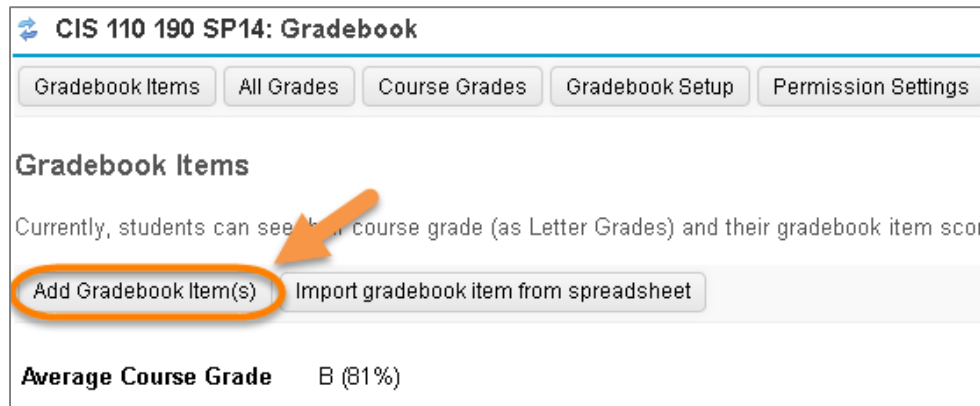# How to Grade Students' Forum Posts

Sakai's Forums tool offers several ways for instructors to review and grade students' discussion posts. In this handout, we'll show you the way we think is simplest and quickest.

Step 1: Add a Gradebook item

In the Gradebook, you need to have a gradebook item for each forum topic. Here's how to create them:

1. On the main course menu, click **Gradebook**.

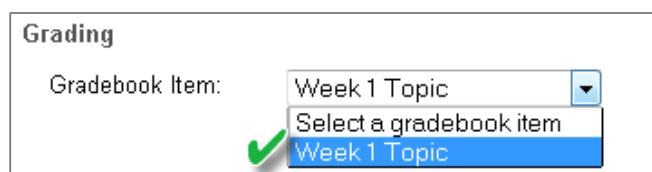2. Click the **Add Gradebook Item(s)** button, as shown below.

3. Enter a **Title** (example: *Week 1 Topic*) and the **Gradebook Item Point Value** (ex: *10*).

4. Enter a **Due Date**. (Optional, but recommended. Students will see due dates in the Gradebook.)

5. If you have set up gradebook categories (recommended), choose the appropriate **Category** for this gradebook item. Then BE SURE to check the box to "**Include this item in course grade calculations**" so students' forum grades will be calculated into their overall course grade.

6. At the bottom, click **Add Item(s).** The new item now appears in your Sakai gradebook.

Step 2: Associate a Forum Topic with the Gradebook Item

When you "associate" a Forum topic with a Gradebook item, you are telling the Forums tool where in the Gradebook to store grades for that topic.

1. In the main course menu, click **Forums**.

2. To the right of the topic you want to grade, click **Topic Settings**.

3. Scroll to the bottom, to the area labeled **Grading**. In the dropdown menu, select the **Gradebook item** you want to associate with this Forum topic.

- **TIP:** If you created a Gradebook item just a few moments ago, you may need to wait a minute or two before it appears in this dropdown menu. You may need to Save and come back into Topic Settings before it will appear.

4. After selecting the appropriate gradebook item, click **Save**.

Step 3: Review and grade students' posts

On the main page of the Forums tool, to the right of the topic you want to grade, click **More** and choose **Grade**. A grading screen appears, which lists each student along with a column for entering grades:

1. If you want to enter comments along with grades, click **Show Comments** in the upper right. This will display boxes for entering comments.

2. To begin grading, click on a **student's name**. A window will open showing the full text of all posts and replies submitted by that student in this topic. Scroll through this window to review the student's work. When finished, click **Close Window**.

3. Enter the student's grade in the box provided, and enter any comments.

   - **TIP:** Once you start entering grades, do NOT click on DETAILS. Doing so can result in losing unsaved grades.

4. To save, scroll down to the bottom and click **Submit Grades**.
   (After saving, you will need to click Show Comments again to see and enter comments.)

   - **IMPORTANT:** BE SURE to SAVE often! We recommend that you scroll down and click **Submit Grades** after every one or two students that you grade.

5. Students will see their grade and any comments in the Gradebook:

For more info on using Sakai's Forums tool visit Durham Tech's Instructional Technology web site
[http://courses.durhamtech.edu/wiki/]