

## Blended Learning Development: Activity Guide 2

### Adding an Assignment (Updated 2019)

The *Assignment* activity module is used to assign tasks, collect student work and provide grades and feedback. Depending on the type of assignment, students can be asked to complete an assignment by uploading files, including word processing documents and multimedia files (i.e. audio, video, images), by using the PoodLL online voice recorder, or by typing their submission directly on the edulinc.org site. There are also offline assignments, for which students do not have to submit anything electronically. These tasks do not require use of a computer to be completed. The grading (and feedback) for all types of assignments appears in the courseware grade book and reminders appear in the course *Calendar*.

The *Assignment* activity module can help teachers communicate deadlines and collect student submissions in one central area. The date and time of each submission is also recorded. Assignments can be rejected if they miss the deadline, although there is flexibility for this in the settings. Teachers can provide students with individual feedback using the learning management system or they can mark up the submissions with feedback and return assignments with their comments inserted.

The Assignment activity module can help teachers manage both online and offline assignment tasks. Teachers who ask students to email their written assignments should find the Assignment activity module very convenient to use instead. Submissions are collected centrally and they can be downloaded as a single .ZIP archive.

### Using the Assignment Activity to Enhance Blended Learning

Students can work on and submit assignments as follow-ups to activities they did in the face-to-face class. For example, a submission could be the first draft of a writing composition, PowerPoint presentation, a spoken summary, or even the second draft of a handwritten assignment. Assignments can be individual or group submissions. The group submission could be the product of collaborative in-class (or out-of-class) work. There are many possibilities for blending face-to-face class activities with uploaded assignment submissions.

An Offline Assignment integrates the learning management system with classroom-based learning. In this case, the language-learning activities may be done completely offline, e.g. preparing and delivering an in-class presentation or submitting paper-based portfolio tasks, but the assignment communication and grading is provided on the edulinc.org site.

## Using the Assignment Tool for PBLA

The Assignment Tool can be particularly useful for supporting PBLA. It allows individualized, action-oriented feedback. It is a useful way to store examples of students' speaking tasks. It can be used for group-work, which can include peer assessment. And it can be used to store grades and show feedback even for tasks which are not actually created with the Assignment Tool.

### Action-oriented feedback

Action-oriented feedback consists of comments given to students about specific actions they can take in order to improve in a meaningful way. It is specific to individual students and can be referenced to assessment criteria as well.

Action-oriented feedback puts a focus on steps that can be taken or goals that can be set for the future to help improve. It can also help teachers come up with ideas of things that can be worked on more in future modules and planning.

#### Action-Oriented Feedback Strategies:

- Use verbs or action statements instead of general comments.
- Start feedback with context, such as "continue doing..." or "next time remember to..."
- Provide feedback orally to the class as a whole.
- Choose a few action-oriented feedback comments that were common among students in the class and ask students to choose one they would like to focus on.
- Keep comments short and to the point, in learner-friendly language.
- Focus on most important elements of overall success and communicative competence rather than specific details.
- Target feedback toward the criteria that were missed or not done clearly/well.

#### Assignment Feedback modes

Feedback can be delivered to learners through the following modes or technologies, further explained in the other Assignment documents:

- Rubrics
- Microsoft Word documents
- Annotated PDFs
- Inline Comments annotated directly on the student's submission
- Audio using the PoodLL recorder

### Storing examples of speaking tasks

Create a PoodLL assignment, to keep your students' speaking task stored in edulinc. See the document Adding a PoodLL Voice Recorder Assignment in Activity Guide 1. Once the assignment is completed, it can then be marked using Action-Oriented feedback, as appropriate.

## Group-work and Peer Assessment

Peer feedback/assessment is another hallmark of PBLA. Assignment submissions can be shared and viewed by classmates. After seeing each other's work, students can then each upload a file giving feedback to one of their classmates.

However, peer feedback becomes unruly if students all have access to everyone's submissions. Some students may be missed in the process. Dividing students into Groups makes this more manageable. It is recommended that Groups are defined in the courseware before moving forward with assignment peer feedback. To set up Groups in a class see the document Organizing Users in Groups in Course Management. Once the students in the Group upload their assignments, they can each see each other's work and can upload a file giving feedback to a group-mate.

