outcomes are evaluated by the following evaluation criterion.

Evaluation Description	Course Learning Outcomes	EESOs	Weighting
In Process: Participation (Discussions, Debates, and Activities)	CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4, CLO5, CLO6, CLO7	EES1, EES2, EES3, EES7, EES8	30
Assignment: Assignment 1 - Summary and Response: A.I. Related Book/Show/Film/Game	CLO1, CLO2, CLO4, CLO5	EES1, EES2, EES7, EES10	10
Assignment: Assignment 2 - Summary and Response: A.I. Article Relevant to Your Field	CLO1, CLO2, CLO4, CLO7	EES1, EES2, EES7, EES10	10
Assignment: Assignment 3 - Summary and Response: AI Article with an Ethical Issue	CLO1, CLO2, CLO4, CLO7	EES1, EES2, EES7, EES10	10
Assignment: Assignment 4 - Final Consolidation Assignment	CLO1, CLO2, CLO4, CLO5, CLO7	EES1, EES6, EES7, EES10	25
Exam: Final Test	CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4, CLO5, CLO6, CLO7	EES1, EES7	15
<b>Total</b>			<b>100%</b>

**NOTE:** If your course is a Pass/Fail course, please contact CTL staff for assistance with setting up your gradebook.

For the purposes of this document, a weighted system will be depicted in the DC Connect grading environment.

If the grades list is not displayed, click **Manage Grades**.



When **Manage Grades** is selected, the grade list appears.

**NOTE:** If the total weights of all Grade Items do not sum to 100%, a warning is displayed above the grade item list.

The screenshot shows the 'Manage Grades' interface. At the top, there are two buttons: 'New' (highlighted in blue) and 'More Actions'. Below them is a red 'Note' section with the text: 'Final Calculated Grade' sums to 0%, not 100%. Verify the total weight of all top level categories and items is 100%. Below the note is a 'Bulk Edit' icon. At the bottom is a table with the following columns: 'Grade Item', 'Type', 'Association', 'Max. Points', and 'Weight'. The table contains two rows: 'Final Calculated Grade' and 'Final Adjusted Grade', both with dropdown arrows next to their names.

By default, the grade list is created with the two grade items: **Final Calculated Grade**, and **Final Adjusted Grade**. Do not edit these items.

## Create New Grade Items

To create a new grade item, click the **New** button.

The screenshot shows the 'New' button (highlighted in blue) and its dropdown menu. The menu has two options: 'Item' (highlighted in light blue) and 'Category'.

Select **Item** from the pull-down menu.

From the options that appear, click the type of grade item you would like to create (usually **Numeric**).

The screenshot shows the 'New Item' dialog box. The title is 'New Item' and the subtitle is 'Choose a Grade Item Type'. There are two options: 'Numeric' (highlighted in blue) and 'Text'. Below 'Numeric' is the description: 'Grade users by assigning a value out of a specified total number of points. E.g. 8/10'.

**NOTE:** If you intend to associate an activity (Assignment, Discussion, Quiz) with the Grade Item, it *must* be the Numeric type.

## Grade Item Properties

On the **Properties** tab...

Enter a **Name** for the grade item (required).

You will want to enter a **Short Name** so that your gradebook does not display absurdly wide when in spreadsheet view.

We recommend leaving the **Description** field blank. Assignment descriptions should be posted in the course Content.

The screenshot shows the 'Properties' tab with three sub-tabs: 'Properties', 'Restrictions', and 'Objectives'. The 'General' section is active. It includes a 'Type' dropdown set to 'Numeric', a 'Name \*' text box with 'Assignment #1', a 'Short Name' text box with 'A1', and a 'Category' dropdown set to 'None' with a '[New Category]' link. A 'Show Description' button is located at the bottom of the section.

**NOTE:** Consistency is *very* important. Be sure that the names of your Grade Items match those described in the Evaluation Criteria of your Course Outline.

Enter the **Maximum Points** for the grade item (required). This is what the item is/will be marked out of. If you don't know yet, don't worry. This can be edited later when you have this information.

Enter the **Weight** for the grade item (required). This will come directly from the Evaluation Criteria section of your course outline.

Select the **Can Exceed** option if you need the ability to input a mark *greater* than the Maximum Points. For example, the assessment item has a "bonus question".

Select **Bonus** if this grade item is a bonus item *for the course*.

