



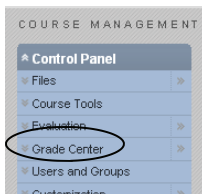
# Grade Center - Starting Out

August 2010

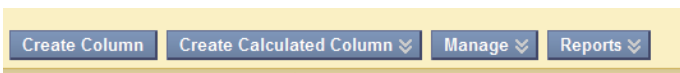
The Grade Center feature allows you to publish grades to individual students, which gives them a stronger sense of where they stand as the class progresses. Grade columns are created *automatically* for assignments, assessments (tests and quizzes), and surveys delivered **inside** of Blackboard. Columns can be created *manually* for course work managed **outside** of Blackboard, such as labs or projects. In addition, you can elect to create graded discussion boards, blogs, journals and wikis - adding a column to the grade center automatically.

## Accessing Grade Center

Locate the *Grade Center* of the Control Panel on the left side of the side and click on it. The *Grade Center* menu opens and lists options for displaying grades. The Full Grade Center is always listed -- the other choices are smart views that are set as favorites. Select the view to display and a spreadsheet listing students in rows and graded items in columns. All features of the *Grade Center* can be accessed through the spreadsheet.



## Grade Center Features



**Create Column:** manually add a column for items and grades to the *Grade Center* for work that is completed outside of Blackboard.

**Create Calculated Column:** manually add a calculated column to the Grade Center, such as Average, Minimum/Maximum, Total, and Weighted Column. (See Grade Center - Calculated Columns Quick Guide for more detailed information.)

**Manage:** allows instructor to set up Grading Periods and Schema, categories, create Smart Views, and other organizational options.

> **Grading Periods**— sort the Grade Center by due dates.

> **Grading Schema**— modifies grading criteria.

> **Grading Color Codes** - apply background and text color to items in the grade center that meet specified criteria.

> **Categories**— enables sorting and filtering items by category - categories can be used to weight assessment categories differently.

> **Smart Views**— used to create of specialized views by students, categories, column item scores, total calculated scores, etc.

> **Column Organization**— changes the layout and settings for the Grade Center view.

> **Row Visibility**— allows you to hide or show student users.

> **Send Email**— provides access to email selected users found in the Grade Center.

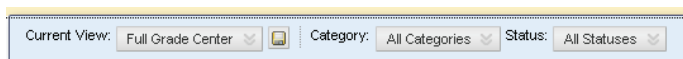


**Reports**— generates reports from the information posted within the Grade Center.



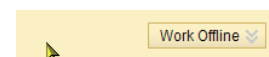
> **Create Report**— create reports by student or class with the selected columns or categories — reports can be viewed on the screen or printed.

> **View Grade History**—allows tracking the history grading updates/changes and to see who entered grade changes and when.



**Filter** - allows you change the view and/or select specific categories or statuses to display.

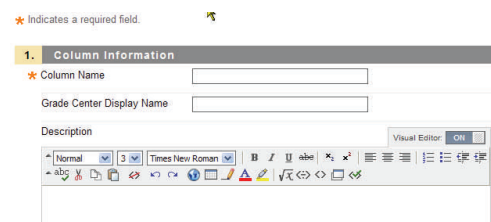
**Work Offline** - drop-down list provides access to upload/download *Grade Center* information.



## Creating Graded Columns

You may add Grade Columns and grades to the *Grade Center* for work that has been done outside of Blackboard.

Click once on the *Create Column* button.

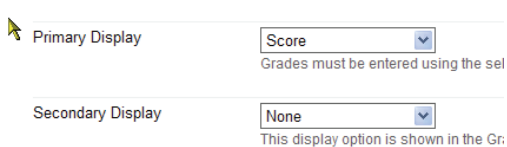


### Column Name

When editing an Assignment or Assessment created within Blackboard, changing the Column Name will only change the Column Name in the Grade Center. It must also be changed in the course area where the Assignment or Assessment item appears.

