

Blackboard’s Grade Center automatically stores scores from assessments delivered through Blackboard. Items can be added to the Grade Center for scores from activities performed outside Blackboard. The Grade Center supports custom grading scales, item analysis, and multiple Grade Center views.

VIEW THE GRADE CENTER

To view the Grade Center, click on the Grade Center link from the Control Panel.

Blackboard displays the Grade Center is selected from the Control Panel under the Assessment area.



Grade Center

Grades can be entered directly from the Grade Center page. To enter grades, 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.

Current View: Full Grade Center Sort Columns By: Layout Position

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Last Name	First Name	Username	Student ID	Last Access	Availability	Ch. 1 Assign.	Ch. 2 Assign.	Ch. 3 Assign.	Exam 1	Weighted Total
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Blackboard Test	bbstu001			Available	40.00 (80.00%)	- (-)	- (-)	-	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Blackboard Test	bbstu002			Available	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	-	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Blackboard Test	bbstu003			Available	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	-	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Blackboard Test	bbstu004			Available	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	-	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Blackboard Test	bbstu005			Available	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	-	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Blackboard Test	bbstu006			Available	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	-	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Blackboard Test	bbstu007			Available	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	-	-

Selected Rows: 0

Grade Information Bar Icon Legend

ADD A GRADE COLUMN TO THE GRADE CENTER

You can manually add items to the Grade Center for graded exercises conducted outside the Blackboard Course Management System. For example, you might give your students points for an in-class presentation or for attending an event. You do not need to use Add Item for Blackboard Assignments or Tests, as these are automatically added to the Grade Center.

To Manually Add an Item to the Grade Center:

Step 1: Click the **Add Item** button  **Add Grade Column** from the Grade Center.

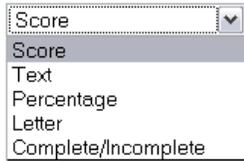
- The Add Grade Column Item page displays.

Step 2: In the *Column Information* section, enter a **Column Name**.

Step 3: Optionally, you can add an additional name which displays in the Grade Center. When left empty, this will default to the Column Name.

Step 4: Enter a description of the Grade Center column in the **Description** field.

Step 5: Choose a **Primary Display** option from the drop-down list. Grades must be entered into Grade Center based on this selection and will display in this format in the Grade Center and My Grades.



Step 6: Choose a **Secondary Display** option from the drop-down list. This is an additional display option which will be shown in the Grade Center only.

Step 7: Choose a **Category** from the drop-down list.

Step 8: Enter a number in the **Points Possible** field for this Grade Center item.

Step 9: Enter a date in the **Date** field. You can use this to enter a due date.

Step 10: In the *Options* section, choose either **Yes** or **No** for the following items.

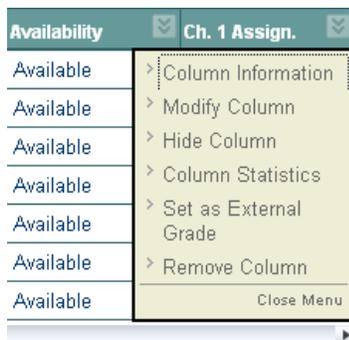
Select **No** for the first option to exclude this Grade Center column from calculations. Select **No** for the second option to make this Grade Center column unavailable in My Grades. Select **Yes** for the third option to display column statistics in My Grades.

- Include this column in Grade Center calculations** Yes No
- Show this column in My Grades** Yes No
- Show Statistics (average and median) for this column in My Grades** Yes No

Step 9: Click **Submit**.

MANAGE GRADE CENTER COLUMNS

Click the **Action** button  on the column you wish to manage.



Column Information – Basic information about the column is displayed.

Modify Column – Directs the user to a new page. This page allows the user to modify information inserted in the column creation.

Hide Column – Allows the user to hide the column from view. The user can show the column by using the show / hide feature discussed in Organize Grade Center

Column Statistics – Directs the user to a page showing data and grade distribution of all graded users for the column.

