Assignment

Overview

The Assignment tool allows you to create link in a module where students submit a piece of coursework electronically. You can view, feedback and grade student submissions from the module's Grade Centre. Certain file types will also let you use the Blackboard inline marking tool so that you can write, highlight and draw on the student's work. A student's submission may consist of one or more files. Assignment set-up options include:

- Specify due date and time;
- Specify number of times a student can submit;
- Create Group assignments (one student can submit for the whole group);
- Attach a Rubric card for marking by criteria. Rubrics are interactive, criteria-marking cards that you create and attach to assessable objects in VITAL (a separate guide to Rubrics is available).

Assignments can accept nearly any file type. For where you expect large file submissions (100MB +) from students and content like video please contact the eLearning Unit for advice. (Turnitin is an alternative assignment submission facility but only one file can be submitted and it does not accept group submissions. Turnitin is used for originality-checking and electronic marking and feedback via GradeMark.)

Create an assignment – individual submissions

1. Go to the content area in the module to where you want to add your new assignment (e.g. **Assessment** or **Assignments**).

2. With the EDIT mode switched **ON**, hover the mouse over the **Assessments** button at the top of the screen, and click **Assignment** from the menu that appears.
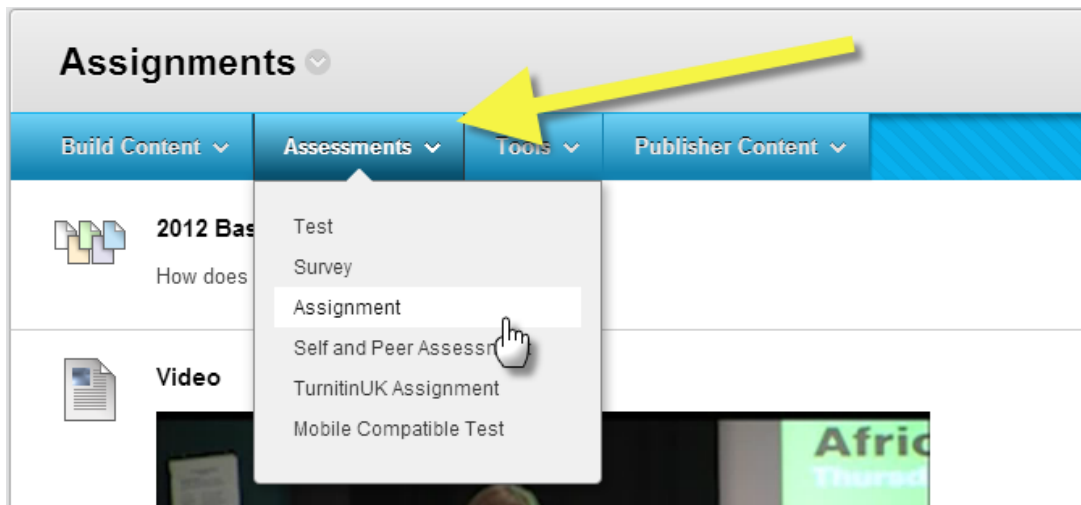
3. There is a '**More Help**' link at the top of the page which has some basic information on the settings available.
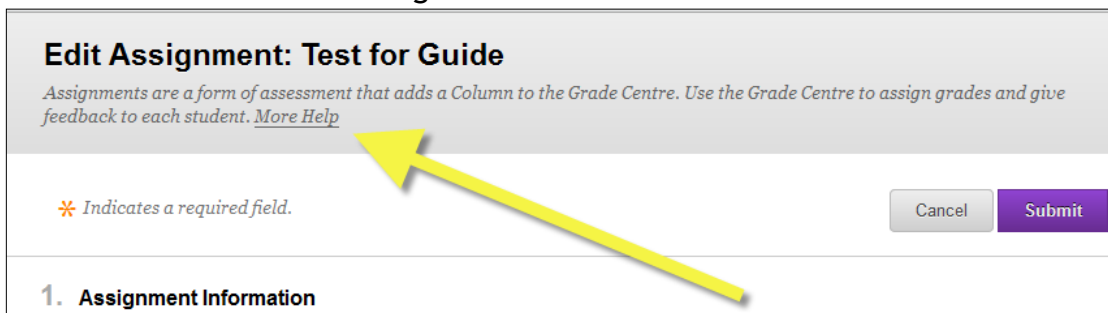
4. You should enter an assignment **Name** and **Instructions** for the assignment (which can include multimedia content, hyperlinks, embedded YouTube/SlideShare etc).

