

8: ADVANCED GRADEBOOK OPTIONS

WELCOME TO THE ADVANCED GRADEBOOK OPTIONS TUTORIAL!

This tutorial provides information about Gradebook features not covered in the *Moodle Gradebook Basics* and the *Using the Gradebook* training modules. In this tutorial, you will learn:

- How to use grading scales
- How to assign letter grades
- How to import and export grades from the Moodle Gradebook

If you have not used one of CareerTech’s “How to Moodle” tutorials before, view the [instructions](#) for using it as a self-paced tutorial or as a resource for classroom instruction.

Before taking this tutorial, you should be familiar with:

- Moodle navigation and course editing
- Adding course Activities and Resources
- Enrolling students in a Moodle course
- Concepts presented in the *Moodle Gradebook Basics* tutorial

For this tutorial, you are encouraged to follow your syllabus and grading plan. You should also have a course site with a populated Gradebook, either real or fictitious of your own courses.

MENU OF TUTORIAL TOPICS

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INTRODUCTION

This tutorial addresses common questions concerning grading and importing and exporting the Moodle Gradebook.

Once you have set up your course, you may want to consider some alternatives to the standard points system of grading. These include Scales and Letters.

USING GRADING SCALES

Scales represent student performance using text or numbers. A scale may or may not correlate with a percentage range. Scales can be calculated within some aggregation methods. Scales cannot be used with Natural.

Scales can be created at two different levels:

- **Standard scales**—Standard scales can only be created by an administrator at the site level in the Site Administration area. Standard scales are available site wide, meaning they can be used and automatically appear, in every course on the site.
- **Custom scales**—Custom scales can be created by an instructor or other user in courses with the appropriate permissions. Custom scales are only accessible in the course in which they are created.

Scales may be textual, numerical, or symbolic. The samples below illustrate how scales can be designed to be appropriate for specific age and developmental ranges:

- Textual (Verbose) Scales
 - Well below average, Below average, Average, Above Average, Well above average
 - Bad, Very poor, Poor, Normal, Good, Very Good, Excellent
- Numerical Scales
 - 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
 - 10, 20, 30, 40, 50
 - 0, 50, 100, 150, 200, 250
- Symbolic Scales
 - *, **, ***, ****, *****

Scales can be used to grade an individual activity or a Gradebook category. Keep in mind that three-item scales, and even four-item scales, may not result in the expected grading outcome. For example, if you have a scale of Poor—Good—Excellent, the “Good” indicator would receive a 50-percent score, which is

likely not what you want. Consider creating a scale with no less than five indicators in order to be fair to your students.

Why Use Scales?

Scales are most often a replacement for a numerical grade for activities. You may want to use scales as a form of feedback if your students will understand them or be motivated by them more than percentage scores.

How Do I Create Scales in Moodle?

To create a new scale for your course, follow the steps below:

Step	Action	Notes
1.	Open the Grader Report. In the Administration block under Course Administration, click on Grades. In the Boost theme, open the grader report by clicking the course editing gear icon and clicking Gradebook Setup . Finally, click the View tab.	You must be working in the course where you want to use the Scales you are adding, as they will not be added to other courses.
2.	Click the Scales tab.	This tab displays existing Custom and Standard scales.
3.	Click the button Add a new scale .	The Add a Scale settings page displays.
4.	Enter the Name of the scale.	Use a meaningful name, such as “Incomplete,” “Complete,” etc.
5.	The Standard Scale checkbox will be inactive unless you have administrator privileges.	
6.	Add the Scale range.	Enter your desired scale values starting with the lowest indicator value and ending with the highest. Separate each indicator with a comma. Example: Needs Work, Average, Excellent
7.	Enter in a Description if desired.	This description can only be seen when in editing mode for this scale.

Step	Action	Notes
8.	Click Save changes .	<p>The new Scale now appears under Custom on the Scale tab. The Scale name and range of indicators are listed.</p> <p>The scale can be edited or deleted using the associated icons on this tab. Once a scale is used for an activity, it is no longer possible to move or delete it, and you can only edit the scale name and description.</p>

ASSIGNING LETTER GRADES

Although Letter grades are a type of scale system, they are used separately from Scales. In Moodle, Letter grades are defined initially at the site level by an administrator. If you would like to edit the Letter scale for a specific course that you teach, follow the steps below:

Step	Action	Notes
1.	<p>Open the Grader Report by clicking on Course Administration > Grades</p> <p>In the Boost theme, open the grader report by clicking the course editing gear icon and clicking Gradebook Setup. Finally, click the View tab.</p>	Any letter definitions you edit will be used only in the course in which you edit them.
2.	Click the Letters tab.	This tab displays the existing definitions for letter grades.
3.	Click the Edit Grade Letters link.	
4.	Click the Override site defaults box to enable this functionality.	You must mark this checkbox to activate the fields for editing grade letters and boundaries.
5.	Edit the letters and/or boundaries as desired.	<p>Grade letters can be A, B, C, ...; or you can use words such as Distinction, Merit, Pass, ...</p> <p>The boundary for each letter determines the minimum percentage over which grades will be assigned the grade letter.</p>

Step	Action	Notes
6.	Click Save changes .	The new definitions for letter grades are displayed on the Letters tab. These definitions will only be used in the course in which they have been edited.

EXPORTING AND IMPORTING GRADES

Moodle provides the option to export student grades so they can be viewed in a spreadsheet. The export and import features enable teachers to manage their Gradebook outside of Moodle and import grades into Moodle. If you want to use this method, you must export the Gradebook from Moodle first in order to be able to import it later.

