This Quick Guide gives the eLearning team’s recommended settings for creating a journal in Blackboard. It is the first in a series of four quick guides covering the process of grading & providing feedback using online journals.

Guides on other aspects of reflection, assessment & Blackboard are available at www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/resources/

1. Adding a Journal to Your Module

1. Access your Blackboard module and click on the plus button at the top left of the module menu.
2. Select Tool Link then give the journal a name (e.g. Reflective Journals) and select Type: Journals.
3. You can choose whether or not to make the journal Available to Users straight away. Click Submit.

This will add the link to the module menu. You can click and drag to move the link as needed. Click on the down arrow next to the link to show/hide the link to students. It can be useful to hide the link from students until you are ready for them to use the journals.

2. Journal Information

Click on the Reflective Journals link in the module menu then select Create Journal.

When you create a journal, each student will automatically have their own section that is not visible to other students or on the web generally. You can create multiple journals if needed for different purposes but for now just create a single journal for your students.

On the next screen, enter a name and instructions. You can click on the down arrows on the right-hand side to view all of the options (including adding videos & images to your instructions).

3. Journal Availability & Time Restrictions

Leave Journal Availability as Yes. Under Journal Date and Time Restrictions you can optionally enter dates for Display After & Display Until – these control when the journal will be visible to students.

4. Journal Settings

Index journal entries by month.

Allow Users to Edit and Delete Entries and Allow Users to Delete Comments. This allows students to correct mistakes; you can disable this option later when you are ready to grade.

Ensure Permit Module Users to View Journal is NOT TICKED – selecting this option would allow students to see each other’s journal entries.

5. Grade Settings

For Grade: Points possible enter 100. Marking assessments out of 100 will make results easy to calculate and export in the module’s Grade Centre.

The Show participants in “needs grading” after every X entries option controls when you will see a student’s journal listed in your Needs Marking queue (covered in Quick Guide 3). This does not affect your ability to grade a journal if it has fewer entries than the specified number. Enter the minimum number of entries students are expected to create; for example 3 entries.

Optionally, enter a Due Date for when students are required to make their final entry. Entries can still be submitted & edited after this date but will be marked as Late in the Grade Centre; there is no automatic docking of marks.

You can also optionally add a rubric to provide grading criteria to students and to help you mark students’ entries. Once you are ready, click Submit. You can change these settings at any time – see Quick Guide 2 for details.

6. The Next Step – Navigating Journals

Visit http://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/resources/onlineassessment/journals.php for a Quick Guide on how you can navigate students’ journals and add comments to their entries.