5. In section **2. Assignment Files** you can attach one or more files for students to open and download (e.g. supporting documents or assignment templates that the students copy, complete and then submit in their own version).

6. To attach a file here click **Browse My Computer**. Find the file and click **Open.** Your file should now be displayed as below. You can give the link it creates for the students a more meaningful name in the **Link Title** box. Ignore the **Alignments** setting.
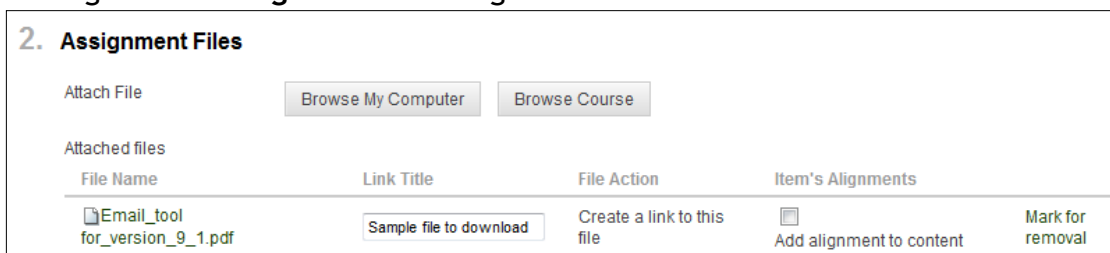
Add more files by clicking the **Browse My Computer** button again.

7. The information in steps 4, 5 and 6 displays to the student as below. Students click the main title to submit (**'Test for Guide'** in this example).

Grading and adding Rubrics (marking by criteria)

8. In section **3.Grading** you must enter a **Points Possible** (e.g. 100 but you can also specify 0. You can change how grades display to students so that letters or text could be used instead.)

9. If you are using the Rubrics facility for marking work by criteria, use the **Add Rubric** dropdown ('**a**' in the screenshot below) in this section to: select a pre-existing Rubric; create a new one from scratch; or create a new one based on an existing Rubric. (Please see the separate 'How to' guide on Rubrics for more details on building and managing Rubrics).

10. If you are using a second Rubric card for secondary marking, use the **Add Rubric** dropdown again. You will see that this second card will be described in the **Type** column as "Used for Secondary Evaluation". This criteria Rubric will not send a grade to the grade column for this assignment when marking. You can swap the Type using the dropdown menus in this column ('**b**' in the screenshot above).

11. You can set whether students see the Rubric(s) and at what point ('**Yes**' for before and after the assignment is submitted) using the dropdown menu in the '**Show Rubrics to Students**' column ('**c**' in the screenshot above). From '**d**' you can remove, view and edit the Rubrics you have selected.

Due dates and number of attempts allowed

12. **Section 4 Availability.** You can set the number of attempts that you want to allow students for submission. This can be '**Allow single attempt**', '**Allow multiple attempts**' (unlimited) or a specific number of attempts. VITAL stores the submissions for each attempt which you can access in the Grade Centre.

13. This section also allows you to specify the dates after/until/between that the assignment is available to the students to submit. Use the date and time widgets to set these parameters.

14. **Section 5 Due Dates**. You can set a due date and time for the assignment using the calendar and clock widgets (make sure that you set the correct time, e.g. AM or PM). Students can still submit the assignment after the due date (despite what the screen says here) but it will be marked in the Grade Centre as late with a date and time stamp (see screenshot below for step 29A).

