1. Using Rubrics in your Canvas course

WHY USE RUBRICS?

- Set clear expectations for students
- Plan consistent, equitable grading of assessments
- Grade and provide meaningful feedback more efficiently

RUBRICS SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Rubrics let students know what you're looking for in their work. A clear rubric breaks down each part of the assessment and sets the criteria for success (or not), so students can plan exactly what they need to do to succeed--before they start the assignment. When used for grading, a well-constructed rubric gives clear feedback about what the student accomplished and where they need to improve.

RUBRICS ARE MORE EQUITABLE

Rubrics ensure that the same grading criteria are applied to all students. Building assignments and assessments that are explicit about which skills students are practicing, and why they are practicing them on a particular assessment, builds transparency into learning and grading. Students who know why they are doing something and how their skills and knowledge will be measured are likely to be more engaged and view the assessment process as fair.

RUBRICS MAKE GRADING IN CANVAS EASIER AND FASTER

Once a rubric has been created in Canvas for an assessment, grading is simply a matter of clicking the box in each row that best fits that submission. A well-designed rubric prompts instructors to review work for specific, observable indicators of the criteria (i.e., structure, evidence, quality.) The Canvas rubric then automatically calculates the final grade and reflects back to students how their assignment was assessed relative to each of the criteria. This also saves time that can be used to craft focused, thoughtful comments for each student on a few topics rather than needing to write individual notes about every addition or deduction of points.

It takes extra time to create a good rubric, but it will provide you with a strong tool that gives students clear feedback and saves you time when it is time to grade.

HOW DO I BUILD A RUBRIC IN CANVAS?

Rubrics include three main components: Criteria, Ratings, and Descriptors

Assignment rubric

Criteria ①	Ratings ②			Pts
Explanation of issues	**5 pts** **Meets/exceeds expectations** Content indicates synthesis of ideas, in-depth analysis and includes original thought and support and examples for the topic.	**3 pts** **Approaching expectations** Content indicates thinking and reasoning applied on at least 3 ideas. Could use more analysis and support for these ideas.	**1 pts** **Not yet meeting expectations** Shows some thinking and reasoning, but includes less than 2 ideas, and analysis is underdeveloped or not original.	5 pts
Evidence and use of information	**5 pts** **Meets/exceeds expectations** At least 4 main points are well developed with focused evidence and clear examples that support the ideas. Reveals high degree of critical thinking to investigate a conclusion or point of view (yours).	**3 pts** **Approaching expectations** At least 3 main points are well developed with quality supporting details. Critical thinking is weaved into the thesis, but could use more development of main ideas leading to a stronger conclusion.	**1 pts** **Not yet meeting expectations** ③ Less than 2 main points lack detailed development. The ideas are vague with little evidence of critical thinking.	5 pts
Evaluation of potential solutions	**5 pts** **Meets/exceeds expectations** Contains insightful analysis of each of these areas: history of problem, feasibility of solution, and impacts of solution.	**3 pts** **Approaching expectations** Evaluation of solutions is adequate, but could use more analysis and detail in each of these areas: following: history of problem, feasibility of solution, and impacts of solution.	**1 pts** **Not yet meeting expectations** Superficial or cursory evaluation that lacks explanation, and that does not address each of the following: history of problem, feasibility of solution, and impacts of solution.	5 pts
			Total Points: 15	

1. **Criteria:** Identify three to five criteria about the content and skills taught in the course and reflected in this assignment.
2. **Ratings:** Include a breakdown of points for each achievement level. Levels can include points and labels ("Meets/exceeds expectations," etc.)
3. **Descriptors:** Write succinct, measurable descriptions for each achievement level; they should be specific to guide students. For instance, use "Includes three or more examples," instead of: "Includes examples."

WHERE YOU CAN USE CANVAS RUBRICS

Rubrics can be applied to Canvas assignments, quizzes and discussions.

- How to: Create a Canvas rubric, edit a rubric, and add rubric to Canvas assignment.
- Add a rubric to a graded Discussion post
- Use a rubric to grade submissions in Speedgrader
- Overview video of how Canvas rubrics work

Excellent resource about rubrics from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln: Introduction to rubrics

2. Weighted Assignment Groups

WHY USE WEIGHTED ASSIGNMENT GROUPS?

- Help streamline the grading process in Canvas
- Take advantage of the built-in Canvas Gradebook
- Set clear expectations for students

WEIGHTED ASSIGNMENT GROUPS HELP STREAMLINE THE GRADING PROCESS IN CANVAS

When creating and enabling certain grading structure and related content in a course, it is best practice to set things up before students have begun completing coursework.

Adding assignment groups allows you to organize the assignments in your course. Weighting the final course grade based on assignment groups can help streamline the grading process. Enabling this function assigns a percentage weight to each assignment group and is different from the value given to the individual assignments themselves. Similar to the overall breakdown instructors often include in their syllabi, weighted assignment groups can be set up to match.

