Buddycheck Peer Evaluation

This digiguide provides technical and pedagogical guidance to instructors who are looking to deploy and administer Buddycheck peer evaluations. This complements online user guides and a suite of [Buddycheck and Peer Evaluation resources](#) by CIE, with supplementary information to guide your approach for a successful and trouble-free implementation. The digiguide is divided up into three sections that mirror the phases of an evaluation: creation, monitoring, and finishing the evaluation.

As Buddycheck is cloud-hosted it receives occasional updates from the developer. Whilst we will aim to keep this digiguide up-to-date, minor changes and feature additions may have appeared since this document's time of writing (January 2024).

Introduction

Buddycheck is a peer evaluation tool used to help support groupwork, including the assessment of groupwork. It provides a means by which students can evaluate the contribution of group members towards a group task, and feed this information back to their tutor. It can then be a source of formative feedback to help students develop their approach to teamwork, or it can be used within summative assessment, in which case an 'Adjustment Factor' is generated for each student that can be used by tutors to 'individualise' shared group marks on assessed work, thereby potentially making assessed groupwork fairer.

Buddycheck is fully integrated into Canvas, with a university-wide institutional license, making Buddycheck an easy tool for staff and students to access and use. Buddycheck was piloted and introduced in 2019, replacing the former tool 'WebPA'.
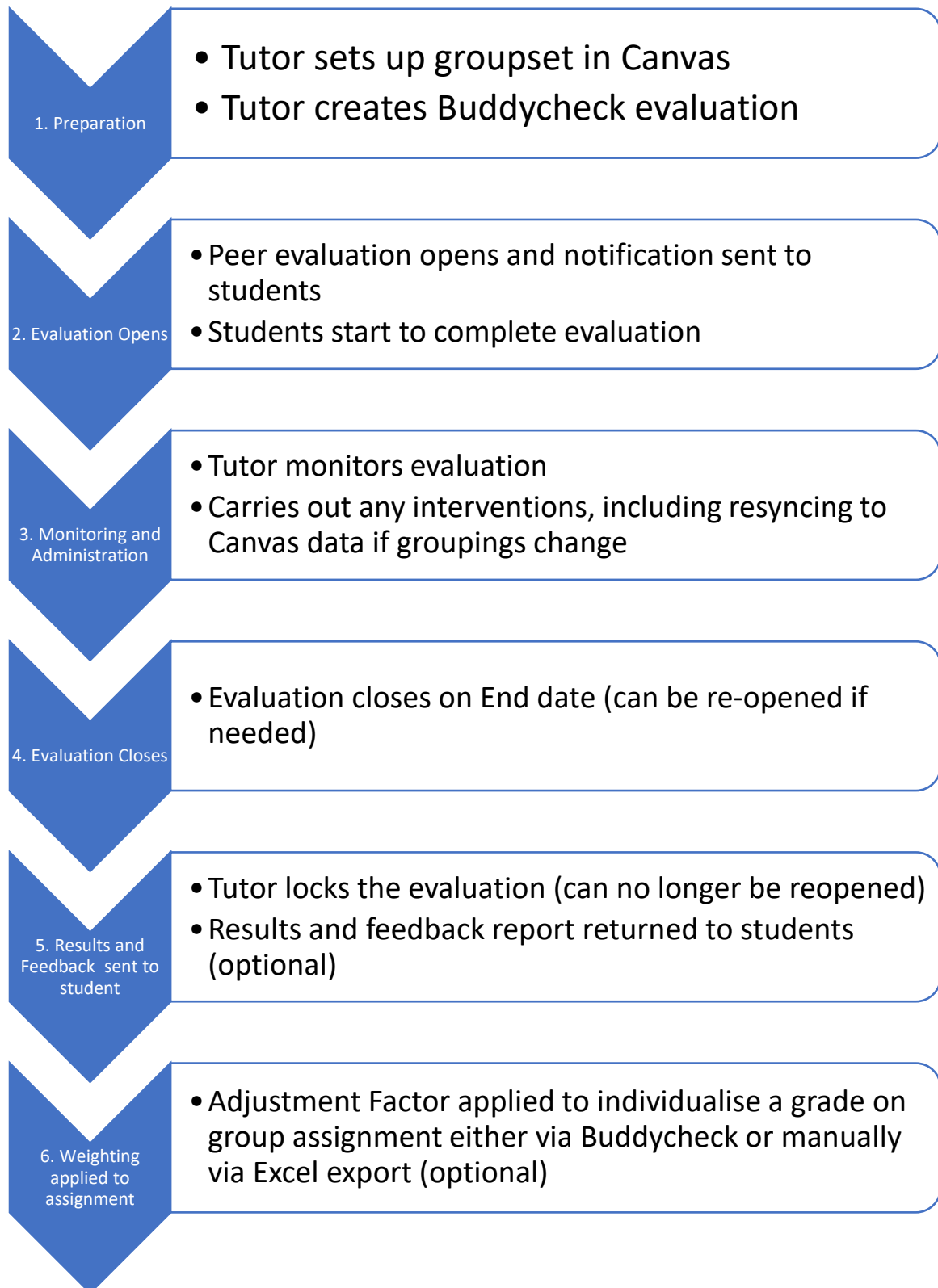
Getting support

