Grade Center Categories and Columns

Instructors can add grade columns for individual grades, weighted grades, average grades, or a total calculation of all of the Grade Center columns. In addition, the Grade Center can be manipulated to sort items, add or hide columns, and categorize columns.

Categories
Categories are helpful in organizing the Grade Center. A category is a classification of a column. The Grade Center has several default categories; Assignment, Test, Blog, Wiki, Survey, and Discussion. Default categories cannot be modified or removed. An instructor can generate additional categories to classify Grade Center items such as Labs, Homework or Quizzes. While the column may have a title such as Essay or Final, they are classified in the Grade Center as Assignment or Test. If you have a large number of Grade Center items (i.e. more than 10), create categories for each type of Grade Center item. This will make generating a Weighted Grade Column easier. Categories also allow for grades to be dropped. Dropping grades is not available when using Columns.

Create a Category
New categories are created using the Manage Categories option. Manage Categories displays the default categories and any other categories that have been created. Each category displays the Grade Center columns associated with that particular category.

1. Click Manage on the Grade Center Action Bar.
2. Select Categories
3. The Categories page opens, click Create Category.
4. Enter a Name for the category.
5. Enter a Description to identify a category.
6. Click Submit.

Modify a Category
User-created categories can be modified. Default categories or categories that contain Blackboard-generated tests may not be modified

1. Click Manage on the Grade Center Action Bar.
2. Select Categories.
3. The Categories page opens. Locate the category and Click the Action Button.
4. Select Edit. The Edit button will appear only if a category can be modified.
5. Change the Name for the category.
6. Edit the Description.
7. Click Submit.

Delete a Category
Default categories and categories that contain Blackboard-generated content may not be modified cannot be removed from the Grade Center. Categories that contain manually generated grade columns may be removed.

1. Click Manage on the Grade Center Action Bar.
2. Select Categories.
3. The Categories page opens. Locate the category and click the Action Button.
4. Select Delete. The Edit button will appear only if a category can be modified.

View the Grade Center by Category
The instructor can isolate the Grade Center view by category.

1. Click the Filter button.
2. Click Categories to view the entire Grade Center by category.

Columns
There are two types of grade columns in Blackboard; a Grade Column and a Calculated Column. Grade columns are created one of two ways; automatically or manually by the instructor. The instructor may also edit, hide and delete columns.

Automatically Generated Columns
The following course content items automatically generate a column in the Grade Center:

- Assignments – Assignments are graded manually.
- Surveys – Completed surveys are recorded as a checkmark.
• **Tests**—Tests and quizzes and tests are automatically scored in the Grade Center. Tests that contain essay questions require the instructor to grade the essay question, which is then calculated into the test grade.

• **Wikis, Blogs and Discussion Boards**—The instructor must choose to make these items gradable. If the item is gradable, a column is created in the Grade Center.

**Instructor Created Columns**

If the instructor adds course content using the Build Content option, or does not use Blackboard to distribute or collect assignments, but uses the Grade Center, they can choose the **Create Column** option to manage their grades.

**Create Column**

1. Click **Create Column** in the **Action Bar** of the Grade Center.
2. Review the **Column Name**. This name should briefly describe the Grade Center item, and contain *less than 15 characters*.
3. Enter a **Description**. A description will help instructors and graders identify the column.
4. Select a **Primary** and/or **Secondary Display** option from the drop-down menu. This indicates how the grade will be displayed to the student. The default choice is **Score**.
5. Add a **Category** from the drop-down list
6. Add **Points possible** *(This is a required field)*
7. If necessary, add a **Rubric**.
8. Add a **Due Date**. This will place the item in the student’s **To Do List** on their course Homepage.

9. **Options** - Select **Yes** or **No** for the following options:
   - **Include Column in Grade Center calculations** – Choose **Yes**, and the column is included in Total and Weighted grade calculations.
   - **Show this Column in My Grades** – Choose **Yes**, and the column will appear in My Grades, View Grades, and the Report Card module.
   - **Show Statistics (average and mean) for this column in My Grades** – Choose **Yes**, and statistical information within the column such as Average and median grade can be viewed by students.

10. Click **Submit**.

### Calculated Grade Columns

A **Calculated Column** is designed to allow the instructor to inform students of their overall grade based on a calculated formula; There are four types of calculated columns; **Average**, **Minimum/Maximum**, **Total**, and **Weighted**. By default, The Grade Center includes both **Total** and **Weighted** columns. The Total column shows the total value of all columns, **Weighted** column, assigns a value to each column or category, then calculates a total grade based on these values.

By default, the Grade Center includes both a Total Grade and a Weighted Grade column. Since both the Total and Weighted columns indicate a student’s final grade, instructors should choose one of the columns to display the final grade, and then delete the other. The remaining Total or Weighted column can be edited to suit their needs.

