

WeBWorK Quickstart

Once you have a WeBWorK course created (which takes a quick email to Sarunas), here's how to interact with the system.

Three general notes:

- There is a help button in the left-hand column which may have information about the page you are currently viewing. I find it is helpful less than a quarter of the time, but it's a quick place to make a first check. Note that the students do *not* have this button.
- WeBWorK is very one-thing-at-a-time; you will often have to click the "Take Action" button for each step of a process.
- WeBWorK does not have confirmation pop-up windows or similar guards against accidental actions, so be careful when you click things.

1. ACCOUNTS

1.1. Creating Accounts. You will have to create accounts for all students, other professors of the course, and teaching assistants.

1.1.1. *Automated.* Start at bannerstudent, downloading your class list in Excel format. Open it in Excel and delete all the header rows (every row from the first down should be a student's information). Save it as a CSV (comma-delimited) file. Go to `webwork.dartmouth.edu` (the very top-level page). Near the bottom is a link to a classlist converter, where you can upload the .csv file to get a .lst file. Depending on your browser, downloading the .lst file may just show it in the window, in which case you can either back up and ctrl-click/right-click to download, or copy the text, paste it into a text editor, and save it as [name].lst manually. The .lst file can be uploaded to WeBWorK using the File Manager, and you can create the accounts from it in the Classlist Editor with the "import users from file" option.



User IDs are by default the last name of a student. If you have duplicate last names the user IDs must be adjusted. Within a section the system will accommodate that automatically; between sections it must be done manually. If you try to import from an lst file (using the options of replacing no users and adding any new users) and there are duplicates, the system will reject them. You can either adjust the .lst file, adding, say, a 1 at the end of the duplicate ID (the last entry in each row of the .lst file is the user ID), or add the duplicate student manually.

1.1.2. *Manual.* This is easier than the automated method when adding a few people at a time. Go to the Classlist Editor and select "Add x student(s)" at the top, filling in the appropriate number for x. You will get a form to fill out with name, user ID, email, password, section, etc. You can also assign problems sets to the students. Note that even for TAs and professors you need to assign all problem sets or they will not be able to see them.

1.1.3. *Permissions.* “Student” is the default, so for TAs and other instructors you’ll want to reset the permission level.

1.2. **Acting as a Student.** If you follow the instruction “Click this link to see the page from which the user sent feedback:” in WeBWorK-generated emails, you will be acting as the student. This means you see the version of the problem assigned to the student, as students will see varying constants and (where applicable) ordering of parts. It does not appear to me that anything else is indicated by the phrase “acting as.” To act as a student without such an email, click on the student’s name in the Classlist Editor.

Acting as a student still allows you to see the correct answers and still gives you the “edit this problem” button. That can be useful if you do not immediately see how to solve the problem. You won’t want to actually edit the problem, nor will you have permission to do so, but looking at the source code will tell you what parts of the answer came from which constants in the problem.

1.3. **Changing Individual Due Dates.** There are two ways to do this; here is the one I feel is easier. From the classlist editor, check the box next to the student’s name, scroll back up and click the button next to “edit selected users.” Click “Take Action” and from the next page, click the student’s name. That will take you to a page listing all the homework sets currently assigned to the student. Each set will have three rows with it, corresponding to the dates for opening, closing, and answers available. You may change as many as you like and click “save.”

1.4. **Sending Email.** There are three tricky things with the email page. One is that it is particular about the format of the “from” address, so mimic the previous one exactly. The second is that the buttons at the foot of the page are laid out in such a way that it is easy to accidentally save a message as the default message when you don’t want to. Third, note that you have to have saved a message to send it – there is no creating a quick message and sending it without saving it.

You’ll probably be working with a previous course’s default message to start; you can modify it as needed and save it as your default. For later messages you can “save as” some other filename, and be careful to hit the “save” and not “save as default” button.

There are certain macros you can use to personalize messages, such as \$FN for first name, which are described in the “list of insertable macros” drop-down menu on the email page.

2. ASSIGNMENTS

2.1. **Importing Assignments from Other Classes.** If you have a previous class to mimic, you can export the problem sets from it, import them to your class, and then just change the due dates (and names, if necessary).

If you want to mimic a previous class but do not have an account for it, Sarunas can set you up with one. If you are nice he will even transfer the homework sets for you.

To export, log in to the old course, go to the Hmwk Sets Editor and check the boxes of all the sets you want to export, clicking the button by “export selected sets.” If you want to export all of them you can select “export all sets” or “export visible sets.” The file name will be “set[assignment name].def.” From the File Manager, select the set definition files you want and click “download.” Unfortunately downloading and uploading have to be done one file at a time.

Now go to the new/current course and to its File Manager, and use the “upload” line. Finally, back to the Hmwk Sets Editor, selecting “import.” If you want to change the set names, you must import them one at a time. If they may keep their previous names, you can use the “import multiple sets” option. For the rest, see “Setting Due Dates,” below.

2.2. Creating Assignments Manually. From the Hmwk Sets Editor you can create new empty problem sets. You may also do that from the Library Browser, which is where you will actually add problems to the set. If you work from the Library Browser, you will have to click the “create a new set in this course” button (with the appropriate name typed in) and then select that set as the target set before attempting to add any problems.

The problems available to browse are the ones in the default set of problem collections; you can scroll through and display the problems in a collection (“view problems”). Check the ones you want and click “update set” (the “edit target set” button at the top takes you to a page from which you can change dates and delete or reorder problems, but not add them).

2.3. Setting Due Dates. If you set the dates as you go (such as when you are creating assignments manually), you can do it by clicking the “edit problems” column link in the Hmwk Sets Editor for that assignment. To do more than one at once, you can check the boxes next to those assignments, select the “edit selected sets” button, and click “Take Action.” That will take you to a page with boxes for opening, closing, and answers available dates.

2.4. Assigning to Students. If you create an assignment after students have been added, you will have to assign it to them. From the Hmwk Sets Editor, you can click the link in the “Edit Assigned Users” column to do so. Separately, you need to make the set visible to the students, which is an option at the top of the Hmwk Sets Editor page.

2.5. Statistics. You can explore the Statistics and Student Progress pages on your own. The only note I would make is that there is a column headed *Ind*, which is supposed to take number of attempts into account, but does

not seem to correspond to any statistic calculated as described in the help window. It is unclear what actual calculation is happening.

2.6. Getting Grades. This is wonderfully easy. From the “scoring tools” page, highlight all the assignments and click “score selected set(s) and save to:” button. The scores will appear in the window with a link above it from which you can download the file. I could not determine what “include index” accomplishes; the numbers included if you check that box do not obviously correspond to any student statistic I could think of.

3. STUDENT DIFFICULTIES



3.1. Failed Log-In. This can be mysterious. If the student is doing everything right (user IDs and passwords are case-sensitive), try changing his or her password (from the Classlist Editor).

3.2. No Images Visible. Students have in the past been unable to see the embedded images (mathematical symbols) when using Internet Explorer. We have recommended they use Firefox; if that is not possible, the other solution is to change from “images” to “formattedText” (and if that doesn’t work, to “plainText”) in the display options menu on the left-hand side.

3.3. Seeing Past Answers. While assignments are open, students can see their most recently-submitted answer, as they typed it, in the input box. However, once an assignment closes that might disappear. If the answer is a number, WeBWorK always gives it as a decimal, which may be less than enlightening if a student goes back to look at it later. However, they have a “show saved answers” button on the left side of the page they can use to see what their final solution was, trig, fractions, exponents and all.