For technical assistance (e.g. when something is not working correctly) please contact IT Services Digital Education Systems team (servicedesk@liverpool.ac.uk). Or alternatively, you can get support directly from Buddycheck's support team through the floating 'speech bubble' that at the bottom-left of the Buddycheck interface in Canvas, where you can access an FAQ and technical support.

For queries related to your approach to embedding peer evaluation or Buddycheck please contact CIE's Digital Education team (digitaled@liverpool.ac.uk).

Key resources and guides

- [How to activate Buddycheck within a Canvas course](#)
- [How to create a peer evaluation within Buddycheck](#)
- [How to edit an existing Peer Evaluation in Buddycheck](#)
- [CIE's Buddycheck and Peer Evaluation resources](#) (including this digiguide)
- [Create evaluation as instructor](#) (video)
- [Review results as instructor](#) (video)
- [Grading with Buddycheck](#) (video)
- [Other Buddycheck videos](#)

Timeline of the Buddycheck peer evaluation process

1. Preparation
- Tutor sets up groupset in Canvas
- Tutor creates Buddycheck evaluation

2. Evaluation Opens
- Peer evaluation opens and notification sent to students
- Students start to complete evaluation

3. Monitoring and Administration
- Tutor monitors evaluation
- Carries out any interventions, including resyncing to Canvas data if groupings change

4. Evaluation Closes
- Evaluation closes on End date (can be re-opened if needed)

5. Results and Feedback sent to student
- Tutor locks the evaluation (can no longer be reopened)
- Results and feedback report returned to students (optional)

6. Weighting applied to assignment
- Adjustment Factor applied to individualise a grade on group assignment either via Buddycheck or manually via Excel export (optional)

We recommend a minimum of one week setup time, and leaving the evaluation open for one week (but it can be setup very quickly, with an evaluation open just for a timetabled session if needed). The key to success is knowing and communicating with students in

advance how the peer evaluation will work on your course – see our [DIY Guide](#) for more tips from Buddycheck practitioners.

Creation of a Buddycheck Peer Evaluation

Pre-requisites

A Canvas Course

Buddycheck works through a Canvas course, the student enrolments and their groupings. If your students are not in a single Canvas course then seek help from your school or [IT Services](#).

Student Groupset

Buddycheck will use the student groups in your Canvas course, but when you set up your Buddycheck evaluation you only need to specify a groupset. For the differences between a groupset and groups, and instructions on setting them up please see this guide: [How do I add a Group Set?](#) This is useful because it allows you to set up Buddycheck before students arrive, and then at a later stage (when you have had a chance to organise students into actual groups) there is a handy 'Sync' function to bring Buddycheck up to date with your Canvas course.

Creating a Buddycheck Peer Evaluation

Step 1: Check your Canvas URL

IMPORTANT: Make sure you use the URL for Canvas 'http://canvas.liverpool.ac.uk' (this is our new address, replacing the old one 'liverpool.instructure.com'). Check this in your browser's address bar and update any bookmarks - Buddycheck will only work for instructors from this new URL.

