

Advanced Aspen IMS Gradebook

30 minutes

Description

Tracking assignments and scores is a necessary feature of any gradebook. What's more, having a way to customize the grades you enter and track extra information about them can give you the insight you need when entering final grades.

In the Aspen IMS gradebook, you can create your own grade scales to use values specific to your classes or assignments, create special codes you enter for assignments not scored, track missing assignments, and enter footnote codes next to scores to offer more explanation of the score you entered.

Upon completion of this lesson, you will create your own grade scale, create special codes, be able to track the number of missing assignments for each student in a grade term, and create footnotes and enter them on the Scores page.

Prerequisites

Make sure you have completed the following lesson plans:

- Finding Your Way Around Aspen
- Getting Started with Aspen IMS
- Setting Up Your Aspen IMS Gradebook
- Creating Assignments
- Entering Scores

Participant Objectives

- Create a grade scale and assign it to all classes, specific classes, or assignments.
- Create special codes to indicate why assignments were missed or a certain score was entered.
- Create footnotes to enter with scores to explain circumstances of the score.

Activities

- Answer questions in the *Plan* section to prepare to create grade scales, special codes, and footnotes.
- Create a grade scale.
- Assign a grade scale to all classes, a specific class, or a specific assignment category or assignment.
- Create a special code and enter it for a score.
- Track missing assignments for a term using a special code.
- Create a footnote and enter it with a score.

Resources

For more information on this lesson and to complete the *Plan* and *Apply* sections, refer to the resources listed below. These are available in Aspen from the **Help** menu, **Videos**. You can also access online Help from the **Help** menu.

Quick Reference Guides:

- Teacher Grade Scales
- Gradebook Special Codes
- Gradebook Footnotes

Plan

Use the space provided to record your answers to the following questions.

1. Do you use the same grading scale as your district's grade scale? If not, what is the grade scale you use?
2. How do you currently track missing assignments? How do they affect a student's term average?
3. How do you document that a student turned an assignment in late, or a student didn't finish a timed test in the time allotted?

Apply

Now that you've taken an in-depth look at the advanced features of the Aspen IMS gradebook, complete the following in the order listed:

- Create a grade scale.
- Apply the grade scale to all of your classes, a specific class, an assignment category, or a specific assignment.
- Set up the **Missing** column on the Scores page to track the number of missing assignments.
- Create a special code and enter it for a student's score.
- Create a footnote, then use it when you enter a score to indicate that an assignment was late.

Assess

Staff Name: _____ Date: _____

Advanced Aspen IMS Gradebook

Use the following table to confirm that you successfully completed each task, and to make any notes:

I can...	Do this in Aspen...
	Create my own grade scale.
	Assign a grade scale to all my classes, one class, or a specific assignment.
	Set up the Missing column on the Scores page to track missing assignments during a term.
	Create special codes and use them on the Scores page.
	Create footnotes and use them on the Scores page.
Notes:	

Create Teacher Grade Scales in the Gradebook

Your Aspen administrator creates grade scales for your district in the District view. Those grades are available for you and all teachers to use for their students' assignment and end-of-term grades.

Because the grades in the district grade scales might not fit your personal grading system, you can create your own grade scales and link them to specific class sections, specific assignment categories, or individual assignments.

There are two ways teacher grade scales can work with your district's grade scale:

- District administrators can define alignment codes for each grade in a district grade scale. Then, you can [align each grade within a grade scale you create in your gradebook to the codes in the district grade scale](#). This way, when Aspen calculates the values in average columns for that section, it maps the grades that you enter to the appropriate grades in the district grade scale. For example, if you create a 1-4 grade scale, you can determine that a score of 3 in your grade scale is equal to a B in the district grade scale. Without doing so, Aspen calculates a score of 3 as a 75 (C) out of 100. (link)

Your Grade	Term Average in Post Column	Grade on Report Card
3	3	B

- [You can enter the grades within the scales you create only when entering assignment grades](#). When Aspen calculates term grades for district post columns, it matches any grades from your grade scale to the appropriate grade in the district grade scale by points.

Note: If you cannot align your grades with district alignment codes, you must use characters that are not numbers or letters matching any values on the district grade scale; Aspen will not be able to tell the difference between your *B* (88) and the district *B* (82).