NOTE: Another way to facilitate Peer Feedback would be with a Forum activity or a Wiki, also possibly in Groups. These may be easier to administer than using an Assignment for this purpose.

## Storing Grades for Offline Assignments

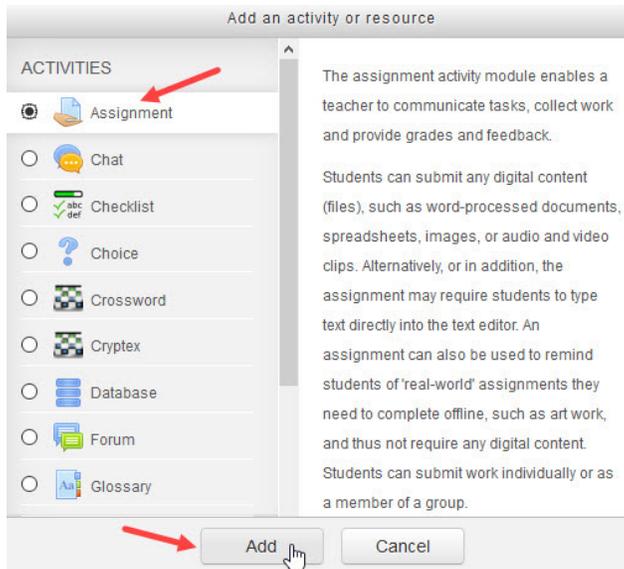
Assessments in PBLA are usually based on real world tasks. These don't always lend themselves to being uploaded as assignments in the courseware. However, teachers may want all the students' assignment marks to be stored in the courseware, so that the gradebook reflects all the assessments, whether they were done as Assignments in the courseware or not.

This can easily be achieved. If an Assignment is created with no requirement for a submission, it is considered an Offline Assignment. Some examples of tasks that might fit this model would be in-class speaking activities, in-class writing, interactions on a field trip, or even other kinds of activities in the courseware such as a Forum or Wiki entry.

Once the students have completed the task, teachers can give Action-Oriented feedback and marks in the Offline Assignment, as for any other assignment. In this case, the students' work is not stored in the Assignment but the marks and the feedback are.

## Step-by-Step Instructions for Adding this Activity

1. On the course home page, click the *Turn editing on* button.
2. Click the *Add an activity or resource* link in the topic where the activity should be added. The *Add an activity or resource* window appears.
3. Select *Assignment* in the left panel under ACTIVITIES and click the *Add* button.



The *Adding a new Assignment* page opens.

Settings in the **General** section are used to set the general information about the activity.

▼ General

Assignment name\*

Description 

Display description on course page

Additional files   Maximum size for new files: Unlimited



4. Type a descriptive name in the *Assignment name* text box.

5. Type a description of the assignment in the *Description* text box. Click the *Show editing tools* tab in the *Description* text box to display the Text editor toolbar if needed.
  - To read how to add a video to your instructions, see the document Adding Video to an Assignment Description
  - To read how to add an audio recording to your instructions, see the document Adding Audio to an Assignment Description
6. To display the description on the course home page, click the *Display description on course page* check box. (To keep the page less cluttered, this is not recommended.)
7. Use the *Additional files* upload area to attach files that will be attached to the Assignment description, an answer template, or answer key for example.

Settings in the **Availability** section are used to control when the activity is available to students.

#### ▼ Availability

Allow submissions from ⓘ 8 February 2018 00 00  Enable

Due date ⓘ 15 February 2018 00 00  Enable

Cut-off date ⓘ 8 February 2018 15 50  Enable

Always show description ⓘ

8. The *Allow submissions from* setting specifies the times and dates for students to submit an assignment. Any submissions received after this date are marked as late.
9. The *Due date* setting specifies the date that the assignment is due.  
Note: The *Enable* check box for both these lines is checked by default, as if it is disabled, students are able to submit an assignment as soon as it becomes available.
10. The *Cut-off date* setting specifies the date after which assignments are no longer accepted. Any assignments submitted after this date are not accepted, except with an agreed-on extension.
11. The *Always show description* check box is enabled by default. If disabled, the *Assignment Description* above will become visible to students only at the *Allow submissions from* date.