The screenshot shows the 'Grading' section with four fields: 'Maximum Points \*' (10), 'Weight \*' (10), 'Can Exceed' (checkbox), and 'Bonus' (checkbox). Each field has a help icon to its right.

It is inadvisable to change the **Grade Scheme**.

Do not associate a Rubric you have created in DC Connect with your Grade Item. Doing so prevents the Grade Item from associating with Activities.

Click the **Show Display Options** link to show more options.

Grade Scheme

-- Default Scheme -- (Percentage - DC Standard) ?

Rubrics

Add Rubric

No rubrics selected.

[Create Rubric in New Window]

Display Options

Show Display Options

You can show students both the class average...

...and grade distribution for the grade item to your students.

Display Options

Hide Display Options

Student View

Display class average to users ?

Display grade distribution to users ?

Although it is possible to do so,...

*we strongly discourage you from overriding the display options*

...for the Student View or Managing View.

Doing so may create errors during the grade submission process.

Override display options for this item ?

Show

Points grade

Weighted grade

Grade scheme symbol

Grade scheme colour

Managing View

Override display options for this item ?

## Grade Item Restrictions

Marks should be visible to your students at all times.

Do not hide your Grade Items from your students.

Do not set Availability dates on the **Restrictions** tab.

The screenshot shows the 'Restrictions' tab of a software interface. It features three main sections:

- Hide from Users:** A checkbox that is currently unchecked.
- Availability:** A section containing two options:
  - Has Start Date:** An unchecked checkbox followed by a date field containing '12/7/2021' and a time field containing '10:46 AM'.
  - Has End Date:** An unchecked checkbox followed by a date field containing '12/14/2021' and a time field containing '3:46 PM'.

Do not attach Release Conditions to your Grade Items.

The 'Release Conditions' section contains three buttons:

- Attach Existing**
- Create and Attach**
- Remove All Conditions** (with a trash icon)

**NOTE:** There are rare situations where the recommendations above do not apply. Please contact CTL staff if you are considering using options on the Restrictions tab to discuss options.

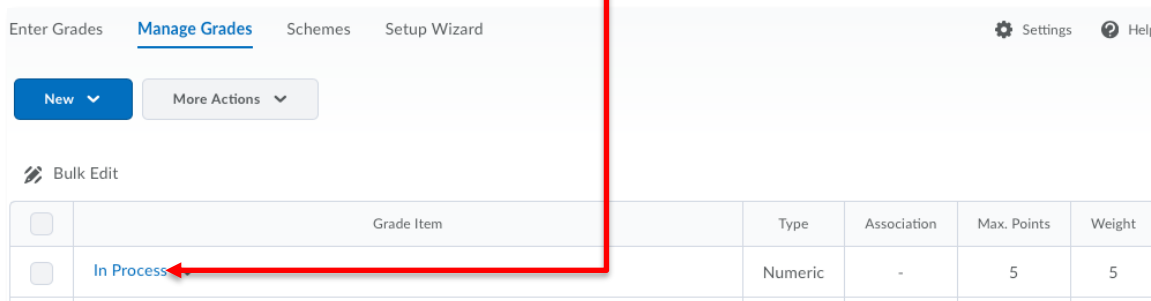
Click one of the **Save** options to save the grade item.

The save options bar contains four buttons:

- Save and Close** (highlighted in blue)
- Save and New**
- Save**
- Cancel**

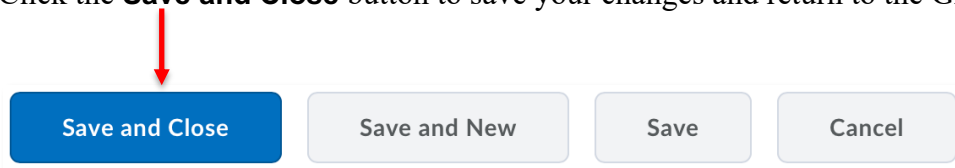
## Edit a Grade Item

To edit all aspects of a grade item, click directly on the name of the grade item in the Grade Item list of the Manage Grades page.



This opens the grade item for editing where changes can be made to the item's properties and restrictions.

Click the **Save and Close** button to save your changes and return to the Grade Item list.



Grade Items can also be edited by selecting them in the grades list...

