Grade Center

The Grade Center is a central repository for assessment data, student information, and instructor notes. Columns are automatically created for work done on the system in Assignments and Tests and Surveys. If elected, columns can also be automatically created for Blogs, Wikis, Journals, and Discussion Board posts. Columns can be manually created for work done outside of the system that needs to be recorded, such as handwritten exams. Grades can be calculated, weighted, and imported from spreadsheet programs such as Microsoft Excel.

Accessing the Grade Center:

1. Click the Grade Center link in the Control Panel (lower left hand side of the screen) to expand its options.
2. Choose ‘Full Grade Center.’
Exploring the Grade Center:

Setting Up the Grade Center

Creating a Column:

1. From within the Grade Center, click the ‘Create Column’ button in the top left.

2. Enter a Column Name. (Entering a ‘Grade Center Display Name’ is optional – this will appear in place of the Column Name in the Grade Center for you and in My Grades for students. This may be useful for shortening column widths.) Fill in a description if desired.

   **Column Information**

   - **Column Name**: Homework
   - **Grade Center Name**: 
   - **Description**

Click the heading of any column to sort by that column. The small orange arrow lets you know which column the grade center is sorted by.
3. From the ‘Primary Display’ dropdown, choose which format you want the column to be displayed in (score, percentage, letter, text, etc.). Secondary Display is optional – appears in parentheses after the Primary Display, not visible to students. **Note:** If you choose ‘text,’ keep in mind that Blackboard allows a maximum of 32 characters in each cell.

![Primary Display dropdown](image)

Secondary Display: None

*This display option is shown in the Grade Center only.*

4. Choosing a category is optional, but recommended if you want to weight grades according to type (tests, assignments, etc.) and necessary if you want to drop the lowest/highest grades. (To create a new category, see ‘Creating Categories.’)

Enter an amount for points possible.
Add/associate a rubric to the column if desired.

![Category and Points Possible](image)

5. Enter a due date if desired.

![Due Date](image)

6. Decide whether or not to include this item in grade center calculations, show the column to students, and show statistics about this item to students. Click Submit.
7. The new column has been added to the grade center. Scroll to the right using the scroll bar to view the column.

Calculated Columns:

Calculated columns include average columns, minimum/maximum columns, total columns, and weighted columns. They can be displayed to students or remain accessible to only the Instructor, TA, and Grader.

Note: New or Restored Courses will automatically contain a Total Points column and a Weighted Total column. To configure column settings, click the column’s option menu at the very top of the columns and select ‘Edit Column Information’ from the drop down list.

Creating an Average Column:

An Average Column calculates and displays the numeric average for a selected number of grade columns. Columns with text as the primary display cannot be averaged.

1. From the Grade Center, click the ‘Create Calculated Column’ dropdown and select ‘Average Column.’
2. Enter a Column Name. (Entering a ‘Grade Center Display Name’ is optional – this will appear in place of the Column Name in the Grade Center for you and in My Grades for students. This may be useful for shortening column widths.) Fill in a description if desired.

1. **Column Information**

   ![Column Name](image)

   *Column Name*  
   
   Grade Center Name

   Displays as the column header in the Grade Center. Cannot exceed 15 characters.

   ![Description](image)

3. From the ‘Primary Display’ dropdown, choose which format you want the column to be displayed in (score, percentage, letter, etc.). Secondary Display is optional – appears in parentheses after the Primary Display, not visible to students.

   **Note:** If you would like an average of Letter Grades, you may choose Letter as your Primary Display. However, this option is mapped to a preexisting Grading Schema (similar to a grading scale) that you will need to edit to fit your course. See ‘Creating Grading Schemas’ for more information.

   ![Primary Display](image)

   **Primary Display**  
   Percentage  
   Calculated grades display in this format in both the Grade Center and My Grades.

   ![Secondary Display](image)

   **Secondary Display**  
   None
   This display option is shown in the Grade Center only.

4. Select which columns you would like to include in the Average Column. Choose ‘All Grade Columns’ to include all columns in the average and ‘Selected Columns and Categories’ to include only specific columns or categories in the average.

3. **Select Columns**

   ![Select Columns](image)

   *Choose All Grade Columns* to include all grade columns in the average. If Grading Period is included in the average by choosing All Grade Columns in Grading Period. To include the average, choose Selected Columns and Categories.

   ![Include in Average](image)

   Include in Average  
   - All Grade Columns  
   - Selected Columns and Categories

5. Choose whether you would like the average to Calculate as a Running Total. A running total only includes items that have grades or attempts. Selecting No includes all items in the calculations, using a value of 0 for an item if there is no grade.
6. Decide whether or not to include this item in grade center calculations, show the column to students, and show statistics about this item to students. Click Submit.

3. Options

Select No for the first option to exclude this Grade Center column from calculations. Select No for the second option to hide this column from Students in My Grades. Select Yes for the third option to show column statistics to Students in My Grades.

Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations

Show this Column to Students

Show Statistics (average and median) for this column to Students in My Grades

7. The average column has been added to the grade center. If needed, scroll to the right using the scroll bar to view the column.

Creating a Minimum/Maximum Column:

A Minimum/Maximum Column calculates either the minimum or maximum grade for a selected number of Columns. Columns with text as the primary display cannot be displayed as a minimum or maximum grade.

1. From the Grade Center, click the ‘Create Calculated Column’ dropdown and select ‘Minimum/Maximum Column.’
2. Enter a Column Name. (Entering a ‘Grade Center Display Name’ is optional – this will appear in place of the Column Name in the Grade Center for you and in My Grades for students. This may be useful for shortening column widths.) Fill in a description if desired.

3. From the ‘Primary Display’ dropdown, choose which format you want the column to be displayed in (score, percentage, letter, etc.). Secondary Display is optional – appears in parentheses after the Primary Display, not visible to students.

   **Note**: If you would like a minimum or maximum of Letter Grades, you may choose Letter as your Primary Display. However, this option is mapped to a preexisting Grading Schema (similar to a grading scale) that you will need to edit to fit your course. See ‘Creating Grading Schemas’ for more information.

   
   Primary Display: Score
   
   Calculated grades display in this format in both the Grade Center and My Grades.

   Secondary Display: None
   
   This display option is shown in the Grade Center only.

4. Select whether the calculation type is a Minimum or Maximum calculation. Choose ‘All Grade Columns’ to include all columns in the defined set. Choose ‘Selected Columns and Categories’ to include only specific columns or categories in the defined set.

5. Choose whether you would like the minimum/maximum column to Calculate as a Running Total. A running total only includes items that have grades or attempts. Selecting No includes all items in the calculations, using a value of 0 for an item if there is no grade.

6. Decide whether or not to include this item in grade center calculations, show the column to students, and show statistics about this item to students. Click Submit.
7. The minimum/maximum column has been added to the grade center. If needed, scroll to the right using the scroll bar to view the column.

Creating a Total Column:

A total column calculates the total points for a number of columns related to the total number of points allowed, which is useful for generating a final score. Columns with text as the primary display cannot be totaled.

1. From the Grade Center, click the ‘Create Calculated Column’ dropdown and select ‘Total Column.’

2. Enter a Column Name. (Entering a ‘Grade Center Display Name’ is optional – this will appear in place of the Column Name in the Grade Center for you and in My Grades for students. This may be useful for shortening column widths.) Fill in a description if desired.
3. From the ‘Primary Display’ dropdown, choose which format you want the column to be displayed in (score, percentage, letter, etc.). Secondary Display is optional – appears in parentheses after the Primary Display, not visible to students.

4. Select which columns you would like to include in the Total Column. Choose ‘All Grade Columns’ to include all columns or ‘Selected Columns and Categories’ to include only specific columns or categories in the total.

   If you choose ‘Selected Columns and Categories,’ select the columns and categories to include in the total and click the center arrow to add them to the Selected Columns area on the right-hand side.
5. Choose whether you would like the total column to Calculate as a Running Total. A running total only includes items that have grades or attempts. Selecting No includes all items in the calculations, using a value of 0 for an item if there is no grade.

6. Decide whether or not to include this item in grade center calculations, show the column to students, and show statistics about this item to students. Click Submit.

7. The total column has been added to the grade center. If needed, scroll to the right using the scroll bar to view the column.

Creating a Weighted Column:

A Weighted Column calculates and displays a grade for a selected number of Columns based upon each column’s respective worth of the total grade. Columns with text as the primary display cannot be displayed as a weighted grade.

1. From the Grade Center, click the ‘Create Calculated Column’ dropdown and select ‘Weighted Column.’
2. Enter a Column Name. (Entering a ‘Grade Center Display Name’ is optional – this will appear in place of the Column Name in the Grade Center for you and in My Grades for students. This may be useful for shortening column widths.) Fill in a description if desired.

3. From the ‘Primary Display’ dropdown, choose which format you want the column to be displayed in (score, percentage, letter, etc.). Secondary Display is optional – appears in parentheses after the Primary Display, not visible to students.

4. Select the columns and categories to include in the weighted grade and click the center arrow to add them to the Selected Columns area. After all columns and categories have been selected and added, set the weight percentages.
Note: If you have created a column for an item and placed it in a category, weight either the column or the category for that particular item. If you weight both the column and the category, the item will be factored into the weighted grade twice.

Note: When a category has been selected, several other options appear. Select to weigh columns within the category ‘Equally’ or ‘Proportionally.’ Choosing ‘Equally’ applies equal value to all columns within a category. Choosing ‘Proportionally’ applies the appropriate value to a grade item based on its points compared to other columns in the category. Also decide whether to drop high or low grades within the category or use the lowest or highest value in the category.