15. Setting a **Due Date** also creates an automatic entry in the module's calendar. This is accessible from the Control Panel, in Course Tools, or from the **My Blackboard** menu, Calendar area, which shows dates for all of your modules. Accessed as below.
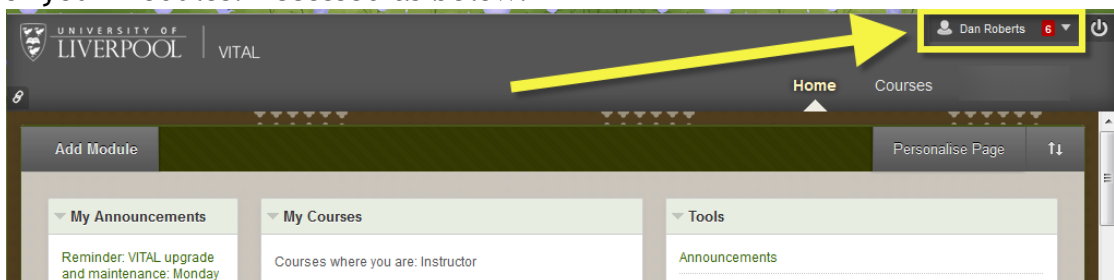
16. **Section 6 Recipients.** Select recipients '**All students individually**' for an individual assignment. Click **Submit**.

Create an assignment – group submission

If you are using groups in your module (see 'How to' Group tool guide) then you can set up a group assignment. Here, only one group member needs to submit the assignment on behalf of the group. All members automatically receive the mark or grade you give the assignment (i.e. you need only mark the work once). Group membership is decided at the point of submission. Anyone added to the group after submission will not receive the grade –

unless the assignment is resubmitted. Any member can submit the assignment electronically.

To create a group assignment and once the group has been set up, follow the steps 1-14 in Create an Assignment above, then

17. Select the **'Groups of Students'** option in the Recipients section to make it into a group assignment.
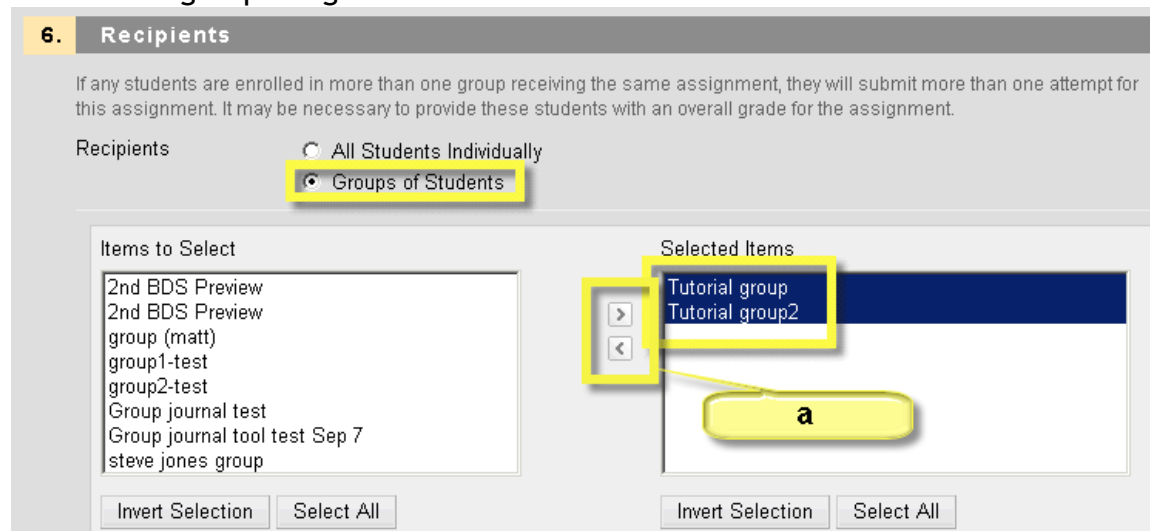
18. From the **'Items to Select'** box, click on the group(s – hold down the CTRL key for multiple selections) that you want to be able to submit to the assignment then move these to the right hand side **'Selected Items'** box with the **'>'** icon ('a' in the above screenshot). You can use the **Select All** button also. In the example above a group assignment is being set up for two groups.