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assignment #1 ▾
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assignment #2 ▾
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assignment #3 ▾

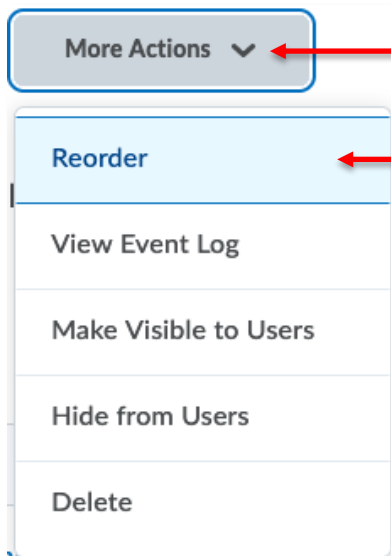
...and clicking **Bulk Edit** at the top of the Grade Item list.



**NOTE:** This will allow editing of the grade items' *properties only*.



## Reorder Grade Items



To reorder grade items in the grade list, click the **More Actions** button and select the **Reorder** option.

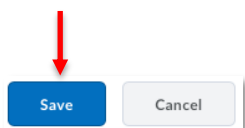
## Reorder Grade Items and Categories

[Expand All](#) [Collapse All](#)

Items and Categories	Sort Order
Assignment #1	1 ▾

In the **Sort Order** column, use the select boxes to change the order of the grade items.

Click the **Save** button to return to the grades list and view the changes.



## Grade Categories

A **Category** can be used to group related grade items, providing additional grading flexibility. Creating a Grade Category is similar to creating a Grade Item (see Creating a New Grade Item above).

After assigning an appropriate name, input the weight of the Category.

**Grading**

Weight

?

Allow category grade to exceed category weight ?

Distribution

Manually assign weight to items in the category

Distribute weights by points across all items in the category

Distribute weight evenly across all items

Number of highest non-bonus items to drop for each user ?

Number of lowest non-bonus items to drop for each user ?

Set the Distribution as required. Please see the Situation descriptions below for which option is best.

Once a Category exists, Grade Items can be assigned to it using the **Category** pull-down menu found on the Properties tab when creating or editing a Grade Item.

Properties Restrictions Objectives

**General**

Type

Numeric

Name \*

Short Name

?

Category

[New Category]

Show Description

However, the use of Categories will skew your grade calculation until all assessments are scored. The degree of skew can be quite significant. Therefore, we do not recommend the use of Categories purely for organizational purposes.

There are three situations where it is appropriate to use Categories.

### Situation 1: Ugly Math

If you have a collection of Grade Items that individually have weights with many decimal places, it would be best to group them in a category and let the system do the math for you.

For example, if you have biweekly labs that contribute to 20% of the course, 20% divided by 7 is 2.85714% each. Imputing these labs individually is *still* not going to total to 20% as the decimal is repeating.

The best solution is to create a Category called “Labs” weighted at 20% and include all the Lab Grade Items in it.

In this example, set the **Distribution to Distribute weights by points across all items in the category** if you want the point totals of the lab items to control the ratio of contribution.

Otherwise simply set it to **Distribute weight evenly across all items** so that each lab contributes evenly to the 20%

Distribution

- Manually assign weight to items in the category
- Distribute weights by points across all items in the category
- Distribute weight evenly across all items

0 Number of highest non-bonus items to drop for each user ?

0 Number of lowest non-bonus items to drop for each user ?

### Situation 2: Dynamic List (In Process)

If you have an “In Process” item listed in the Evaluation Criteria of your course outline, you may wish your Grades to reflect this assessment at a greater level of detail. However, you may not know at the outset of your course how many activities will contribute to this mark, or to what degree.

The best solution is to create a Category called “In Process”, set the weight to that described in your course outline, and set the **Distribution to Distribute weights by points across all items in the category**.

Distribution

- Manually assign weight to items in the category
- Distribute weights by points across all items in the category
- Distribute weight evenly across all items

0 Number of highest non-bonus items to drop for each user ?

0 Number of lowest non-bonus items to drop for each user ?

As you create new grade items that represent the individual activities that contribute to the In Process mark, include them in the “In Process” category and use their Maximum Points to manage their relative contributions to the category weight. For example, an icebreaker activity might be scored out of 2 points, and a group discussion might be scored out of 5. The group discussion will contribute more to the category total weight than the icebreaker. The distribution will automatically update with each new grade item added to the category.

