



# Blackboard

## Getting Started with Grade Center

Blackboard's Grade Center automatically creates columns in the Grade Center for assessments (tests and surveys) delivered through Blackboard, assignments added using the assignment feature and discussion board forums that have been setup to include grading. Items can be added to the Grade Center for scores from activities performed outside Blackboard (such as journals, final projects, extra credit, etc.) The Grade Center supports custom grading scales, item analysis, and multiple Grade Center views.



Grade Center does not display well at low screen resolutions (e.g., 800x600). For example, on a 17" monitor you need a minimum screen resolution of 1024 x 768 for proper viewing.

### View the Grade Center

1. From Control Panel, click **Evaluation**, then **Grade Center**. Here is a sample of the spreadsheet:

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Grade Center interface. At the top, there are buttons for 'Create Column', 'Create Calculated Column', 'Manage', and 'Reports'. Below these are 'Discover Content' and 'Work Offline' buttons. The 'Current View' is set to 'Full Grade Center'. The 'Sort Columns By' is 'Layout Position' and the 'Order' is 'Ascending'. The main area is a spreadsheet with columns for 'Last Name', 'First Name', 'Username', 'Last Access', 'Test1', 'Test2', 'Test3', 'Test4', 'Assign1', 'Assign2', and 'Assign3'. The data rows are for three students: Choke, Choke, Jr., and Choke, Sr. The 'Selected Rows' section shows 0 rows selected.

Last Name	First Name	Username	Last Access	Test1	Test2	Test3	Test4	Assign1	Assign2	Assign3
Choke	Artie	scstudent1	March 26, 2009	-	-	-	-	17.00	18.00	19.00
Choke, Jr.	Artie	scstudent3	March 6, 2009	-	-	-	-	19.00	20.00	18.00
Choke, Sr.	Artie	scstudent2	March 10, 2009	-	-	-	-	20.00	19.00	20.00

### Add an Item to the Grade Center

You can manually add items (grade columns) to the Grade Center for graded exercises conducted outside Blackboard. For example, you might give your students points for an in-class presentation or for attending an event.



You do not need to manually add a grade column for Assignments, Tests or graded Discussion Boards – generated *within* Blackboard. These are automatically added to the Grade Center.

1. Click **Create Column**.



In the *Column Information* section, enter a **Column Name**.

2. Grade Center Display Name allows for an alternate, perhaps shorter label in the Grade Center spreadsheet.

\* Indicates a required field.

### 1. Column Information

\* Column Name

Grade Center Display Name

Description Visual Editor:  ON

Normal | 3 | Arial | **B** | *I* | U | abc |  $\times_2$  |  $\times^2$  | [List Icons]

Covers chapters 1-4

Path: [body](#)



Save as Reusable Object

Primary Display  Grades must be entered using the selected format. Grades d

Secondary Display  This display option is shown in the Grade Center only.

Category

\* Points Possible

3. Enter a Description of the grade item (viewable by students in My Grades).
4. Choose a **Primary Display** option from the drop-down list. Score is recommended.
  -  Secondary Display allows for alternate display (shown in parentheses) in the spreadsheet cells.
5. Choose a **Category** from the drop-down list. (You can add custom categories through the Manage menu.) This is viewable by students in My Grades
6. Enter a number in the **Points Possible** field for this item.
7. In the *Dates* section, indicate a **Due Date**. (This is viewable by students.)
  -  Due dates are helpful when defining date ranges in the Grading Period feature. They're also useful with the Early Warning System (from the Control Panel).
8. In the *Options* section, choose either **Yes** or **No** for the following items.

### 3. Options

Select **No** for the first option to exclude this Grade Center column from My Grades.

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

9. Click **Submit**. The column appears at the right end of the spreadsheet.

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## Manage Grade Columns


### **To modify a grade column's settings:**

1. In the spreadsheet, click the double chevron  symbol to the right of the column heading to pull-down the menu.
2. Click **Edit Column Information** from the menu.

### **To re-order grade columns:**

1. From the **Manage** menu, click **Column Organization**.
2. Point to the four-sided arrow (extreme left side of table) of the column to be moved, then drag up or down.
3. Click **Submit**.

### **To delete a grade column:**

1. In the spreadsheet, click the double chevron  symbol to the right of the column heading to pull-down the menu.
2. Click **Delete Column** from the menu. You are asked to confirm that the column – along with any grades for that item – will be deleted.



Assignments and tests linked to a content area cannot be removed from the Grade Center, but rather from the content area in which they are deployed.

3. Click **OK**.

## Enter Grades

### **To enter a grade:**

1. Click the spreadsheet cell for the student and grade item.
2. Enter the student's score, then press **Enter**. The score is saved and you are moved to the cell below.




Be careful not to have a blinking cursor after the "-" sign; otherwise, you'll get a negative number when you press enter.

3. Continue entering student scores.





If you don't enter the score and move to a different cell, you'll receive a warning box to confirm the saving of the grade.

### **To change a grade:**

1. Enter the student's score, then press **Enter**. The score is changed and a  symbol appears in the upper left corner of the cell to indicate the change.




