# Blackboard Tips & Tricks

Blackboard Assignments

There are two tools available in Blackboard for faculty to collect electronic assignment submissions: 1) the Blackboard Assignment tool, and 2) the Turnitin Assignment tool. See the Blackboard Assignments vs Turnitin Assignments Tips & Tricks to view a table comparing the features available in both tools to help identify the one best suited to meet your needs.

✓ A Blackboard Assignment is created within any Blackboard course content area (e.g. Coursework > Module 1) by clicking on the **Assessments** button at the top of the screen and selecting **Assignment** from the drop down list.
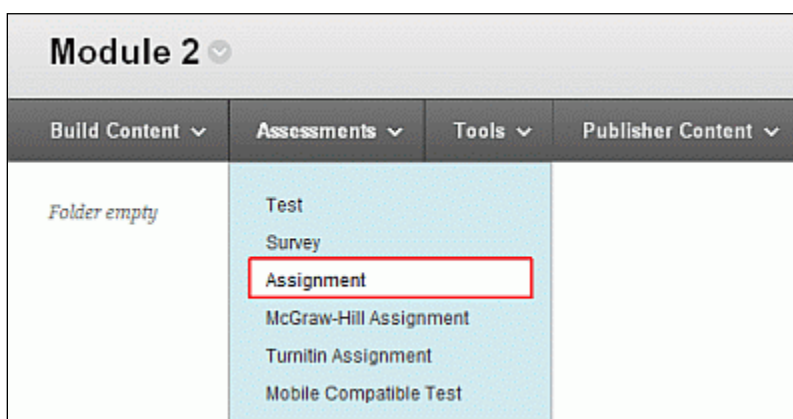
✓ It is highly recommended that you specify to students the specific file format(s) you will accept for their submissions (i.e. .doc, .rtf. docx) based upon the software available to you for opening and grading those submissions. There are compatibility issues between some versions of Microsoft Office: http://www.siue.edu/its/bb/known_issues.shtml#office.

✓ A rubric can be created and associated with any Blackboard Assignment. Instructors determine whether or not students can see the rubric and, if so, when. Rubrics are interactive, allowing instructors to simply click on the appropriate cells in the rubric to automatically generate a score. Feedback can also be provided for each cell within the rubric.