### Situation 3: Dropping the Lowest Score from a Set

If the Evaluation Criteria or Evaluation Notes of your course outline describe a set of assessments where the lowest achievement is dropped from the calculation, you must use a grade category to achieve this result.

**NOTE:** Do not arbitrarily drop an assessment from the grade calculation, only drop items if it described in your course outline.

Create a Category called “Quizzes”, set the weight to that described in your course outline, and set the **Distribution to Distribute weight evenly across all items.**

Input “1” in the lower **Number of lowest non-bonus items to drop for each user** field.

Distribution

- Manually assign weight to items in the category
- Distribute weights by points across all items in the category
- Distribute weight evenly across all items

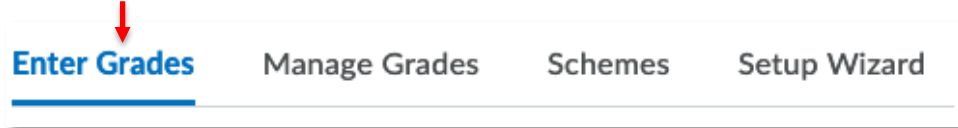
0 Number of highest non-bonus items to drop for each user ?

1 Number of lowest non-bonus items to drop for each user ?

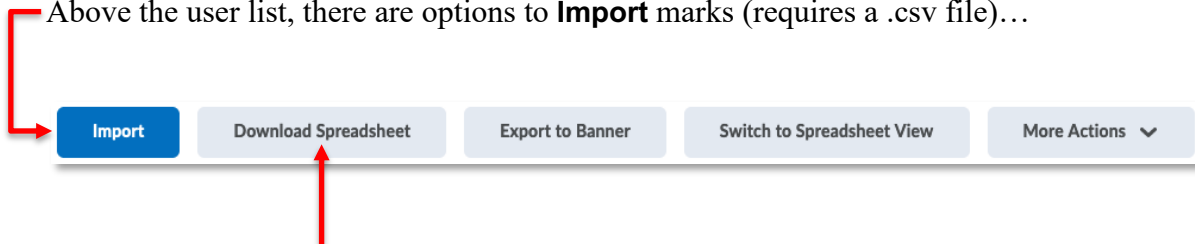
**NOTE:** The first score input for this set of assessment will be flagged as “dropped” until subsequent data is entered. The lowest score is re-evaluated each time new marks are input, and the overall achievement is re-calculated.

## The Enter Grades View

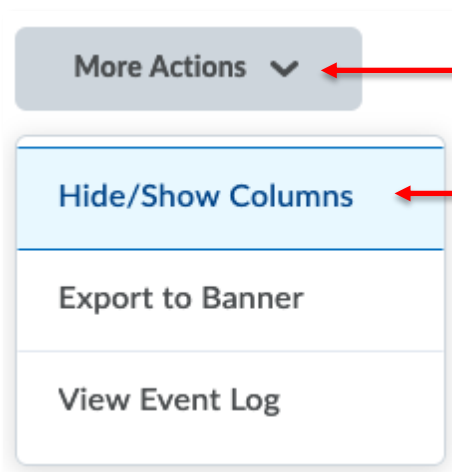
Click **Enter Grades** to display the user list and grade items.



Above the user list, there are options to **Import** marks (requires a .csv file)...

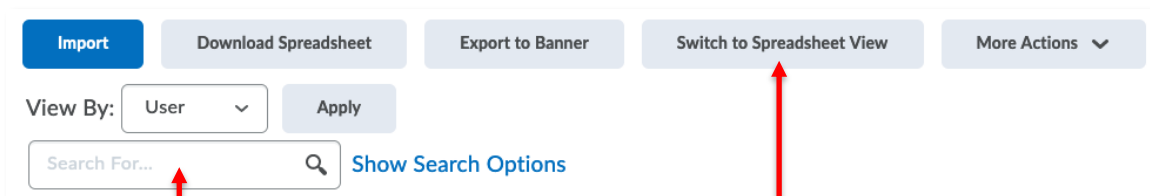


...and **Download Spreadsheet** (to an Excel or .csv file) if desired.



Click on **More Actions**...

...and select the **Manage Columns** option to select which grade items to display.



The **Search for:** option can be used to find an individual student.

The **Switch to Spread View** button displays the user list with individual cells for entering grades (like a spreadsheet).

