

# Creating assignments

## Comprehensive guide for designers

For Blackboard Vista 4.x

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### Overview of the assignments tool

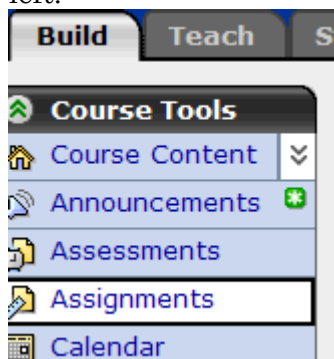
As a designer you can use the assignments tool to create assignments for individuals or groups. Assignments are created using text instructions and/or file attachments.

By adding the assignments tool to the **Course Tools** menu, you make it available to instructors, allowing them to assign assignments to individual students or groups, edit the settings/properties, and manage and grade submissions.

For students, the assignments tool allows them to view and submit assignments as either text on screen, as an attachment(s) or web page. If the option is provided by the instructor, they can also publish their assignments to the entire class.

### Accessing assignments with the assignments tool

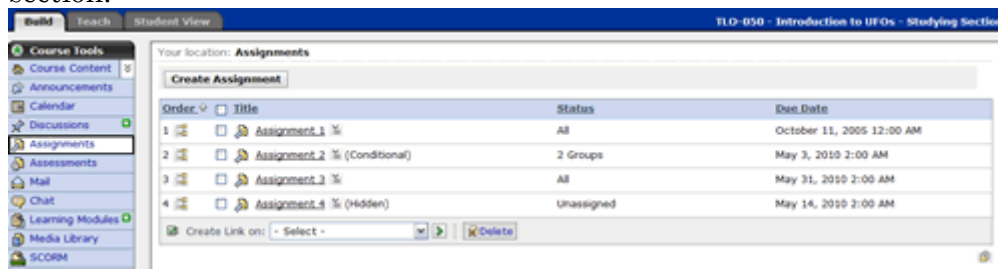
1. Click on the **Build** tab, and select **Assignments** from the **Course Tools** menu on the left.




2. If the Assignments tool is not visible then you will need to add it to the **Course Tools** menu:
  - click on **Manage Course** from the **Designer Tools** menu, select **Tools**, and then select **Assignments** from the tool list (under '*Student Learning Activities*') click **Save**.

## Creating assignments

3. On the **Assignments** screen you will see a list of all the assignments in your section.



### The Assignments Tool in Build view.

- Title** Shows the Titles/names for the assignments. Click on the *ActionLinks*  icon to review the actions possible.  
**Note:** If an assignment is hidden (e.g. because it is yet to be assigned to students) it is indicated in brackets next to the title.
- Status** Shows whether the assignment is assigned to any students/groups (i.e. target individuals/groups specified). If the word '*Unassigned*' appears it means that the assignment is not assigned to any students or groups.  
 To assign an assignment, access the settings by clicking on the assignment title. Scroll down to **Assignment Recipients** and select the appropriate radio button.  
 When the assignment is assigned to Learning Groups, you will see how many groups it is assigned to; e.g. "2 Groups". Click on this text to modify/add/delete groups assigned to this assignment.
- Due Date** This is the current setting for the Due Date for this assignment.

To access details about a particular assignment, simply click on the assignment title.

## Setting up an assignment

From the **Assignments** screen, click **Create Assignment**. You will then see the **Create Assignment** screen for your assignment. The text boxes next to items marked with red asterisks must be filled in. Those not marked are optional.