To remove the  symbol, click the double chevron  symbol for the cell, then choose **Clear Cell Modified Icon**.

### **To delete a grade:**

1. Click the spreadsheet cell for the specific grade score to remove.
2. Press **Delete** key, then **Enter**.
3. Click **OK** to null the grade. The cell re-displays the dash symbol.

### To exempt a grade:

1. In the spreadsheet, click the double chevron  symbol to the right of the grade item to pull-down the menu.
2. Click **Exempt Grade** from the menu. The grade is no longer included in any statistical or graded total calculations.

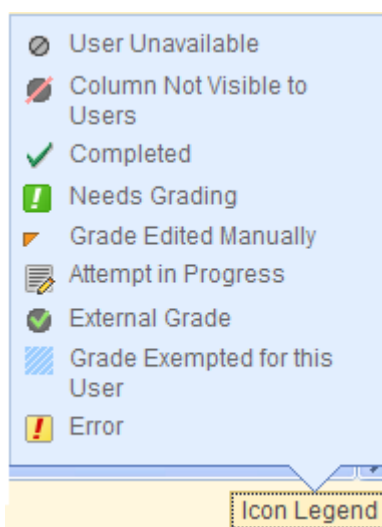
 To clear the exemption, click the double chevron  symbol and choose **Clear Exemption**.

### To view Grade Information Bar and Icon Legend:

When a cell is selected, the points possible (as well as other information) displays below the spreadsheet, as in the following example:

**Grade Information Bar** Grade Type: **Grade** | Points Possible: **25** | Displayed As: **Score** | Visible to Users: **Yes**



- When clicked, the Icon Legend shows the following:

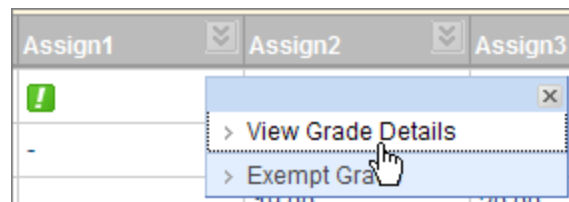


- Click the box to remove it.

### Enter Grades for Assignments & Tests


A test may have subjective questions (e.g., short answer) or you may want to review objective questions (e.g., fill in the blank). Or you need to review and grade an item using Blackboard's Assignment feature. In these cases, follow these steps.

1. Where the  (needs grading symbol) appears, click the double chevron  symbol to the right of the grade item.
2. Click **View Grade Details** from the drop-down menu.
3. On the Grade Details page, click **Open Attempt**.
4. This step depends on the type of grade item:




- For a test, review answers to subjective questions and enter grades.
- For an assignment, review the student's submission under the User's Work section, then enter a grade and optional comments.

5. Click **Submit**.

 On the Grade Details page, you can use these controls, to quickly move to another student or another grade column:

Jump to User:  Jump to Column:


Current User: **Artie Choke (sccstudent1)**   Current Column: **Assign1 (Assignment)**

 Use **Edit Grade** to enter a zero score. Save and Submit the grade. This prevents the student from taking the assignment or test.

 Use **Override Grade** to change a previously entered grade. Save and Submit.

6. Click **OK** when finished entering grades.

### Clearing a Test or Assignment Attempt


The  icon ("attempt in progress") in a student's grade cell may indicate one of the following:

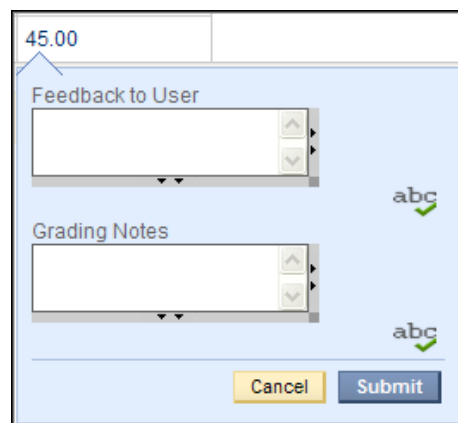
- A student is still working on an item (check Grade Details to be sure).
- A student clicked Save Draft instead of Submit for an assignment or a test. You may need to remind the student that Submit is required for completion.
- A student had technical problems while working on an exam. You may need to clear the attempt (through Grade Details). Caution: clearing an attempt is final and all student work will be lost!

1. From the Grade Details page, click **Clear Attempt** and **OK** to confirm.

### Add Comment to a Student's Score

Instructors can add comments to student scores in the Grade Center. These comments will be visible to the students when they review their grades. Comments may be added for Assignments and Assessments once they have been completed and submitted by the student. For items the instructor adds manually to the Grade Center (through Add Column), the grade must be entered before the comment feature will become available. For the latter, follow these steps:

1. In the spreadsheet, click the double chevron  symbol to the right of the grade item to pull-down the menu.
2. Click **Quick Comment** from the menu.
3. In the *Feedback to User* box, enter a comment to the student.
4. Optionally, you can enter a note to yourself in the *Grading Notes* box.
5. Click **Submit**.



