Navigating the Blackboard Grade Center

Survival Guide

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Blackboard’s grade center is the location of the online grade book. It is the epicenter of Blackboard.

With the “Grade Center”, you can access assignments, manage students' grades, tests, discussion posts, journals, blogs, and wikis.

You can also create graded columns, create weighted categories, and create a grading schema or grading scale.

You can use it to communicate with your students about their journey of success through your course.
Survival Skills

- ALL college credit courses must have a properly functioning grade center.

- Courses will utilize an indicator (green checkmark ✓) to designate the external grade column that appropriately represents every student’s progress in the course-to-date.
Customizing Your Grading Scale

- So what is a grading schema? It is simply the grading scale. At IRSC the numerical value that corresponds with the letter grade “A” is often 90-100, 80-89 equals a B, etc.

- However in nursing and education, it is 93-100 that equals an A--and that is where the customizing comes in. Check with your dean or department chair for the specifics of your program.
Creating Grading Schemas

Mouse over the “Manage” tab and click on “Grading Schemas”.

Grade Center : Full Grade Center

When screen reader mode is on, the Grade Center data appears in a simplified grid. You can access a cell’s contextual menu and click View Grade Details. When screen reader mode is off, type the grade value, and press the Enter key to submit. Use the arrow keys or the tab key to navigate.

Manage

Grading Periods
Grading Schemas
Grading Color Codes
Categories
Smart Views
Column Organization
Row Visibility
Send Email
WileyPLUS Grade Refresh
McGraw-Hill Connect To Do List
Manage Pearson MyLab & Mastering Grades
McGraw-Hill Connect Reports
Click on the chevron next to “Standard IRSC Grading Schema” and drop down to edit.

Now you can edit the grading schema based upon the requirements for your course.

If you do not change anything it will default to the standard.
Creating Categories

1. Recognize the seven pre-existing categories.

2. Create your own customized category.

3. Re-associating assessments into categories.
Pre-existing categories are found in the “Grade Center” under “Manage” Tab > “Categories”.

Seven Pre-Existing Categories
Seven Pre-Existing Categories

By default, you will find categories for:
- Assignment
- Blog
- Discussion
- Journal
- Self and Peer
- Survey
- Test
By default, Blackboard will associate certain types of assessments to specific pre-determined categories:

1. Electronic submissions submitted as attachments through “submit assignment” will automatically be associated with the category of “Assignments”.
2. Electronic submissions of “Test” will automatically be associated with the “Test” category.
Creating Customized Categories

Custom categories can also be created by selecting “Create Category”.

A Grade Center Category is a classification. Operations on all Grade Columns in a Category cannot be removed or edited. More Help
Q: Why would I need to create a customized Category?

A: When a student submits an assignment, it will automatically be associated with the assignments category. Since homework may be weighted differently than a big project, a quiz, or an essay, you may want to create a category for each of these so that you set the weight for each accordingly.

Once you have created your customized categories, you associate the appropriate grade columns with those categories. This is accomplished under “Column Organization”.

The Column Organization Page

Allows you to:

- See all assessment columns in one place.
- Enables you to show or hide columns for instructor view only (*hidden columns are italicized*).
- View, but *not change* the points assigned to each assessment. (You can change the points of an assessments by going directly to that assessment).
- Adjust the order of columns in grade center. Top to bottom on the column organization table is equal to left to right in the grade center view.
Organizing Columns into Categories

Organize your columns by grouping them into grading categories. Mouse over the “Manage” tab and select “Column Organization”.

Grade Center : Full Grade Center

When screen reader mode is on, the Grade Center data appears in a simplified grid. You can access a cell’s contextual menu and click View Grade Details. When screen reader mode is on, type the grade value, and press the Enter key to submit. Use the arrow keys or the tab key to navigate.

Manage:
- Grading Periods
- Grading Schemas
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First select the grade column you want to move into the customized category by clicking the box next to the name.

Then mouse over “Change Category to...” and then select the category with which to associate the grade column.

To complete this process, you will need to make sure your customized category is in your total or weighted column. This topic is covered in the “Creating Columns” section.
To hide columns from students, in the grade center view, select the chevron next to the column you want to hide and choose “Hide from Students (on/off)”.

Showing and Hiding Columns
The Grade Center has pre-existing columns that are in the grade book by default. These are:

- Last Name
- First Name
- User Name
- Student ID
- Last Access
- Availability
1. “Create Column” tab.
2. Give it a Name.

Create Grade Column

Grade Columns represent any student effort that is measured. Column Grade Column. More Help

* Indicates a required field.

COLUMN INFORMATION

* Column Name

Class Project

Grade Center Name
3. Select a category with which to associate the assessment.
Step 4: Assign it Points

4. Assign the point value and rubric.
5. Set the dates. Due date will appear on the course calendar.
Creating a Weighted Column

If current and final grade(s) for assignments of a course are represented to the students as a percentage in the syllabus, a “Weighted Column” based on these percentages should be created in the Grade Center.

The “Weighted Column” will be comprised of the columns and/or categories that are selected when creating or subsequently editing grading columns.
Creating a Weighted Column

1. From the Grade Center, select “Create Calculated Column”.
2. Select “Weighted Column”.

Grade Center: Full Grade Center

When screen reader mode is on, the Grade Center data appears in a simplified grid. You cannot use the keyboard. To enter a grade, access a cell’s contextual menu and click View Grade Details. The grade is displayed directly in the cell on the Grade Center page. To enter a grade, click the cell, type the grade using the keyboard, or press the Tab key to navigate through the Grade Center. More Help
Creating a Weighted Column

- If the assignment is ungraded, select complete/incomplete from the primary display drop down list.