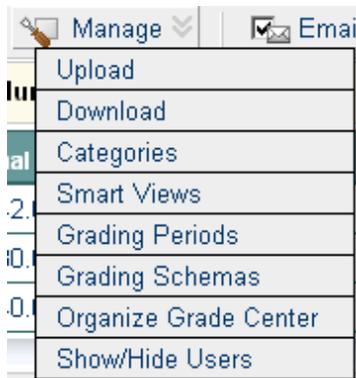
Set as External Grade – Sets the column to be updated by an uploaded file.

Note: This will change the options available to the user in the action menu and

currently cannot be undone.

Remove Column – This will remove the column from the Grade Center. All grades within the column will be deleted.

GRADE CENTER SETTINGS

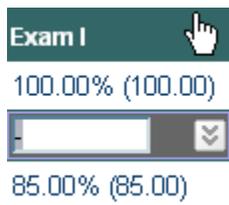


Click the **Manage** button  from the Grade Center. A drop down menu will appear allowing you to select from the actions available.

These options are discussed below.

ENTER GRADES IN GRADE CENTER

Non-Blackboard Items



To enter grades for a single Grade Center item, multiple students:

- Step 1:** Click in the area below the Grade Column header.
- Step 2:** Type the grade into the cell for the student.
- Step 3:** Press Enter.
- Step 4:** Repeat until the grades have been completed for that column.
Note: If you wish to leave a student's grade cell empty use the down arrow key to go to the next student cell.

To enter grades for a single student, multiple Grade Center items:

- Step 1:** Click in the grade cell of the student.
- Step 2:** Type in the score for that student.

Step 3: Click into the next cell to insert the next grade.

Exams

- Exams with objective questions are automatically graded by Blackboard.

Windows Pract	Survey
	✓
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- **Exams with Essay questions** display in the score area as an exclamation mark indicating the exam needs to be manually graded. Instructor must click exclamation mark, click View to display the test, enter points for the essay questions, and click Submit.

- Exam scores can be manually entered in the Grade Center. For example, a student who takes the exam on paper rather than online in Blackboard.
- A score can be entered in the cell which overrides the automatic grade (e.g., for extenuating circumstances) which is either higher or lower than the current score. Once submitted, this new score is entered in the Current Grade column and is used in calculating the total. The previous grade is stored in the Grade History under the Grade Details area.

Surveys

Windows Pract	Survey
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- Completed surveys are indicated with a checkmark.
- Points can be assigned to a Survey by clicking on the action button and selecting Modify Column. Then enter the points possible.

To assign points to students for taking a survey:

- Click in the area below the Grade Column header.
- Type the grade into the cell for the student.
- Press Enter.

- Repeat until the grades have been completed for that column. **Note:** If you wish to leave a student's grade cell empty use the down arrow key to go to the next student cell.

Assignments

Assignment 24
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- Assignments are entered automatically in the Grade Center when added to the Content Area.
- Assignments needing grading are displayed in the Grade Center with an exclamation mark.
- The instructor can view the assignments from the Grade Center by clicking on the action button beside the exclamation mark and select Grade Details then view attempt.



For more specific information on how to grade assignments, see the Assignment Quick Reference Guide.

CREATING SMART VIEWS

Viewing the Grade Center can become cumbersome with lots of scrolling from side to side when you have several items in the Grade Center. This can be managed somewhat by filtering to display only the items you wish to view at the time. This is done with the use of Smart Views.

Step 1: Click on the Manage button and select Smart Views.

Step 2: Click on the **Add Smart View** button  Add Smart View .

Step 3: Give the new Smart View a name and description.

Step 4: Select the type of view.

- Type of View**
- Group (Select one or more groups.)
 - Benchmark (Select users based on their performance.)
 - Focus (Select individual users.)
 - Investigate (Build a full query based on user attributes.)

Step 5: Set the select criteria in the view. **Note:** These options will change with different view types.

Step 6: Select what columns to display of the those who meet the criteria.

Step 7: Click on Submit.

DOWNLOAD GRADES/BACKUP THE GRADE CENTER

It is a good idea to make a backup copy of 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.