19. Click **Submit**. The assignment is created in the content area.

Monitor assignment submissions

Using the **Grade Centre** for the module you can check which students have submitted their work, open their submitted files for viewing or printing, and add marks/grades/Rubrics and/or feedback for student's assignments. Students view grades and feedback in their **My Grades** area.

You can also use the **Retention Centre** tool on the **My Blackboard** menu, or from the Control Panel of the module, to check quickly which students have missed the deadline (useful for large cohorts).

You can also use the **Updates** tool in the **My Blackboard** menu to keep an eye on which assignments need grading.

20. Go to the **Control Panel** of the module. To view the full Grade Centre you can click the small right-hand arrow as shown here.
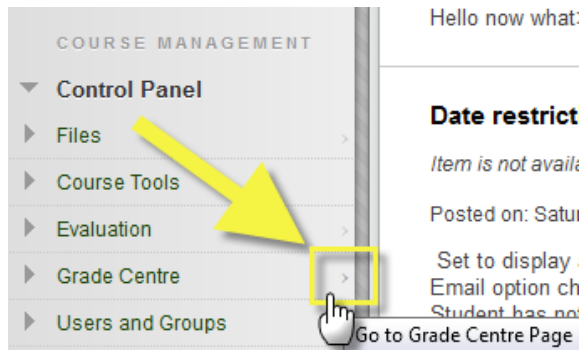
21. Alternatively, you can click the **Grade Centre** link and open up a sub-menu to access options such as 'Needs Grading' or SmartViews you have created and set as your favourites, as shown below.
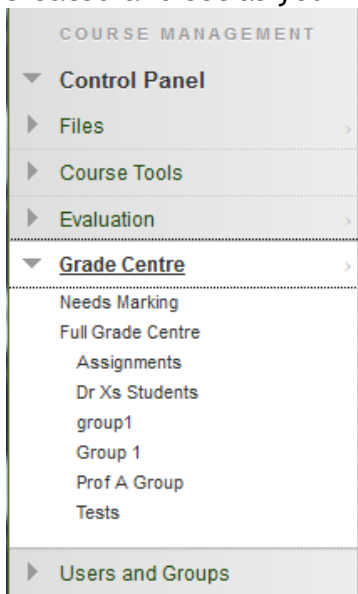
22. In the Grade Centre each assignment has a column and each student has a row. Find the column for the assignment. Where a submission has been made by a student and is unmarked, an exclamation mark icon appears. Where no submission has been made there will be two dashes ´- -´.

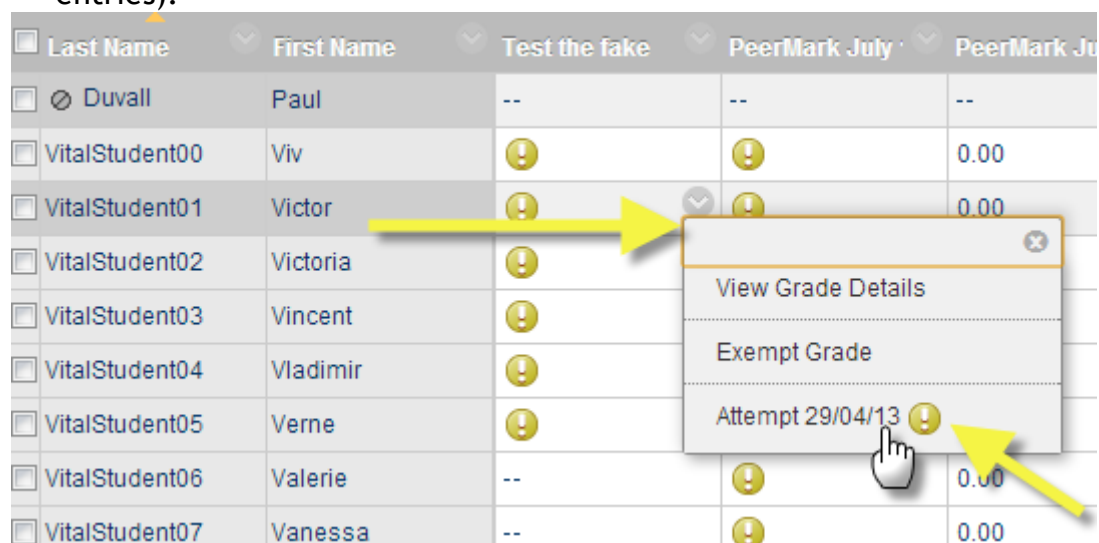## Grading and Feedback – hide grades from students