## Student View of Grades

Here's a sample of what a student sees when choosing the **My Grades** link:

Item Name	Details	Due Date	Last Submitted, Edited, or Graded	Grade	Points Possible	Comments
Assign1	<a href="#">Details</a>	Feb 1, 2010	Mar 16, 2010 10:01 AM	<a href="#">20.00</a>	20	
Assign2	<a href="#">Details</a>	Mar 1, 2010	May 12, 2009 10:39 AM	18.00	20	Good work on content, just a few grammar problems.
Assign3	<a href="#">Details</a>		May 12, 2009 10:39 AM	19.00	20	
Assign4	<a href="#">Details</a>		May 12, 2009 10:40 AM	19.00	20	
Exam 1	<a href="#">Details</a>	Mar 17, 2010		-	50	
<b>Total</b>				95.00%	80	
<b>Weighted Total</b>				0.00%	0	
Availability	<a href="#">Details</a>			-	0	

Icon Legend

You, as instructor, cannot access the My Grades link. You can enroll a “fake” student in your course, then log in as that student to see this screen. (See your campus Blackboard support personnel for assistance.)

## Running Total

The Total column is set, by default, to only count points for those assignments that have been graded. If you need to verify or change that setting, follow these instructions:

1. In the spreadsheet, click the double chevron symbol to the right of the Total column heading to pull-down the menu.
2. Click **Edit Column Information** from the menu.
3. If necessary, make a change to the running total option and click **Submit**.

In order to project the most accurate picture of how the student is doing when using Running Total, you should enter a zero for any assignment that is not turned in by the due date. Otherwise, student grades will be inflated.

## Grade History

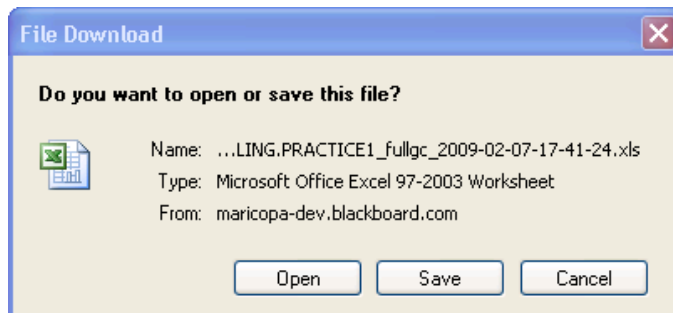
1. From the **Reports** menu, click **View Grade History**. The changes to grades display in reverse chronological order. A pull-down menu at the upper right corner of the screen allows you to adjust how many entries to display at a time (14 days is the default).
2. Click **OK** to return to the normal spreadsheet.

Grade history can be displayed for a specific student by clicking the double chevron symbol for the given grade, then choosing **Grade Details**.


## Back Up Grades

It is highly recommended to back up your Blackboard Grade Center periodically throughout the semester and also to make a final backup of the entire Grade Center at the end of the semester to file away as a permanent electronic copy. You can do this by downloading the Grade Center as a tab-delimited file, which can be opened in Microsoft Excel.


1. From the **Work Offline** menu, click **Download**. The Download Grades page displays.
2. Choose whether to download all grade information or just a selected grade item (latter available with default view – “Full Grade Center”).
3. In the Options section, leave the **Tab** radio button selected for *Delimiter Type*.
4. In the Save Location section, leave it set for *My Computer*.
5. Click **Submit**.
6. Click **Download**. The following dialog box appears:

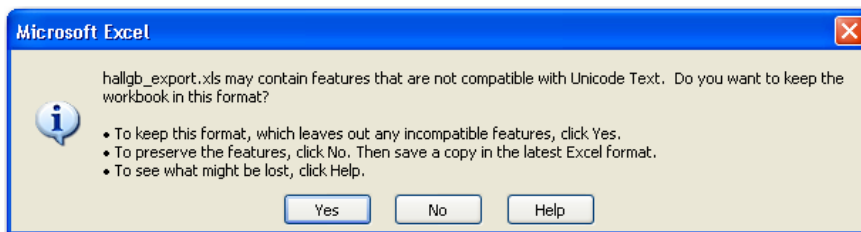


7. Click **Save**.
8. In the *Save As* window, select where you wish to save the Grade Center file.

 You may want to change the default name to better identify the course to which this Grade Center belongs, but **keep the .xls extension** at the end of the filename. This is so you will be able to open the file with Microsoft Excel.

9. Click **Save**.

 This exported Grade Center file may be opened and edited in Microsoft Excel. Even though the file has the .xls extension, it was actually saved in Unicode Text format when you downloaded from Blackboard. When you save the file from within MS Excel, you will see the following prompt:



 You should click **Yes**.

### Create an Extra Credit Column

There is no specific extra credit feature in Grade Center, but you can use the following steps to set up a regular grade column for assigning extra credit points for students.

1. Click **Create Column**.
2. As described in the “Add an Item to the Grade Center” section, enter a name and other pertinent information.
3. For the *Points Possible*, enter 0.
4. Click **Submit**.