If you have created student groups using the Groups tool, the **View By:** option can filter the user list by group.

View By: Groups ▾ Groups: Group 1 ▾ Apply

This View By: group feature can make marking group projects that don't use the Assignments much more efficient.

Below the search field is the list of students in the class.

Click a checkbox and then the Email icon to email selected student(s).

<input type="checkbox"/>	First Name ▾, Last Name	IP ▾	A1 ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	Taylor Student ▾	- / 5, -	- / 10, -

**NOTE:** Further explanation of the **Email** tool can be found in the **Email** handout available on the CTL website.

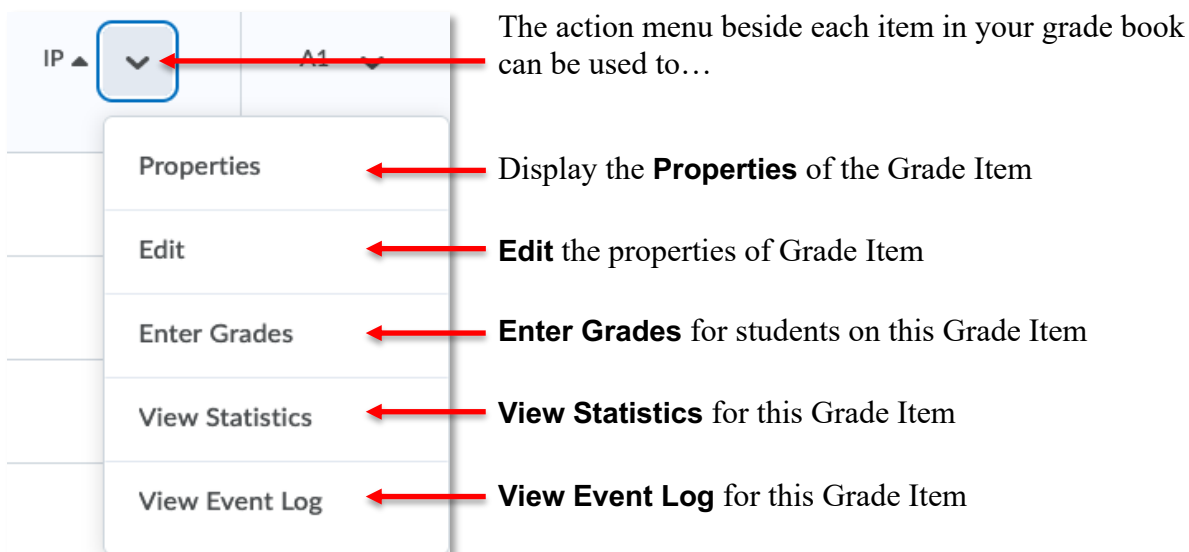
Click this flag icon to identify student(s) you are concerned about.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Taylor Student ▾	- / 5, -	- / 10, -
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Click this chart icon to view student progress.