23. Before grading student work, if the marks should not be instantly released to the students, you must hide both the Grade Centre column for the assignment and the Total column for the module from student view. To hide the assignment column, click the downward arrow icon in the column header, and on the pop-up menu select the option **'Show/Hide to Users'**. When the column is hidden to students the header will display a red icon as shown below.
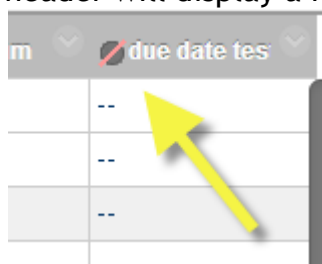
24. To hide the total column (to stop student working out their grade this way), find the **Total** column, click the downward arrow icon in the title bar and select the option **Edit Column Information.**

25. In section 4 of the setting page that appears, change the **Show this column to students** setting to **No.** Click Submit. If you have any other total columns you are using (Weighted Total) as well, these should be hidden if you do not want to reveal grades instantly to students.

Grading and feedback – view and grade work

26. An individual's assignment submission can be opened by hovering the mouse pointer to the right of the relevant exclamation mark icon and clicking on the downward arrow icon. Select the option 'Attempt' on the pop-up menu that appears (multiple attempts will have separate entries).

27. You can also run through a whole class' submission in sequence using the "Grade Attempts" facility. Hover the mouse pointer in the title header of the Grade Centre column for the assignment, click on the downward arrow icon and on the pop-up menu that appears select "**Grade Attempts**".
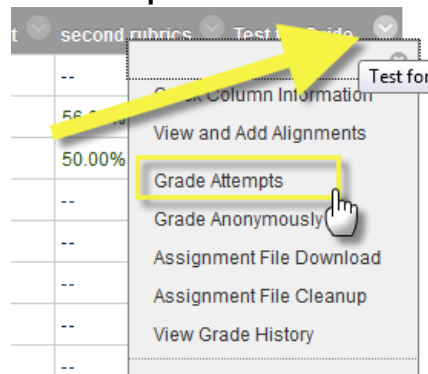
28. With both methods you are taken to the marking page for one assignment where you can view, grade and comment on the student work and leave comments for the other Instructors on the module (the **Grading Notes** section – students never see this). Be sure to 'Submit' as you grade each piece of work.

29. The grading and feedback area for an assignment is quite dense with a lot of features packed into a small space. Assignments which have been submitted in file types MS Word doc and docx, PowerPoint ppt and pptx, Excel xls and xlsx, or pdf will see the students work open in the grading window with a set of inline marking tools for directly commenting on the work. Please see this guide to the Blackboard inline marking tool for further details.

Special note. It is important that students do not include any personal data in their assignments submitted to the Blackboard Assignment tool for electronic marking other than name, Student ID, university email address, as the marking tool is a third-party service and the copies of the assignments created for marking are not held on University of Liverpool servers. (Examples of personal data which should **never** be included in Blackboard assignments are: gender, marital status, ethnicity, religion, country of nationality, health records/disability, address, date of birth, pin/password, payroll number, National Insurance number).

Below is a screenshot of the grading area for a non-inline marking tool compatible file submission (i.e. not one of the file types listed above). You have to download the file to see it in a suitable application.

