

Setting Up Your Aspen IMS Gradebook

30 minutes

Description

Defining how you manage assignment scores and end-of-term grades at the beginning of a course ensures you easily and accurately track each student's performance.

In Aspen IMS, define preferences that determine how your Aspen IMS gradebook appears and works, including how you like to calculate term averages. You can also link several sections of the same course so that you only have to create shared assignment categories and assignments once.

Once you set up your Aspen IMS gradebook, Aspen IMS makes grade management effortless by automatically and accurately calculating and adjusting each student's term grade with each assignment score you enter.

Prerequisites

Make sure you have completed the following lesson plans:

- Finding Your Way Around Aspen
- Getting Started with Aspen IMS

Participant Objectives

- Set Aspen IMS gradebook preferences.
- Define your default averaging mode, and specific averaging modes for specific classes.
- Link sections of the same course.

Activities

- Answer questions in the *Plan* section to prepare to select the appropriate responses to gradebook preferences.
- Set gradebook preferences.

- Select a default averaging mode for all of your classes, and select a specific mode for one class.
- Link sections of the same course that share assignments.

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:

- Gradebook Preferences
- Understanding Averaging Modes
- Configure Scoring Settings for Individual and Linked Classes

Plan

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

1. In your current system or markbook, how do you define assignments; do you have a system you use to determine the text and information you include in the column header for each assignment? For example, do you include the type of assignment (Quiz), name, and points possible? List the information here:
2. Do you currently have a quick and easy way to view important information about each student, such as life-threatening allergies, or special considerations?
3. How do you currently calculate your students' term averages? Do you weight categories of assignments? For example, is a student's quiz average worth 25%, tests 50%, and homework 25%? Or, do you calculate by points? For example, you add all points a student receives and divide by the total number of points possible to get their grade.
4. Does the calculation you defined in #3 differ depending on the class?
5. Do you teach several sections of the same course that you assign the same activities?

6. How do you differentiate your classes when talking about them? For example, do you refer to them by the time they meet, or by level and class period (such as *my Sophomore Block 2*)? Write each class and how you refer to them below:

7. Do you drop a student's lowest score when calculating end-of-term grades? Write your policy here:

Apply

Now that you've taken an in-depth look at setting up your gradebook, complete the following in the order listed:

- Set your gradebook preferences.
- Set your default averaging mode for all classes.
- Select a specific averaging mode for a specific class.
- Define a nickname for each of your classes.
- Link sections of the same course.
- Define nicknames for each class for easier identification throughout your gradebook.
- Define your 'drop lowest score' policy for each class.

Assess

Staff Name: _____ Date: _____

Setting Up Your 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...
	Set my gradebook preferences.
	Set a default averaging mode for all of my classes.
	Set a specific averaging mode for a specific class and any classes linked to it.
	Link classes that share assignments.
	Define a nickname for each of my classes.
	Define my 'drop lowest score' policy for each of my classes.
Notes:	

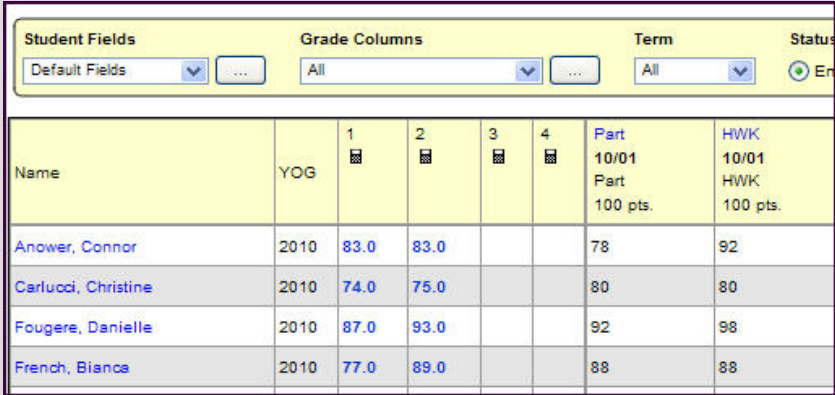
Set Your Preferences on the Gradebook tab:

Note: The **Gradebook** preferences are only available from the Staff view.