5. Choose whether or not you would like the weighted column to Calculate as a Running Total. A running total only includes items that have grades or attempts. Selecting No includes all items in the calculations, using a value of 0 for an item if there is no grade.

6. Decide whether or not to include this item in grade center calculations, show the column to students, and show statistics about this item to students. Click Submit.

7. The weighted column has been added to the grade center. If needed, scroll to the right using the scroll bar to view the column.
Adding, Editing, Downloading/Uploading Grades

Grades can be manually entered into the Grade Center by clicking directly inside of a cell, similar to a spreadsheet, or they can be uploaded from an external file such as Microsoft Excel. Scores from gradable items created within Blackboard, such as online tests, graded discussion forums, and assignments, are automatically entered into the Grade Center.

Manually Adding/Editing Grades:

1. From the Grade Center, click inside the cell where you want to add or edit the grade.
2. Type in the grade and click Enter to record.

   **Note:** You must enter the grade in the format you selected (score, percentage, letter, etc.) when the column was created.

Downloading Grades from Blackboard:

1. From the Grade Center, click the ‘Work Offline’ button in the upper right and choose ‘Download.’
2. Select the data to download. Choose ‘Full Grade Center’ for all columns and associated data. To download specific data for one column, choose ‘Selected Column’ and use the drop-down to select the column. Check the box to include comments for this column if desired. Select ‘User Information Only’ to download columns containing student data such as User Name.

   **1. Data**

   *Select Data to Download*  
   *Full Grade Center*
   *Selected Column*  
   *Include Comments for this Column*
   *User Information Only*

3. Decide which delimiter type to use, comma or tab.

   **Note:** Comma-delimited files (.CSV) have data items separated by commas. Tab-delimited files (.XLS) have data items separated by tabs. Both are common types of data files and can be opened in most editing software. XLS tab-delimited files can be opened directly in Microsoft Excel.

   Select whether to include hidden information in the downloaded data. Hidden information includes columns and students that have been hidden from view in the downloaded file.
4. Choose whether to save the file to Blackboard’s Content Collection or to your computer.

- If you choose Content Collection, click Browse to select where in the content collection you’d like to save the file. Click Submit and the file will be saved there.

3. Save Location

Select where to save the file.

Download Location

- My Computer
- Content Collection

Browse

Cancel Submit

Downloaded grade center file saved to Content Collection

- If you choose ‘My Computer,’ click Submit, then click ‘Download.’

3. Save Location

Select where to save the file.

Download Location

- My Computer
- Content Collection

Browse

Cancel Submit
Save the file to your computer and open in a text editor or spreadsheet program, such as Excel, to edit.

**Note:** When opening the file, you’ll notice numeric column ID numbers that have been added by Blackboard after the column names. **Do not delete or change these ID numbers** if you plan to upload grades back into the grade center. You’ll also want to leave the **Username** column as it is – this column must be present when uploading grades back into Blackboard.

### Uploading Grades to Blackboard:

Things to keep in mind before uploading grades –

- It is **strongly** recommended that you first download the Grade Center from Blackboard into a .CSV or .XLS format and edit that file, so that the necessary formatting is already in place.
- Blackboard uses the **Username** field as the unique identifier to handle external data – this column must be present when uploading.

1. From the Grade Center, click the ‘Work Offline’ button in the upper right and choose ‘Upload.’

2. Click ‘Browse’ to locate the file to upload. Select the Delimiter Type. (‘Auto’ will attempt to automatically detect the delimiter used in the selected file.) Click Submit.
3. Review the list of data from the file to be uploaded. Use the check boxes to de-select any data to be excluded from the upload. Click Submit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Upload</th>
<th>Uploading Column</th>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Grade Center Column</th>
<th>Data Preview</th>
<th>Messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weighted Column</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Weighted Column</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Automatically calculated data will not be uploaded.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Automatically calculated data will not be uploaded.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 - Article Summary</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Week 1 - Article Summary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No Data Updates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 - Article Summary</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Week 2 - Article Summary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No Data Updates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3 - Article Summary</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Week 3 - Article Summary</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No Data Updates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework 1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Homework 1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No Data Updates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Column</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.9,10</td>
<td>Add Column</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Large files take significant time to process and a warning message will be displayed for any files that need extra time. To avoid long processing times, break up large files into separate uploads.

**Note:** If you created new columns outside of Blackboard and included them in your upload, you must edit the column information, such as primary display, points possible, etc. for it to be included in any calculations. Once added to the grade center, click the option menu next to the column name and choose ‘Edit Column Information’ to make changes.

**Creating a Category:**

A Category is a classification of grade center columns. Categories are used to organize and view grade center data and are useful when creating calculated columns. The grade center has several default categories created by Blackboard (Assignment, Discussion, Test, etc.) that cannot be removed or edited. You can use these or create your own.