A. Highlighted here is where you can **enter a grade** for the assignment. If the assignment was submitted late it will be marked as shown here and date/time stamped (whether late or not).

B. If you have attached Rubric card(s) to this assignment they are accessed to use here. Clicking on the title link will open the card in a list view directly in the window. Clicking on the highlighted icon will open the rubric card in a grid view in a new window.

C. This **Feedback** area is where you can write some feedback for the student to read. Highlighted on this box are two icons where you can:

Switch on the spellcheck facility for your text. The default is US English so use the dropdown to switch to UK English.

Access the full text editor to add rich feedback for students, including multimedia and embedded mashups.

Attach one or more files for the students as a part of their feedback.

D. **Grading Notes**. Clicking this **Add Notes** link opens a text box where you can leave notes for anyone else marking the work. Students do not see these notes.

E. In this area you can anonymise the work you are marking (so long as identifying information is not included in the work itself), **Exit** and return to the Grade Centre.

F. Us the **View Previous** and **View Next links** to move to the next or previous student assignment to view and mark.

G. Clicking **Assignment Details** opens a basic information area about the assignment, such as due date, title and any files you originally uploaded.

Download submissions for printing and offline viewing

You can also download all of the submissions for an assignment in a batch for printing or viewing offline.

30. In the **Grade Centre** for the module, in the title header for this assignment's column, hover your mouse pointer and click on the downward arrow icon and on the pop-up menu that appears select "Assignment File Download".
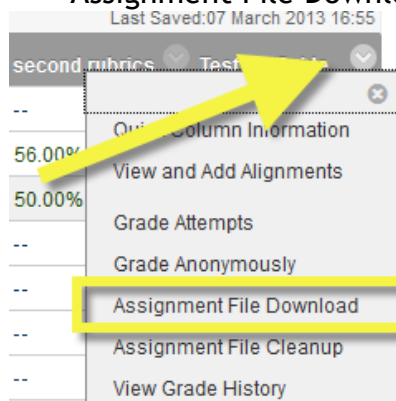
31. You can select all students by checking the box highlighted below, or you can select individual users by ticking the box next to their names.
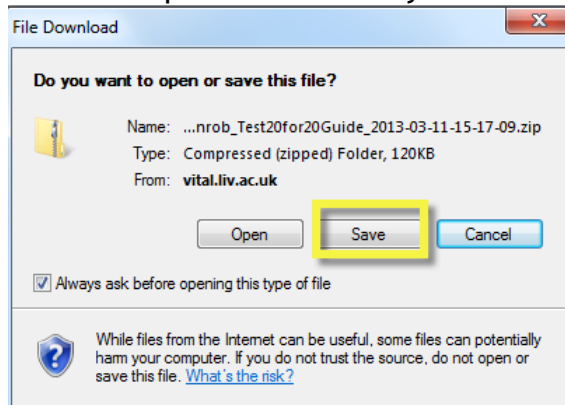

32. Click **Submit** and on the next screen you see click the **Download assignments now** link to get the zip file containing all the selected assignments.

Download Assignment: Test for Guide

The assignments have been packaged. Download assignments now. (123 KB)
Monday, 11 March 2013 14:44:57 o'clock GMT

33. Click **Save** to save the zip file to your computer (the below shows Internet Explorer so this may look different in different browsers).

File Download

Do you want to open or save this file?

Name: ...nrob_Test20for20Guide_2013-03-11-15-17-09.zip
Type: Compressed (zipped) Folder, 120KB
From: **vital.liv.ac.uk**

[Open] [Save] [Cancel]

☑ Always ask before opening this type of file

While files from the Internet can be useful, some files can potentially harm your computer. If you do not trust the source, do not open or save this file. What's the risk?

34. Find a location on your machine and click **Save** again.

35. The assignment title, student's username (or their group name if it is a group assignment) and the date of the submission is automatically added to each filename in the download. This cannot be changed. If there are multiple attempts they will all be downloaded.