DIGITAL DIGEST

January 2025

Start Up Support

We will be providing **extended hours** on:

Saturday, Jan. 11th
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

via a virtual open lab and ticket support.

Automatic Zero Grading is Here!

We've all been there. It's the end of the term, and now you have to go through your D2L gradebook and enter zeros for all student work that was not attempted. It's a pain, but it must be done for the Calculated Final Grade feature to work correctly.

But wait —you've figured out that if you enabled "Treat ungraded items as 0," the zeros are already being factored into the Calculated Final Grade. This is indeed a solution, but a less than ideal one. For one, if you have the Calculated Final Grade released to the students, they will see a mathematically correct grade but might freak out if they don't understand that it calculates in the zeros for work they haven't even gotten to yet. Secondly, unattempted work in their grade dashboard does not display a 0, so they might not understand that there actually is a zero for that grade and might assume that they can still turn in work for a grade. Third, and finally, when you export the D2L gradebook, those 0's—that have definitely been calculated into the grade—do not display in the spreadsheet. Only empty cells are generated.

Enter **Automatic Zero Grading**. This newly introduced feature in D2L addresses the issues we've raised, making your life just a little bit easier.

D2L Email Transition Complete

Last month, D2L Brightspace's internal email system was replaced with the Microsoft 365 email integration, which hosts LSC Employee and Student Email. Emails sent via the Classlist or Intelligent Agents continue to work and course-related emails—such as announcements, assignment feedback, and discussion notifications—are delivered directly to LSC Employee and Student email inboxes.

This change means **the Sent box in D2L is no longer available**; therefore, emails sent from D2L will not be automatically saved. To retain a copy of sent messages, instructors should follow the instructions provided in the article Send a Copy of Outgoing D2L Emails to Your LSC

☑ Send a copy of each outgoing message to...

Video Newsletter

Want to see some of these topics in action? Then watch *The Online Update*, our video newsletter. Topics include Creator+ Lumi, Automatic Zero Grading, the New Quiz Evaluation Experience, and more, all in about 6 minutes.

Need D2L support? Visit the Virtual Teaching Assistance Center.

Semester Start Reminders

Welcome to the Spring 2025 Semester at Lone Star College! Here are some links to help you prepare your course:

Faculty Assistance ……………………………. Virtual Teaching Assistance Center (VTAC)

Student Assistance …………………………... Virtual Learning Assistance Center (VLAC)

Prep Your Course ……………………………. Semester Start Checklist (Video Series)

Rosters not matching? ………………………… Reconcile D2L and iStar Rosters

Not sure what to include in your course? …… Design Checklist and Syllabus Template

Need help designing your course? …………. Meet Your Instructional Designers

Need some technology help? ………………… Meet Your Campus Technologists

Want some training on D2L? ………………… VTAC Upcoming Events and Training Library

AI Detection Returns

Back by popular demand after a trial in 2023, AI Writing Detection for Turnitin Feedback Studio has returned to D2L, effective immediately. This feature detects when AI writing tools, such as ChatGPT, may have been used in a student submission and provides a report detailing what percentage of the text in the submission has been determined to be AI-generated. The detector also attempts to recognize instances where students use text spinners or other AI tools to rephrase AI-generated content. AI detection reports are available for any Assignment in which you have enabled Turnitin Similarity Reports.

While this is a useful tool, we caution faculty to keep in mind that when using this, or any other AI detection tool or website, there is always a chance of a false-positive, and Turnitin states that the results of the AI detection report should not be used as the sole basis for determining academic misconduct.

For more information, please visit the Use Turnitin with Assignments and Detecting Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) VTAC articles.

Design in the Evening

Remember that evening appointment hours with instructional designers are available to support faculty members—including both full-time and adjunct instructors—who prefer to work on their courses after regular business hours. Instructional designers can assist with online course design, course building, group training requests and facilitation, as well as a variety of other specialized, one-on-one strategies to enhance your course materials. These evening hours are offered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM. To schedule an appointment, please visit the Designer page in VTAC.

At this time, Alana Kubeczka, Maria Block, and Amberly Vela are the Instructional Designers available for evening support. You do not need to be assigned to their campus to make an appointment with them.

Automatic Zero Grading is Here, cont.

With automatic zero grading, a grade of zero is automatically assigned after a due date has passed. Applying the Automatic Zero feature eliminates the need for instructors to manually set missing submissions to zero. Additionally, learners receive a more accurate view of their grade calculations for individual activities and for the overall course.

To enable this feature, look for the Automatic Zero for Missing Submissions check box that appears in the Grade Calculations area of Grade Settings.

