

Inline Grading

The following tools support inline grading:

- Assignment Building Block
- Blogs and Journals Building Block
- Wiki Building Block
- Discussion Building Block

Inline Grading for Assignments

Instructors can view student-submitted files “inline,” meaning in the web browser, without requiring any plug-ins, applets, or client-side applications. Additionally, annotations tools are available as part of the inline viewer, enabling Instructors to provide feedback—comments, highlights, and even drawing/annotation—directly on the inline view of the document.

Inline Assignment Grading Availability

You must enable Cloud connector and configure it to contact Blackboard Cloud.

You then must make Inline Assignment Grading available in existing courses.

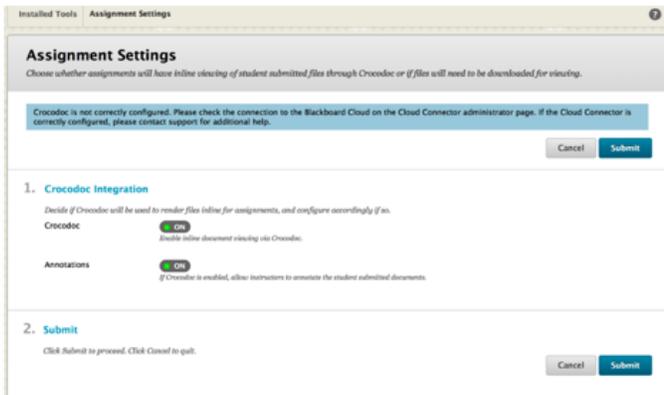
1. On the **Administrator Panel** in the **Tools and Utilities** section, click **Tools**.
2. Locate **Assignment** in the list of tools and select **Always On** for **Assignment** to turn the tool on for all courses. Select **Default On** to allow instructors to turn it on or off in their courses.

Important Notes

- There are no changes to the workflow for submitting assignments, with the exception for one minor UI change to the field where a user would enter an assignment response using the content editor as opposed to uploading a file. All of the changes are focused on the **Grade Assignment** page.
- The only requirements are the Course Delivery module and a modern browser.
- When students view their submitted attempts, they see the converted document in an inline viewer, as well as any annotations the instructor may have added. Students cannot edit instructor annotations or add their own annotations.
- Inline Assignment Grading can convert, display, and annotate Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and PDF file formats. This accounts for well over 95% of submissions to Blackboard Learn assignments (based on sampling of Managed Hosting clients). File formats that cannot be converted are presented for download, as in the past.
- The conversion retains most formatting for supported file types. There may be some very complex page layouts that don't render perfectly, but those are uncommon exceptions.

Inline Assignment Grading and Crocodoc

- Inline Assignment Grading is powered by Crocodoc (<http://www.crocodoc.com>). Crocodoc is a third-party, cloud-based conversion, display, and annotation service.
- Inline Assignment Grading *does* contact a Blackboard-managed cloud service to retrieve a unique Crocodoc token per Blackboard Learn instance. This token is used to identify the Blackboard Learn instance with the Crocodoc service. Acquisition of this token happens automatically when Inline Assignment Grading is available. For this acquisition to occur, the Cloud Connector needs to be enabled and configured to contact the Blackboard Cloud. In the event that Inline Assignment Grading has difficulty obtaining the Crocodoc token from the Blackboard-managed cloud service, the following error will appear in the Inline Assignment Grading settings page:



The Cloud Connector only needs to be enabled for Inline Assignment Grading to request and retrieve the Crocodoc token. The Cloud Connector is not required for regular use of the Inline Assignment Grading feature once the token has been successfully retrieved.

- Student file submissions are stored in your Learn instance, as always. A copy of the submission is transmitted to the Crocodoc cloud service for conversion. The converted version of the document lives in the cloud on servers managed by Crocodoc.
- The Crocodoc application and associated data (converted documents and annotations) live in the Amazon Web Services cloud, hosted in the United States.
- The files in Crocodoc are only stored in the US. Blackboard and Amazon Web Services adhere to the Safe Harbor Guidelines to comply with EU data protection regulations.
- No personally identifiable data about student is sent to Crocodoc. Learn retrieves a document ID from Crocodoc and assigns it to the document. That mapping of Document ID to user, course, assignment, and attempt is tracked locally in Learn. None of that data is available to Crocodoc. All that is transmitted to Crocodoc is the file for conversion. (Of course, the content of the file could contain personally identifiable information.) The converted file is stored in the Crocodoc service, as are any annotations made on the converted file.
- The files are secure in the Crocodoc service. Blackboard, Crocodoc, and Amazon Web Services go to great lengths to secure access to the content stored in the cloud.
- Annotations are made to the converted document. They are stored as metadata associated with the converted document in the Crocodoc cloud service.
- It's possible to download the annotated document as a PDF file.

- The Crocodoc service can convert files in any character set, including double-byte character sets. Likewise, comment annotations can be entered in any character set, including double-byte character sets. However, the inline viewer's interface itself is *not* localized, so the labels on the inline viewer toolbar and any other textual interface elements of the inline viewer will always be displayed in English. Blackboard is working with Crocodoc to get more clarity around their timeline for supporting localized interfaces.
- Text files, HTML files, and content created via the content editor can already be displayed inline natively in the browser, so we do not send them to Crocodoc for conversion. Since they are not processed through Crocodoc, they cannot be annotated.
- When a converted document is loaded a session is initiated in Crocodoc. Annotations made in session are automatically saved. However, that session expires after an hour, so if an Instructor takes longer than an hour to annotate a document, annotations made after that session expiration may not be saved. As a workaround, navigating away from the Grade Assignment page to another page in Blackboard Learn, then navigating back to the Grade Assignment page will re-establish a new session. Blackboard is working with Crocodoc to determine how we might extend this session to be more in sync with the Learn session itself.

Known Issues

- Students cannot annotate documents.
- This does not work with SafeAssign, Self & Peer, Forums, or Content Collections.
- This does not work in Mobile Learn.
- The Crocodoc inline viewer interface is always displayed in English at this time.
- Annotation sessions expires after an hour, so if an instructor takes longer than an hour to annotate a document, annotations made after that session expiration may not be saved.

To Learn More

To learn more about how to grade inline, see [Grade Assignments](#).

To learn more about the Cloud Connector, see [Cloud Management](#).