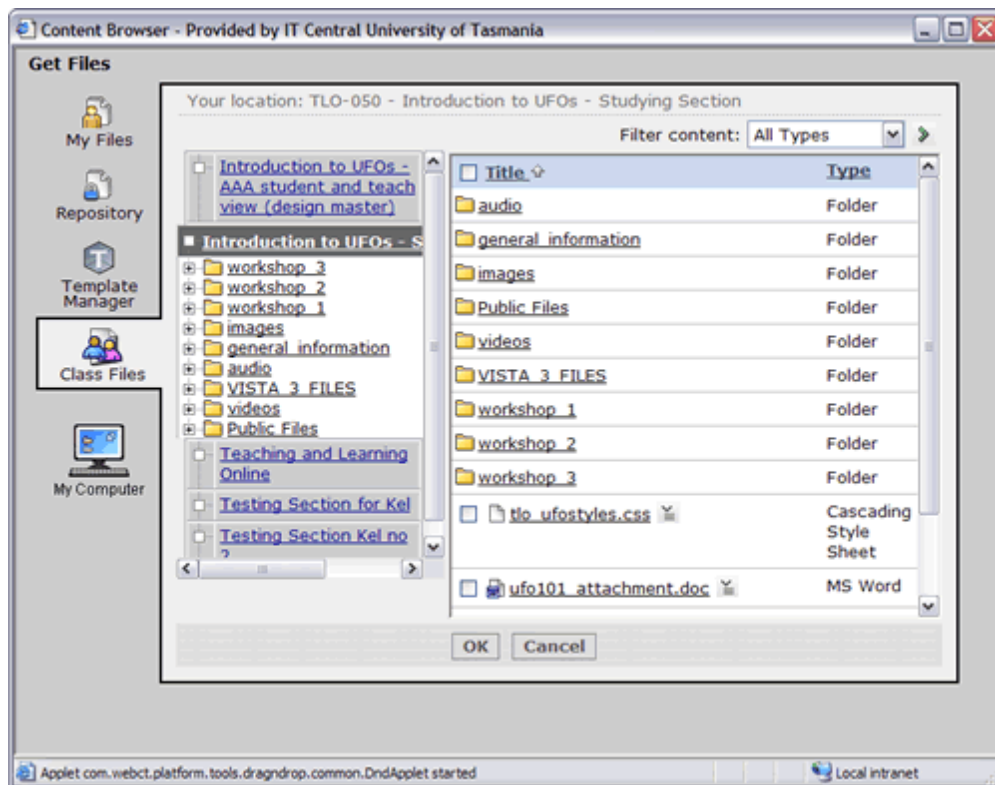
## Creating assignments

### Entering basic text data about the assignment

1. In the **Title** text box, enter a name for your assignment.
2. Enter a brief description if desired. (This will be seen by students).
3. Check **Item Visibility** – note that it is hidden until assigned to students
4. In the **Instructions** text box you may add some brief instructions, or a full set of instructions, if you do not wish to provide full instructions as an attachment. For example you may wish to use the **Instructions** box to describe what the attachments are and how to use them.

### Adding attachments

Attach any associated files by clicking **Add Attachments**. This opens a file browser window that shows your course files and allows you to select and/or upload files to attach to the assignment. These files might be extra instructions, assignment coversheets, supporting materials etc.

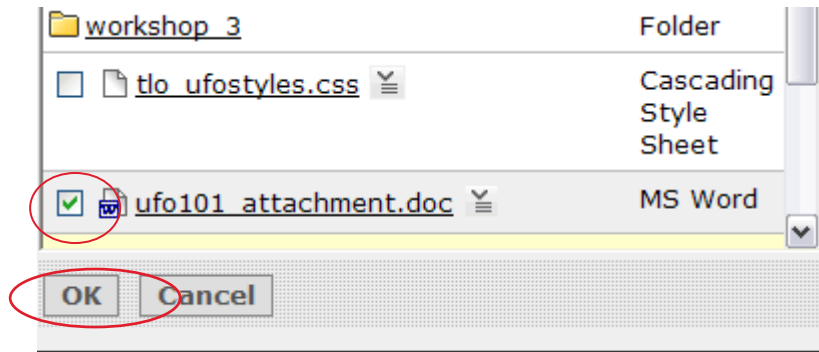


From this window you can choose from files that you have already uploaded to your course (listed on the right hand side). If you have not already uploaded the files you need, you can select the file(s) from another course you are a member of, or from your computer (left hand side options).

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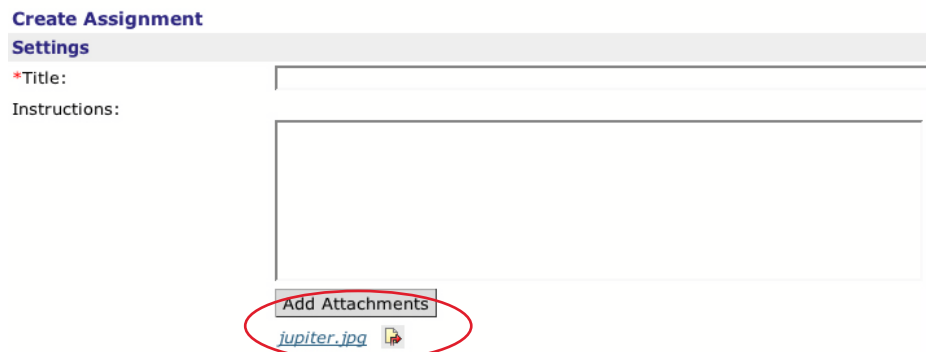
### Attaching a file loaded into the section content folder

- Click on the tick box next to the file(s) you wish to attach to your assignment and click **OK**.



