Tips for Using Sakai's Gradebook

Below are our top tips for avoiding problems and having a smooth experience with Sakai's Gradebook.

Setting up your Gradebook

- **Use a simple grading scheme of categories and percentages.**
  Sometimes instructors make their grading schemes overly complex. The result can be confusion for students (and for instructors too). If you'd like advice on simplifying your grading scheme, email us at sakaihelp@durhamtech.edu

- **Choose POINTS -- not percentages.** (on Gradebook Setup screen)
  When we get calls from instructors saying students' grades "don't look right", the reason is often that the instructor chose percentages instead of points.

- If you "drop lowest" grade in a category, ALL items in that category must have the same point value! (If you do NOT drop grades, then items within a category do not have to have the same point value.)

Creating Gradebook items and entering grades

- When adding items to the Gradebook, be sure to assign the item to a category (if using categories) AND to check the box to include it in grade calculations.

- Two Sakai tools -- Assignments and Tests & Quizzes -- can create gradebook items automatically for you. You do NOT need to add items to the Gradebook for activities that use these two tools. Gradebook items created by these tools will appear highlighted in light yellow on the main Gradebook screen, and to the right of the item you will see *"from Assignments"* or *"from Tests & Quizzes"*.

- In the Gradebook, you cannot add/change grades for highlighted items that were created by other Sakai tools (Assignments or Tests & Quizzes). Grades for those items must be entered/changed within each of those tools.

- When grading, click the **Save Changes** button often; your grades and comments are **not** automatically saved.

- Remember: When a student doesn't turn in an assignment or misses a test, no grade is assigned, and a small dash shows where the grade should be. Grades left "blank" like this are not punitive -- they do not affect the student's final course grade. To penalize students for missed work, the instructor must assign a grade of zero.

Tips for checking that everything is right

- On the main Gradebook items screen, do a quick check to make sure:
    - Items are assigned to the correct categories
    - Point values are correct for each item
    - Items are released (visible) to students – look for YESs in the "Released" column
    - Items are included in grade calculations – look for YESs in the "Included" column

- At the end of the semester, use our handout on finalizing grades to make sure everything is correct.

What do students see? To see EXACTLY what a student sees in the Gradebook: In the All Grades area, click on a student's name, such as John Doe, then in the upper right click on "John Doe's View of Grades"