Step 2: Adding Buddycheck to your Canvas course menu

Buddycheck is already installed in all Canvas courses but it may be hidden from your course menu – follow these instructions to add it: [How do I manage Course Navigation links.](#)

Step 3: Activating Buddycheck

When you first click on the Buddycheck link in your course menu, you will need to follow the prompt to '**Activate Buddycheck for this course**' as detailed here: [How to activate Buddycheck within a Canvas course](#)).

Step 4: Creating a New Evaluation or using an existing one as a template

The IT Services article [How to create a peer evaluation within Buddycheck](#) (requires login), or the video from Buddycheck [Create evaluation as instructor,](#) provides step-by-step instructions on creating a Buddycheck evaluation.

Essentially, clicking the **Create Evaluation** button allows you to create a new evaluation from scratch or to reuse an evaluation from one of your other Canvas courses (Evaluation template). You will be prompted to provide a title for the evaluation. At this stage Buddycheck may also require you to authorise its access of your account – just click **Authorise**.

On the **Create New Evaluation** screen these are the main sections you can complete:

- **Groups:** Select the relevant groupset (see Pre-requisites)
- **Evaluation title:** The title that you and students will see
- **Start/end dates:** These are the dates between which the evaluation will be open for students to complete
- **Main questions:** these are the default Peer Questions that students will use to evaluate their teammate's performance. You can create and use different questions, but we strongly recommend using these default ones to begin with - they are well written and comprehensive (based on CATME's Five Teamwork Dimensions) and they work well with how Buddycheck works (and therefore should give you fewer problems).
- **Select from Library:** Allows you to reapply the default questions (e.g. if you deleted them), or select from a library of alternative questions shared by school/institution. Here you can also select 'Team Questions', which prompt students to reflect on overall team performance – useful to use at an early stage in the groupwork (see our DIY guide for inspiration).
- **Open questions:** These can be used to ask students free-text questions. Answers only go back to the instructor, so these can be used to prompt deeper reflection or seek feedback on the process. Instructors find that students appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback (good or bad) close to the point of group assessment/evaluation, in a way that is both cathartic and useful.
- **Peer messages:** prompts students to leave free-text feedback for their peers. WARNING: Use this option with extreme caution unless it is part of your overall learning design and students are fully prepared and supported to give and receive feedback in this way.
- **Show advanced options > Adjustment Factor:** Set a minimum and maximum value for the 'adjustment factor'. This is the number that Buddycheck will calculate for each student following the peer evaluation, which can then be used as a multiplication factor to generate an individualised mark on a group assignment. The minimum and maximum here dictate a hard limit to the effect of this adjustment factor. A good starting position for new users is 0.9 and 1.1 meaning that students can lose or increase their mark up to 10% based on the peer evaluation - but choose whatever you have already communicated to students. The limits here only come into play when getting Buddycheck to apply grade changes automatically, but most staff prefer to analyse peer evaluation results in

Excel (see the section [Using Buddycheck for assessment](#) – so don't panic too much about this setting because it can be overridden later).
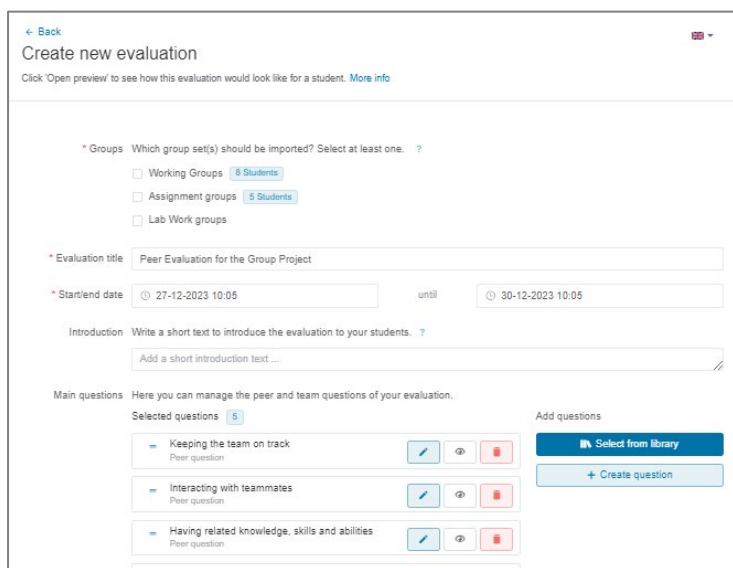