Settings in the **Submission types** section are used to indicate the submission types and the allowable number and size of accompanying files.

### ▼ Submission types

**Submission types**  Online PoodLL ?  File submissions ?  Online text ?

**PoodLL Rec. Type** MP3 Voice Recorder ▼

**PoodLL Rec. Time Limit** 0 minutes ▼

**Maximum number of uploaded files** 1 ▼ ?

**Maximum submission size** ? Activity upload limit (50MB) ▼

**Word limit** ?   Enable

12. The *Submission types* setting specifies the types of submission students can make by checking one or more of the three check boxes.
  - The *Online PoodLL* type allows students to record spoken words with the online recorder. (Android devices may not support the *PoodLL* recorder. Use *File submissions* for Android users to access the camcorder to record spoken assignments.)
  - The *File submissions* type allows students to upload external files, e.g. a PowerPoint presentation or camcorder recording.
  - *Online text* type allows students to enter text directly into an online text editing box, and is also useful if they are submitting digital work and need to copy-paste, e.g., the URL of a YouTube video as part of their assignment.
  - If none of the check boxes are selected, this is an Offline Assignment and does not require a submission. Grades and feedback can still be stored for each student.
13. The *PoodLL Rec. Type* allows for MP3 Voice Recording or Video Recorder.
14. The *PoodLL Rec. Time Limit* allows teachers to set a time limit for student recordings. Input a number in the text box corresponding to the drop-down menu. Realistic options include *seconds and minutes*. If the time Limit field is zero, the recording allocation is unlimited.
15. The *Maximum number of uploaded files* setting specifies the maximum number of files students are allowed to upload with their assignments.
16. The *Maximum submission size* setting specifies the allowable limit of activity upload. Note: The recommended choice is *50MB* (the activity upload limit), otherwise students will receive error messages if they try to upload files larger than the maximum allowable file size.
17. The *Word limit* setting enables teachers to set a maximum number of words for *Online text* submissions.

Settings in the **Feedback types** section are used to set the options of leaving feedback, uploading files with feedback and using a grading worksheet.

#### ▼ Feedback types

**Feedback types**  Feedback comments   Feedback files   Offline grading worksheet   
 Feedback PoodLL 

**Comment inline** 

**PoodLL Recorder Type**

**Show download link**

18. The *Feedback comments* setting is used to enable feedback comments, e.g. traditional comments, images, hyperlinks to external files or resources for each submitted assignment. These appear in the *Feedback comments* panel.
19. The *Feedback files* setting is used to upload files with feedback when marking the assignments.
20. The *Offline grading worksheet* setting is used if an instructor wants to grade offline. Instructors download the submissions and the assignment feedback form (usually a spreadsheet). Instructors assess offline and upload the assignment feedback form and, if necessary, marked up student submissions.  
**Note:** Instructors cannot upload marks and feedback to Moodle if Rubrics or Marking Guides are enabled.
21. If the *Comment inline* option is set to *Yes*, the online submission text will be copied into the feedback comment field during grading, making it possible for instructors to comment inline (using a different colour, perhaps) within the original text.
22. The *Feedback PoodLL* setting is used to insert an online voice recorder for teachers to give spoken feedback.
23. The *Show download link* drop-down menu can be set to *no* or *yes*. This choice allows learners to just listen to the teacher's comments online, or to listen online and also to have a link to download the MP3 file.

Settings in the **Submission settings** section are used to set the options of finalizing of the submission, confirming the integrity of the students' work, and limiting the number of assignment submission times.

### ▼ Submission settings

Require students click submit button	No
Require that students accept the submission statement	No
Attempts reopened	Never
Maximum attempts	Unlimited