### Attaching a file on your computer

- Click on the **My Computer** icon, navigate to the file you wish to add, select it and then click **Open**.
- When you click **OK** (or **Open**) the files you have selected will appear under the **Add Attachments** button as shown below.



- To remove a file, click the **Remove**  icon next to the filename.

## Choosing format of student submissions

Next to **Student submissions format**, choose one of these options by clicking the radio button:

- Text** - the student uploads documents as an attachment (this is the most common option) or alternatively the student types the submission into the textbox provided (this would only be used for a very short answer assignment).
- Web site** - students will submit their assignment as a zip file of related web pages.

## Assigning the assignment

Under **Assignment recipients** there are three main options:

- Decide later** – this saves the assignment as a draft and any link to it will remain hidden.
- All Students individually** – students submit assignments for individual grades. There are two options:

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- All students receive the same instructions – i.e. the assignment is assigned to all students. This is the hidden default option when the **All Students individually** radio button is selected.
- Different groups of students receive additional different sets of instructions (but students still work individually and receive individual grades). All students receive the same instructions initially entered in the **Instructions** text box, as well as additional instructions specific to each group.
  1. To choose this option check the box next to **Create additional sets of instructions for groups of Students**.  
Note: If you want to provide additional instructions to learning groups, ensure the learning groups have been created – this needs to be done through the **Teach** tab, using the **Group Manager** tool (see the guide [Working with the group manager tool](#)).
  2. Assuming the groups have been formed, click **Select Groups**. A window will load showing all the Learning Groups in your course.
  3. To select a group, click the checkbox next to the group name. You may select one or more groups. When you have selected all the groups that you wish to assign to, click **Continue**. The **Additional Instructions** screen appears.
  4. Enter the specific instruction for each group in the text boxes. If you want to provide a group with a file containing specific instructions, click **Add Attachments**. A file browser screen will appear – navigate to the folder you want to attach, select the check box next to the file (if within the section), and then click **OK**. Otherwise, navigate to the location of the file on your computer, select it and click **Open**. You will be returned to the **Additional Instructions** screen, with the selected file(s) listed below **Attachments**.
  5. Click **Save**. This will return you to the **Create Assignment** screen.
- 3. **Groups of Students** – Students work collaboratively on one group assignment to be submitted on behalf of all group members; all group members receive the same grade. To select a group assignment you will need to have already set up your learning groups. (See the companion guide: [Working with the group manager tool](#)).  
**Note:** You will need to have access as an Instructor as well as Designer to do this, as you need to access the **Group Manager** tool in **Teach** tab. If you have not done so, you can click **Cancel** and go back to this screen later to assign the groups.
  - You can choose to send the same instructions to all learning groups (default option) or include additional customised instructions for each group.
    1. To choose this option, check the box next to **Sample Group**.
    2. Click the **Select Groups** button next to this option. A window will load showing all of the learning groups in your section.

**Select Learning Groups**

Select the learning groups to which you want to assign this assignment.

Sample Group (12 Students)

Test Group (1 Student)

**Instructions**

Provide groups with additional instructions

Save Cancel

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3. To select a group, click the checkbox next to the group name. You may select one or more groups.
  4. If you want to include specific instructions for each group, select the check box under Instructions.
  5. When you have selected all of the groups that you wish to assign to, click **Save**.
  6. If you chose to provide additional instructions, the **Additional Instructions** text box appears – enter the instructions and/or attach files.
  7. Click **Save**.
4. The name(s) of the selected group(s) are added below the *Groups of Students* option, along with an instruction editing tool.

**Send assignment to**

Decide later (Save assignment as a draft and send it later)

All Students individually

Create additional sets of instructions for groups of Students

Groups of Students

Distance group

## Setting the dates

The next setting is **Dates**.

**Dates**

\* Due Date (Submissions are accepted after this date but are marked 'late')

16/10/2007

12:00 PM

Create a corresponding event in the Calendar tool

\* Cutoff Date (Submissions are not accepted after this date and are marked 'missed')

23/10/2007

12:00 PM

- **Due Date** - determines when the assignment is due.
- **Create a corresponding event in the Calendar tool** - creates an automatic message to notify students of the *Due Date* (this option is recommended).
- **Cutoff Date** - determines at which point the student can no longer submit an assignment. Assignments submitted after the *Due Date* (but before the *Cutoff Date*) will be marked as 'Late'. Submissions that miss the *Cutoff Date* are marked as 'missed'.