Your Grade	Term Average in Post Column	Grade on Report Card
3	C	C

Create Your Own Grade Scales for Assignments, Categories, or Sections

Your Aspen administrator creates grade scales for your district in the District view. Those grades are available for all teachers to use for their students' assignment grades. Because the grades in the district grade scales might not fit a teacher's personal grading system, teachers can create their own grade scales and link them to specific class sections, specific assignment categories, or individual assignments.

Teachers can enter the grades within the scales they create only when entering assignment grades. When Aspen calculates term grades for district post columns, it matches any grades from a teacher's grade scale to the appropriate grade in the district grade scale.

Example 1: Teacher grade scales (and grades within that grade scale):

Grade Scale: *My Homework Scale*

Grades (within the *My Homework Scale* grade scale)

Code	Value	Cutoff Value
GJ	10.0	7.5
AE	7.0	4.5
MA	4.0	0.5
DT	0.0	0.0

In this example, the teacher wants to create a scale for homework which uses four values for homework:

- **GJ** = great job = **10**
- **AE** = average effort = **7**
- **MA** = minimum attempt = **4**
- **DT** = did not try = **0**

The teacher maps these codes to numerical values so that all assignments can be averaged together for a homework average.

For example, a student receives the following five homework scores: MA, MA, MA, AE, and AE. Aspen averages the corresponding values to arrive at a homework average.

$$\frac{(MA+MA+MA+AE+AE)}{5} = \frac{(4.0+4.0+4.0+7.0+7.0)}{5} = 5.2 \text{ AE}$$

Since 5.2 is above the cutoff of 4.5, the student receives a score of AE.

Assignment scores can be entered in different ways: as letters, numbers, or both. So a teacher could enter an AE or enter any number greater than 4.5 and less than 7.5, which also corresponds to an AE.

The difference is subtle. If the teacher enters numbers for the assignment, then the actual numbers are used for the calculations. If the teacher enters letters for the assignment, then the grade scale values are used for calculations.

Three scores: AE, AE, GJ average to: 8.0 GJ; $(7 + 7 + 10)/3 = 24/3 = 8.0$

Three scores of 5, 5, 8 average to: 6.0 AE; $(5 + 5 + 8)/3 = 18/3 = 6.0$

Example 2: Teacher grade scales (and grades within that grade scale):

Grade Scale: *My Homework Check*

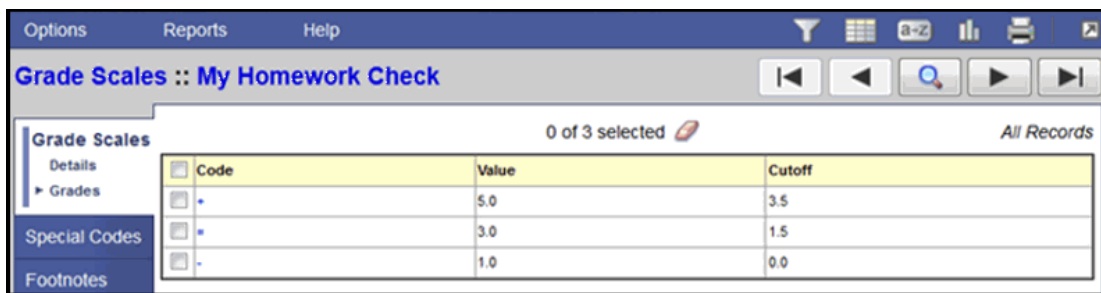
Grades (within the *My Homework Check* grade scale)

Code	Value	Cutoff Value
+	5.0	3.5
=	3.0	1.5
-	1.0	0.0

In this example, the teacher wants to create a scale for homework which uses three values:

- + represents a check plus = **5**
- = represents a check = **3**
- - represents a check minus = **1**

In Aspen, this looks like the following:



Note: Follett Software **does not recommend** using numerical codes for teacher grade scales.

Assignment scores can be entered as numbers or letters (codes). If a number is entered, Aspen assumes the numerical score is not mapped to a code.

For example, a teacher cannot make a grade scale in Aspen where a 1 = 50, 2 = 85, 3 = 100.

Follett Software recommends making a grade scale containing a character, such as: s1 = 50, s2 = 85, s3 = 100.

To create a teacher grade scale, first [create the grade scale](#), then [define the grades within that scale](#).