24. The *Require students click submit button* setting specifies whether the student submission is final or in draft on uploading. If *Yes* is clicked, students will have to click a *Submit* button to declare their submission as final, with no changes allowed. If *No* is clicked, assignments will stay in draft form on uploading, and students will be able to make changes to their assignments at any time.
25. The *Require that students accept the submission statement* setting specifies whether a student is required to accept the submission statement. If *Yes* is clicked, students are required to accept the submission statement (i.e. to declare that their submission is their own work). If *No* is clicked, accepting the submission statement is not required. Note: *No* should be clicked if the *Require students click submit* has also been set to *No*.
26. The *Attempts reopened* setting specifies if and how many times an assignment is allowed to be reopened. If *Never* is clicked, a student submission cannot be reopened by a student. If *Manually* is clicked, a student submission can be opened by a teacher. If *Automatically until pass* is clicked, a student can reopen his/her submission until he/she achieves the minimum passing grade set out in the *Grade book*. Note: If *Never* is clicked, then the *Maximum attempts* drop-down menu (located below the *Attempts reopened* drop-down menu) remains greyed out. It can be enabled only when *Manually* or *Automatically until pass* is clicked in the *Attempts reopened* drop-down menu.
27. The *Maximum attempts* setting specifies if, and how many times, a student can resubmit his/her assignment. *Unlimited* (the default setting) or one of the numbers (from 1 to 30) specifies the maximum number of submissions attempts that can be made by a student before the submission is no longer able to be reopened.

Settings in the **Group submission settings** section are used to set the parameters for assignment submissions from students working in groups.

### ▼ Group submission settings

Students submit in groups 

Require group to make submission 

Require all group members submit 

Grouping for student groups 

28. The *Students submit in groups* setting specifies whether students are required to participate in a group during the completion of the assignment and then submit it as a "group" assignment.

Note: If *No* is clicked, then the *Require all group members submit* and *Grouping for student groups* drop-down menus remain greyed out. If *Yes* is clicked, the *Grouping for student groups* drop-down menu is enabled, with its default setting of *None*. Note: there must be groups established in the course for **Groups submission settings** to function.

Settings in the **Notifications** section are used to set up teacher notifications regarding the timing of assignment submissions.

### ▼ Notifications

Notify graders about submissions 

Notify graders about late submissions 

Default setting for "Notify students" 

29. The *Notify graders about submissions* setting specifies whether the teacher receives notification messages about assignment submissions. If *Yes* is clicked, the teacher receives a message whenever a student submits an assignment early, on time or late. If *No* is clicked, the teacher will not receive such messages.
30. From the *Notify graders about late submissions* drop-down menu, click *Yes* to enable receiving a message whenever a student submits an assignment late. Click *No* to disable receiving such messages.

Settings in the **Grade** section are used to configure various aspects of grading the

submitted assignments.

#### ▼ Grade

Grade ⓘ Type

Scale

Maximum grade

Grading method ⓘ

Grade category ⓘ

Grade to pass ⓘ

Blind marking ⓘ

Use marking workflow ⓘ

Use marking allocation ⓘ

31. The *Grade* setting specifies how the assignment will be graded. If *Type* is set to *None*, only feedback will be provided. If *Type* is set to *Point*, the *Maximum grade* can be set to any number from 1 to 100. If *Type* is set to *Scale* and *Scale* is set to *Separate and Connected*, the student's approach to presenting his or her ideas and how this comes across in his/her submission will be evaluated. The work will be marked as *Mostly Connected Knowing*, *Separate and Connected*, or *Mostly Separate Knowing*. If *Scale* is set to *Default Competence Scale*, the work will be marked as *Competent* or *Not Yet Competent*.
- Note: The *Scale: Separate and Connected ways of knowing* option is often used to rate posts in a forum.
32. The *Grading method* setting specifies how the grading will be set up. If *Simple direct grading* (the default setting) is clicked, the advanced grading method is disabled, and marks and summary feedback can be set up. If *Rubric* is clicked, marking according to pre-set criteria and levels can be set up, and an overall mark is generated at the end. (Rubric assessment is covered in detail in the document: *Assignment Rubrics*). If *Marking guide* is clicked, a comment and mark on each criterion is provided. (See [Marking Guide](https://docs.moodle.org/37/en/Marking_guide) <https://docs.moodle.org/37/en/Marking\_guide> for information about using this method).
33. The *Grade category* setting shows categories or ways of grouping assignment grades. *Uncategorised* is the default setting. If grade categories are set up in the course, they would appear as options.

34. The *Grade to pass* field allows teachers to set the minimum grade required to pass. This setting will affect how grades are displayed in the gradebook and are used for activity and course completion if set up.
35. The *Blind marking* setting hides the identities of students who have submitted assignments.
36. *Use marking workflow* can be used if teachers expect multiple rounds of marking and want to release marks to students only after final marking is done. If set to *yes*, marks will go through a series of workflow stages before being released to students.
37. *Use marking allocation* can be combined with the *marking workflow* to assign markers to students.

