

# Tech Snacks: Early Feedback & Intervention

With more than a third of the semester behind us already, it's critical to ensure that struggling students get the feedback and support that they may need. Early feedback and intervention strategies play a critical role in students' academic success and retention.

## Strategy 1: Making grades visible in Brightspace

When we collect input from students about online classes at MSU-Northern in our annual survey, some of their most frequent requests relate to instructor use of the Gradebook in Brightspace. Specifically, they appreciate being able to see their final grades (so far) earlier in the semester.

*Note: There are some valid reasons for **not** showing a student's final grade before the end of the semester. Some instructors choose to release final grades for a few days at mid-semester, then un-release them again. If you do choose not to release final grades early, consider explaining your reasoning to students so they understand that this was a deliberate choice.*

In your Gradebook you'll be able to see if the final grade is visible to students by looking at the icon next to their final grade. If there is a slash through the eye, that means the students can't see their final grade. This can be changed by selecting the drop down menu next to final grade and clicking on "Grade All." On the next screen select the drop menu next to Final Grades near the top of the page and select "Release All." Once completed, the eye next to the student's grade will have the slash removed, showing that students can now see their final calculated grade.

**Please note that mid-term grades must be submitted to the Registrar by March 10th.**

To submit mid-term grades, log in to MyInfo and you'll see "Mid Term Grades" under the "Faculty Services" tab. Mid-term grades help students make an informed decision about whether they should withdraw from a course or not. The withdraw deadline is March 24th.

## Strategy 2: Reporting "Early Alerts" on IRVM

It may be hard to believe, but students who are at risk for failing a class often don't even realize that they are at risk. MSUN's Early Alert system is designed to allow instructors to report these students to the Registrar and Director of Enrollment Management so that they can be contacted about their status and connected with appropriate services when necessary.

The screenshot displays the Brightspace Gradebook interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Final Grades' and 'Multi-Select'. Below this, a table lists students with their names in a dropdown menu, their final calculated grade, and a status icon (a slash through an eye). The table shows two students: 'Frodo' with a grade of '111.3 / 260, D' and 'Bob' with a grade of '26.8 / 260, F'. A dropdown menu is open next to the 'Final Grades' header, showing options: 'Event Log', 'Recalculate All', 'Transfer All', 'Clear All', 'Add Feedback for All', and 'Release All' (which is highlighted in blue). Below the menu, there are buttons for 'Set Grades' and 'Clear G...'. At the bottom, there is a table with columns for 'First Name, Last Name', 'Final Calculated Grade', 'Grade', and 'Scheme'.

### **How do I submit an Early Alert?**

Instructors are strongly encouraged to use the online Early Alert referral system to report concerns about a student's:

- Class attendance
- Test scores (particularly C's, D's and F's)
- Homework Assignments (incomplete, missed or poorly completed)
- Poor class interaction/engagement

Once an alert has been made, you will receive an email letting you know that the early alert is being processed. Every early alert is opened and reviewed by Maura Gatch. Once the early alert has been reviewed, the initial assignment is made. If a student is served by LRI, SSS or Accessibility Services (or could benefit from Accessibility Services) they are assigned to those offices. Other students are assigned to staff in enrollment management. Students may be connected with financial aid, tutoring, student health services, the student's advisor or the chair of the college. All student athlete early alerts are reported to the coach as well as the Athletic Director.

If you continue to see the same behaviors or the same academic issues, please submit an additional Early Alert so further monitoring and/or adjustments can occur.

### **How do I access the Early Alert system?**

If you are on campus, simply type "IRVM" (Institutional Research Virtual Machine) and click on the "SIS: Early Alert" button. You will need to have your student's MSU ID ready. Students' IDs are located in MyInfo in your class roster ("Faculty Services" > "Summary Class List").

### **Can I access it from off campus?**

If you are off campus, you will have to install the Virtual Private Network client from <https://www.msun.edu/its/vpn.aspx> to access and sign into IRVM.

## **Strategy 3: Using grade check assignments**

Many students — especially freshmen — have a hard time connecting their own motivation and effort with their resulting grade.

One way to ensure that students are tracking their own progress is to create a "grade check" assignment or build a grade check component into a current course assignment.

In a grade check assignment, you make students find their current grade in the class, share that grade with you the instructor, and reflect on why they have that grade. If they aren't satisfied with their grade, you can have them create a plan for what they'll do (and when) to improve their grade in the class. You can do this as a short reflection paper, or you can create a form that they need to fill out. You can do grade checks at the mid-point of the semester, or more frequently.