

Blackboard **Grade Center: Advanced Features** Quick Guide

What is the Grade Center?

The **Grade Center** is more than just a way to record students' grades. It is a dynamic and interactive tool, allowing faculty to record data, calculate grades, and monitor student progress. In the **Grade Center**, faculty can provide and manage students' grades for a variety of assessments, including assignments, tests, discussion posts, journals, blogs, and wikis. Faculty can also create grade columns for any activities or requirements that require grading but do not require submission through Blackboard, such as special projects, participation, or attendance.

Managing the Grade Center

The **Manage** menu, accessed from the *action bar* in the full Grade Center, provides centralized access to a variety of settings, functions, and features. A few of the key ones are featured here:

- **Grading Periods**—Grading Periods are used to **sort Grade Center Columns** into sections **based on due date**. These sections help manage the Grade Center by associating columns together so that viewing and reporting can be done based on a Grading Period instead of the entire Grade Center.
- **Grading Schemas**—Grading schemas take the **actual points scored** from a graded item and **compare** it to the **total points possible** for that item to **derive a percentage**. This percentage is mapped to a range of scores to display a grade. The Grade Center includes a copy of a default grading schema.
- **Grading Color Codes**—Grading Color Codes **apply background** and **text color** to items in the Grade Center that meet **specified criteria**. Colors and criteria are defined by the instructor.
- **Categories**—A Grade Center Category is a **classification of Grade Center Columns**. Categories are used to organize and view Grade Center data and can be used when creating Calculated Columns to perform operations on all Grade Columns in a Category.
- **Smart Views**—Smart Views are **focused views** of the Grade Center. Any number of Smart Views can be created based on a variety of criteria, including Grading Periods, Categories, and Performance.
- **Column Organization**—The Column Organization page is divided into various tables that control how different Grade Center views are displayed. Rows in these tables represent Columns in the Grade Center views. Rows can be manipulated to **customize the different views** of the Grade Center.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Grade Center interface. At the top, there are four tabs: 'Create Column', 'Create Calculated Column', 'Manage', and 'Reports'. The 'Manage' tab is selected and highlighted with a red box. A dropdown menu is open from the 'Manage' tab, listing various options: 'Grading Periods', 'Grading Schemas', 'Grading Color Codes', 'Categories', 'Smart Views', 'Column Organization', 'Row Visibility', 'Send Email', 'McGraw-Hill Connect Reports', and 'McGraw-Hill Connect To Do List'. Below the tabs, there is a 'Grade Information Bar' with 'Move To Top' and 'Email' buttons. Below that is a table with columns for 'Last Name', 'First Name', and 'Username'. The table contains five rows of student data: Alcott, Louisa, su00001; Bohr, Niels, su00036; Caesar, Julius, su00045; Cather, Willa, su00002; and Churchill, Winston, su00003.



Remember

Each Grade Center column also has its own menu, allowing access to column settings, functions and features. These menu options include: **Quick Column Information, Edit Column Information, Column Statistics, Set as External Grade, Show/Hide to Users, Sort Ascending or Descending, and Hide Column.**

Create a Weighted Column

A calculated column that generates a grade based on selected columns and categories, and their respective percentages.

1. On the *action bar*, click **Create Calculated Column**
2. Select **Weighted Column**
3. Provide *Column Name*
4. Select **Primary** and **Secondary** grading displays
5. Select **Columns** and/or **Categories** to be included
 - Press **Ctrl** to select more than one column/category
 - Enter the **weight percentage** (must add up to 100%)
6. Determine the column's **Options** (default settings are recommended)
7. Click **Submit**

Create an Extra-Credit Column

A column that is included in the total computation and has a maximum score of 0. Extra-credit points are then assigned as needed.

1. On the *action bar*, click **Create Column**
2. Provide a **Column Name**
3. Provide a **Grade Center Display Name** (optional)
4. Select the other options as needed (Primary and Secondary grade display, and Category)
5. Enter **0** in the *Points Possible* field
6. Leave default to **Yes** to *Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations*
7. Click **Submit**

Note: Extra-credit points will need to be manually entered in the Grade Center column.

Hide Columns / Unhide Columns

Hide a column to focus on specific data. When columns are hidden, the data is retained. Columns can be restored to view after they have been hidden.

Hiding a Column

1. Click the *action link* for the column you want to hide
2. Select **Hide Column**

Unhiding a Column

1. On the *action bar*, click **Manage**
2. Select **Column Organization**
3. On the following page, check the box(es) to the left of the column name to be shown
4. At the top of the page, click **Show/Hide**
5. Select **Show Selected Columns**
6. Click **Submit**

Create Smart Views

Focused views based on a variety of criteria, including grading periods, categories, and student performance.

1. On the *action bar*, click **Manage**
2. Select **Smart Views**
3. On the following page, click **Create Smart View**
4. Provide a **Name**
5. Provide a **Description** (Optional)
6. Select to **Add as a Favorite** (if selected, this will create a shortcut in the *Control Panel* menu)
7. Select **Type of View**
8. Select **Criteria** to be included in the Smart View
9. Filter Results (columns to display in the results)
10. Click **Submit**

Erase or Allow Additional Attempts

Submission for any type of assessment can be edited or erased, allowing the student a chance to resubmit. The new submission becomes the grade.

1. Point to the **desired cell** for the grade to be changed, click the *action link* and select **View Grade Details**
2. Click **Clear Attempt** (a pop-up message will appear asking for confirmation)
3. The page will refresh, and the submitted assessment will be permanently **deleted**
4. Notify student to resubmit the assessment

Note: Clearing a student's submission cannot be undone.

Upload Grades from an External Source

Upload grades from external sources such as an Excel file. Data should be formatted correctly to upload correctly and be synched with existing Grade Center data.

1. Located in the *far right side* of the full Grade Center, click **Work Offline** and select **Upload**
2. Browse for the file on your computer
3. Select the **Delimiter type** (Comma, Tab, or Auto. Auto will attempt to detect the delimiter used in the file)
4. Click **Submit**
5. Review the list of data from the file to be uploaded on the Upload Grades Confirmation page
6. Click **Submit** to confirm and upload the file

Note: When uploading grades, first download the Grade Center, and edit the file with the data to be uploaded. This will help ensure that the data in the upload file is formatted correctly.