1. From the Grade Center, click the ‘Manage’ dropdown and select ‘Categories.’
2. Click the 'Create Category' button in the upper left.

3. Give the category a name and enter a description if desired. Click Submit.

4. The new category is now listed and available. Click the Edit dropdown next to the name of the category to edit.

Creating/editing a grading schema:

A ‘grading schema’ is like a grading scale – it shows percentage ranges that match scores to specific grades. Blackboard includes a default grading schema in all course sections which can be edited. Instructors also have the ability to create additional grading schemas within their
course sections to reflect the multiple ways in which they may need to grade throughout their courses.

1. From the Grade Center, click the ‘Manage’ dropdown and choose ‘Grading Schemas.’

2. To create a new grading schema, click the ‘Create Grading Schema’ button at the top left.
   (To edit the existing grading schema, titled ‘Letter,’ click the option menu next to ‘Letter’ and choose ‘Edit.’)

3. If creating a new schema, give it a name and fill in a description if desired.

   1. **Schema Information**
      
      ![Schema Information Image](image)

   2. Determine the total number of grades you will put in your grading schema and create additional rows as necessary (make sure there is one row for each grade).
5. Enter percent ranges for each grade in the left column and the percentage for what each grade will calculate as in the right column. Click Submit when complete.

2. Schema Mapping

Grade Center columns that are automatically graded, such as Tests, will be converted to this display option according to the grade mapping provided below. To enter grades in the Grade Center manually using this display option, mappings from each symbol into a percentage of points possible must be provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades Scored Between</th>
<th>Will Equal</th>
<th>Grades Manually Entered as</th>
<th>Will Calculate as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 % and 100%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 % and Less Than 90%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 % and Less Than 80%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 % and Less Than 70%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 % and Less Than 60%</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The percentage values must overlap. For example A = 90 – 100%, B = 80 –90%, C = 70 – 80% and so on. Ranges must be set up in this way to avoid gaps that could occur when a score falls in between two numbers in the range. The range of 80 – 90% includes all grades up to but not including 90%. The top range does include 100%.

6. The new grading schema is listed.
Organizing the Grade Center

Moving/Freezing Columns:

1. To move a column, click the ‘Manage’ dropdown and choose ‘Column Organization.’

2. Click the symbol in front of the column name and drag it up or down to its new location. To ‘freeze’ a column, drag it above the dark gray bar. (Freezing a column will keep it in place as you scroll through the entries on the main Grade Center page.) Click Submit to save.
3. Frozen columns are highlighted in gray.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Username</th>
<th>Last Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>test1</td>
<td></td>
<td>test1_student</td>
<td>November 27, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>test2</td>
<td></td>
<td>test2_student</td>
<td>November 16, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>test3</td>
<td></td>
<td>test3_student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected Rows: 0

Frozen columns

**Show/Hide Students:**

Students can be hidden from the grade center view to reduce the number of rows in the grid. Hidden students are not removed from the grade center and can be shown at any time.

1. **From the Grade Center**, click on the ‘Manage’ dropdown and choose ‘Row Visibility.’

   ![Manage Dropdown](image)

   - Grading Periods
   - Grading Schemas
   - Grading Color Codes
   - Categories
   - Smart Views
   - Column Organization
   - **Row Visibility**
   - Send Email

2. **Select the desired users** and click **Hide Rows**. Show users who have been hidden by selecting them and clicking **Show Rows**. Click Submit to save changes.

   **Set Rows Visibility**

   Select the desired rows and choose to **Hide them from the Grade Center View**. Show rows that have been hidden by selecting them and clicking **Show**.

   ![Show or Hide Rows](image)
Editing, Deleting, Managing Columns:

Click the option menu at the top of the column to expand its options.

Quick Column Information – displays a quick view of some of the column settings such as category, points possible, due date, etc.
View and Add Alignments – associates pre-defined alignments with the column
Grade Attempts – opens up the assignment for grading
Grade Anonymously – student names are hidden when grading assignments
Assignment File Download - (appears only in Assignment columns) downloads all student assignment submissions in a compressed .zip file
Assignment File Cleanup – (appears only in Assignment columns) deletes links to compressed assignment .zip files; not necessary but reduces size of the course for archiving
View Grade History – displays a breakdown of who entered/edited the grades in this column
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Edit Column Information – allows you to edit column settings
Column Statistics – shows statistics for this column
Set as External Grade – denotes this column as the grade of record, or the ‘final grade’
Show/Hide to Users – shows or hides column from students
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Clear Attempts for All Users – clears all student attempts for assignment or test submission
Sort Ascending – sorts data in ascending order
Sort Descending - sorts data in descending order
Hide Column – hides column in grade center view (does not affect student view)
Delete Column – deletes column from grade center