

Canvas: How does Canvas calculate Subtotal and Total scores?

Canvas calculates each student's Total course score based on the point value of the activities assigned to the student, the grade received, and any grade manipulation rules added on the Assignments storage page. Numeric scores are converted to letter grades using the course Grading Scheme (in Settings).

Begin by looking at the **Assignments** page. The Assignments page lists every graded activity as well as any activity created with the Assignments tool specifically, whether it is gradable or not. Graded discussions, graded surveys, and graded quizzes display here as well as in the specific tool pages used to create them.

There will always be at least one **Assignment Group** for storing graded activities. By default, it is called "Assignments". The instructor can add groups and name them appropriately. When a graded activity is created, the instructor indicates which Assignment Group the activity should be stored in.

- Care should be taken to ensure activities are stored in the correct Assignment Group.
- Renaming each Assignment Group with the word "Subtotal" at the beginning reduces confusion for both instructors and students when reviewing the course gradebook.

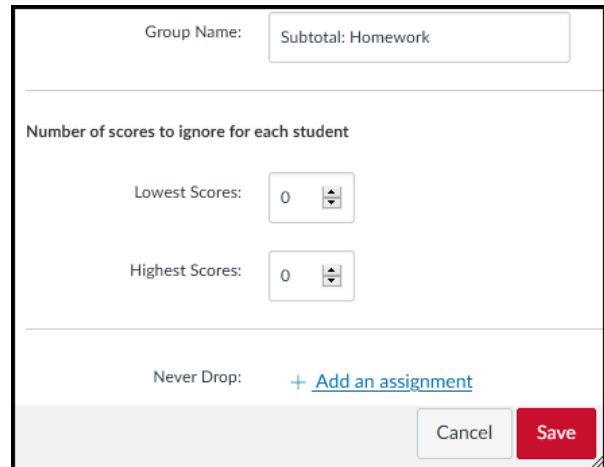
The screenshot displays the Canvas Assignments page. On the left is a navigation menu with links: Home, Announcements, Modules, Assignments (highlighted), Quizzes, Discussions, People, Webex, Chat, Grades, ISU AdminTools, Files, Pages, Rubrics, Syllabus, Outcomes, Collaborations, and Settings. The main content area has a search bar and buttons for '+ Group' and '+ Assignment'. Below these, a pink arrow points to the 'Assignment Groups' section, which contains three groups: 'Subtotal: Homework', 'Subtotal: Graded Discussions', and 'Subtotal: Quizzes & Exams'. The 'Subtotal: Homework' group is expanded, showing a list of assignments: 'Homework 1' (10 pts), 'Homework 4' (10 pts), 'Homework 2' (10 pts), 'Homework 3' (10 pts), 'Webex Meetings Attendance Assignment' (3 pts), 'Student Video Presentation' (50 pts), and 'Extra credit' (Closed). A yellow circle highlights the three-dot menu icon for the 'Homework 1' assignment, and a red arrow points to the 'Edit' option in the dropdown menu. The 'Edit' menu also includes 'Delete', 'Move Contents...', 'Move Group...', and 'Commons Favorites'.

When a student is assigned an activity and the activity is published, the corresponding grade cell is activated for the student, i.e. it can then hold a score. **Until a grade is actually entered into the cell, the activity does not count towards the student's earned course Total.**

- An ungraded submission is not an earned score.
- A blank cell is not an earned score.
- Only when a student has an earned score does the activity itself and the student's earned score both count toward the student's course Total.