To create a grade scale:

1. Log on to the Staff view.
2. Click the **Tools** tab.
3. Click the **Grade Scales** side-tab. A list of grade scales appears.

4. On the **Options** menu, click **Add**. The New Grade Scale page appears.
5. Type a name for the grade scale.
6. Type the maximum number of points a student can earn for an assignment that uses this grade scale.
7. Type the minimum number of points a student can earn for an assignment that uses this grade scale.
8. Type the maximum and minimum input values. These values give you the ability to enter more or less points than the maximum or minimum points you define without affecting any other students' grades for the assignment. For example, assume you want to enter the value 110 for an assignment with a 100-point maximum. If you define the maximum input as 110 or higher, you can enter 110 without affecting all other grades for that assignment.
9. Click **Save**.

To define the grades within the grade scale:

1. On the Grade Scales page, select the checkbox next to the grade scale you created, and click **Grade Definitions** on the **Grade Scales** side-tab.
2. On the **Options** menu, click **Add**. The New Grade Definition page appears.
3. Type a code.

Note: Follett Software recommends that codes are not numbers. Codes should contain characters.

4. Type a value for the grade. This value is often the maximum percentage a student earns to receive this grade.
5. Type a cutoff value for the grade. This value is often the lowest percentage a student earns to receive this grade.

Note: The **Earns credit** and **Consider for honor roll** checkboxes do not apply to teacher grade scales.

6. Click **Save**.
7. Repeat steps 1-6 to define every grade within a grade scale. Now, link this grade scale to any [section](#), [category](#) or [individual assignment](#) you want to enter these grades for.

Example 1 (continued)

A sample score grid containing homework assignments HW1 and HW2 which both use the example *My Homework Scale* as the grade scale (GJ = 10, AE = 7, MA = 4, DT = 0).

Student Fields		Grade Columns		
Default Fields		Category: HW		
Name	YOG	HW Q1 HW	HW1 11/01 HW 10 pts.	HW2 11/02 HW 10 pts.
Clark, Thomas	2015	70.0 C-	AE	AE
Dejesus, Tianna	2015	85.0 B	AE	GJ
Deliz, Hasnain	2016	55.0 F	AE	MA
Fernandez, Cooper Lee	2016	20.0 F	MA	DT
Fitts, Concetta	2015	70.0 C-	MA	GJ
Harpin, John Hamilton	2015	85.0 B	GJ	AE
Lamountain, Mary	2015	0.0 F	DT	DT
Peckham, Britnee	2015	35.0 F	AE	DT
Resendes, Jennifer	2016	85.0 B	AE	GJ
Rice, Christina	2015	20.0 F	MA	DT
Thomas, Mary	2016	35.0 F	AE	DT
Walker, Nathan	2015	55.0 F	AE	MA
Average score		51.3 F	5.9 AE	4.3 MA

Below is the same sample score grid containing homework assignments HW1 and HW2 which both use the example *My Homework Scale* as the grade scale (GJ = 10, AE = 7, MA = 4, DT = 0).

In this example, the teacher is also entering numerical values.

Student Fields		Grade Columns		
Default Fields		Category: HW		
Name	YOG	HW Q1 HW	HW1 11/01 HW 10 pts.	HW2 11/02 HW 10 pts.
Clark, Thomas	2015	70.0 C-	AE	7
Dejesus, Tianna	2015	80.0 B-	AE	9
Deliz, Hasnain	2016	66.0 D	AE	6.2
Fernandez, Cooper Lee	2016	20.0 F	MA	DT
Fitts, Concetta	2015	70.0 C-	MA	GJ
Harpin, John Hamilton	2015	85.0 B	GJ	AE
Lamountain, Mary	2015	0.0 F	DT	DT
Peckham, Britnee	2015	35.0 F	AE	DT
Resendes, Jennifer	2016	85.0 B	AE	GJ
Rice, Christina	2015	20.0 F	MA	DT
Thomas, Mary	2016	35.0 F	AE	DT
Walker, Nathan	2015	55.0 F	AE	MA
Average score		51.8 F	5.9 AE	4.4 MA

Comparing the two examples, notice that numeric values are used in calculations when available.