Figure 1 Screenshot of Buddycheck's evaluation creation screen

Important: Remember to Resync Buddycheck

After creating your evaluation, if you carry out further changes to the grouping of students in Canvas (e.g. placing new students in groups, or moving students between groups), it is important that you resynchronise Buddycheck with your course. To do this, enter your chosen Peer Evaluation from Buddycheck: click on the **More** button and choose **'Sync with Course'**, and **Continue**.

Monitoring a Buddycheck Peer Evaluation

Once the Open date for your evaluation arrives, the evaluation will change from Pending to Open. Students will then receive an email from Buddycheck telling them to complete the evaluation, with a link to the evaluation in your Canvas course. We recommend supplementing this with an Announcement in your Canvas course, or reminding students in-class.

Once students start completing the evaluation, if you return to the evaluation in your Canvas course you can see live data.
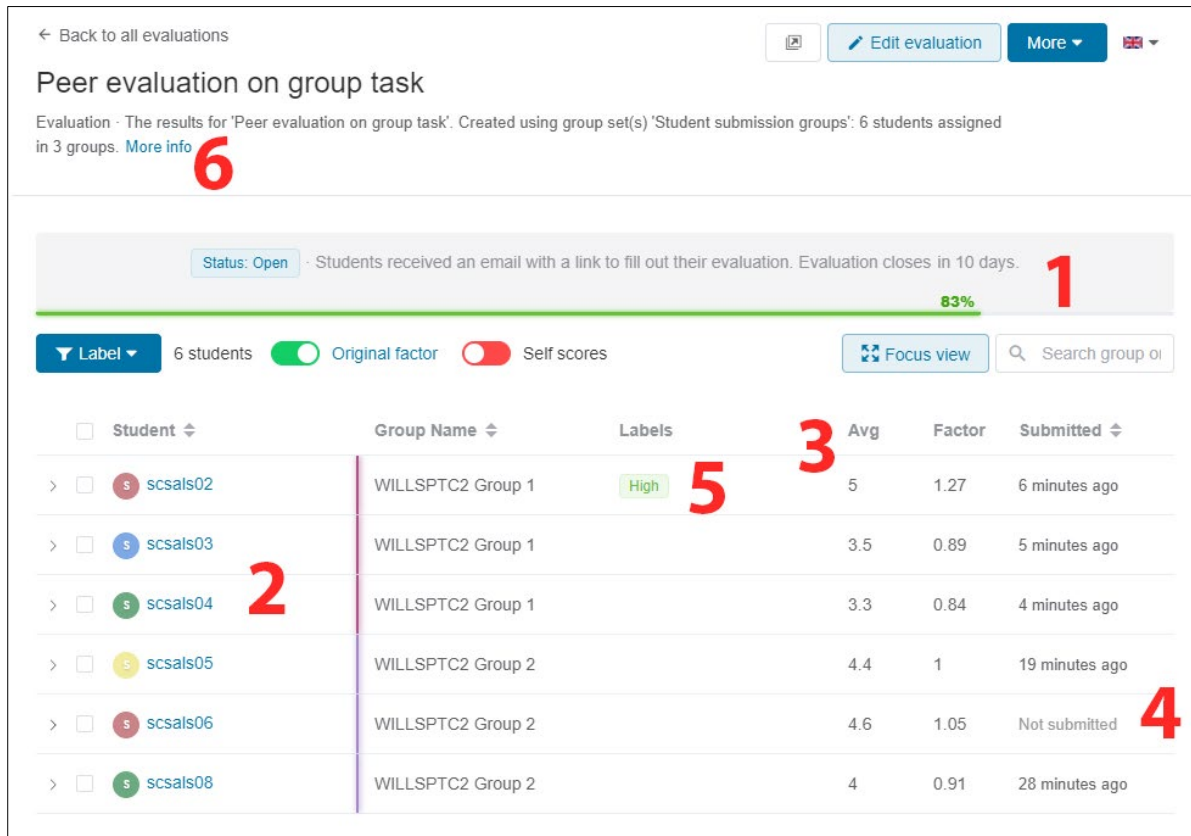
Monitoring live data

