

Blackboard 8: Grade Center

This workshop is for existing users of Blackboard interested in keeping track of student grades online. Blackboard replaced the Gradebook with the Grade Center in version 8.

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Goals

- Learn how to add and configure columns for assignments, quizzes, tests, and other assessments.
- Learn how to enter scores, comments, and include feedback.
- Learn how to export and import grades to/from a spreadsheet.
- Learn how to download all student documents for a single assessment.
- Learn how to set up weighted grading.

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Overview of Grade Center interface

Grades can be entered directly from the spreadsheet view. To enter a grade, click on the cell, type the grade value, and press the **Enter** key to submit. Use the arrow keys or the tab key to navigate through the Grade Center. Use the contextual menus to modify column properties and access grade details.

Last Name	First Name	Username	Total	Discuss	Quiz 1	Attendance	Extra Credit
Altus	Karen	altusk	100.00	80.00	20.00	-5.00	5.00
Brewer	Tami	brewer	100.00	80.00	20.00	-5.00	5.00
Cheyney	Barbara	cheynib	103.00	90.00	18.00	-	5.00
Diddams	Margaret	mdiddams	95.00	75.00	15.00	-	5.00
Drovdahl	Bob	bdrovdahl	85.00	60.00	20.00	-	5.00
Farmer	Patty	farmerp	120.00	95.00	20.00	-	5.00
Hess	Dan	hessd	95.00	90.00	15.00	-15.00	5.00
Julka-Tischhauser	Karen	julkak	117.00	95.00	20.00	-	5.00
Kato	Sharleen	skato	114.00	90.00	20.00	-	5.00
Klein	Lylje	lylje	115.00	90.00	20.00	-	5.00
Mitre	Jim	mitrej	115.00	90.00	20.00	-5.00	5.00
Rendleman	Todd	rendletr	115.00	90.00	20.00	-5.00	5.00
Ryder	Andrew	aryder	115.00	95.00	15.00	-	5.00
Steele	Rick	rsteele	110.00	85.00	20.00	-	5.00
Young	Sharon	syoung	102.00	80.00	17.00	-	5.00

Grade Center workflow for each course

1. Verify settings for student view in **My Grades**
2. Remove, hide, or freeze appropriate columns
3. Set up categories
4. Set up weighted grading (if using it)
5. Add columns for each new assignment
6. Enter grades
7. Verify that totals are accurate

Verify settings for student viewing in **My Grades**

When adding a new Grade Center column:

1. Under Options, **Show this column in My Grades**, select **Yes** to allow students to view the column in **My Grades** or **No** to make the column unavailable.
2. To **Include this column in Grade Center calculations**, select **Yes**.
3. Click **Submit** to save selections.

When viewing the Grade Center page:

1. Click the **Action Link** in the desired column header to open the contextual menu.
2. Select **Modify Column**.
3. Change the availability options for the Column.

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Remove or hide unnecessary columns and freeze columns that should always appear

1. Click **Manage**, and select **Organize Grade Center**.
2. Hide unnecessary columns by checking boxes beside column names, click **Show/Hide, Hide Selected Columns**.
3. Modify which columns are frozen by dragging any part of row with column information above or below the “frozen” bar.
4. Click **Submit** to confirm changes.

A column can be removed using Action Link associated with column.

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Creating a Category

To create a new Category, follow these steps:

1. Click **Manage** in the **Action Bar** of the **Grade Center**.
2. Select **Categories** from the **Action Link** menu.
3. Click **Add Category**.
4. Enter a **Name** for the **Category**.
5. Enter a **Description**. The Description field can help differentiate Categories and explain a Category's purpose.
6. Click **Submit**.

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Adding columns in the Grade Center

1. Automatically generated Grade Center columns
 1. **Discussion Board** – Must choose setting to grade the forum or forum thread
 2. **Assignment** – Added to **Course Content** area and graded manually
 3. **Survey** – Automatically scored
 4. **Assessment** – Can be automatically scored and entered in **Grade Center**. Assessment may contain questions that need to be scored manually (e.g. essay question).
2. Manually created Grade Center columns are created in the Grade Center.

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Adding a manually created Grade Center column

To create a column in the Grade Center:

1. Click **Add Grade Column** in the **Action Bar** of the Grade Center.
2. Enter a **Column Name** - Formal name (15 characters).
3. Enter a **Grade Center Display Name** - only a header in Grade Center.
4. Enter a **Description** - optional (not seen by students).
5. Select a **Primary Display** option.
6. Select a **Secondary Display** - optional.
7. Select a **Category**.
8. Enter **Points Possible** – must be numeric. (Can be zero)
9. Select a **Grading Period** – optional (used primarily by schools with longer terms)
10. **Creation Date** – can't be changed.
11. Enter a **Due Date** – None or specify.
12. Set additional **Options**:
 - Include Column in **Grade Center** calculations
 - Show this Column in **My Grades**
 - Show Statistics (average and mean) for this column in **My Grades**
13. Click **Submit** to save.