WEIGHTED ASSIGNMENT GROUPS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE BUILT-IN CANVAS GRADEBOOK

The percentage weights will determine how Canvas calculates the final grade for your course and can help you take full advantage of the Gradebook. In other words, you can make Canvas do the math for you!

WEIGHTED ASSIGNMENT GROUPS SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Weighted assignment groups can help clarify expectations for your students. When you create weighted assignment groups the results auto populate on the **Syllabus** page and are explicitly displayed to your students. So, as you think about organizing and naming these **Assignment Groups**, think about how you may already have that structure outlined in your syllabus.
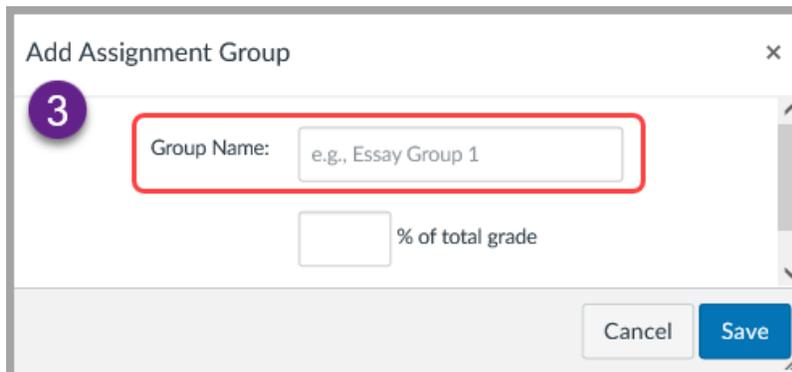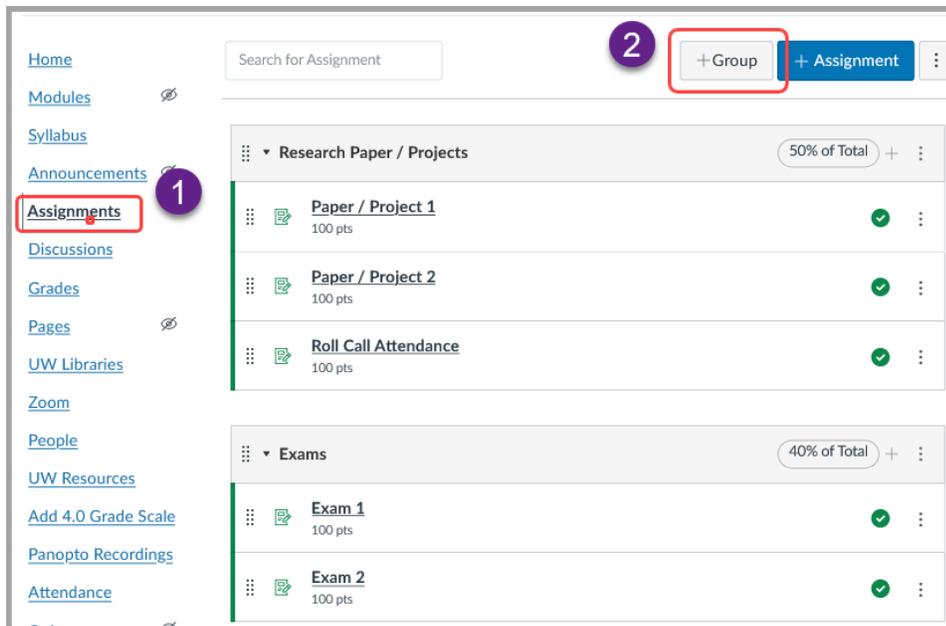

1. In the course navigation list at the left, click the **Syllabus** link
2. This is an example of the content which auto-populates on the Syllabus page when you create weighted assignment groups
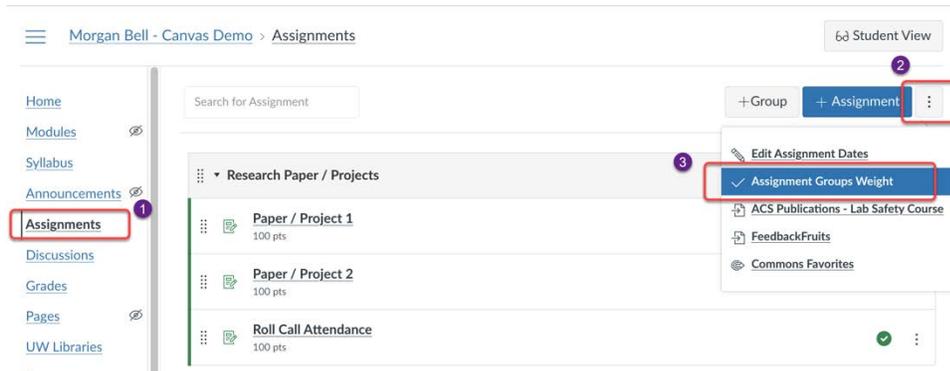
HOW TO CREATE WEIGHTED ASSIGNMENT GROUPS

The first step is to **Add Assignment Groups**.

