

Best Practices for Assignments



Below are tips for using online assignments effectively. These tips were gathered from the experiences of *real* instructors, from Durham Tech and elsewhere.

Provide support for students

- Remember that Sakai's Assignments tool may be new to your students.
- Provide a link to Durham Tech's info for students on [Submitting Assignments](#) so they'll know what to do.
- Early in the course, give students an opportunity to submit a low-stakes Assignment, so they can become familiar with the process before a major paper is due.

Combat plagiarism

- Use the **Turnitin** feature within Assignments to check student papers for plagiarism.
- Be sure to review the [rules for submitting papers to Turnitin](#) and share them with students.
- Be aware that it may take 30-60 minutes from the time the student submits a paper for the Turnitin report to appear.
- A high "similarity index" doesn't always mean a paper is plagiarized! Instructors must review Turnitin reports carefully to determine if plagiarism occurred.

Assignment Feedback and Grading

- **Highlight/bold** the text you type in the instructor comments area, so it will stand out to students.
- Consider attaching a [grading rubric](#) to provide detailed feedback. Instructor comments will display to students in the Gradebook, but any files you attach when grading will not!
 - *Students must go into the Assignments tool -- and must scroll all the way to the bottom -- to see the instructor's attachments.* If you attach files as part of assignment feedback, it's important to tell students where to find them.
- Apply a grade of zero to students who did not submit.
- Remember to **Release Grades** so students will be able to see their grades and any comments or feedback.

Student	Submitted	Status	Grade	Release
East, Jane (jane) Grade	Sep 3, 2014 4:44 pm	Returned	80.0	✓
South, Ted (ted) Grade		Returned	0	✓
West, David (david) Grade	Sep 3, 2014 4:45 pm	Returned	100.0	✓