**Grade Center Overview**

The Grade Center resembles a spreadsheet. Each row is populated by a user in your course and each column includes information for an item, such as an assignment, test, graded blog entry, or survey. You can also use columns to calculate grades. You can provide grades and comments directly on the Grade Center page, on the Grade Details page, and from a tool, such as the discussion board.

You are able to customize your view of the Grade Center and create grading schemas, grading periods, categories, and columns to present and gather the information you need.

**Accessing the Grade Center**

You access the Grade Center from the Control Panel. Expand the Grade Center section to display the links to the Needs Grading page, the Full Grade Center, and the Smart Views. Click the right-pointing arrow next to the Grade Center heading to go directly to the full Grade Center.

The Needs Grading link allows you to view individual assignments, group assignment, and test attempts, as well as blog and journal entries, wiki page saves, and discussion posts ready for grading or review.

The Full Grade Center link displays all columns and rows in the Grade Center and is the default view of the Grade Center.

The smart view links appear as an intended list in the Full Grade Center section. A smart view is focused look at the Grade Center and shows only the data that matches a set of criteria. You can use smart views to quickly find data when the Grade Center includes a great number of students and columns. For example, the default Tests smart view displays only test columns.
You can create customized smart views and remove unneeded smart views. Click a smart view link to open the Grade Center using that view.

**Organizing the Grade Center**

By knowing how to manage the Grade Center with Column Organization allows for a clear match of the columns with the graded assignments in the course. For example, your column organization should appear in chronological order Week 1, Week 2, Week 3, etc. and you can manually sort grade columns to match the course outline and schedule of assignments.

The column Organization page allows you to view all the columns in the Grade Center on one page. You can quickly reorder the columns, and the changes you make appear in the Grade Center grid.

- On this page, each column in the Grade Center grid becomes a row. For example, the Last Name column in the grid becomes the Last Name row on the Column Organization page. The first Column in the grid is the first row on this page. The order of rows on this page is the same as the order of columns in the grid.

- From this page, you can organize the Grade Center columns in the following ways:
  - Reorder columns in the first table. If a column is frozen, it remains stationary when scrolling through the Grade Center view.
  - Hide or Show multiple columns.
  - Change a grade column’s category or Grading Period.

**IMPORTANT!** Changes you make on this page do not affect what students see on their My Grades pages. 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. You must edit an existing column’s setting to hide a column from students on their My Grades pages or select Show / Hide to Users in a column’s contextual menu. In the Grade Center grid, the Column Not Visible to Users icon appears in the column header for any column hidden from students.

**How to Access the Column Organization Page**

1. In the Grade Center, point to **Manage** on the Action to access the drop-down list.
2. Select **Column Organization**
3. Organize your columns to match your course outline and schedule of assignments from the Syllabus Section.
Contextual Menu Options

To see the contextual menu for a cell in the Grade Center grid, move your mouse pointer over the cell. Click the arrow icon to access the contextual menu.

When you access the contextual menu for a user’s name cell, you have options to hide a user’s row, hide other rows to focus your attention on one row, or email a user, you can view which items are visible to a user based on availability and adaptive release rules or which items a user marked reviewed. You can also view the super stats page which provides statically information related to a user’s performance.
Adding Grade Columns

1. In the Grade Center, click Create Column on the action bar.

2. On the Create Grade Column page, type a brief, descriptive Column Name. This name becomes the column name in the Grade Center and a student’s MY Grades pages. If this name is too long to display clearly in the Grade Center, you can type a short, descriptive name in the Grade Center Name box.

   Only the first 14-15 characters typed in either name box appear in the column heading in the Grace Center grid. If you point to the column heading, you can see its full name on the Grade Information Bar.

3. Optionally, type a Description. You can use the content editor functions to format the text. Information provided here appears to students when they click the item name in My Grades.

4. Make a selection in the Primary Display drop-down list. The selection is the grade format shown in the Grade Center and to students in My Grades. If you created any custom grading schemas, they appear in the list. Five default options appear: Optionally, make a selection in the Secondary Display drop-down list. The default setting is None. The same options appear except for the option chose as the Primary Display and Text. The default Text option does not appear as you cannot edit a secondary value from a column’s cell. If you create a customized grading schema based on text and have not used it as the Primary Display, it appears in the list. In the Grade Center column, the secondary value appears in parentheses. The secondary value does not appear to students.
   a. Score: A numeric grade appears in the column. This is the default setting. If you do not make a selection, the score appears in the grid.
   b. Letter: Text appears in the column. The default grading schema is used to assign latter grades. For example, a score of 21/30 equals 70% and appears as a C
   c. Text: Text appears in the column where you create a custom text grading schema. Examples of text values include: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor –OR- Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. If you create no custom text grading schema, and the Text option is selected toy are allowed to type text in the column’s cells. If you choose to share the column results with students in My Grades, they will see the text values for their grades.