Effective Spring 2014, with the upgrade to Blackboard 9.1 SP 14, by default, all grading feedback (rubrics, general written feedback, and the icon for attaching the graded paper to return to the student) is *not* immediately visible to faculty on the Grade Assignment screen. To locate all of the feedback options, in the *Assignment Details* area on the right side of the Grade Assignment screen, click on the narrow blue bar with the downward pointing arrow to expand that area of the screen.
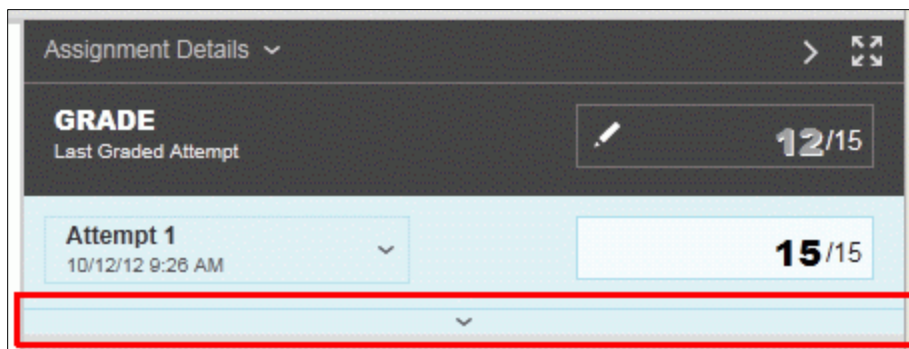
Once that area has been expanded, click on either the linked name of the rubric (to open an inline version of it) or the paper icon to the right of that (to open the rubric in a new window). Beneath the rubrics, you can enter general written feedback, and/or use the paperclip icon to attach a copy of the graded paper to return to the student.
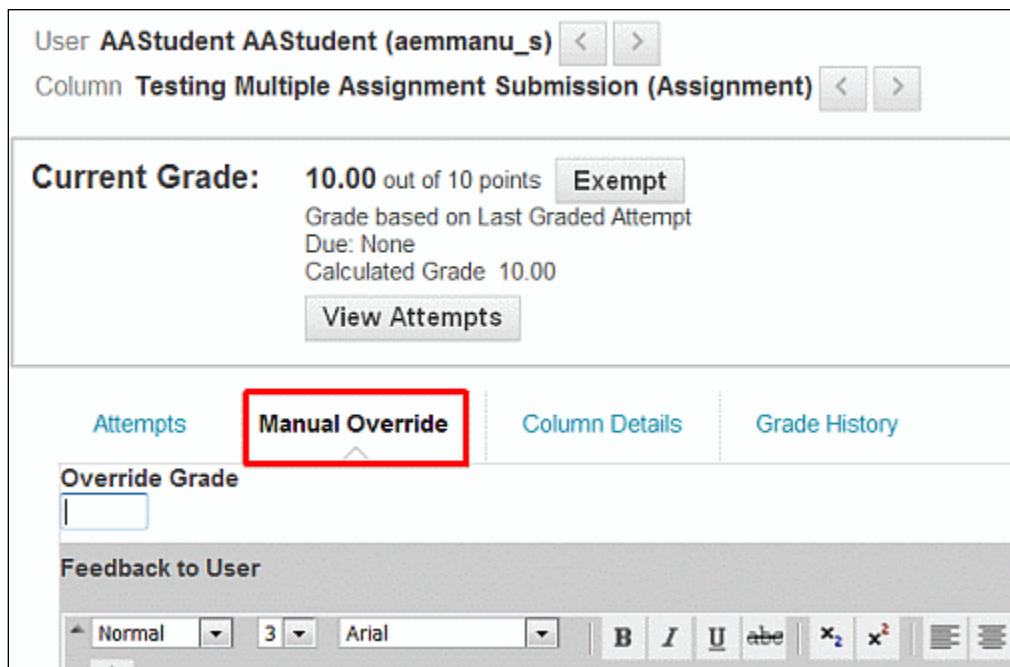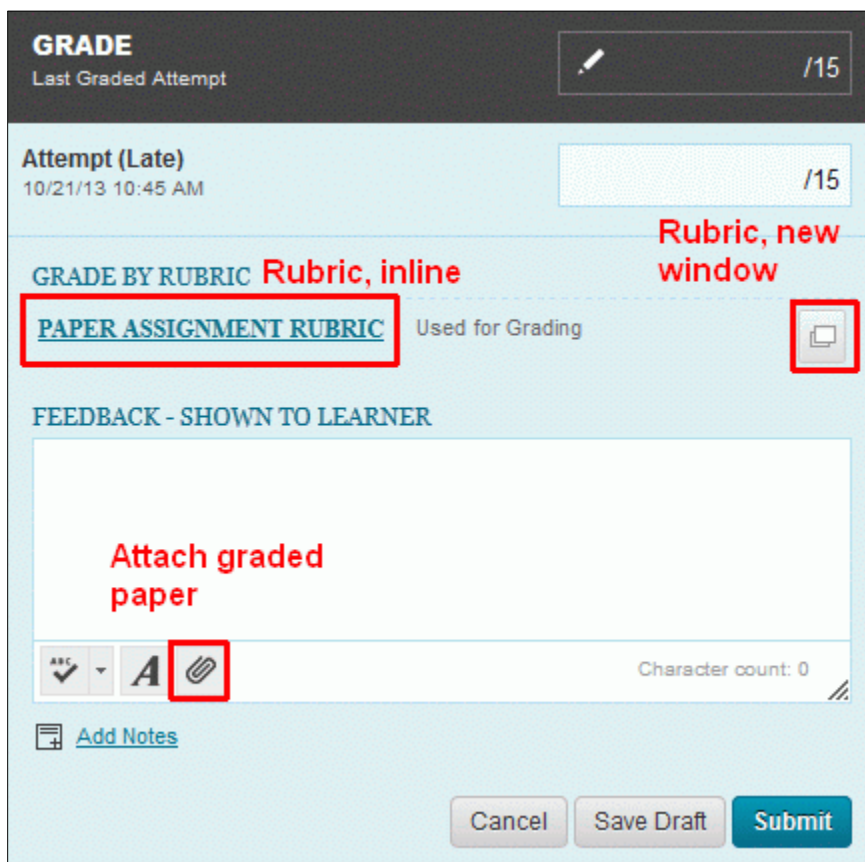

✓ The "Recipients" section of the Assignment set up screen determines whether each student will submit an assignment to be graded individually (All Students Individually), or whether one student will submit an assignment for a group of students (Groups of Students). In the case of the latter, when the instructor assigns a grade, it automatically is assigned to each student within that group. Note that the Groups must first be created before a group assignment can be created.

✓ Access to student submitted Assignments is provided through the
Control Panel > **Grade Center**, using one of the following links:
  o Needs Grading
  o Full Grade Center

o Assignments (Smart View)

✓ Assignments can be graded anonymously. That option appears in the drop down list in the column header by selecting "Grade Anonymously." Note that the concept of anonymity is futile if students are asked to submit a cover page with their name on it as part of the assignment.

✓ If a student saves an assignment, but neglects to "Submit" it, you will see an Attempt in Progress icon 🕐. Note that that icon is *only* visible in the Full Grade Center or Assignments Smart View, *not* on the Needs Grading screen. A saved file will be inaccessible to the instructor for grading. ***Only the student can actually "Submit" a saved assignment*** by returning to the assignment and clicking the "Submit" button. After the assignment has been submitted, it will then be available for grading.

✓ In order to change an Assignment grade, it is highly recommended to go to the "Manual Override" section of the Grade Details screen where you will be given an opportunity to document for both the student and yourself why the grade was changed. In addition, a gold triangle will appear in the Grade Center beside the grade, flagging it as one that was overridden.

✓ Assignments submitted by students count against the course quota. Faculty are advised against having students submit extremely large files (e.g. PowerPoint files full of improperly formatted images and/or voice over PowerPoint presentations). Please contact ITS for recommendations for alternate options for collecting extremely large files.

✓ Upon completion of an assignment, with grading complete, faculty are advised to download all assignment files (student submissions and graded papers) for archival purposes. The download option is available through the drop down in the Grade Center assignment column header: **Assignment File Download.**

Tutorials: http://www.siue.edu/its/bb/fac_staff/bb_step4c.shtml#assignments