### Grade Center Display Name/Description

An instructor can enter a *Grade Center Display Name* and a *Description* for each column.



### Primary/Secondary Display

Select a *Primary Display* category from the drop-down menu. A *Secondary Display* can also be included. Select that from the Secondary Display drop-down menu. An example of how the two work together would be to set Primary Display to Score and the Secondary Display as Letter, which would look like this for a 100 point item: Score = 90 and Letter = A-.

## Grade Display Options

The following grade display options are available:

**Score** – the raw score earned by the student. There is a limit of 6 digits. For example, 100.00 or 123456.

**Percentage** – calculated with the following calculation: (Raw Score/Points Possible) \*100

**Text** – allows you to enter any string as the score for a *Grade Center* item. It does not have any calculable value. Scores that are entered as text cannot be set to a numerical range.

**Letter (name of grade schema)** – is a letter grade that equals a specific range of percentages as defined in the selected grade schema. For example, 94% to 97% could be displayed as an “A” Letter grade.

**Complete / Incomplete** – signifies that a student has completed an item. It is the default option for surveys.

### Category

Select a *category* for the column from the drop-down list. Categories are used to organize the columns and can be used to weight grades. This is an optional choice.

### Points Possible

Enter the maximum number of *Points Possible* for this item. This is a required field.

### Dates

A column can be included in a grading period if one has been defined. The date the column is created will be filled in automatically. A due date can be entered for the column. If a date is entered it will be displayed for students when they view their grades. Click on the *Calendar* icon and choose a date.

### Options

The grade column options selected determine how the column will display and how it will be calculated.

**Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations**—select the **Yes** radio button to include this item in the Grade Center calculations or select the **No** radio button to exclude it.

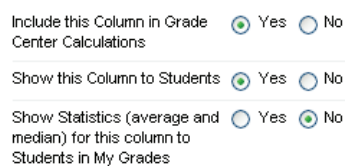
**NOTE:** Excluding items from summary calculations also excludes them from weighting.

**Show this Column to**

**Students** option– select the **Yes** radio button to allow students to view the item in their My Grades area or select the **No** radio button to exclude it.

**Show Statistics** option— select the **Yes** radio button to allow students to view the average and median statistics from the Grade Center calculations or select the **No** radio button if you do not want students to view them.

Click the **Submit** button to save the changes.



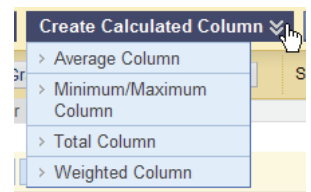
Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations  Yes  No

Show this Column to Students  Yes  No

Show Statistics (average and median) for this column to Students in My Grades  Yes  No

## Create Calculated Column

Allows you to create a column that will calculate a value for you. You can create a column to calculate averages, minimum/maximum values, totals or weighted grades.



You can name the column and determine which columns/categories to include in the calculation. The columns can be displayed to students or not — depending on the way you set them up. For more detailed information about using this feature see the **Weighting Grades Quick Guide** for more specific details.

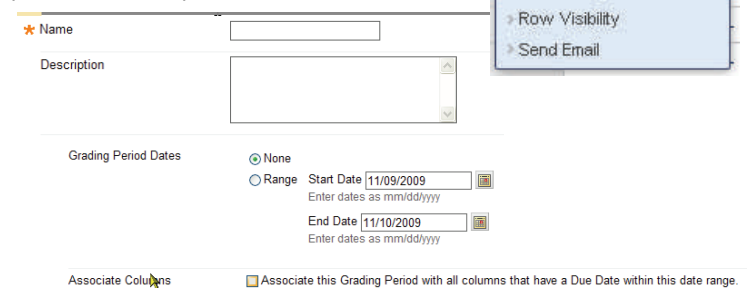
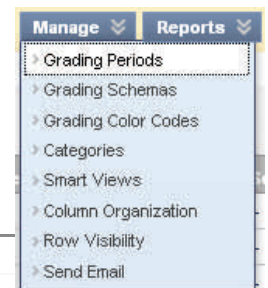
## Manage

Use the *Manage* options to configure and organize the Grade Center.