DOWNLOAD GRADE CENTER

Step 1: From the *Control Panel*, in the *Assessment* section, click on the **Grade Center** link.

Step 2: Click on the Manage button and select Download.

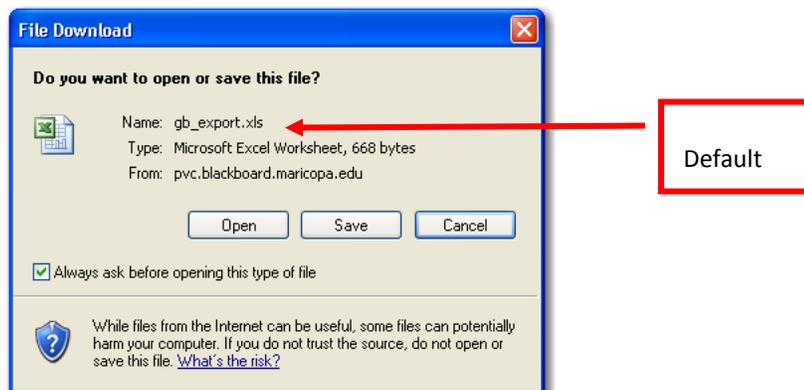
Step 3: Select what items you want to download from the Grade Center.

Step 4: Select the Delimiter type and if you want hidden information to be added to the download.

Step 4: Click the **Submit** button.

Step 5: Click the **Download** button.

- A File Download window will display asking “Do you want to open or save this file?”



Step 6: Click **Save**.

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

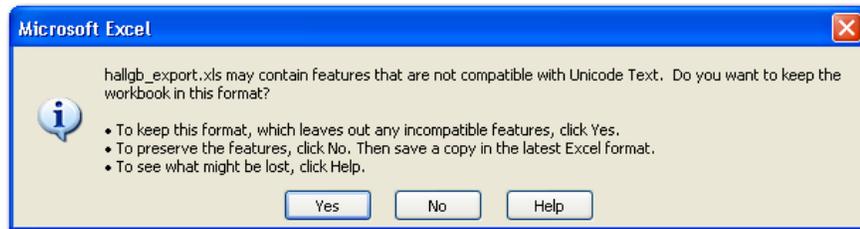


The default filename is gb_(COURSEID)_(DATE).xls. You may want to change the name to better identify the course to which this Grade Center belongs, but **keep the .xls extension** at the end of the filename. This is so that you will be able to open the file with Microsoft Excel

Step 8: 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 **No**. The **Save As** window will display so you can save the file in the latest Microsoft Excel format rather than the Unicode Text format.

UPLOAD GRADES

You can upload grades into the Blackboard Grade Center. This may be useful if you prefer to use some other software such as Microsoft Excel for your Grade Center and then you want to upload to Blackboard so your students can view their grades online. You can upload grades for one assignment at a time.



To upload grades, the file you wish to upload must be saved in the .csv (comma-separated values) file format. Be sure to use **Save As** and select .csv as the file type.



It is *strongly* recommended that you download the Grade Center *first* from Blackboard to Excel before you enter/edit any grades and perform an upload of grades. This will ensure that students listed in the uploaded file match those in the Grade Center. Students cannot be added to the Grade Center through the upload process.

Step 1: To upload grades, click on the manage button and select **Upload**.

Step 2: Click **Browse** to locate and select the file to be uploaded then select what delimiter type the file is in (the default automatically checks the file for either one).

Step 3: Click the **Submit** button.

Step 4: Under the *Upload Grades Confirmation* area, select the column you wish to upload from the file. **Note:** If the grade column is not set for external grades, grades will not be uploaded to Blackboard.

Step 6: Click **Submit**.

Step 9: Click **Close**.

Running Total

By default, the Total column in the Grade Center counts the points for all assignments (even assignments that aren't due yet) in the total points possible. When the student views his grades, this may make it look like the student isn't doing very well when in fact, he is doing just fine.