## Choosing the grading scheme

The next setting is **Grading**.

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**Grading**

Allow the assignment to be graded (A column is automatically created for this assignment in Grade Book)

Grade Book column title:

Release grade to Students in *My Grades*


Numeric grade: Out of


Alphanumeric grade

Grade by Grading Form:

- **Allow the assignment to be graded** - If you are marking this assignment and giving a grade, you will need to ensure this box is checked. If left blank the assignment is given a default grading scheme of 'Not gradable'. The grading scheme cannot be edited once the assignment is saved.
- **Numeric grade: Out of** this is the maximum mark for that assignment – i.e. 40 for a mark out of 40)
- **Alphanumeric** - refers to grades such as "A, B, C" or "HA, SA, PP" etc.
- **Grade by Grading Form** – select the radio button then click on **Select Grading Form** to select a grading form to be associated with this assignment.

### More Options

The final set of properties is hidden. Click on the *Expand* icon  to view these options. These settings are optional.

 **More Options** (Expand this area to see more options.)

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Taking Back Submissions

Students can take back and correct work after submission

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Publishing Submissions

Only the Section Instructor can publish submissions

Both the Section Instructor and Students can publish submissions

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Section Instructor notification:

Notify Section Instructor when a Student submits this assignment

Section Instructor's e-mail address:

Do not send e-mail notification when Student has submitted an assignment

### Saving the settings/properties

Once all settings have been chosen, click **Save**.

## Linking an assignment into your course

Now that you have created the assignment you need to make it available to students. There are two main ways to do this – through the **Course Tools** menu and/or as a link from a page within your course.

### Through the course tools menu

Students and instructors will be able to access assignments from the menu if the assignments tool has been made available to them.

To make the assignment tool available from the **Course Tools** menu:

1. Under the **Designer Tools** heading, click on **Manage Course**.
2. Click on **Tools** and under the heading **Student Learning Activities**, check the box beside **Assignments**.
3. Click on **Save**.

**Note:**  **Assignments (H)**

If **Assignments** is showing in the **Course Tools** menu with (H) beside it means that the tool is hidden from students.

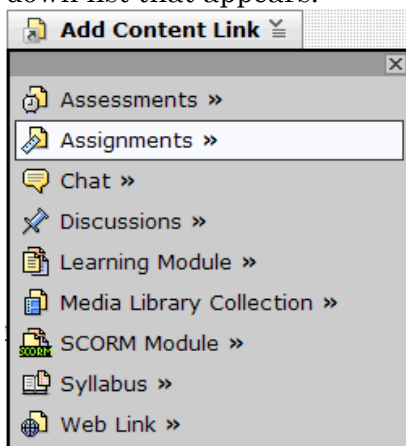
To unhide the assignment tool:

1. Under the **Designer Tools** heading, click on **Manage Course**.
2. Click on **Course Menu** and, under the heading **Course Tools**, check the box beside **Assignments**.
3. Click on **Show Link**
4. Click on **Apply Settings**.

### In a folder or learning module

To place an assignment into a learning module or folder, or on the home page:

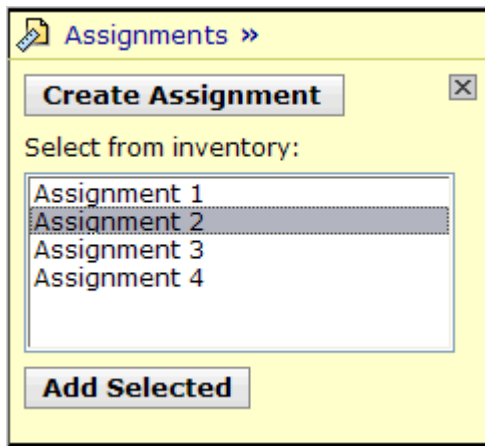
1. Click on the **Build** tab, and go to the location where you wish to place the link, click on **Course Content** or **Learning Modules** for example.
2. Click **Add Content Link** near top of screen and select **Assignments** from the drop-down list that appears.



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3. Click on the required assignment from the inventory list.



4. Click **Add Selected**.

## Need more information?

Managing Assignment Submissions and Grading is performed via the **Teach Tab** and the **Assignment Dropbox**. From here you can view submissions, grade them and release the results to students.

For more information on this tool see the [Managing Assignment Submissions](#) comprehensive guide.

### References:

Designer and Instructor Reference: Application Pack 2 for Blackboard Learning System – Vista Enterprise License (Release 4) 2006 Blackboard Inc.

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