### Grading Periods

Grading periods can be used to sort *Grade Center* columns into groups based on due dates. Columns cannot be associated with more than one grading period.

Enter the name of grading period and provide a description if needed.



Name:

Description:

Grading Period Dates:  None  Range

Start Date:  Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy

End Date:  Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy

Associate Columns:  Associate this Grading Period with all columns that have a Due Date within this date range.

Enter the grading period dates by selecting dates from the calendar provided. Check the box provided to include all of the columns already in the *Grade Center* with due dates that fall between the start and end date of the range in the grade period. Columns can be added to the grading period later when they are created.

### View the Grade Center Using Grading Periods

*Grade Center Views* exist for each grading period. Columns associated with the grading period will display using this view. Grading periods can be used as a criteria to create smart views, a focused look at the *Grade Center*.

### Grading Periods and Grade Calculation

Grading periods are useful when creating calculated columns. For example, to calculate an average grade for all columns in a Grading period, create an average grade column. Columns associated with the grading period are automatically included in the average calculation.

### Grading Periods and Reports

Grading periods can also be used to create a printable report that displays the grades for all of the columns associated with the grading period. This can be used to generate mid-term performance reports.

**When creating a calculated column you have the option to include the column in Grade Center calculations. If you choose to include the calculated column, do not include the columns that are used in the calculation or the grades will be counted twice.**

## Modifying Grade Schemas

Blackboard has a default grading schema which is used to translate numeric grades to letter grades. The default schema provided by Blackboard is named Letter.

97% to 100% (or higher) = A+	77% to 80% = C+
94% to 97% = A	74% to 77% = C
90% to 94% = A-	70% to 74% = C-
87% to 90% = B+	67% to 70% = D+
84% to 87% = B	64% to 67% = D
80% to 84% = B-	60% to 64% = D-
	59 or below = F

You can add new schemas or edit the default schema to match the grading scale you use in your class.

To create a new schema click on the green *Create Grading Schema* button. You can also click on the double-down arrows on an existing schema and select *Copy*. Then change the schema *Name* and add in a brief description (not required field) and make the changes as needed.

To edit an existing schema click on the double-down arrows next to the schema name and select *Edit*. Revise the breakdowns as needed. Note: If you omit a grade level such as A+ you will need to properly adjust the "will calculate as" percentage column.

Grading schemas have two functions -- to convert numeric data to letter grades (using the values on the left side of the table) and to convert letter grades to numeric values (using the options in the right side of the table).

## Grading Color Codes

Colors can be defined for items that have an In Progress, Needs Grading, or Exempt status. Grade ranges can also be defined by percentage and background and text colors applied to items that fall within the defined grading percentages.

Grading Status	
Colors can be defined for items that have an In Progress, Needs Grading, or Exempt status.	
Background Color	
In Progress	Light-Hard-Blue
Needs Grading	Light Red-Orange
Exempt	Medium Spring-Yellow

## Categories

Categories are used to organize and view *Grade Center* data and can be used when creating calculated columns to perform operations on columns in a category. The *Grade Center* has four default Categories: Assignment, Discussion, Survey, and Test that cannot be removed or edited.

**To create a new category**, click the *Create Category* button. Enter a *Title and Description* for the new category and click the *Submit* button.

**To edit a category**, click the double-down arrow icon next to the title of the category you want to edit, and then select *Edit*. You will return to the form you filled out when you created the category. Make the necessary modifications and click the *Submit* button.