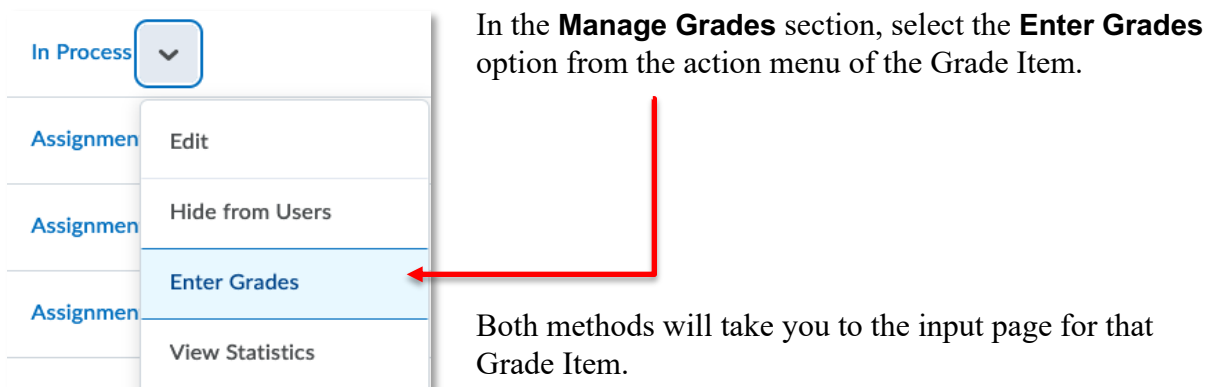
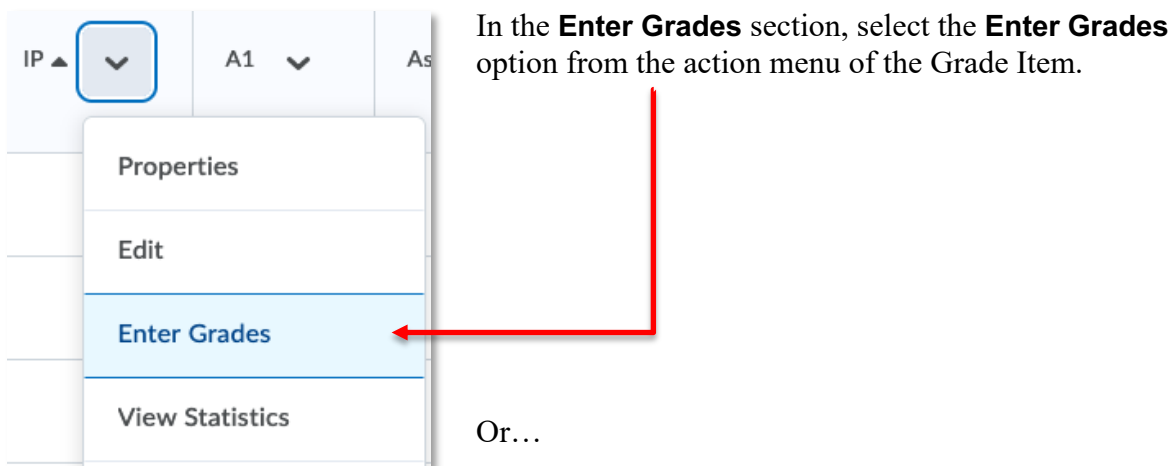
<input type="checkbox"/>	Taylor Student ▾	- / 5, -	- / 10, -
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Click on a student's name to enter marks for the student.



### How to Enter Grades

You can input marks for a Grade Item from either the **Enter Grades** or **Manage Grades** sections of the Grades tool.



## Grade Item: In Process

▶ [Show details and overall feedback](#)

### Users

View By: User Apply

Search For... Show Search Options

[Set Grades](#) [Clear Grades](#) [Add Feedback](#) [Email](#)

<input type="checkbox"/>	First Name ▾, Last Name	Grade	Weighted Grade	Scheme	Feedback
<input type="checkbox"/>	Test, Student5 ▾	<input type="text"/> / 5	- / 10	-	No feedback added.

Enter the students' marks in the Grade column.

**NOTE:** Grade achievement is displayed in three ways: mark as entered, its weight towards the course overall, and as a whole number describing the percentage (Scheme) achieved.

When assigning marks within a Grade Item, click **Show details and overall feedback...**

## Grade Item: In Process

▶ [Show details and overall feedback](#)

▼ [Hide details and overall feedback](#)

### In Process

Max Points  
5

Grade Scheme  
Percentage - DC Standard

Weight  
10

Overall  
Feedback  
(visible to all)

Format ▼ **B** *I* U + ▼ Font ▼ Font ... ▼

...for the option to leave feedback/comments regarding this Grade Item that *all* students will receive.



When inputting marks within a Grade Item, you may also...

Click on the **flag** icon to flag students

Click on the **Email** icon to email selected students

Click on the **Feedback** icon to leave individual student feedback

A screenshot of the grade entry interface. At the top, there are four icons: 'Set Grades', 'Clear Grades', 'Add Feedback', and 'Email'. Below these is a table with columns: 'First Name Last Name', 'Grade', 'Weighted Grade', 'Scheme', and 'Feedback'. The first row shows a student named 'Test, Student5' with a grade input field containing ' / 5', a weighted grade of '- / 10', and a feedback field with 'No feedback provided.' and a feedback icon. Red arrows point from the text above to the 'Email' icon, the 'Test, Student5' name, and the feedback icon.

Clear grades from selected students by clicking the **Clear Grades** icon.

A screenshot of the grade entry interface, similar to the one above. A red arrow points to the 'Clear Grades' icon in the top navigation bar.

Remember to click the **Save** button when your input is complete.

