Grade Center Columns

Blackboard will create columns for graded online activities, like tests, assignments, discussion boards, wikis and blogs. For activities that are not online, you will need to create a column in the Grade Center.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Chapter 1 Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akbar</td>
<td>Mina</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casper</td>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the screen shot, two grade columns are shown:

- Participation: Created by an instructor to store class participation grades.
- Chapter 1 Test: Created by Blackboard when the instructor deployed the test.

The scores in the Participation column are manually entered by the instructor. The scores in the Chapter 1 Test column are populated when a student completes the test and the test is automatically graded by Blackboard.

When creating columns, you have the following options:

- Choose how the grade is displayed. The display options are as a score, letter, text, percentage, or as complete/incomplete.
- Associate it with a category.
- Include or exclude the column in Grade Center calculations, such as when creating a calculated column.
- Choose if the column will appear in the students’ My Grades tool.
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Create a Column

1. In the **Full Grade Center**, click **Create Column** on the **Action Bar**.

2. On the **Create Grade Column** page, enter a brief, descriptive **Column Name**. This name will be the column name in the Grade Center and in the students’ My Grades tool. A shorter name can be entered in the **Grade Center Name** field if the column name doesn’t display in an understandable way in the Grade Center.
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3. The **Description** field is optional. Information entered in this field will appear for students to read in the **My Grades** tool.

4. The **Primary Display** drop-down list provides choices on the way that the grade can be entered and/or displayed. This format will be displayed in the **Grade Center** and to students in the **My Grades** tool.

![Primary Display Image]

Five default options appear:

- **Score**: A numeric grade appears in the column, which is the default setting.
- **Letter**: A letter grade appears in the column. This also provides a way to enter letter grades, rather than scores, using the default grading schema.
- **Text**: Text values from a default text grading schema might include: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor. If no custom text grading schema is created, you will be able to type text in the column’s cells.
- **Percentage**: A percentage is displayed in the column.
- **Complete/Incomplete**: A check mark (✓) appears in the column when a grade has been entered.

![Secondary Display Image]

5. The **Secondary Display** is optional, with the default being **None**. The same options appear in the list except for Text and the one chosen as the Primary Display. In the Grade Center column, the secondary value appears in parentheses. The secondary value does not appear to students in My Grades.

**Note**: If Percentage is selected as the Primary Display, any value entered in the column will interpreted as a percentage and not the score. Most instructors prefer having the Primary Display as score and the Secondary Display as percentage.

6. The **Category** field is optional. If you calculate grades based on weighting, then categories tend to be essential.
7. In the **Points Possible** field, enter the number of total points.

8. The **Associated Rubrics** area will provide a way to use rubrics to grade this activity, you can connect to an existing rubric using the list, or you can create a rubric by using the **Add Rubric** button.

9. The **Due Date** is optional, to use it, place a check in the box and type a date (mm/dd/yyyy) or use the pop-up Date Selection Calendar. Due dates will be displayed in the course calendar.

**Tips and Tricks:** Using due dates will help students stay organized, if you encourage them to use the course calendar.

10. Select the **Options**.
   - **Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations:** Select **Yes** to make the column available to be included in calculated columns.
   - **Show this Column to Students:** Select **Yes** to display the column to students in My Grades.
   - **Show Statistics (average and median) for this Column to Students in My Grades:** Select **Yes** to include statistical information with the grade in My Grades.

11. Click **Submit**.
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Enter Grades

Grades are entered in any cell in the Grade Center or from the Grade Details page. When typing directly in a Grade Center cell, the grade may be an override grade.

1. Click within the cell where you want to enter a grade.
2. Type the value.
3. Press Enter.
4. Click OK to save the grade.

Edit Grades

The roles of Instructor, Teaching Assistant, and Grader are allowed to change grades in a course. When grades are changed, the new scores are automatically calculated into existing calculated grade columns. Every time a grade is changed, the change is recorded in the Grade History log.

In certain situations, a grade change results in an override grade. An override grade is applied only to attempt-based Grade Center items, which are tests, and assignments. An override grade for a test or an assignment takes precedence over all other grade entries, including attempts a student submits after an override grade is assigned.

When you override a grade, an orange triangle appears in the Grade Center cell.

IMPORTANT! When you assign a grade to a cell with no attempt for an assignment or a test, it is an override grade, and the override icon appears in the grade cell. If you assign a grade for an interactive tool's gradable activity, but no activity exists, no icon appears in the grade cell because it behaves as if you are assigning a grade in the grading panel of the tool.

You can assign an override grade in two ways:

- Use the Manual Override tab on the Grade Details page. This is the recommended way to assign an override grade. After assigning the grade, you can add feedback for the user and notes for yourself explaining the grade change. You will have a record of why you chose to override any future attempts. The only way to assign an override grade for gradable journal and blog entries, wiki page saves, and discussion posts is on the Manual Override tab. However, the interactive tools allow you to edit an override grade from the tool's grading panel and disallow its precedence.