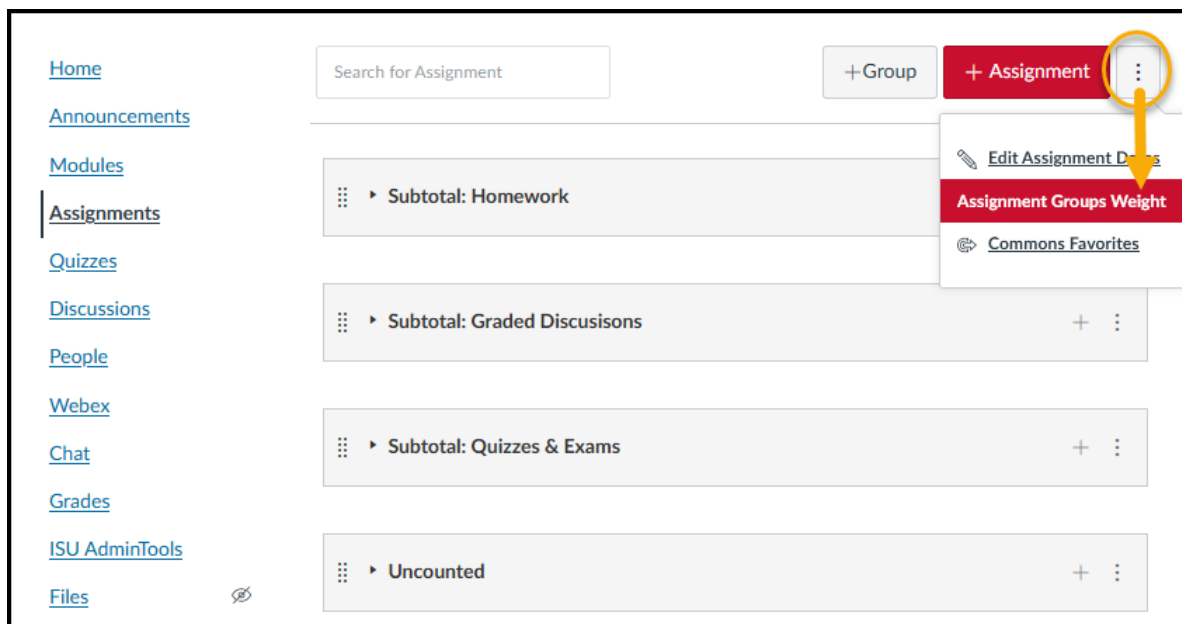
Each **Assignment Group** creates a calculated **Subtotal** score, which is displayed as a percentage in the gradebook. Typically the Subtotal is based on a straight sum of the points earned by the student on the group's activities, divided by the total maximum point value of those activities. However, the instructor can edit an Assignment Group and activate rules to drop a student's lowest and/or highest scores.

IMPORTANT: In order for drop rules to work as expected, a numeric score must be entered into every assigned activity grade cell, i.e. no blank cells.



This screenshot shows the configuration interface for an Assignment Group. At the top, there is a 'Group Name' field with the value 'Subtotal: Homework'. Below this, a section titled 'Number of scores to ignore for each student' contains two dropdown menus: 'Lowest Scores' and 'Highest Scores', both currently set to 0. At the bottom of this section, there is a 'Never Drop' label followed by a link '+ Add an assignment'. The interface concludes with 'Cancel' and 'Save' buttons.

Subtotal scores are combined to determine a student's Total score. The instructor can further manipulate this calculation turning on weighted grading and specifying a group weight for each assignment group, which define its contribution towards the course Total. Together the weights must sum to 100%.



This screenshot displays the LMS interface for managing Assignment Groups. On the left is a navigation menu with links for Home, Announcements, Modules, Assignments (which is highlighted), Quizzes, Discussions, People, Webex, Chat, Grades, ISU AdminTools, and Files. The main content area features a 'Search for Assignment' bar and '+Group' and '+ Assignment' buttons. Below these are four Assignment Group cards: 'Subtotal: Homework', 'Subtotal: Graded Discussions', 'Subtotal: Quizzes & Exams', and 'Uncounted'. Each card has a three-dot menu icon on its right side. A dropdown menu is open for the 'Subtotal: Homework' card, showing options: 'Edit Assignment Dates', 'Assignment Groups Weight' (highlighted in red), and 'Commons Favorites'. An orange circle and arrow highlight the three-dot menu icon on the 'Subtotal: Homework' card.

By default, the group weighting feature is not turned on. To use it, check the box then indicate the percentage contribution each Subgroup makes toward the earned Total.

Subtotal	Value	Percentage
Subtotal: Homework	40	%
Subtotal: Graded Discussions	10	%
Subtotal: Quizzes & Exams	50	%
Uncounted	0	%
Total		100%

Since the calculated contributions to each student's earned Total is a percent value times a subgroup point value, every group must have a maximum point value greater than zero.

- When using weighted grading, you must not have an Assignment Group composed entirely of extra credit activities, since they are worth zero points.
- Scoring Extra Credit activities correctly is difficult with weighted grading turned on because each category is multiple by a percentage.

Example:

Student receives extra credit on Activity 1 = 5pt

Activity 1 is stored in an Assignment Group weight = 40%

Impact of the extra credit on student's Total = 5 pt * 0.4 = 2 pt.

Recommendations:

- When grading an assignment, enter a grade into every student's grade cell: do not leave blanks!
 - Enter a zero for all missing submissions.
 - Any grade entered sends an alert to students, thus giving a timely notice of problems.
- Check the course home page "To Do" list to help spot times when a student has made multiple submissions to the same assignment: you must grade the LAST submission.
- Create Assignment Groups that match the grade break down described in the course syllabus.
- To reduce confusion and improve grading transparency, avoid weighted grading. Instead, assign point values to activities such that they directly define the activity's impact on the course Total.