Student	Example 1: Homework Average	Example 2: Homework Average
Thomas Clark	70% C- = $(AE + AE)/2 = (7 + 7)/2$	70% C- = $(AE + 7)/2 = (7 + 7)/2$
Tianna Dejesus	85% B = $(AE + GJ)/2 = (7 + 10)/2$	80 B- = $(AE + 9)/2 = (7 + 9)/2$

Create Teacher Grade Scales Aligned with District Codes

If your district administrator creates alignment codes for each grade in the district grade scale, you can create your own grades, and align each one to a district grade. This way, you determine exactly what district value appears on your students' report cards, as aligned to the grade that appears in your gradebook.

Note: If you cannot align a grade to a district grade (the Alignment Code field does not appear on the new Grade Definition page – accessed from the **Tools** tab > **Grade Scales** side-tab), see [Create Grade Scales for Assignments, Categories or Sections](#). It is important to use specific characters to represent your grades so that Aspen does not confuse them with district values.

To align grades in your teacher grade scale to a district alignment code:

1. Log on to the Staff view.
2. Click the **Tools** tab.
3. Click the **Grade Scales** side-tab.
4. Select a grade scale, and click **Grades**.
5. To create a new grade within the scale, on the **Options** menu, click **Add**.
6. Type the **Code**, **Value**, and **Cutoff Value**.
7. At the **Alignment Code** field, select the grade from the district grade scale that will represent this grade on a student's report card.
8. Click **Save**.

Create Special Codes for Assignment Grades

Teachers can create special gradebook codes to exempt an assignment score from a student's average or to count as a zero (0). For example, you might create the MED (medical) code to explain why a student did not complete an assignment, and then determine that the score does not affect the student's average.

Note: Be careful not to create a code that is already represented in your grade scale. For example, you do not want to create a cheating code C if your grade scale contains a C grade.

To create special codes:

1. Log on to the Staff view.
2. Click the **Tools** tab.
3. Click the **Special Codes** side-tab.
4. On the **Options** menu, click **Add**. The New Gradebook Special Code page appears
5. Enter the code.
6. Click the **Behavior** drop-down to select one of the following:
 - **Exempt from calculations** to determine that the system should not count this assignment when calculating the student's average.
 - **Calculate as zero** to determine that the system should count this as a zero when calculating the student's average.
7. Select the **Report as missing** checkbox if you want assignments with this code to appear on reports that list missing assignments (such as a progress report). These assignments appear in addition to assignments with no score.

Note: If you select the **Show missing column** checkbox in your user preferences, Aspen includes any assignments you enter this code for in the calculation for the **Missing** column that appears on the Scores page. The **Missing** column can also include assignments that were due before today that you did not enter a score for, if you also select the **Count as missing** checkbox in your user preferences.

8. Select the **Color** you want the system to display the code in after you click **Save**. For example, you might want the **CH** (cheated) code to appear in red so that you can easily locate it on the Scores page.
9. Click **Save**.

Track Missing Assignments for a Term

During a grading term, you can track how many assignments your students missed or did not submit.

The **Missing** column shows the total number of assignments for which you entered your special code(s) for missing assignments:

Class List :: 2012-2013-011-01-English 9 C

Name	Y03	Missing	Homew 4 08/31 Homework	Homew 2 08/31 Homework	Homew 3 09/04 Homework	Sin Wt 3 09/10 Sin Writing Assign	Sin Wt 1 09/10 Sin Writing Assign	Sin Wt 2 09/10 Sin Writing Assign	Homew 1 09/13 Homework	Q1	Add
Andrews, Lillian	2016 0	15	10	10	10	0	0	5	15	71.0 C-	
Bronstein, Walter	2016 1	10	10	10	10	0	15	5	15	71.0 C-	
Byrne, Peter	2016 0	10	10	10	10	0	0	5	15	67.0 D+	
Chazan, Howard (nt)	2016 1	10	10	10	10	0	15	5	8	61.0 D-	
Chin, Sarah	2016 2	10	10	10	10	15	15	5	15	71.0 C-	
Cummings, Kyle	2016 0	10	10	10	10	10	10	5	15	100.0 A+	
Donovan, Matthew T	2016 1	10	10	10	10	15	0	5	15	71.0 C-	
Godes, Judith	2016 0	10	10	10	10	0	0	5	8	61.0 D-	
Grigorenko, Kevin T (nt)	2016 0	10	10	10	10	0	0	5	0	50.0 F	
Kagan, Collen	2016 0	10	10	10	10	0	0	5	15	71.0 C-	
Kagan, Elliott T (nt) (nt)	2016 0	10	10	10	10	0	0	5	15	71.0 C-	
Kelley, Eryn T	2016 0	10	10	10	10	0	0	5	15	71.0 C-	
Louko, Alexandria	2016 0	10	10	10	10	10	10	5	15	100.0 A+	
Miquesney, Scott	2016 0	10	10	10	10	0	0	5	0	50.0 F	
Quinn, Jack	2016 0	0	10	10	10	10	10	5	15	100.0 A+	
Romaine, Raymond T	2016 0	10	10	10	10	10	10	5	15	100.0 A+	
Average score		10.0 A+	10.0 A+	10.0 A+	3.0 F	3.0 F	5.0 A+	13.0 B+	76.0 C		