Automatic Zero for Missing Submissions
☑ Automatically apply a grade of zero (0) to missing submissions once an assessment becomes overdue
Changes to this setting only take effect on assessments with future due dates

At this time, we recommend setting ungraded items to "Drop ungraded items." This guidance may change over time as we learn more about this feature.

As you view your gradebook with Auto Zero enabled, you will see the automatic zero applied to missing or late submissions with an explanatory tooltip.

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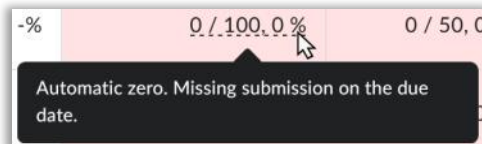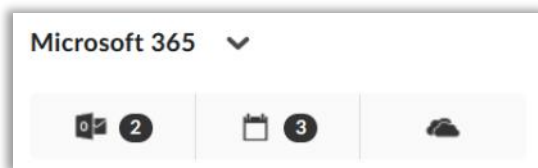Automatic zero. Missing submission on the due date.

A couple of caveats:

- The Auto Zero will not apply retroactively; in other words, if the due date has already passed, you cannot then apply Auto Zero and expect that it will put in the missing grades.

- D2L guidance indicates that the Auto Zero must be used with Due Dates. The easy work-around if you don't usually use Due Dates is to make the Due Date the same as the End Date.

This new feature is in response to a PIE (product idea exchange) suggestion, which is how D2L solicits feedback about its platform. Visit VTAC to learn more about Automatic Zero Grading and the Product Idea Exchange.

Email Transition, cont.

Employee Email Inbox.

And don't forget to sign into the Microsoft 365 widget, which is available on most D2L home-pages. It shows your most recent emails in your inbox, as well as calendar and OneDrive items.

Microsoft 365 ⌄

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Virtual Assistant gets AI

The LSC Brightspace Virtual Assistant is now powered by Lumi Chat, an AI-driven help tool that provides faculty with role-specific resources directly in D2L. Accessible via the speech bubble icon in the bottom-right corner, it offers more accurate step-by-step guides, video tutorials, and help articles without the need to leave D2L.

While Lumi Chat's AI-generated responses address most questions, faculty who need further assistance can connect with a real person at the D2L Helpdesk. Simply type "contact support" in the chat or click the Contact Support button to be connected to live support.

Lumi Chat is available across most of D2L but does not appear on third-party tools, full-screen pages, or during live quizzes. It focuses exclusively on D2L-related tasks, offering context-specific support to enhance your experience.

More information on using the Virtual Assistant can be found in VTAC.

Lone Star College's Online Proctoring Options

Lone Star College offers three tiers of online proctoring for its classes. The first is **automated proctoring** using Respondus LockDown Browser + Monitor. This recommended solution records the student's webcam and screen, flagging instances for the instructor to review later. The LockDown Browser prevents access to other websites, applications, and the use of copy/paste functions. This method does not involve a human proctor and is available for all classes, with no limits on the number of exams.

The second tier is **live proctoring done by the LSC instructor** using Respondus LockDown Browser and Zoom/Webex. With this method, students take the exam simultaneously while the instructor monitors them for any infractions. This option is also available for all classes and unlimited exams.

The final tier is **live proctoring using ProctorU**. Students schedule a proctoring session and are continuously monitored by ProctorU employees during the exam. Any infractions are reported alongside a video recording of the session. Students using ProctorU take the exam with the Guardian browser, which functions similarly to LockDown Browser. Due to associated costs (covered by the college), this tier is restricted to pre-approved, fully online courses.

To learn more about the online proctoring options available at LSC, visit the Proctoring Options page in VTAC.

Virtual Meetings for Students

Did you know all students at Lone Star College have access to their own Webex and Zoom accounts, enabling them to schedule and host their own virtual meetings?

Professors can leverage this access to enhance engagement and facilitate collaboration by assigning group projects that require students to meet independently outside of class time. Students could also use these tools to create peer-led study groups, fostering deeper understanding of course material through discussion and mutual support.

By empowering students to organize their own meetings, professors encourage active participation and build students' skills in teamwork and self-directed learning. For more information about student access, click here for the VLAC article you can share with your students.

Upcoming Training

Would you like to learn how to use D2L, YuJa Video, or one of the other LSC-supported technologies? Or maybe you just need a small refresher course on Respondus LockDown Browser + Monitor?

We list upcoming trainings, webinars, and open labs on the VTAC Upcoming Events page, available in the News section of the VTAC website.

Many of the offerings are hosted by our own instructional designers, technologists, or faculty you may know. Other sessions are provided by our supported third-party vendors.

It is easy to join a webinar by clicking on the event title and using the registration or session link in the description.