- If you are using a weighted system, select percentages from the primary display drop down list.

- If you are using total points, select score from the primary display drop down list.
Creating a Weighted Column

1. Select the Column or Category you want to include in your total grade calculation and click on the arrow to move it the “Selected Columns” box.
2. Assign the appropriate weight to those selected columns, based on the course syllabus.

Select either a column or category that represents a graded item and click the arrow to move it into the selection box. This includes it in the total grade calculations for the course.
When a “Category” is selected, the associated assessments are listed in the box below.
Instructors can “Drop” the lowest grade in any category by clicking the appropriate radio button shown.
Weights Must Equal 100%

As you assign a weight to each assessment, make sure the total weight is equal to 100%.
A “Total” column simply adds up all the points/columns associated with it. If you use a point system in your class, you will need to create a “Total” column instead of a “Weighted Total” column.

To set up the “Total” column, follow the same process as when creating the “Weighted Total” column. Note you will not need to provide weights or points as these are already predetermined when the assessment is created.
1. From the “Full Grade Center”, select “Create Calculated Column”.

2. Select “Total Column”.
Naming a Total Column

Create Total Column

A Total Column calculates the total points for a number of Columns related

* Indicates a required field.

COLUMN INFORMATION

* Column Name

Current Grade

Grade Center Name

Displays as the column header in the Grade

Give your “Total Column” a name such as “Current Grade” or “Total”.

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Use Score Display for Points

When using points, select “Score” in the primary display option.
Selecting Columns or Categories

1. Select and move the Column or Category into the box.
2. The total points will have been assigned when the assessment was originally created.

Select either a column or category that represents a graded item and click the arrow to move it into the selection box. This includes it in the total grade calculations for the course.
To show students their current grade, click the “Yes” radio button in the “Calculate as Running Total” section. (Remember you MUST enter zeros into the grade center for any un-submitted assignments for this total to be accurate).

Leave these options on the default settings.
The External Grade Column is identified by the green checkmark. Trends and performance levels of course and curriculum strengths, as well as areas that may need attention, are identified by pulling data from this column.

Each and every class, online, blended and face-to-face must have the column that calculates the current students grades set as the external grade center, so that IRSC can track student success in its classes.
1. Select the dropdown menu from the “Weighted Total” or “Total” column you are using.

2. Select “Set as External Grade” column.

3. The green checkmark will move to the selected column of choice.
How Assignments are Submitted and Graded

Ungraded assignments will appear in “Needs Grading”.

COURSE MANAGEMENT
- Control Panel
- Content Collection
- Course Tools
- Evaluation
- Grade Center
  - Needs Grading
  - Full Grade Center
  - Assignments
  - Tests
How Assignments are Submitted and Graded

1. Click on the student’s name in the “User Attempt” column to grade items.
2. Once graded, grades will automatically appear in the grade center.
External Grade Column:

One of the most common errors occurs when the instructor does not set the external grade column correctly. The grade center column with the green check mark drives the trends and performance reports. Please make sure the green check is on the correct external grade column that represents the correct student grades.

To set the external grade column:
1. Find the column that you are using as your current grade column.
2. Select the chevron to the right of the column’s name.
3. Select “Set as External Grade” from the drop-down menu.
4. Make sure the green checkmark is now on the current grade column.
Entering Zeros into the Grade Center
Q: Once I enter a zero into the grade center for an un-submitted assignment, is there an easy way to override it?
A: The only way to override the 0 is by entering the grade manually.

Q: If a student misses a quiz and I enter a zero into the grade center, does the grade update automatically once the student retakes the quiz?
A: No. The instructor must click on the zero to see if a new grade has been earned. The new grade will not self-populate.
Reach Out:

Q: Why is my “Reach Out” button missing?

A: The “Reach Out” button, located just above the grade grid, should appear at all times. In order for the “Reach Out” button to show correctly, the instructor must make sure the “Student ID” column is not hidden. Instructors can choose to show and hide columns in the Grade Center via Column Organization found under the “Manage” tab.
Attendance:

Q: How do I manage attendance using the grade center?

A: One way to manage attendance is to enter the maximum number of points possible for attendance for every student at the beginning of the semester. Points are then deducted for only those who are absent rather than having to enter points for every student in every class every week. For example if you give 15 points for attendance for the term, enter all 15 points at the beginning of the term, and then deduct one point for each student absence.
Extra Credit:
Q: How do I manage extra credit in my grade center?
A: This will depend on whether you are using total points or weighted percentages. The first thing you will do is add an extra column that is worth zero points. Name this column “Extra Credit”. You will need an additional column into which your current grade column and extra credit column will be calculated. If you are offering extra points, simply enter them into the extra credit column. If you are offering a percentage, you will need to do the math. Take the total amount of points you are offering as a percentage bonus, then find the correct number of points for the percentage you mean to offer. For example if you have a total of 1000 points in your class and you want to offer 2% extra credit calculate .02 X1000. This gives you 20 points. If the student earns all the extra credit, enter 20 points into the “Extra Credit” column.
Additional Resources

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http://virtualcampusfaculty support.weebly.com
http://ondemand.blackboard.com