1. Click the **Gradebook** tab:

Option	Control
Shade alternate lines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Track administrator updates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Tab direction	Down
Show studies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enable gradebook features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Assignment column order	Date due (ascending)
Show points in headers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Show category names in headers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Publish assignment statistics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Show student alerts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Show course selection recommendation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Anchor averages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Missing Assignments</u>	
Show missing column	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Count empty as missing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Averages</u>	
Default weighting	Total points
Decimals	0
Grade scale	Standard A-F Grade Scale
Semester running total	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

2. Use the following table to fill in the fields:

Field	Description
Shade alternate lines	Select this checkbox if you want the system to shade every other row of your Grade Input page. Otherwise, deselect this checkbox.
Track administrator updates	Select this checkbox to have an Exclamation point appear next to any grades a staff member in the office changes in the School view.
Tab direction	Select whether you want the Tab key to move you across a row or down a column when you are entering grades on the Grade Input page.
Show studies	Select this checkbox if you want courses with a category of Study to appear in your gradebook.
Enable gradebook features	Select this checkbox if you want to use the Grade Input page to enter scores for assignments. If you do not select this checkbox, the gradebook only displays post columns (Term 1, Term 2, etc.).
Assignment column order	Select if you want assignments to appear in Date due (ascending) , Date due (descending) , or Sequence number order on the Scores page.
Show points in headers	At the Default weighting field, if you select Total Points , you can select the Show points in headers checkbox if you want to view the number of total points in the column header of an assignment.
Show category names in headers	Select this checkbox to display the names of assignment categories in the assignment headers.
Publish assignment statistics	Select this checkbox if you want low, median, and high assignment scores to appear for parents and students when they view grades using the Family and Student portals.
Show student alerts	Select this checkbox to display alert icons next to student names.
Anchor averages	Select this checkbox to left-align average columns on the Scores page. This way, the averages always appear next to the student information, and the assignments appear to the right: 

Field	Description
<p>Show missing column</p>	<p>If you create special codes that you enter for missing assignments, select this checkbox to view the Missing column on the Scores page.</p> <p>For each student, the Missing column displays the total number of assignments you have entered those special codes for.</p> <p>The values in this column might help you when determining students' final grades for the term.</p> <hr/> <p>Note: This column is for your eyes only. Students and family members do not see it in the portals, and office and administrative staff members do not see it in the School or District views.</p>
<p>Count empty as missing</p>	<p>If you selected the Show missing column checkbox, select this checkbox to count any assignments that were due before today, and that you have not entered scores for, as missing.</p> <hr/> <p>Note: You might want to select this checkbox at the end of a term when you have finished entering all assignment scores. Otherwise, the Missing column will include scores for assignments you have not graded yet.</p>
<p>Default weighting</p>	<p>To indicate to the system how you calculate averages, do one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select Categories only if you want to weight categories only in your gradebook. For example, assume you create three categories: Homework, Tests, and Quizzes. All homework assignments are worth the same amount, as are all tests and quizzes. To determine student term averages, Homework is worth 25% of the grade, Tests are worth 50% of the final grade, and Quizzes are worth 25% of the final grade. • Select Category and assignments if you want to weight both categories and assignments within those categories. For example, a student's homework average is worth 25% of the term grade, but each homework within the category is weighted differently. For example, you weight reading homework assignments 1, and intensive writing homework assignments 3. • Select Total points if you calculate averages by dividing the total points a student earns by the total number of points possible. For example, a student receives a 100, 90, and 80 for grades. The student's average is $270/300=90$. • Select Category total points if you want to use total points for individual assignments within categories that you weight. For example, assume you have a Homework category. The homework average counts as

Field	Description
	<p>25% of the student's final grade. Within the Homework category, you grade each individual assignment using points (HW 1 is worth 10 points, HW 2 is worth 20 points).</p> <p>Note: This value becomes the default average mode for the teacher. Teachers can then assign a different average mode to different course sections in the gradebook.</p>
Decimals	Type the number of decimal places you want the system to use for calculated averages.
Grade scale	Click  to select the grade scale you want to use to calculate term averages. If you use a grade scale different than the district grade scale, when you update post columns, the system translates the grades to the district grade scale.
Show semester averages	<p>Select this checkbox to show semester running averages on your Scores page. Aspen calculates semester running averages based on the assignment grades within each of the terms inside of it, not on the average for each term.</p> <p>Students and family can view this column in the Student and Family views.</p> <p>Note: Your school must enable the School Grade preferences (for Show semester averages in the gradebook) for this user preference to be activated. See your Aspen system administrator for details.</p> <p>Aspen uses the column header Semester # (for example, Semester 1) for semester running average columns.</p>

3. Click **OK**.

Calculate Averages in the Gradebook

There are four ways teachers can calculate averages in the gradebook:

- [weighted categories](#)
- [weighted categories and assignments](#)
- [total points only](#)
- [category total points](#)

Determine which system you use, and then [set your gradebook preferences](#) to indicate your grading system to Aspen.

Aspen needs this information to help you create your categories and assignments, and calculate averages. The value you select when you set your gradebook preferences becomes your default averaging mode. Then, [you can define a different averaging mode for different course sections](#).

Calculating Averages Using Weighted Categories

- Each assignment is converted to a percentage.
- **Assignments averaged...** Assignments are averaged within each category.
- **Categories weighted...** Averages from each category are then multiplied by their given weight and added to find the term average.

