GRADE ITEMS & CATEGORIES

A MORE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO GRADES AND CATEGORIES

WHY IS THE GRADEBOOK SET TO 'WEIGHTED' BY DEFAULT FOR TSBE?

- TSBE Template sets the Gradebook to use 'Weighted' Grades. This means every grade has both maximum points AND a 'weight' that determines the grade's overall weight in the MyLO unit.

- One reason is because many assessments use Rubrics, and the easiest way to create and mark with rubrics is to have them set to 100 points with reference to the UTAS DN, CR, PP grading system.

- This means when using a 100 points rubric, your marks will be easy to understand at a glance no matter how much the individual assignment is worth.

- You can still use a grade set to mark out of the same points as the weighting – so you can still use a grade item out of 20 that is worth 20%, you can also do this in the rubrics tool.

- You can *also* set a grade item set to mark out of *any* number that then has a weighting of *any other* number, this allows for flexibility when using some external systems, and some specific complex assignment setups etc.

- Essentially the weighted gradebook allows for the most flexibility for your grades and thus was selected as the default for TSBE units.

GRADES IN THE 'MANAGE GRADES' AREA

- Go to the 'Grades' area in MyLO and click on 'Manage Grades'.

- You will see a list of all of the grades in your MyLO site.

- Icons you may see are:

  - Grade is Restricted to group/criteria

  - Grade is Hidden

  - Association Details

Columns in the Manage Grades area are as follows:

Grade Item	Type	Association	Max Points	Weight
Grade item or Category item name. Also functions as the link you can click on to edit the grade or category.	The type of grade. Most common is 'numeric' but you might also see 'formula' or 'calculated' in some units.	If the grade is connected to an activity (ie a quiz) the type of association is listed here along with an icon that you can click to find out more information.	The maximum value that can be entered. If rubrics are being used this might often be 100.	The weighted value, what is the grade or category worth overall for this unit.

THE APPEARANCE OF CATEGORIES

- If categories are being used they will appear with a shaded background.

- Grades "inside" of the category are indented.

- The overall weighting set for the Category 'Subtotal' will show in the column 'Weight'.

	Grade Item	Type	Association	Max. Points	Weight
☐	Student Engagement 🖾 ∨				0
☐	Student Engagement 1 #SEA [r] 🖾	Numeric	Quizzes ❓	1	50
☐	Student Engagement 2 #SEA [r] 🖾	Numeric	-	1	0
☐	Category - One of Two ∨				20
☐	Category item 1 [r] 🖾 ∨	Numeric	Discussions ❓	10	50
☐	Category item 2 [r] ⬨ ∨	Numeric	-	10	50
☐	Example Quiz [r] ∨	Numeric	Quizzes ❓	1	20
☐	Assignment [r] ∨	Numeric	Assignments ❓	100	15

CREATING CATEGORIES & ADDING GRADES TO IT

- To create a category follow the instructions here.

- To assign an existing Grade Item to a category follow these instructions.

- When creating a new Grade Item the option to assign it to a category is one of the optional options. Follow these instructions here.

- To edit a Category click on the Category name in 'Manage Grades'.

HOW IS THE 'SUBTOTAL' DETERMINED?

- A Category 'subtotal' is determined in the Category Settings. Click on a Category in your Manage Grades area to see the settings.

- There are 3 options. (more details on next pages)
  - Manually assign weight to items
  - Distribute weight by points
  - Distribute weight evenly

- Further options appear on selecting option 3, allowing you to specify items that may be 'dropped' from the calculation.

  (ie, in the screenshot shown the grade with the lowest score will be dropped, this does not include a grade with no score listed).

Properties | Restrictions

General

Name *

Category - One of Two

Short Name

▷ Show Description

Grading

Weight

20

☐ Allow category grade to exceed category weight

Distribution

○ Manually assign weight to items in the category
○ Distribute weights by points across all items in the category
● Distribute weight evenly across all items

0   Number of highest non-bonus items to drop for each user

1   Number of lowest non-bonus items to drop for each user

WHAT DO THE THREE OPTIONS MEAN IN DETAIL?

- **Option 1: Manually assign weight to items in the category**

- You will need to enter the weight of each grade item in the category. Remember that you need it to add up to 100%

- **The category will then subtotal to the 'weight' you've selected.**

- In the example to the right, three grade items have been given manual weightings. The subtotal then calculates to a weighting of 20% overall, however the grades inside this category add up to 100% of the 'Category'.

	Type	Association	Max. Points	Weight
Category - Example ⌄				20
Category item 1 [r] ⌄	Numeric	Discussions ?	10	30
Category item 2 [r] ⌄	Numeric	-	30	50
Category Item 3 [r] ⌄	Numeric	-	20	20

WHAT DO THE THREE OPTIONS MEAN IN DETAIL?

- **Option 2: Distribute the weighting by points**

- Assigns a weight to each item in the category that is proportionate to how many points the assignment is worth.

- Weights are automatically recalculated as grade items are added to the category.

- If this option is chosen, the points of individual grade items are used to determine the relative weight of each item out of 100%.