To track missing assignments using the **Missing** column on the Scores page:

1. On the **Tools** tab, **Special Codes** side-tab, [create one or more special codes that you can enter for assignments students do not turn in](#). Be sure to select the **Report as missing** checkbox. You can also determine if entering that code affects student averages.
2. In your [user preferences](#), select the **Show missing column** checkbox. If you want Aspen to include assignments that were due before today that you do not enter scores for in the missing total, select the **Count empty as missing** checkbox.
3. On the Scores page, enter the special codes you created to use for missing assignments. Each time you enter the code(s) for an assignment, Aspen calculates the total number for that grading term in the **Missing** column.

Note: The **Missing** column and its values appear only on your Scores page; students, parents, and office staff cannot see these values. The values are for your information only.

Create Footnotes

Create footnotes to add special notes to scores on the Scores page. The notes do not add or subtract any points, or affect the student's average. They simply offer you a place to record notes regarding an assignment grade.

For example, a student might receive a C for an assignment – two grades lower than he actually earned, because he submitted it two weeks late.

After you enter a footnote for a score, the code you select appears next to the score. To view the footnote, use your cursor to hover over the footnote code:

The screenshot shows the 'Gradebook' tab in the software. The 'Scores' side-tab is selected. A table displays student scores for various assignments. A red circle highlights the score '83' for student 'Jezard, Stephen' on the 'SP 1 09/15 Small Project' assignment. Next to the score is a small box containing the text 'TEST', which is the footnote code. The interface includes navigation buttons, a search bar, and a sidebar with various menu options like 'Details', 'Roster', 'Contacts', etc.

Name	YOG	Recommendation	Comment	Q1	SP 1 09/15 Small Project 100 pts	LP 1 10/01 Large Project 100 pts	SP 2 10/15 Small Project 100 pts	SP 3 11/01 Small Project 100 pts	LP 2 11/05 Large Project 100 pts	Add...
Anderson, Patrick	2011			80.0 B-	85	80	83	88	91	
Brown, Jerome	2011			84.2 B	85	78	84	85	90	
Dionne, Samuel	2011			78.3 C+	78	78	78	82	78	
Duarte, Andrew	2011			80.0 B-	85	72	83	88	85	
Fallon, Andrew	2012	129 History of filmmaking		86.4 B	76	78	88	94	98	
Gendreau, Kelley	2011			91.4 A-	92	93	98	79	91	
Glover, Nora	2011			85.9 B	85	80	91	87	85	
Jezard, Stephen	2011			85.7 B	83 TEST	85	87	88	91	
Madden, Andrew	2012	129 History of filmmaking		87.5 B+	82	82	77	88	93	
Morgan, Glenna	2011			78.6 C+	81	78	73	92	77	
Nassise, Leigh	2011			71.9 C-	94	46	83	78	89	
O'Brien, Alfonso	2012			68.5 D+	85	85	85	48	50	
Quinn, Zahariah	2012			82.6 D	87	88	91	88	28	
Ring, Zachary	2011			83.7 B	85	78	82	77	91	
Teixeira, David	2012			84.5 B	86	78	81	88	84	
Average score				80.6 B-	84.7 B	79.0 C+	83.1 B	77.6 C+	81.5 B-	

To create footnotes:

1. Log on to the Staff view.
2. Click the **Tools** tab.
3. Click the **Footnotes** side-tab.
4. On the **Options** menu, click **Add**. The New Gradebook Footnote page appears.
5. Type the code. This is the code you can enter on the Scores page by pressing **CTRL+N**.
6. Type the description.
7. Click **Save**.