Example for a single student:

Homework Category: (Weight: 25)	Quizzes Category: (Weight: 25)	Tests Category: (Weight: 50)
HW 1: 9 of 10 = 90%	Quiz 1: 100 of 100 = 100%	Test 1: 80 of 100 = 80%
HW 2: 10 of 10 = 100%	Quiz 2: 75 of 100 = 75%	Test 2: 94 of 100 = 94%
HW 3: 9 of 10 = 90%	Quiz 3: 80 of 100 = 80%	Test 3: 90 of 100 = 90%
HW 4: 10 of 10 = 100%		
HW average: $(90+100+90+100)/4$ = 95%	Quiz average: $(100+75+80)/3$ = 85%	Test average: $(80+94+90)/3$ = 88%

Aspen uses the following formula to calculate the term average using weights:

$$(95 \times 25/100) + (85 \times 25/100) + (88 \times 50/100) = 89\%$$

Calculating Averages Using Weighted Categories and Assignments

- Each assignment is converted to a percentage.
- **Assignments weighted first...** Assignments are multiplied by their given weight and then added to calculate the category average.
- **Categories weighted second...** Category averages are then multiplied by their given weight and added to get the term average.

Example for a single student:

Homework Category (Weight: 25)	Quizzes Category (Weight: 25)	Tests Category (Weight: 50)
HW 1(wt=1): 9 of 10 = 90%	Quiz 1(wt=1): 100 of 100 = 100%	Test 1(wt=1): 80 of 100 = 80%
HW 2(wt=1): 10 of 10 = 100%	Quiz 2(wt=1): 75 of 100 = 75%	Test 2(wt=1): 94 of 100 = 94%
HW 3(wt=1): 9 of 10 = 90%	Quiz 3(wt=1): 80 of 100 = 80%	Test 3(wt=2): 90 of 100 = 90%
HW 4(wt=2): 10 of 10 = 100%		
HW average: 96%	Quiz average: 85%	Test average: 88.5%

Aspen uses the following formula to calculate the average:

The system weights assignments first:

$$\text{HW: } (90 \times 1/5) + (100 \times 1/5) + (90 \times 1/5) + (100 \times 2/5) = 96\%$$

$$\text{Quiz: } (100 \times 1/3) + (75 \times 1/3) + (80 \times 1/3) = 85\%$$

$$\text{Test: } (80 \times 1/4) + (94 \times 1/4) + (90 \times 2/4) = 88.5\%$$

The system then weights category averages just like the Categories Only option:

$$(96 \times 1/4) + (85 \times 1/4) + (88.5 \times 1/2) = 89.5\%$$

Calculating Averages Using Total Points Only

- Assignments are NOT converted to percentages.
- **Points earned...** All points a student receives for each assignment are added together.
- **Points possible...** Total points possible for each assignment are added together.
- The term average for a student is the sum of the points earned divided by the sum of the points possible.

Example for a single student:

Homework Category	Quizzes Category	Tests Category
HW 1: 10 of 10	Quiz 1: 50 of 50	Test 1: 80 of 100
HW 2: 9 of 10	Quiz 2: 42 of 50	Test 2: 94 of 100
HW 3: 15 of 20	Quiz 3: 48 of 50	Test 3: 180 of 200
HW 4: 4 of 5		
HW total points earned: 38	Quiz total points earned: 140	Test total points earned: 354
HW total points possible: 45	Quiz total points possible: 150	Test total points possible: 400

Aspen uses the following formula to calculate the term average using Total Points Only:

$$38 + 140 + 354 = 532 = 89.4\%$$

$$45 + 150 + 400 = 595$$

Calculating Averages Using Category Total Points

- Assignments are NOT converted to percentages.
- **Points earned...** Within each category, the points a student receives are added together.
- **Points possible...** Within each category, the total points possible are added together.
- Each category average is the sum of the points earned divided by the sum of points possible.
- **Categories weighted...** Category averages are then multiplied by their given weight and added to find the term average.

Example for a single student:

Homework Category (Weight: 25)	Quizzes Category (Weight: 25)	Tests Category (Weight: 50)
HW 1: 10 of 10	Quiz 1: 50 of 50	Test 1: 80 of 100
HW 2: 9 of 10	Quiz 2: 42 of 50	Test 2: 94 of 100
HW 3: 15 of 20	Quiz 3: 48 of 50	Test 3: 180 of 200
HW 4: 4 of 5		
HW total points earned: 38	Quiz total points earned: 140	Test total points earned: 354
HW total points possible: 45	Quiz total points possible: 150	Test total points possible: 400
HW average: 38/45 = 84.4%	Quiz average: 140/150 = 93.3%	Test average: 354/400 = 88.5%

Aspen uses the following formula to calculate the term average using Category Total Points:

$$(84.4 \times 25/100) + (93.3 \times 25/100) + (88.5 \times 50/100) = 88.7\%$$

View Class Details in the Gradebook

In the gradebook, you can view details such as room, day schedule, and term for each of your current classes.