   When you convert a numeric score to text without creating a custom text grading schema, and then return to numeric scoring, values that cannot be converted display a zero after conversion. Therefore, if you want to include text as grades, Blackboard recommends creating a custom text grading schema and associating it with the columns.
If you choose Percentage as the Primary Display and type the achieved numeric score into the Grade Center grid directly, the number you type is interpreted as a percentage and not the score. Therefore, if you want the system to calculate percentages when you type a score, select Score as the Primary Display and select a Percentage as the Secondary Display. Scores you type directly in the grid will display a percentage in parentheses.

6. Optionally, you can associate the column with a category by making a selection in the Category drop-down list. The default setting is No Category. You can use categories to filter Grade Center data, create smart views that focus the view of the Grade Center data, and create calculated columns.

7. In the Points Possible box, type the total points. Entries must be numeric.

8. If grading periods exist, you can associate the column with a grading period by making a section in the Grading Period drop-down list. If no grading periods exist, the drop down list does not appear. You can use grading periods to filter Grade center data and create calculated columns.

9. Optionally, select the option next to Due Date and type a date (mm/dd/yyyy) or use the pop-up Date Selection Calendar. Columns that you assigned a due date to are associate automatically with a grading period if the due date falls within the date range of the grading period. The option to automatically associate columns with a grading period is set when creating or editing a grading period. You can use due dates with The Early Warning System / Retention Center to generate an alert if a test or assignment is not submitted on time.
10. Select the Options
   
a. Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations: Select Yes to make the column available for potential inclusion when creating calculated columns.

b. Show this Column to Students: Select Yes to display the column to students in My Grades.

c. Show Statistics (average and median) for this column to students in My Grades: Select Yes to include statistical information with the grade value when shown to students.

   **When editing the Grade Center column for a test, the options to include this Column in Other Grade Center Calculations and Show Statistics (average and Median) for this Column to students in My Grades When editing the Grade Center column for a test, the options to Hide Results for this Test Completely from Instructor and the Grade Center on the Test Options page.**

11. Click Submit.

**How to Edit, Hide, and Select Options for Columns**

You can edit most Grade Center columns and change the column’s name settings, grading schema, what is included in a calculated column’s calculation, and whether students can see the column results in My Grades by hiding the section column from users. You can also use the options in a column’s contextual menu to perform a variety of actions, such as viewing information about the column, sorting the contents, or downloading results.

You cannot edit or delete the default user columns:

- Last Name
- First Name
- Username
- Student ID
- Last Access
- Availability

You can hide all but the first user column in the grid. If you need to hide the first column, you can rearrange the user columns on the Column Organization page, but at least one user column must show.

You can use the options in a column’s contextual menu to hide a column from your view in the grid (Hide Column) or from student’s My Grades pages (Show/Hide to Users). When you hide a
column from your students, you will still see it in the grid. To learn more, see the example following the image: Hide a column from users.

Each column’s contextual menu display options that are available and specific in that column. For example, a test column’s contextual menu includes options for Column Statistics and Grade Questions. For a default user column, such as First Name, you only have the options of hiding the column and sorting the items. If an option does not appear in the contextual menu, you cannot perform the action on that column.

Use the following steps to edit a column.

1. In the Grade Center, access the contextual menu.

2. Select an option. Depending on the option: As needed, click submit –OR- click OK to return to the Grade Center.
   - A Change occurs automatically. For example, if you select Set as External Grade for a grade or calculated column, the column immediately becomes the external grade column. The external grade icon appears in the column header.
   - You can assign grades, provide feedback to students, and include grading notes for yourself. For example, if you select Grade Attempts for a test column, you can begin the grading process.
   - You can review information. For example, if you select Quick Column Information or Column Statistics, you can view basic information or statistics, such as range, average, median, variance, and grade distribution.

3. Click Submit.
Deleting Grade Columns

When you create gradable items in your course, grade columns are created automatically in the Grade Center, including columns for:

- Tests, surveys and self and peer assessments
- Assignments and SafeAssignements
- Discussion posts
- Journal and blog entries
- Wiki contributions

The only way to delete these auto-created grade columns is to first delete the gradable items in your course. For some, if no student submissions exist when you delete the item, the Grade Center column is deleted automatically or you are allowed to decide whether to delete the column. However when you delete a SafeAssignement in your course you must also delete the corresponding column in the Grade Center.

WARNING! Before deleting gradable content in your course, you must carefully consider what the ramifications may be. Student work, such as test and assignment submissions, is deleted along with the deletion of the content item in your course. The action is final. In some cases, you can choose to save the grades assigned in the Grade Center. Even if you retain grade columns in the Grade Center, you cannot access the student submissions because they were deleted with the item in your course. Alternatively, you can preserve the submissions and the scores in the Grade Center by making a gradable item in your course unavailable.