- You can type directly in a Grade Center cell to assign an override grade for a test attempt or for an assignment attempt, if multiple attempts are allowed. If you allow Multiple attempts and have assigned a grade for the first attempt, and then decide to ignore another attempt by typing directly in the cell, that will act as an override grade. If you go on to grade the other attempt from the Grade Assignment page, the override grade still supersedes the grade you assign. Therefore, avoid assigning grades directly in Grade Center cells for assignments and tests without considering the consequences.
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Create a Total Column

1. In the Full Grade Center, click Create Calculated Column on the Action Bar and select Total.
2. On the Create Total Column screen, enter a Column Name.
3. The Description is optional.
4. Make a selection in the Primary Display drop-down list, much like you did on the Create Column screen.
5. The Secondary Display is optional, and will only display in the Grade Center, not in My Grades.
6. In the Select Columns section, select what to include in the total column's calculation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Grade Columns</td>
<td>Include all individual grade columns in the Grade Center.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected Columns and Categories</td>
<td>Select grade columns and categories individually.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select the columns in the Columns to Select box and click the right-pointing arrow to move the selections to the Selected Columns box. When you select a column, you can view information about the column in the Column Information area below the Columns to Select box.

A column that is set to No for Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations does not appear in the selection list.

To select multiple columns, press the Ctrl key and click each column needed. For Macs, press the Command key instead of the Ctrl key.

Select the categories in the Categories to Select box and click the right-pointing arrow to move the selections to the Selected Columns box. When you select a category, you can view which columns are included in the category in the Category Information area below the Categories to Select box. Other options appear after you move the category to the Selected Columns box:

Drop Grades removes a number of either the highest or lowest grades for each category from the calculation. If you do not type numbers in the boxes, no grades are dropped.

The Lowest -OR- Highest Value to Calculate removes all grades from the calculation except for the worst or best score.

To delete a selection in the Selected Columns box, click the red X.

7. Calculate as Running Total: Click Yes to calculate as a running total. Running totals exempt cells that do not contain data. Click No to include all selected columns in the calculation, using a value of 0 if no grade exists. This can make grades appear artificially low.

8. Select the Options, much like the options you had when creating a column.

9. Click Submit.

If a column is deleted from the Grade Center that is included in a total calculation, it is also removed from the calculation.
Organize Columns

1. In the **Full Grade Center**, click the **Manage** button and select **Column Organization**.

   The Column Organization displays all the columns in the Grade Center on one screen. When you reorder the columns on this screen, the changes will appear in the Full Grade Center.

   On this screen, each column in the Grade Center grid is a row. The order of rows on this page is the same as the order of columns in the Full Grade Center.

2. You can organize the Grade Center columns in the following ways:
   - Reorder columns using the **drag-and-drop** function.
   - Freeze or unfreeze columns in the first table. If you freeze a column, it remains stationary, on the left side of the screen, when scrolling through the Grade Center view.
   - Hide or show multiple columns.
   - Change a grade column’s category.

   **Note:** Some changes you make on this page do not affect what students see in My Grades. For example:
   - If you choose to hide a column on this page, the column is only hidden from your view in the Grade Center grid.

   To hide a column from students in My Grades, you must select **Show/Hide to Users** in a column’s contextual menu. In the Grade Center, the **Column Not Visible to Users** icon (👨‍💻) appears in the column header for columns hidden from students.

Smart Views

Several smart views are available by default, but you can also create your own. You can easily move between the Full Grade Center view and any of the available smart views. You can set a smart view as the default view of the Grade Center and change it at any time.

With smart views, you can view the progress of the following items:

- An existing group
- Student performance for a particular item
- Individual students
- Category and status of items
- Custom combination of attributes
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The process for creating the five types of smart views is similar.

1. In the **Grade Center**, point to **Manage** on the action bar and click **Smart Views**.
2. On the Smart Views page, click **Create Smart View** on the action bar.
3. On the Create Smart Views page, type a name an optional description. The description can assist with identifying the smart view.
4. Optionally, select the **Add as Favorite** check box to make the smart view a favorite. In the Grade Center section of the Control Panel, favorite smart views appear in alphabetical order in the indented list in the Full Grade Center section.
5. For **Type of View**, make a selection.
6. In the **Select Criteria** section, set the requirements.
7. In the **Filter Results** drop-down list, select which columns, categories, statuses, or grading periods you want to appear in the Grade Center grid when you access the smart view. For example, when tracking a specific group, you can narrow your view of columns appearing in the Grade Center by filtering the results by a category, such as Tests, or view only specific group assignment columns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Columns</td>
<td>All Grade Center columns that are not hidden on the Column Organization page appear when accessing the smart view, including columns that you have hidden from users.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None (Show user information only)</td>
<td>No grade columns are selected. Only user columns, such as Last Name, appear when accessing the smart view. If you chose to hide some user columns from view, they do not appear when accessing the smart view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All columns shown to users</td>
<td>All columns set to appear to users and those that you have not hidden on the Column Organization page appear in the Grade Center grid when accessing the smart view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All columns hidden from users</td>
<td>All columns appear that are hidden from users. Each column has the Column Not Visible to Users (:hidden_column_icon) icon in the column heading when accessing the smart view. Columns that you hid on the Column Organization page do not appear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected Columns Only</td>
<td>Select columns from the list of columns that appears.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected Categories Only</td>
<td>Select the categories from the list of categories that appears.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected Grading Periods Only</td>
<td>Select grading periods from the list of grading periods that appears.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. If the **Include Hidden Information** check box appears, you can select it to display hidden columns pertaining to the filter. When viewing the smart view, the columns you hid on the Column Organization page appear in the grid also.
9. Click **Submit**.