You can also link a section to other sections. Linking sections lets you create categories and assignments for one section, and automatically add them to other sections linked to it.

To view class details:

1. Log on to the Staff view.
2. Click the **Classes** tab, and select the checkbox next to the class.
3. Click the **Details** side-tab. The details for that class appear.

Note: On the **Options** menu, click **Change History** to view a list of changes made to the section.

4. In the **Course Nickname** field, the default class section number from your school's schedule appears. You can replace this course and section number with a nickname so this class is easily identifiable throughout your gradebook.

For example, if you teach two sections of Calculus, and one section is more crowded than the other, you might name the smaller section *Ca/SM* and the larger section *Ca/LG*. Or, if sections always meet during the same block or period, you might name them after that.

Note: If you don't type a nickname, Aspen identifies the class with the default class section number from your school's schedule.

5. To apply a different averaging mode than the default you defined in your user preferences, use the **Average mode** drop-down to select the mode for this course section.

Note: If you co-teach this section, you cannot select **Gradebook default** at the **Average mode** field. The average mode you select appears for the other teachers who share the class.

6. To link this course section to another section, click **Select**:

Class List :: 2013-2014 - SCI31304-001 - Chemistry

Details

Course Nickname: Green

Description: Chemistry

Classroom: 108

Course: SCI31304-001

Schedule: [S2] B4(A,E) B5(B,F) B6(C,D7) [S1] B1(A,E) B2(B,F) B3(C,D7)

Schedule term: FYT

Team:

House:

Average Mode: Gradebook Default

Averages grade scale: Gradebook Default

Drop mode: Do not drop scores Drop lowest overall score Drop lowest score by category

Classes linked for assignments and categories:

Course	Description	Term	Schedule
SCI31304-003	Chemistry	FYT	[S2] B1(A,D) B2(B,E) B3(C,F) [S1] B4(A,D) B5(B,E) B6(C,F)
SCI31304-002	Chemistry	FYT	[S2] B4(D,D7) B5(A,E) B6(B,F) [S1] B1(D,D7) B2(A,E) B3(B,F)

Enter a name for your linked sections.*
Chemistry

Select...

A pick list containing a list of any other sections the teacher is responsible for appears.

Note: To unlink a course, click **Select**, and deselect the checkbox next to the course. Click **OK**.

7. Select the sections you want to link, and click **OK**. The sections appear on the page.
8. In the **Drop mode** box, do one of the following to determine if you want to drop the lowest scores for this class:
 - Select **Do not drop scores** if you do not want the system to drop any scores for this class.
 - Select **Drop lowest overall score** if you want the system to drop the lowest score(s) for a term. The following options appear:

Drop mode

Do not drop scores Drop lowest overall score Drop lowest score by category

Category	Term - 1		Term - 2		Term - 3		Term - 4	
	Available	# to drop	Available	# to drop	Available	# to drop	Available	# to drop
All	10	1	7	1	0	1	0	1

For each term, the number of scores appears in the **Available** column. Type the number of scores you want to drop for that term in the **# to drop** column.

- Select **Drop lowest score by category** if you want to determine how many scores to drop each term by assignment category. For example, you might drop the two lowest homework scores each term. To do so, type the number in the **# to drop** column for each category, for each term:

Drop mode

Do not drop scores Drop lowest overall score Drop lowest score by category

Category	Term - 1		Term - 2		Term - 3		Term - 4	
	Available	# to drop	Available	# to drop	Available	# to drop	Available	# to drop
Project	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Quiz	6	1	3	1	0	0	0	0
Essay	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Part	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
HWK	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

Note: On the Scores page, the system indicates dropped scores with ↓ because they fit the criteria you determined in the **Drop mode** box:

Pages **Classes** Planner Quest Student Tools

Options Reports Help

Class List :: 2009-2010 - 00415-001 - Humanities

Details Student Fields Grade Columns Term Status
 Roster Default Fields All 1 Enrolled Withdrawn

Name	YOG	1 quiz 10/01 Lit. Quiz 100 pts.	Part. 10/01 Part 100 pts.	LitQuiz2 10/02 Lit. Quiz 100 pts.	LitQuiz3 10/02 Lit. Quiz 100 pts.	art quiz 1 10/02 Art/MusicAssess. 100 pts.	Mus. Test 10/15 Art/MusicAssess. 100 pts.	
Barry, Anne	2009	96.0	105	87	105	105	108	100
Gale, Taylor	2009	91.0	85 ↓	94	105	105	69	98
Harrington, Hsiaolu	2009	96.0	105	93	105	105	102	96
Pacheco, Kayla	2009	84.0	105	94	85 ↓	85	81	47

9. Click **Save**.