Example:

- The total points possible for all assignments in the course for the semester is 1,000.
- It is early in the semester and only a few assignments are due so far (total points of assignments due so far is 300).
- A student checks his grades and sees he has 280 out of 1,000 points possible. In actuality, he has 280 out of 300 points possible for assignments that have been due this far into the semester.

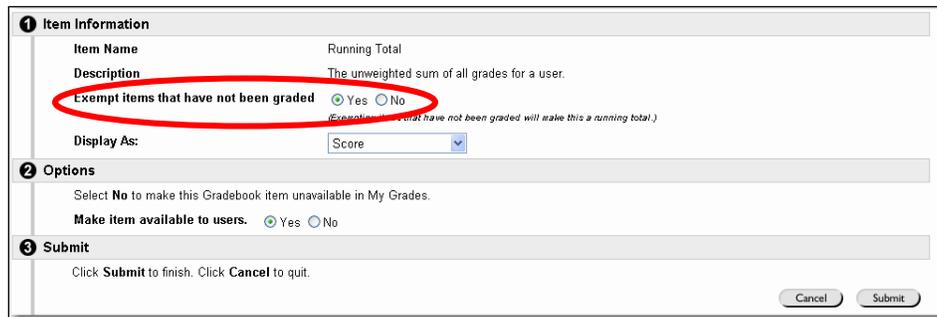
This can be remedied by modifying the Total column to show a Running Total. The **Running Total only includes graded assignments in the total points possible.**

Set Running Total in the Grade Center:

Step 1: Click the Total header in the Grade Center.

Step 2: Click Item Information.

Step 3: At Exempt items that have not been graded, select Yes.



The screenshot shows the 'Item Information' dialog box with the following details:

- Item Name:** Running Total
- Description:** The unweighted sum of all grades for a user.
- Exempt items that have not been graded:** Yes No (A red circle highlights this section, and a red line points to the 'Yes' radio button.)
- Display As:** Score (dropdown menu)
- Options:** Select **No** to make this Gradebook item unavailable in My Grades.
- Make item available to users:** Yes No
- Submit:** Click **Submit** to finish. Click **Cancel** to quit.

Buttons: Cancel, Submit

Step 4: 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.

WEIGHTED TOTAL

If you want to apply extra weight to a particular item (or category of item), you can assign a percentage to that item. Then, in the spreadsheet view, you can compare the normal Total to the Weighted Total for your students.

Step 1: From the Grade Center View Spreadsheet page, click **Weight Grades**.

- The Weight Grades page appears.

Step 2: Enter the percentages for either weighting by *Category* or by *Item*.



The percentage numbers must add up to 100% – it is not automatically done by Blackboard.

Here are guidelines for weighting grades:

- Grade Center items that have not been completed by students are still calculated in the weight. Instructors may exclude items from all calculations on the Add/Modify Grade Center Item page.
- If an item has a weight of 0%, the item will not be calculated in the grade weight. This will occur if a new Grade Center item is added and a percentage for the item is not added to the Weight by Item column or if an item falls into a category that is weighted 0% and the category weight is not adjusted.

The Weighted Total displays percentages for each student. By changing the display of the Total column to percentage, then you can compare the two totals to see how it affects overall grades.



If you don't want the students to see the Weighted Total column in My Grades, click on the "Weighted Total" column, then Item Information and make the statistic unavailable to students.

TURN OFF WEIGHTED TOTAL

To "Turn Off Weighting" you create a Grade Center item that is not visible to students and not included in grade calculations. Then you set weighting to "by Item" and set that invisible item you just created to 100% weight.

Step 1: Go to Control Panel>Grade Center.

Step 2: Click **Add Item**.

Step 3: Set the following in the Add/Modify Grade Center Item window:

Item Name: [Suggest "Turn Off Weighting" so it will be easy to remember what this item was created for]

Category: Other

Points Possible: 0

Make item available to users: No

Include in Grade Center Score Calculations: No

Step 4: Click **Submit**.

Step 5: In the Grade Center, click **Weight Grades**.

Step 6: Select "**Weight by Item**"

Step 7: Set the **Turn Off Weighting** item you just created to **100%**

Step 8: Click **Submit**.