The **Common module settings** section is common to many Moodle activities and resources.

#### ▼ Common module settings

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**Visible**  ▾

**ID number** 

**Group mode**   ▾

**Grouping**   ▾

38. The *Visible* setting is used to *Show/Hide* the activity. This is identical to using the *Show/Hide* icons when the *Turn editing on* function is enabled on a course home page.
39. The *ID Number* setting sets an ID number for advanced use of the grade book. (This is not used in the LINC courseware.)
40. The *Group mode* setting enables the use of groups. (More information is available in the *Groups* documentation in the *Stage 3 Course Management* section.)
41. The *Grouping* option enables the use of groupings (a collection of groups).

Settings in the **Restrict access section** can be used to limit access to the activity. (More information is available in the *Conditional Release* section of the *Stage 3 Course Management* section.)

▼ Restrict access

Access restrictions

None

Add restriction...

42. Upon selecting the *Add restriction button...* a pop up appears.

Add restriction...	
Activity completion	Require students to complete (or not complete) another activity.
Date	Prevent access until (or from) a specified date and time.
Grade	Require students to achieve a specified grade.
Group	Allow only students who belong to a specified group, or all groups.
Grouping	Allow only students who belong to a group within a specified grouping.
User profile	Control access based on fields within the student's profile.
Restriction set	Add a set of nested restrictions to apply complex logic.
<p>Cancel</p>	

43. Settings in the **Activity completion** section are used to set completion tracking, grading options and the expected completion date. (More information is available in the *Completion Tracking* documentation in the *Stage 3 Course Management* section.)

### ▼ Activity completion

**Completion tracking** ?

**Require view**  Student must view this activity to complete it

**Require grade** ?  Student must receive a grade to complete this activity

Student must submit to this activity to complete it

**Expect completed on** ?     Enable

44. The **Tags** sections can be used to add keywords to the assignment.

### ▼ Tags

**Tags** No selection

[Manage standard tags](#)

45. When everything is ready with the settings, teachers can select **Save and display** or **Save and return to course** to add the new assignment.

46. Click the *Save and display* button to save/update the activity, or click the *Save and return to course* button. The *Assignment* activity link appears on the course main page. Use the *Switch role to... student* function in the *Administration* block to preview the activity and test out the assignment settings. Or, use an unused student ID to test the assignment, in order to be able to see how marking it will work.

## Deployment Tips

- The settings cannot be changed after the students have begun to submit their assignments.
- A new column is automatically created in the grade book each time an assignment is created. Teachers working in settlement language training programs may not want to use the grade book; however, the *Assignment* activity module can still be used.
- Grade book columns can be hidden for any assignment by navigating to the grade book and clicking the *Turn editing on* button to reveal this option.

- If asking students to submit voice or video recordings as an assignment task, ensure that the appropriate *Maximum file upload* size is selected.

## Video Resources

**Important note:** Since our upgrade to Moodle 3.3, the following video may appear slightly different in your course, but the principles remain the same.

This video explains how to add an *Assignment* activity and configure the various options when setting it up.

Video link: <https://youtu.be/hnheCuVeVKE>

## Assignment Activity Help files

- [Moodle documents: Assignment module](http://docs.moodle.org/31/en/Assignment_module)  
http://docs.moodle.org/31/en/Assignment\_module
- [Moodle documents: Assignment settings](http://docs.moodle.org/31/en/Assignment_settings)  
http://docs.moodle.org/31/en/Assignment\_settings
- [Moodle documents: Using Assignment](http://docs.moodle.org/31/en/Using_Assignment)  
http://docs.moodle.org/31/en/Using\_Assignment
- [Moodle documents: Assignment FAQ](http://docs.moodle.org/31/en/Assignment_FAQ)  
http://docs.moodle.org/31/en/Assignment\_FAQ
- [LearnIT2Teach documents: New HTML 5 Help](http://learnit2teach.ca/wpnew/help/new-html-5-help/)  
http://learnit2teach.ca/wpnew/help/new-html-5-help/