**Edit the Weighted Grade Column**
The weighted column is a type of calculated column that generates a grade based on the result of selected columns and categories, and their respective percentages. When creating a weighted column, you can include other calculated columns or other weighted columns.

A weighted total column is created by default, has no default settings, and appears in new courses. You can rename, change the settings, change which columns and categories are included, or delete this default column. The default weighted total column displays no results until you select the columns and categories to include in the calculation.
1. Click the **Action Button** on the top of the **Weighted Column**

2. Click **Set as External Grade**. The External Grade is the grade that a student will see as their current course grade in My Grades. The **Green Checkmark** appears next to the column name

3. Click **Edit Column Information**.

4. Review the **Column Name**. This name should briefly describe the Grade Center item, and contain **less than 15 characters**.

5. Enter a **Description**. A description will help instructors and graders identify the column.

6. Select a **Primary** and/or **Secondary Display** option from the drop-down menu. This indicates how the grade will be displayed to the student. The default choice is **Score**.
7. Click a Column Name or Category you must choose ONLY Column Names or ONLY Categories.
8. Once the Column Name or category has been selected, click the arrow to move it to the Weighted Grade column.
9. Enter the percentage for each selection in the section provided.
10. The value for all items in a calculated column MUST Total 100%.
11. Choose a Drop Grade Option. The Drop Grade Option can only be used with categories.
12. When using Categories, choose how to weigh columns within the Category: Equally or Proportionally.
   • Equally applies equal value to all items within a Category, if all of the items are worth the same amount.
   • Proportionally applies the appropriate value to an item based on points awarded to the item when generated. Use this option if the values for Grade Center items vary (i.e. tests are worth 100 points, quizzes; 25 points, homework; 50 points).
13. Running Total Option. Leave this option as Yes. If you delete any grade in the Grade center, be sure to replace the grade with a dash (-), or Null Value, otherwise the grade value will be calculated as a zero value (0) when the weighted grade is calculated.
14. To remove a selected Grade Item or Category from consideration, click the “x”.
15. **Options** There are three options to choose. Click **Yes** or **No** to activate these options:
- **Include Column in the Grade Center calculations** – Click **Yes** to make the Column available for use in other calculations.
- **Show Column in My Grades** – Click **Yes** to show the column in My Grades.
- **Show Statistics (average and median) to students** – Click **Yes** to show the Weighted Grade column statistics in My Grades.

16. Click **Submit**.

17. Click the **Action Button** on the top of the **Total Column**.
18. Click **Delete Column**. The Total Column is not needed if the Weighted Column is being used.

**Edit the Total Grade Column**
The total column is a type of calculated column that generates a grade based on the cumulative points earned, related to the points allowed. A total column is created by default and appears in new courses. You can rename, change the settings, change which columns are included, or delete this default column.

1. Click the **Action Button** on the top of the **Total Column**
2. Click **Set as External Grade**. The External Grade is the grade that a student will see as their current course grade in My Grades. The **Green Checkmark** appears next to the column name.
3. Click **Edit Column** Information.
4. Review the **Column Name**. This name should briefly describe the Grade Center item, and contain *less than 15 characters*.

5. Enter a **Description**. A description will help instructors and graders identify the column.

6. Select a **Primary** and/or **Secondary Display** option from the drop-down menu. This indicates how the grade will be displayed to the student. The default choice is **Score**.

7. Choose what **Grade Center columns to include** in the Total Column.

8. **Running Total Option. Leave this option as Yes.** If you delete *any* grade in the Grade center, *be sure to replace the grade* with a dash (-), or **Null Value**, otherwise the grade value will be calculated as a zero value (0) when the weighted grade is calculated.

9. **Options** There are three options to choose. Click **Yes** or **No** to activate these options:
   - **Include Column in the Grade Center calculations** – Click **Yes** to make the Column available for use in other calculations.
   - **Show Column in My Grades** – Click **Yes** to show the column in My Grades.
   - **Show Statistics (average and median) to students** – Click **Yes** to show the Weighted Grade column statistics in My Grades.

10. Click **Submit**.
11. Click the Action Button on the top of the Weighted Column
12. Click Delete Column. The Weighted Column is not needed if the Total Column is being used.

Delete Grade Center Columns
When you create gradable items in your course, grade columns are created automatically in the Grade Center, including columns for:

- Tests, surveys, and Self and Peer Assessments
- Assignments and SafeAssignments
- Discussion posts
- Journal and blog entries
- Wiki contributions

The only way to delete these auto-created grade columns is to first delete the gradable items in your course. For some, if no student submissions exist when you delete the item, the Grade Center column is deleted automatically. However, when you delete a SafeAssignment in your course, you must also delete the corresponding column in the Grade Center.

1. Click the Action Button on the top of the Weighted Column
2. Click Edit Column Information.