As a best practice, grade within Moodle, because imported grades are equivalent to using manual grading in the Moodle Grader Report. When importing grades for a particular Moodle activity (such as an Assignment), you can no longer edit them on the assignment submission page. Keep this in mind if you want to use the import and export features.

You can also use the export feature to keep a backup of course grades. Exporting grades may be more practical than backing up a course with user data. The ability to export or import grades also comes in handy if, for example, you want to consolidate the grades from another term, or perform a backup of your class grades.

Exporting from the Moodle Gradebook

Users with teacher level permissions or higher can export. The grade export functionality is not intended for student use. Exporting can be done to any of the supported destination file types.

To export grades from your course follow these steps (these are general steps, as each file type has its own specific settings):

Step	Action	Notes
1.	From the Grader Report , click the Export tab.	This will open a page called Export to [destination type]. The default type is OpenDocument Spreadsheet. To use a different destination file type, you must select from the links at the top of the page, or the drop-down list in the top corner of the page.

Advanced Gradebook Options

Step	Action	Notes
2.	If necessary, click the desired destination file type.	Grades from Moodle can be exported to specific types of destinations. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excel spreadsheet• OpenDocument spreadsheet• Plain text file• XML file NOTE: To export grades to an XML file, you must ensure that users have ID numbers (an option field in the common module setting).
3.	<i>Section: Export format options</i> Set options as required.	Each file type is slightly different, so the fields available in this section will vary.
4.	If the course uses groups, select whether to export grades for all participants or for a particular group.	
5.	<i>Section: Grade Items to be included</i> Click the box for any grade item that will be included in the export.	This section will include a list of every activity that currently appears in your Gradebook. All activities are checked by default. There is also a link at the bottom of the list to Select all/none .
6.	Click Submit at the bottom of the page.	A page displaying the data to be exported will display. To cancel the export at this point, simply navigate away from the page. When you return to the Export tab, the settings will be refreshed.
7.	Click Download.	The data is exported to the destination file.

Importing Grades into Moodle

Importing grades to the Moodle Gradebook can be done under limited circumstances, but it is not a recommended method for managing grades for the following reasons:

- A Gradebook or grading system kept in Excel or any type of grades database cannot be *directly* imported into Moodle.

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- If grades are imported from one of the two supported file types (CSV or XML), all grades will be considered overridden and cannot be edited except from within the Moodle Gradebook.
- The import file format must be the same as the corresponding export format. Therefore, instructors must first export the Moodle Gradebook and then grade in order to be able to import.
- When opening the exported Gradebook file in Excel, do not add new columns—Moodle will not import the file if the columns do not match the exported file. Be sure to add columns in Moodle before exporting the Gradebook.

To import grades into Moodle, do the following:

Step	Action	Notes
1.	While in your course site, click on: Administration > Course Administration > Grades > Import.	
2.	Choose an import format type from the dropdown menu.	Import file types include CSV, XML, etc. Settings to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encoding—If unknown, try the second choice in the encoding menu, particularly for Excel CSV files. The import preview will indicate whether your guess was correct.• Separator—Select tab or comma to separate the table cells.• Verbose scales—Check the box if the scale includes a string (such as Excellent, Good, Average, Needs Improvement), as opposed to a raw id or numeric scale (such as 1, 2, 3).
3.	Browse on your computer, locate the file, select it, and click to upload it.	When importing a CSV file, preview the grade import, choose the column mapping, and click to upload the grades. If students have ID number fields in their profiles —The default setting for “Map from” is First Name, and “Map to” to userid. Change “Email Address” to “useremail,” or “Id Number” to “useridnumber.”

SUMMARY AND RESOURCES

In this tutorial, you learned how to:

- Use grading scales
- Assign letter grades
- Import and export grades from the Moodle Gradebook

The Moodle Gradebook has a great deal of functionality. This tutorial covers only a part of what you can do with the Gradebook in your course. Explore the various options that align with the way you prefer to manage your courses.

To find more information about the topics discussed in this tutorial, use the Moodle Docs resources:

- Scales: <https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/Scales>
- Gradebook Import: https://docs.moodle.org/dev/Gradebook_import
- Exporting Grades from Moodle: https://docs.moodle.org/33/en/Grade_export

HOW TO USE THIS TUTORIAL:

This tutorial can be used as a self-paced lesson or as a lesson plan in a classroom setting.

- **As a self-paced lesson.**

If this is a completely new skill for you, work through the tutorial from beginning to end. However, if you have some prior experience with the topic, use the menu hyperlinks on page one to jump to a topic that you want to learn.

Most topics include hyperlinks to video demonstrations. While the videos are useful, you don't have to watch them. All the information that you need is listed in the tutorial text and step instructions.

Use the exercises at the end of the tutorial to practice the skill. This will help to correct any misunderstandings or mistakes before you use the skill in your classroom.

- **As a lesson-plan for a classroom.**

When teaching this skill in a classroom, use the tutorial for:

- ✓ **Motivation**—Use the tutorial introduction as a springboard for a deeper exploration of how instructors might use this functionality in their classrooms. Encourage discussion and contributions from your students.
- ✓ **Demonstration**—Once your learners understand the purpose and pedagogical value of the functionality, demonstrate the steps of the relevant tasks as listed in the tutorial, using your computer and an overhead projector.
- ✓ **Practice**—Use the tutorial example as a basis for student practice. Assist as necessary.
- ✓ **Reference**—Encourage learners to use the tutorial post-session as a reference when using the functionality.

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We would appreciate feedback on this tutorial! Please send comments or suggestions to:

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