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Entering scores

To enter a grade from the **Grade Center**:

1. Click on desired cell.
2. Type the value.
3. Press **Enter**.

Use **Enter**, **Tab**, and **Arrow** keys to move around.

Use **Enter** to submit scores.

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Adding comments

To enter a comment:

1. Move the cursor over an entered grade.
2. Click **Action Link** and select **Add Comment** from menu.
3. Enter text in **Feedback to User** textbox to share with the student.
4. Enter text in **Instructor Notes** textbox for reference. **Caution:** These notes are available to anyone who has access to Grade Center.
5. Click **Submit** to save comments.

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Adding an assignment (students submit work online)

http://www.spu.edu/depts/its/online_learning/assignments.html

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Download student work for a single assessment

http://www.spu.edu/depts/its/online_learning/assignments.html

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Return student work with feedback

http://www.spu.edu/depts/its/online_learning/assignments.html

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Exporting grades to Excel

Downloading grades from the Grade Center:

1. Click **Manage** in **Action Bar** of **Grade Center**.
2. Select **Download** from **Action Link** menu.
3. Use radio button to select data to download.
4. Select the file delimiter - **Tab**.
5. Select whether to **Include Hidden Information** in the downloaded data. (No)
6. Click **Submit**.
7. Click the Download button and choose **Save**.
8. Select a location to save file and change **Save as Type** to **All Files**.
9. Click **Open** on the **Download Complete** window.
10. Click **Yes** to answer the question about opening a file in a different format.

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General rules about downloaded “Excel” gradebook

- Do
 - Enter new scores for existing columns
 - Enter new column headings and scores
 - Use fill-down & fill-across to duplicate common scores
 - Maintain existing file format (tab delimited)
- Don't
 - Save the spreadsheet as an Excel file
 - Don't create formulas to be used as scores
 - Worry about formatting spreadsheet if you plan to upload changes to Blackboard

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Importing grades from Excel

To upload spreadsheet with grades to Grade Center:

1. Click **Manage** in **Action Bar** of **Grade Center**.
2. Select **Upload** from **Action Link** menu.
3. Browse for the file.
4. Select the Delimiter Type – **Tab**.
5. Click **Submit** to upload the selected file.
6. Review list of data to be uploaded. Use check boxes to de-select data to be excluded from upload.
7. Review the **Data Preview Column** to ensure correct data is being uploaded.
8. Click **Submit** to confirm and upload the file.
9. **Modify** any new columns to make sure data is used correctly in **Grade Center**.

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Weighted grading: Part I

To set up **Weighted Grade** column:

1. Click **Action Link** for **Weighted Grade** column.
2. Select **Primary Display** option from drop-down menu. (Percentage)
3. Select items to be included in **Weighted Grade** column, and enter the percentages for each column or **Category** to be included in the **Weighted Grade**.
 - Columns to Select – List of all columns in Grade Center. Select Column and click arrow to add it to Weighted Grade column.
 - Categories to Select – List of all Categories in Grade Center. Select category and click arrow to add it to Weighted Grade column.

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Weighted grading: Part II

4. After all columns and Categories have been selected, enter percentage for each selection. When a Category has been selected, several other options appear:
 - Select how 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.
 - Decide whether to drop high or low grades within the Category or use the lowest or highest value in category.To remove a selected **Grade Item** or **Category** from consideration, click the red “x”.

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Weighted grading: Part III

4. **Calculate as a running total** – Select **Yes** to calculate the weight as a running total to include only the Columns that have been graded. Select **No** to include all items.
5. Share **Weighted Grade** column with users. The following permissions can be selected to add the column to **My Grades**:
 1. Include Column in the Grade Center calculations – Makes the Column available for use in other calculations.
 2. Show Column in My Grades – Shows the column in My Grades.
 3. Show Statistics (average and median) to Students– Shows the Weighted Grade column statistics in My Grades.
6. Click **Submit to save**.

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Exempt a student from a grade

To Exempt a grade from the **Grade Center**, follow these steps:

1. Move the cursor over grade to be exempted, and click **Action Link**.
2. Click **Exempt Grade**.

To clear exemption and return to previous score, click **Clear Exemption** from the menu.

To add comments to an Exemption:

1. Move cursor over cell with exempted grade, and click **Action Link**.
2. Click **Add Comment**.
3. Type in comments in the **Feedback to User** and **Instructor Notes** text boxes.
4. Click **Submit**.

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Comments or Questions?



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