**To delete a category**, click the double-down arrow icon next to the title of the category you want to edit, and then select *Delete*. Click *OK* to remove the item. **NOTE: Categories included with the Blackboard cannot be modified or removed.**

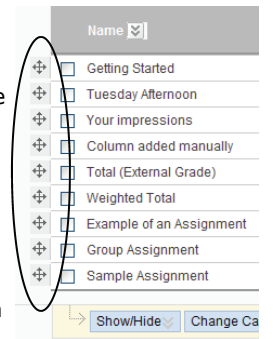
## Smart Views

Smart Views are focused views of the *Grade Center*. Any number of Smart Views can be created and saved based on a variety of criteria including Grading Periods, Categories, and Performance. Once built and saved, Smart Views become a selectable list item on the **Current View** drop-down menu of the *Grade Center* page. Any Smart View can be saved as the default view of the *Grade Center*.

## Column Organization

The *Column Organization* page allows the instructor to modify the main *Grade Center* spreadsheet views.

**To set the order for items to be listed**, click on the shaded box (look for the compass arrow icon) at the far left of each column name and drag the item to the placement you want. When done moving the columns to the order you want click on *Submit* at the bottom right.



You can also *Show/Hide* columns by checking the box on the left of the column you want to Show or Hide, and then choose the option you want from the Show/Hide drop down menu.

Use the checkboxes to the left of the name to select the item and then click on *Check Category to...* or *Change Grading Period to...* to change the item.

Name	Grading Period	Category
<input type="checkbox"/> Getting Started	Not in a Grading Period	Test
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday Afternoon	Not in a Grading Period	Test
<input type="checkbox"/> Your impressions	Not in a Grading Period	Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Column added manually	Not in a Grading Period	Discussion
<input type="checkbox"/> Total (External Grade)	Not in a Grading Period	Calculated Grade
<input type="checkbox"/> Weighted Total	Not in a Grading Period	Calculated Grade
<input type="checkbox"/> Example of an Assignment	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment
<input type="checkbox"/> Group Assignment	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment
<input type="checkbox"/> Sample Assignment	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment

## Row Visibility

Students can be hidden in *Grade Center* 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. Students that are hidden will appear grayed out. To change the status of a student click on the box next to the student's name and select *Show* or *Hide* as appropriate. **NOTE: A student can be hidden from view and his/her grades kept in the *Grade Center* — this can be used for students that drop or withdrawn after some grades have been recorded.**

## Send Email

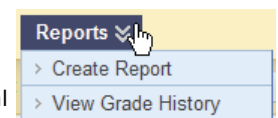
Email can be sent from the manage menu. Type the email address in the required field and enter the body of the email message.

## Reports

Information in the *Grade Center* can be printed to share with students or to view on the screen.

## Create Report

The report feature allows reports to be designed based on the criteria specified. Reports can be for individual students, groups or classes. Reports are read-only and printable.



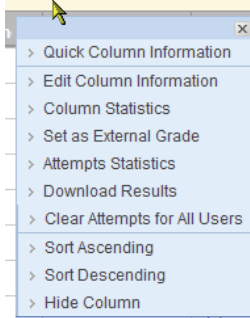
## View Grade History

Grade History is a tool that tracks all changes to grades within the *Grade Center*. When grade history is available, it displays a table of data detailing every grade change to date. The grade history table can be sorted to show items by column name, score, or date by clicking the column header name. The grade history table can be filtered to display entries within a date range using **Show Entries from Past**, located at the top of the table.

## Column Options

Clicking on the double-down arrows in the column heading will display the options available for the column. Each column has different options available, but the most common one are --

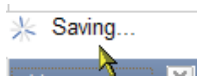
- > **Quick Column Information**—displays details about the column.
- > **Edit Column Information**— make the necessary modifications and click the *Submit* button.
- > **Column Statistics**—displays statistics for the selected column.
- > **Set as External Grade**— sets this grade as the one that displays in the report card module.
- > **Attempts Statistics**—displays statistics for the column selected.
- > **Download Results**— select the format and download the results of the tests/surveys.
- > **Clear Attempts for All Users**— clears attempts based on parameters you set.
- > **Sort Ascending/Descending**— sort the columns using the grades entered.
- > **Hide Column**— hides the column view - to show the column again go to Manage>Column Organization. Hidden columns can still be included in calculations.



