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

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

1. The Grade Centre

When you create a graded journal, a corresponding column will automatically be created in the Blackboard Grade Centre (Module Management → Grade Centre → Full Grade Centre).

Ensuring grades are not visible until you are ready to release them: locate the column for the journal in the Full Grade Centre. Click on the down arrow next to the column & select Edit Column Information. Scroll down to OPTIONS on the next screen and ensure ‘Include this Column in Grade Centre Calculations’ & ‘Show this Column to Students’ are set to No. Click Submit.

2. Needs Marking

Journals will show in the Needs Marking queue (Grade Centre → Needs Marking) after students have created a minimum number of entries (as described in the first Quick Guide ‘Creating a Journal’).

You can also mark a journal at any time when viewing a student’s entries or via the Full Grade Centre → click on the down arrow next to a student’s entry in the journal’s column → Grade User Activity.

3. Grading & Providing Feedback

When viewing a student’s journal, you will see the blue grading panel below the student’s name on the right of the screen.

1. GRADE: Enter the overall grade here
2. GRADED RUBRIC: if you are using a rubric, you can use it to provide detailed feedback under each rubric category and to calculate an overall grade automatically (see the Additional Resources section on the CAPSL Journals page)
3. FEEDBACK TO LEARNER: enter your overall feedback to the student here; you can use the paperclip icon to attach files
4. ADD NOTES: You can use this section to add grading notes for future reference (these are not visible to students)

You can save your feedback as a draft or when you are ready, click Submit. Students won’t be able to see the feedback or grade until the corresponding Grade Centre column is visible.

4. Student Preview

Before students begin using the journal, it can be useful to use the Student Preview button (top right of the screen) to simulate what the journal will look like for students and create test entries.

You can also use Student Preview to practice grading a journal. First, create a test post while in student preview. Then, click Exit Preview and select Keep the preview user and all data.

Then, go to the PreviewUser’s journal and you will see the option to grade the test journal. You can then re-enter the student preview to view feedback as a student. Select Delete the Preview Data when exiting student preview to remove the test posts & grade.

5. The Next Step – Releasing Results to Students

Visit http://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/resources/onlineassessment/journals.php for a Quick Guide on how you can release results to students.