1. In the course navigation list at the left, click the **Assignments** link
2. From the **Assignments** space, click **+Group** to **Add Assignment Group**
3. In the resulting pop-up window fill in the **Group Name** field and click **Save**
4. Repeat step 3 until you have created all the necessary **Assignment Groups**
5. Note, if the popup window has a box to add **% of total grade**, don't worry about that now. You can do all groups at once as outlined below

Now you can Weight the final grade based on these groups:

1. If you're not already there, in the course navigation list at the left, click the **Assignments** link
2. From the **Assignments** space, click the three-dot-stack at the upper right
3. In the drop-down menu select **Assignment Groups Weight**

Note: Once created, you can edit, or drag and drop to rearrange assignment groups and/or move individual assignments between assignment groups as needed. The three-dot-stack menu at the right of each assignment and assignment group also provides edit, delete, and move options.

In the resulting pop-up window, enter the percentage weights for each of the different Assignment Groups you created.

USEFUL GUIDES: CANVAS WEIGHTED ASSIGNMENT GROUPS

- How to: Add Assignment Groups
- How to: Weight the final course grade based on assignment groups
- Overview of the Canvas Gradebook (9 min. video)

3. Create a 4.0 Grade Scale and enable it as a grading scheme in your Canvas course

The [UW Grading System](#) uses a standard numerical 4.0 grading scale, with certain exceptions in the schools of Dentistry, Law, and Medicine. However, deciding what it takes to get a perfect "A", or 4.0, in a course is subjective and up to each instructor or department. For some courses, any student with a percentage grade above 93% received a 4.0; for others, 4.0 may be achievable with only an 85%, or it may be reserved for students who get a 100% score in the course. What makes sense for your students will depend on departmental policy and how you approach assessments in your course.

Canvas allows you to create your own 4.0 grade scale and apply it to a course. Enabling the 4.0 scale in Canvas is not necessary. However, regardless of how you assign grades—as percentages, points, or letter grades—when the course is complete, you will eventually need to convert grades to the 4.0 grade scale as you prepare grades for submission to the Office of the Registrar.

Enabling a 4.0 grade scale in Canvas allows students to track how their current course grades would translate into a grade on their transcript. This can help increase transparency for students and may reduce the anxiety from not knowing how individual assignment grades are impacting their overall GPA. Applying a 4.0 grade scale in Canvas also makes it easier to directly import grades to the UW Registrar at the end of the term.

TIPS AND GUIDES FOR USING A 4.0 GRADE SCALE IN CANVAS

When using the 4.0 Scale Conversion Calculator (whether in Canvas or during submission to the Registrar), the following tips can help keep things tidy:

- Check with your department to see if they have recommendations or requirements for the grading scale in your course. If not, you can choose what percentage grade is required to get a perfect score in your course (e.g., 97, 96, 95, 94…).
- If you want your grading scale to have each 4.0-scale score to line up with a whole number percentage grade:
    - Use a 33-point spread (e.g., 95% -62%) for an Undergraduate Scale (4.0 -0.7)
    - Use a 23-point spread (e.g., 95% -72%) for a Graduate Scale (4.0 -1.7)

4.0 Scale Calculator

UNDERGRADUATE SCALE (4.0-0.7) ▼

Score			Grade Point
95	%	=	4.0

+ Add a row ⋮

62	%	=	0.7

Reset   ⨠ Apply

Minimum score for grade			Grade Point
≥	95	% =	4.0
≥	94	% =	3.9
≥	93	% =	3.8
≥	92	% =	3.7
≥	91	% =	3.6
≥	90	% =	3.5
≥	89	% =	3.4
≥	88	% =	3.3
≥	87	% =	3.2
≥	86	% =	3.1
≥	85	% =	3.0

For more information:
- [Create, edit, or remove 4.0 grade scales in Canvas](#)
- [Apply a 4.0 grade scale to a Canvas Gradebook](#)
- [Canvas Gradebook](#) (9 min. video)
- [UW Grading Resources for Faculty and Staff](#)

A note on terminology:
- The [Gradebook](#) is a tool in Canvas that helps instructors easily view and enter grades for students and functions much like a highly dynamic spreadsheet
- [GradePage](#) is a tool used by the UW for faculty (and, in certain cases, TAs) to submit final course grades to the Office of the University Registrar.

Personalized, 30-minute coaching sessions are available and can be reserved by signing up on the Continuum College [Coaching and Training Calendar](#).

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