Figure 2 Screenshot of in-progress evaluation data

The live data can be useful to view whilst the evaluation is ongoing:

- Completion percentage to track overall completion of the evaluation **(1)**. It's worth noting that non-completion will not stop the evaluation from proceeding, but it will impact the overall representativeness, so you want this to be as high as possible.
- Students, ordered by group name **(2)**. The drop-down button on the left of the student name reveals more information such as data given and received.
- Student average and Adjustment Factor **(3)** shows how a student compares to their teammates – higher numbers equal higher performance.
- Students who have not completed their evaluations **(4)**. You can send a reminder for these students.
- Feedback labels for students – Buddycheck will sometimes apply visual labels to highlight how students have evaluated each other **(5)**.
  - Tension – Considerable disagreement in group
  - Bypass – zero difference in group (meaning that students may have chosen to bypass the peer evaluation by giving each other the same score, or they felt they all contributed equally – neither is a problem)
  - Skew – student could be causing skewed results
  - Under – the student lacks confidence
  - Over – student is overconfident

- High – student is a high performer
- Low – student is a low performer
- Conflict – somebody didn't get along with the others

(Definitions available by clicking on the **More Info** link **(6)**).

Further Administration whilst the Evaluation is underway

You may need to carry out the actions below to ensure the smooth running of the evaluation.

Re-synchronising Buddycheck with any changes with student enrolment or grouping

If there are changes to enrolments or grouping on your Canvas course, remember to 'resync' the evaluation with your course data: Enter the evaluation, then click on the **More** button and choose **'Sync with Course'**, and **Continue**. Changes are applied in a sensitive way without loss of data.

Make changes to the evaluation

It's a good idea to get things set out correctly from the outset, but if you need to make changes then you can return to the **Edit Evaluation** screen via the **pen** button. If students have already completed the evaluation then some settings may be locked.

Sending a Reminder to All Students who have not yet submitted

You can send a reminder to students who have not yet submitted their evaluations: Enter the evaluation and then click on the **More** button at the top-right and choose **Send a reminder**

Send a message to specific students

Send a message to specific students or a whole group of students by clicking in the checkboxes next to student names, and then use the mail (envelope) button that appears. The message is sent as an email to the student's university email address, also containing a link to the Buddycheck evaluation in your Canvas course.

Clearing a student or group's evaluation data so they can retake it

A tutor can allow a student to retake an evaluation if needed. There are two ways to do this. In the evaluation screen select the student(s) then choose one of these options.

- **Clear Data** has the effect of clearing the evaluation data given by that student, in so doing the Average and Adjustment Factor of the other students will be adjusted to remove the cleared evaluation data. The student can then take the evaluation again (and the adjustment factors will subsequently change again). This is a good option to use for a single student.

- **Reopen** allows the student to retake their evaluation, but it will not clear or change any evaluation data in the meantime. This is a good option to use if the majority of a group wants to take it again, without holding things up if they don't.

Students may feel anxious about their peers finding out what ratings have been left for them, and this is often where this request comes from, so it might be worthwhile in the first instance highlighting the anonymity of evaluations to students (see student resources).

Removing a student from the evaluation

A student can be totally removed from the peer evaluation process, having the effect of deleting any evaluation data that the student has left for others, as well as any data that the student has received, with the Adjustment Factors updated for the remaining students to reflect this. This is often needed where a student has not been able to engage with the task at all (please see the CIE DIY Guide for tips from expert users on how to handle this). Select the student and then click on the **trashcan** button.

Finishing the Evaluation

When the End date for the evaluation is reached, the evaluations status will automatically change to Closed. Evaluations can still be submitted by those students who have not yet done so, but they will be marked as late.

