How to Set Up Your Gradebook in Sakai

Instructors can set up the Gradebook in Sakai to organize, manage, and distribute students' grades and to automatically calculate final grades.

This handout covers how to perform the initial "set up" of your Gradebook, so you'll be able to add students' grades later. (A separate handout covers how to enter students' grades.)

Step 1: Consider your grading scheme

How you set up your Gradebook depends on your course grading scheme. The Sakai Gradebook works best if your grading scheme consists of categories and percentages, similar to these examples:

Discussion Forums	25 %
Research Paper	15 %
Tests	60 %

Homework (Drop 1 lowest HW grade)	30 %
Project	20 %
Quizzes	10 %
Exams	40 %

In-class writings	25 %
Quizzes*	15 %
Tests	30 %
Final Exam	10 %
Final Paper	20 %

*Lowest quiz grade will be dropped

If your grading scheme varies greatly from those shown above, it's likely Sakai won't be able to automatically calculate final grades for you.

Some instructors use a total points system, with final grades based on points accumulated throughout the semester. This does not work well in Sakai, because students cannot see their total points in Sakai. Students will have to "do the math" to find out where they stand in the course. (However, instructors WILL be able to see students' total points.)

TIP: **Instructors are encouraged to use a simple grading scheme of categories and percentages, if possible, because it makes things easier for you and your students.**

Whatever you do, make sure your Gradebook in Sakai is consistent with what you put in your syllabus.

Step 2: Set up your gradebook

1. In your Sakai site, click on **Gradebook**, then click the **Gradebook Setup** button along the top.

2. For "Grade Entry" make sure **POINTS** is selected.

   Tip: This selection refers to how you enter grades for individual assignments. For example, if a student scores 40 on an assignment that is worth 50 points, will you enter 40 points or 80 percent? We've found that choosing "percentages" here can create problems for instructors and students; therefore choosing "POINTS" is recommended.

3. Under "Gradebook Items Display" make sure the box is checked to **Display released Gradebook Items to students**. If you un-check this box, your students will not be able to see any grades!

   Tip: Grades for individual assignments can be hidden from students or released to students later, when you set up gradebook items or edit them.

4. In the next section, choose **Categories & Weighting**, if your grading scheme consists of categories and percentages, as described earlier. (If not, choose "No categories" or "Categories only".)

   a. Click **Add a Category** and use your grading structure to enter categories and percentages (%) in the boxes. As categories and percentages are added, the Running Total will change. Running Total must be 100% in order to save and exit.

   b. **Drop Lowest** (optional) - To drop the lowest grade(s) in a category, check the box beside **Enable Drop Lowest** as shown below. A new column will appear in the category list. To the right of any category, you can enter the how many low grades to drop. For example, enter 1 to drop the single lowest grade in the category, or 2 to drop the two lowest, etc.

   IMPORTANT: To drop a grade, all items in the category must have the same point value! For example, if dropping a low grade in the Homework category, all assignments in that category must have the same "points possible". If some Homework assignments will be worth 10 points and others worth 20, DO NOT attempt to drop the lowest grade.


   c. When finished, click **Save Changes**. You will be returned to the main Gradebook screen ("Gradebook Items" screen) where the categories you've created are displayed.

Step 3: Select course grade options

Your last step is to choose whether students can see their overall course grade (as calculated by Sakai) and to make sure the correct letter grades are assigned.

1. In the Sakai Gradebook, click the **Course Grade Options** button along the top.

2. Under **Grade Display** you can check the box to **Display course grade to students now**. If you check this box, your students will see a calculation of their overall course grade, based on work they've done so far in the class.
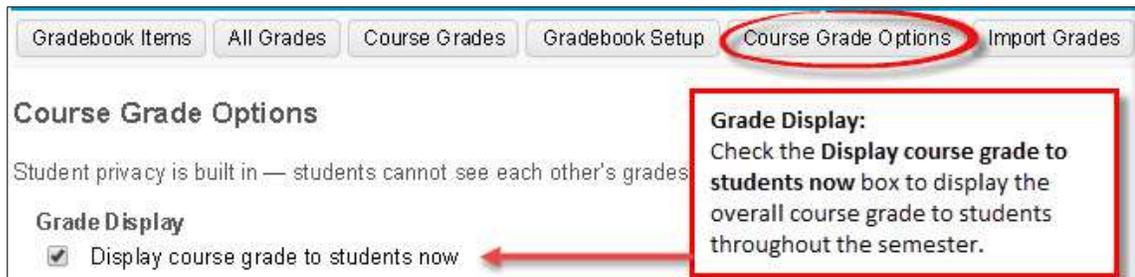
Tip: Displaying the course grade to students throughout the semester can help them keep track of how they are doing in the class.

NOTE: If you did not set up Categories & Weighting to calculate grades, it's best NOT to display the course grade, as it will be a weighted average of all scores and may not reflect an accurate overall course grade.

What does the "course grade" look like to students?

The screenshot on the left shows how the **Course Grade** appears to students (if you choose to display it). Students see a numeric course grade along with a letter grade. Step 3 below covers how letter grades are determined.

3. In the **Grade Conversion** section (of the **Course Grades Options** screen) is a scale that tells Sakai the letter grade to assign to students based on their overall (numeric) course grade.

    o The default **Grade Type** (grading scale) is **Letter Grades**, a 10-point grading scale.

    o If your course grading scale is not a 10-point scale, click on the **drop down menu** and select a different **grading scale** from the list. Then click **Change grade type**.

    o Check the **letter grades** and **numbers** displayed.

    o If the **letter grades** and **numbers** are correct, click **Save**. If not, you can manually adjust the numbers to match your grading scale, and then click **Save**.

For lots more info and handouts on using Sakai's Gradebook tool visit:
http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/index.php/Sakai:_Gradebook