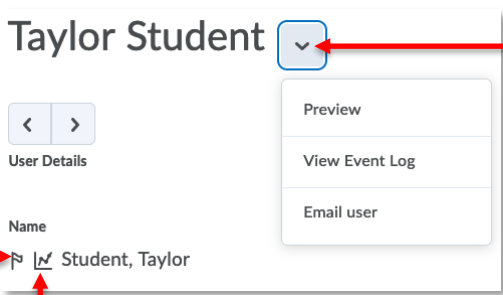
## Reviewing an Individual Student's Grades

Student marks can be reviewed from the **Enter Grades** view.

A screenshot of the 'Enter Grades' view. The top navigation bar includes 'Enter Grades', 'Manage Grades', 'Schemes', and 'Setup Wizard'. Below this are several buttons: 'Import', 'Download Spreadsheet', 'Export to Banner', 'Switch to Spreadsheet View', and 'More Actions'. There is a 'View By:' dropdown set to 'User' and a search bar. Below the search bar is an 'Email' icon. The main table has columns for 'Last Name First Name', 'IP', 'A1', 'Assignment 3', 'Assignment 3', 'Quiz 1', and 'Final Exam'. The first row shows a student named 'Student5, Test' with marks of '- / 5, - / 10, - / 10, - / 10, - / 10, - / 100, -'. A red arrow points to the student's name in the first column.

To review an *individual* student's marks, click the student's name in the user list.

The details of the student's grades are displayed. You can...



Click the flag icon to flag the student.

Click the chart icon to view student progress.

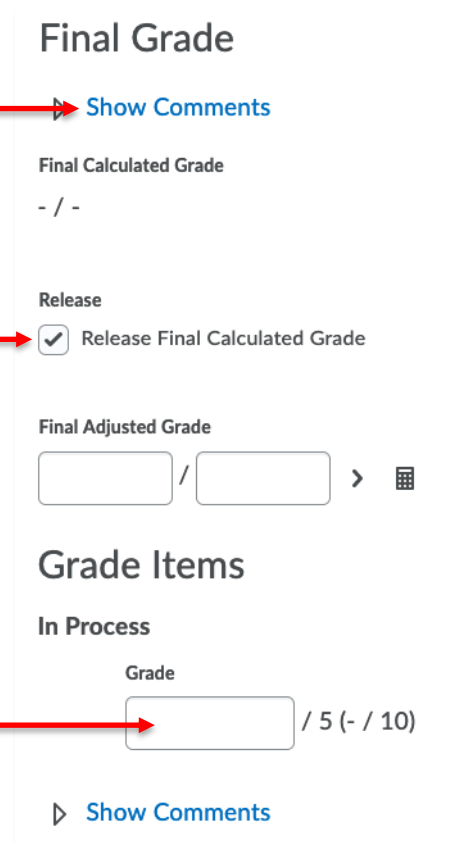
Use the action menu next to the student's name to **Preview** the Grades view of the student, to view the grading **Event Log**, or **Email** the student.

The screenshot shows a student profile for "Taylor Student". It includes a "User Details" section with navigation arrows, a "Name" field with a flag icon and a chart icon, and an action menu with options: "Preview", "View Event Log", and "Email user".

Click the **Show Comments** option to enter comments for the student regarding their final grade.

Click the **Release Final Calculated Grade** checkbox to make the final grade visible to this student.

Review individual marks.



**Final Grade**

[Show Comments](#)

Final Calculated Grade  
- / -

Release  
 Release Final Calculated Grade

Final Adjusted Grade  
[ ] / [ ] > [ ]

**Grade Items**

In Process

Grade  
[ ] / 5 (- / 10)

[Show Comments](#)

The screenshot shows the "Final Grade" section. It includes a "Show Comments" link, "Final Calculated Grade" (- / -), a "Release" section with a checked checkbox for "Release Final Calculated Grade", "Final Adjusted Grade" input fields, a "Grade Items" section with "In Process" status, and a "Grade" input field for "5 (- / 10)".

## *A Note Regarding the Final Adjusted Grade*

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The Final Adjusted Grade is to be used in very few and unique cases.

**DO NOT** arbitrarily change a student's grade from what is calculated by the Final Calculated Grade. If you need to transfer the weight of a missed assessment to another grade item because your course outline describes this flexibility, please contact CTL staff for assistance with the approved process.