- The example to the right shows how the weighting has been automatically calculated based on the 'max. points' column for each grade.

Grade Item	Type	Association	Max. Points	Weight
Category - Example ⌄				20
Category item 1 [r] ⌄	Numeric	Discussions ❓	10	16.666666667
Category item 2 [r] ⌄	Numeric	-	30	50
Category Item 3 [r] ⌄	Numeric	-	20	33.333333333

WHAT DO THE THREE OPTIONS MEAN IN DETAIL?

- **Option 3: Distribute weighting evenly between grade items**

- Assigns a weighting to each grade item in the category by evenly dividing.

- Weights are automatically recalculated as grade items are added to the category.

- The example to the right shows the three items in the category are now worth an equal amount each regardless of the 'max points' value.

- This option is the only option that allows you to 'drop' a grade item automatically (ie, drop the lowest score as in the example to the right)

☐ Category - Example ⌄				20
☐ Category item 1 [r] ⌄	Numeric	Discussions ❓	10	33.333333333
☐ Category item 2 [r] ⌄	Numeric	-	30	33.333333333
☐ Category Item 3 [r] ⌄	Numeric	-	20	33.333333333

Distribution

- ○ Manually assign weight to items in the category
- ○ Distribute weights by points across all items in the category
- ● Distribute weight evenly across all items
  - 0   Number of highest non-bonus items to drop for each user ❓
  - 1   Number of lowest non-bonus items to drop for each user ❓

CATEGORY PITFALL – MYLO 'IGNORES' UNGRADED ITEMS

- Categories will calculate a 'subtotal' based on grade items ONLY IF the grades in them have a grade entered.

- Any grade item left blank (no value at all) will be 'dropped' from the calculation regardless of the setting you use.

- Any category that automatically 'drops' the lowest grade will only drop the lowest VALUE, it will NOT drop a blank grade.

- This means that students who skip an assessment item will have their 'subtotal' recalculate based on the remaining grades, this means potentially the system ignores the weightings you have set in place and students will get higher subtotals than they should get.

- To correct this you will need to manually enter a 0 mark for any item that has been legitimately missed and that should have been attempted by the student.

As you can see in this example the 'blank' grade has been ignored by the category and the subtotal has been calculated only considering the first 2 items. To correct this issue a score of 0 should be entered as seen below it recalculates correctly.

CATEGORIES CAN WORK TO YOUR ADVANTAGE!

- You may wish to have a category that has, for example, 10 grade items that are connected to 10 quizzes, but students can choose to do any 8 of the 10. In this case the category will 'drop' any item that has no value (a blank) and you will not need to do any manual calculation of the subtotal.

- You should still check over the calculation, however, to ensure that students are doing the required number of items. Otherwise they can potentially do less than the required number and get a mark based on those few.

- You can also set up the category so that certain items are only seen by certain cohorts (ie, an 'internal student presentation' vs 'external discussion posts').

- Categories can be a useful way to just organise the gradebook if there are many grades – using the settings you can turn off the 'Subtotal' from your student's view so they can't see it.

- You can always remove grades from a Category and have them as 'stand alone' grades if you change your mind about the category. You can also change the category weighting without affecting the grade values – only the value in the category weight will recalculate, very handy if you have last minute gradebook changes due to unforeseen circumstances.

HOW TO AUTOMATICALLY ADD 0'S TO 'BLANK' GRADES

- If your gradebook is set up in such a way that each student MUST have a score in EACH grade item, you can automatically have the system add a 0 to any item that is a 'blank'.

- This is an 'all or nothing' option – it will add a 0 in for every student, in every single grade item that has a blank. If you have 'optional' grades, it may not be a suitable option for your unit – but there may be some advanced workarounds, so chat to your ed-techs.

- This is best done at the END of the semester. Otherwise your students will get a bunch of 0's on grades for things they haven't done yet. They WILL freak out. So don't do this at the start.

- To do this – click on the 'Settings' link at the top right of the gradebook (on any page) and choose the 'Calculation Options' tab then scroll down and click 'Treat ungraded items as 0' as shown on the right.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- If I hide the category, does it hide everything in it too?

  - Yes, but check how it looks from the point of view of a student with the "impersonate the student view" technique.

- If I make a category only visible to one cohort does that effect the grades inside the category?

  - Yes your categories 'restrictions' affect all the grades inside of it.

- My category isn't adding up properly!?

  - First check the settings of the category. Then check each grade item is listed in the category and has the correct values. To Check - click any grade item in the Manage Grades area. Are the points/weight settings correct? Do students need to have a value entered? Are too many items being dropped etc. Talk with an ed-tech if you are unable to trace the source of the problem.

- My gradebook is a confusing mess, HALP!?

  - It might be worth having a sit down with the ed-tech/designer in your school /college /faculty /blancmange and working out how you can organise your gradebook in the most efficient and easy to use way. If you are confused your students will be confused too.

- What is this icon in my gradebook!?

  - If you see an icon in your Enter Grades area that looks like (!) it means that grade has been dropped for this student. This comes from your Category settings. If you see a (?) it is a link that lets you click to see the activity (ie the quiz) that the grade came from.