Locking the Evaluation

After the evaluation has closed and you are satisfied that enough students have submitted evaluations, and there needs to be no further changes, then you should Lock the Evaluation. This means that no more evaluations will be accepted, evaluation data will therefore no longer change and you are safe to start work with it. Click on the **More** button and choose **Lock Evaluation**

Sending Peer Evaluation results to students

After the evaluation has been locked, you can send all students a personalised report on their outcomes from the peer evaluation process. This shows their average compared to group averages across the different criteria, with advice on improving performance. All data is presented as an aggregate - they cannot see individual responses from their peers and they cannot see their peers scores. This report is optional but it can be a useful source of feedback. You can see a preview of a student's Personal Report by clicking on the drop-down chevron next to a student's name and clicking on the **Personal Report** button.

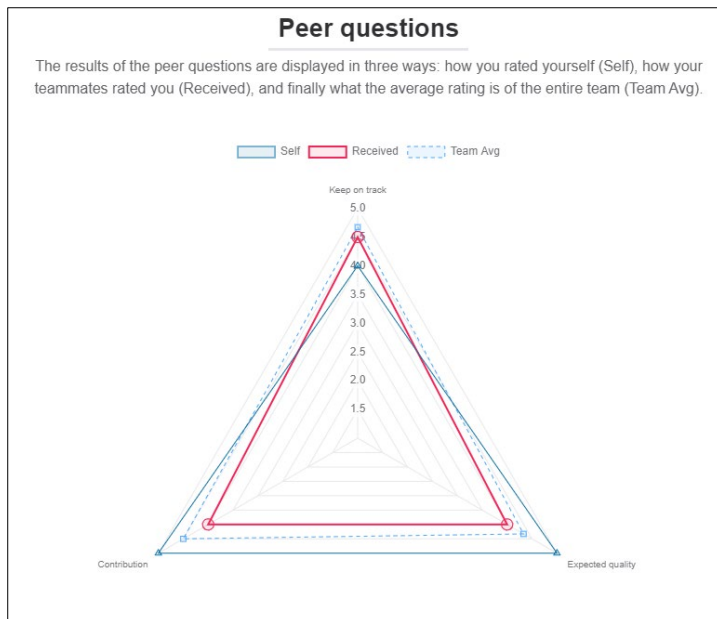To send personal reports, click on the **More** button, and choose **Release Result**.

Figure 3 Screenshot of a student's Personal Report

Using Buddycheck for assessment

Buddycheck can be used within a summative assessment workflow. The common approach for this is to use the evaluation data to generate an adjustment factor for each student (which Buddycheck does automatically), and to use this to 'moderate' a grade given for an assignment, typically a group assignment so that a shared grade can be individualised. New users may be coming to Buddycheck with pre-existing methods (such as the peer evaluation directly giving a grade) – this can also be accomplished using the approaches below.

The maths behind the Adjustment Factor

The Adjustment Factor is calculated from the overall average for the student divided by the overall average for the group. This number will centre on the number '1', and this then serves as a multiplication factor that can be applied to a shared group grade to generate a new individual grade. You can get Buddycheck to do this for you automatically or you can work with the adjustment factors in Excel and update grades manually in Canvas. Here are some examples of the effect of the adjustment factor in practice:

- A student judged by their peers to have made comparatively high contributions to a group receives an adjustment factor of 1.1. When applied to a group grade of 70% on a group assignment, this gives the student a final peer-moderated grade of 77%.
- For the same submission, if a student had been seen to have contributed less than their peers, then they may have an adjustment factor of 0.9, or a final grade of 63%.
- If the group evaluated each other as having contributed equally then their individual grade will remain unchanged from their group grade (an adjustment factor of 1).

For a deep dive into the maths behind Buddycheck, see this document: [Buddycheck Calculations](#)

Step 1: Preparation for creating individualised grades on group assignments

If you are looking to apply the evaluation data to a marked group assignment, you will need to return to the marked group assignment and apply the Group Assignment setting '**Assign grades to each student individually**': [How do I assign an assignment to a course group](#). Buddycheck does provide a reminder for this if using its automatic approach.

