# 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 previous gradebook tutorials

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

## INTRODUCTION

This tutorial addresses common questions concerning grading activities and assignments 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 grading scales and letters grades.

## USING GRADING SCALES

Grading scales provide an alternative to numerical score. Although Moodle assigns a numerical value to the scale variables, grading scales are best used to assess assignments and tests that will not be calculated in the students' total scores.

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 automatically appear as a scaled grading choice in courses sitewide.

- **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
  - Poor, Average, 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.

### 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 to encourage or motivate students.

### 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**. On the course page, click the **Course Management** button and click the **Grades overview** link. | You must be working in the course where you want to use the scale. |
| 2. | Click the **Scales** tab. | This tab displays **Course scales** page that lists existing Custom and Standard scales. |
| 3. | Click the **Add a new scale** button at the bottom of the page. | The **Scale** settings page displays. |
| 4. | Enter the **Name** of the scale. | Use a meaningful name, such as "Level of Expertise," etc. |
| 5. | The **Standard Scale checkbox** will be inactive unless you have administrator privileges. | |
| 6. | Add the scales' range in the **Scale** field. | Enter your desired scale values starting with the **lowest indicator value** and ending with the highest. Separate each indicator with a comma. Example: Unacceptable, Marginal, Adequate, Satisfactory, Good, Excellent, Exceptional |
| 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 the **Save changes** button. | The new custom scale now appears on the **Scale** tab. The scale name and range of indicators are listed. |
| | | The scale can be edited or deleted using the 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. |

## 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. Teachers can edit the letter scale for a specific course by following these steps:

| Step | Action | Notes |
|------|--------|-------|
| 1. | Open the **Course Management** button and click the **Grades overview** link. | 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** checkbox 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. | Grade letters can be A, B, C, ...; or you can use words such as Distinction, Merit, Pass, ... |
| | | The boundary for each letter determines the minimum percentage over which grades will be assigned the grade letter. |

| Step | Action | Notes |
|------|--------|-------|
| 6. | Click the **Save changes** button. | 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 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 also should 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 grades. 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 general steps. Be aware that 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 export a different file type, click the appropriate tab, or choose a different file type from the dropdown menu at the top of the page. |

| Step | Action | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 2. | If necessary, click the desired destination file type. | Grades from Moodle can be exported to specific types of destinations.<br><br>• Excel spreadsheet<br>• OpenDocument spreadsheet<br>• Plain text file<br>• XML file<br><br>To export grades to an XML file, you must ensure that users have ID numbers (an option field in the common module setting). |
| 3. | **Section:** Grade Items to be included<br><br>All activities are checked by default. Click the checkbox to deselect any grade items from the exported file. | This section will include a list of every activity that currently appears in your Gradebook.<br><br>There is also a link at the bottom of the list to **Select all/none**. |
| 4. | **Section:** Export format options.<br><br>This section includes several settings. Make changes as needed. | In most instances, leave **Require active enrollment** enabled. Otherwise, the exported file will include students who are not currently enrolled in the course. |
| 5. | **Section:** Export format options<br><br>Set options as required. | Each file type is slightly different, so the fields available in this section will vary. |
| 6. | If the course uses groups, select whether to export grades for all participants or for a particular group. | |
| 7. | Click the **Download** button at the bottom of the page. | The data is exported to the destination file. Save the file to a location where you can easily find it. |

**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.

- 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 student work to be able to import grades.

- 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.

Before beginning, make sure the user names and assignment names are correct in the spreadsheet. The easiest way to do this is to export the Moodle gradebook as a spreadsheet.

To import grades into your Moodle course from a **CSV file**, follow these steps:

| Step | Action | Notes |
|------|--------|-------|
| 1. | While in your course site, click on the **Course Management** button > **Grades overview** link > **Import** tab. | An **Import file** settings page appears. |
| 2. | Click the **Choose a file…** button, browse to the grade spreadsheet on your computer and select it, and click the **Upload this file** button. | You can also select the file on your computer by clicking and dragging it to the **File** field in Moodle. <br><br> Settings to consider: <br><br> • **Encoding**—The default is UTF-8. The import preview will indicate whether your guess was correct. <br> • **Separator**—Select tab, comma, colon, or semicolon to separate the table cells. <br> • **Verbose scales**—Choose Yes or No, depending on whether words or numbers were used. <br> • **Preview rows**—This determines the number of rows displayed in the preview. |
| 3. | Click the **Upload grades** button. | The import preview screen will display. |
| 4. | | Check the mapping settings. Under the **Identify user by** section, the default setting for "Map from" is "First name", and the default for "Map to" is "User ID." <br><br> Change "Map from" to "Email address," and "Map to" to "Email address." |

| Step | Action | Notes |
|------|--------|-------|
| 5. | Click the **Upload grades** button. | A **Grade import success message** should display on the **Import CSV** page. |
| 6. | Click the **Continue** button. | The **Grader report** should display. |

VIDEO DEMONSTRATION:

Watch this 2 ½-minute video to see a demonstration of copying and pasting grades from Excel into the Moodle gradebook.

https://youtu.be/J8SkEMVoRjc

**NOTE:** Video demonstrations were not created by Oklahoma CareerTech, and they may use a different version of Moodle. However, the steps are similar to the ones that you will use.

## 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/34/en/Scales#Creating_course_scales
- Exporting Grades from Moodle: https://docs.moodle.org/34/en/Grade_export

You may also visit the Moodle YouTube channel (Gradebook Search):
https://www.youtube.com/user/moodlehq/search?query=gradebook

**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.

Return to the tutorial [main menu](#).

*We would appreciate feedback on this tutorial! Please contact the General ctYOU.org Support Staff listed under Division Contacts on ctYOU.org.*