## Entering Student Grades

Enter Grades by Grade Center item:

- Locate the grade column to modify.
- Click on the first cell in the column you want to enter grades so that the '-' symbol is highlighted.
- Enter the grade and press your enter/return key. The cell you just entered the grade in will cycle ("Saving") briefly before moving the next cell.
- Repeat the processes above until finished— at anytime you can skip around to any column and to any individual student grade cell.



Enter Grades by Student:

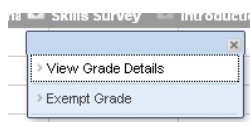
- Locate the individual student cell (grade) you want to modify.
- Click on that cell so that the grade is completely highlighted.
- Change the grade and press your enter/return key.
- The grade will now be updated and the cell will include an orange triangle in the upper left corner. This is the *Grade Edited Manually* icon, which can be removed by clicking on the individual cell's double-down arrows and selecting *Clear Cell Modified Icon*.



View Grade Details:

Use the double-down arrows in the grade cell to display the cell options.

- > **View Grade Details**—displays the history of the cell information
- > **Exempt Grade**—allows a specific grade to be exempt from inclusion in calculations.

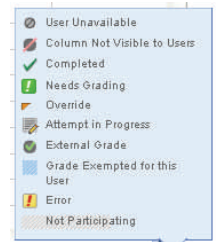


Additional options are available in different column types. Click on *View Grade Details* to add additional comments or view the grade history.

## Icon Legend

If a Grade Center value is not a representation of a grade or blank '-' symbol, it will be one of the following symbols:

- *User Unavailable* - student is unavailable in Blackboard - check the student settings to allow student access again.
- *Column Not Visible to Users* - column item is not visible in the student's view.
- *Completed* - item has been completed by the Student.
- *Needs Grading* - item has been submitted by the student and needs to be reviewed - includes tests with essay questions and assignments.
- *Grade Edited Manually* - a manually revised (changed) grade.
- *Attempt in Progress* - a student is currently using the assignment or the assessment.
- *External Grade* - this is the grade that will display in the report card module as the final grade for the course.
- *Grade Exempted for this User* - the grade has been exempted - the student does not have to complete the assignment.
- *Error* - Grade Center system error.
- *Not Participating* - the student is not participating in the assignment.



## Downloading the Grade Center

The *Grade Center* can be downloaded and saved as either a tab-delimited file (.xls) or a comma-delimited file (.csv) for use in a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel. Downloading these files does not remove any information from the Grade Center.

- Click on the *Work Offline* button then *Download*. Read and follow the *onscreen instructions* carefully.
- Select either the *Tab* or *Comma Delimited Type* radio button.
- Keep *Include Hidden Information* as *No*.
- Click the *Submit* button. Click the *Download* button.

**NOTE:** The Total and Weighted Total columns are included in a Grade Center download. However, these are calculated and can not be changed — they will not be uploaded.

## Uploading the Grade Center

The upload will not process data for any student not enrolled in the course and will fail if the user name for each row of data is not present. Changes to the first name and last name columns will not be processed. **NOTE:** For best results, instructors should manipulate and upload a Grade Center file that has been downloaded first from the Blackboard.

- Click on the *Work Offline* button then *Upload*.
- Click the *Choose File* or *Browse* button and locate the file on your computer.
- Select the *Delimiter Type* of your original file (if you unsure about the file type select *Auto* first). Click the *Submit* button.
- From the *Upload Grades Confirmation* screen to Import section, make sure that the *radio button* next to the *column* you want to upload is selected. **NOTE:** Only columns that have been changed since the download can be checked.
- Click the *Submit* button. You may get a dialog box asking if you want to replace the data. Click the *Ok* button.