Step 2 Option A: Buddycheck automatically applying grade changes

Buddycheck can automatically calculate grades by applying the adjustment factor to a separate marked assignment in Canvas. As it is fully automated this is fast to do, but it does give limited room for adjustment of data, for example on rounding or avoiding certain grades, or to exercise academic judgement in light of additional information about a student's performance. However, it is possible to explore this approach in the first instance before committing to any changes.

Instructions for doing this are below, and a video for the process is here: [Buddycheck - Grading](#)

1) After Locking the Evaluation, click on the **More** button and choose **Publish Grades** (you may be prompted to Authorise Buddycheck access again).
2) You will see a list of the other assignments in your course. Click on the assignment you want to apply peer moderation to, and click **Continue**. (If the assignment says that changing is not possible, then please see the last section 'Preparation for creating individualised grades on group assignments')
3) A screen displays the student's original grade and their proposed peer moderated grade (New grade).

2. Adjustment of grading in Group Assignment - Project Deliverable - DO NOT DELETE!

Below you can configure how you want Buddycheck to apply the adjustments to the selected assignment.

Adjustment factor	Apply weight to difference	New grade options
● Original factor ● Self scores	− 1 + for positive values − 1 + for negative values	− 2 + decimals ☑ Minimum grade is 0 ☑ Grade cannot exceed max. points

Students ⇕	Group name ⇕	Factor ⇕	Grade (out of 100) ⇕	New grade ⇕	Difference ⇕	Remark
scsals00	-		0	0	-	No grade available
scsals02	Group 1	0.93	73	67.89	-5.11 ▼	
scsals03	-		0	0	-	No grade available
scsals04	-		0	0	-	No grade available
scsals05	Group 1	1.07	73	78.11	5.11 ▲	
scsals06	-		0	0	-	No grade available

Figure 4 Screenshot of the Publish Grades view

4) You can carry out adjustments to the level of impact that the peer moderation has on new grades a couple of options. Explore the effect of manipulating these on the **New grade** column.
   - The **Original factor** switch allows you to use or override the minimum and maximum adjustment factor values within the Evaluations settings screen (as set out at the Evaluation creation step); this provides a hard limit to how much impact the peer evaluation has over a new grade.
   - The **Apply weight to difference setting** can be used to apply additional or reduced weight to positive or negative values. If, for example, you only wanted students to be able to increase their marks then you could set negative value to zero. Or if you wanted to add extra incentive to positive then you can apply a small additional multiplier to the positive value.
   - The **Self scores** switch allows you to allow students' own self-evaluation to feed into the calculations, but most instructors have this off.
5) When you are happy with the changes that will be applied, click **Accept & continue**
6) You can then choose to have Buddycheck update (override) a student grade on the existing assignment grade with their peer moderated grade, or create a brand new grade book column for the new grade. (So far users have tended to use the override option). In the case of updating an existing grade, a comment will be posted for a student against their assignment submission detailing the changes made.

Comments for this Attempt

Hi scsals06. Buddycheck has adjusted your assignment score with the adjustment factor of evaluation: Peer Evaluation Dec 2023. Score before adjustment: 73, Adjustment factor: 0.91, Factor weight: 1, Points after adjustment: 66.43

Will Moindrot, 18 Dec at 14:51

In addition, the Grades area of Canvas keeps a record of all grade changes: [How do I view the history of all grading changes in the Gradebook?](#)

Step 2 Option B: Manually applying Buddycheck Peer Evaluation data

Staff sometimes prefer to download the peer evaluation results from Buddycheck and work with the data manually in Excel (to do this go to the evaluation in Buddycheck, go to the **More** menu and choose **'Download Results'**).

The resulting document will have a lot of columns but the most important ones are Student Name and Original Adjustment Factor. These can then be multiplied with group assignment grades (for large number obtainable via [an export of the grades](#)) to create individualised grades. Problems or needed adjustments can then be identified and corrected in the Excel file. Then with the data work complete, it is possible [to reimport the grades file](#) to update the grades in Canvas. A record is kept of all grade changes: [How do I view the history of all grading changes in the Gradebook?](#)