

Grade Center Basics



HIGHLIGHTS

1 ACCESSING THE GRADE CENTER

2-3 FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF

3 SUPPORTING INTERACTION

4-5 CREATING GRADE CENTER ITEMS

5-6 MODIFYING GRADE SCHEMES

6 COLUMN ORGANIZATION

6-7 COLUMN OPTIONS

7 MANAGING CATEGORIES

7-8 WEIGHTING GRADES

8-9 ADD AND MODIFY STUDENT GRADES

9 STUDENT ACCESS

10 DOWNLOADING AND UPLOADING GRADES

More than just a record-keeping system, the Blackboard Grade Center is an effective tool that you can use to support student learning. The Grade Center feature allows you to “publish” grades to individual students, which gives them a stronger sense of where they stand as the class progresses, thus more motivation to improve their performance.

Grades are recorded:

- *automatically* for assignments, assessments (tests and quizzes), and surveys delivered **inside** of Blackboard, and
- *manually* for course work managed **outside** of Blackboard.

Accessing the Grade Center

1. Go to the UO Blackboard website at <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>.
2. Locate the Login box and enter your *uoregon* username (e.g. jdoe99) and the *corresponding* password (same as your email account).
3. You will enter a page entitled *My UO* that will welcome you by name. The *My Courses* section shows a list of classes you are teaching and enrolled in. You will also see a tab entitled *Courses*, which is a list that includes coursesites for all courses where you are the instructor of record in the Registrar's database. **Note:** All students who have registered in the corresponding CRN will automatically be signed up for that blackboard coursesite.
4. Click on a *course name* to enter that coursesite.
5. Locate the *Course Management and Control Panel* section, located at the bottom left of your screen.
6. Locate the *Grade Center* section and click on the *Full Grade Center* link (Note: The *Needs Grading* takes you to a screen for a collection of items you have not graded yet).

Create Column Create Calculated Column Manage Reports Work Offline

Current View: Full Grade Center Set as Default Sort Columns By: Layout Position Order: ▲ Ascending

Familiarizing Yourself with the Grade Center

The Grade Center opens to a spreadsheet view listing students in rows and graded items in columns. All features of the Grade Center can be accessed through the Spreadsheet.

Create Column: Instructors may manually add a column for items and grades to the Grade Center for work that has been done outside of Blackboard. For example, if a student manually hands in a lab report, the instructor may add the Item and all of the grades associated with it to the Grade Center.

Create Calculated Column: Instructors may manually add a calculated column to the Grade Center, such as Average, Minimum/Maximum, Total, and Weighted Column,

Manage: The Manage option allows the instructor to set up Grading Periods and Schema, categories, create Smart Views, and other organizational options.

- **Grading Periods** allows for the Grade Center view to be sorted by due dates.
- **Grading Schema** allows for instructors to map out their own grading criteria.
- **Categories** enables the instructor to sort and filter items by category. For example, the instructor may only want to view items in the Exam category. This feature also enables the instructor to weight assessment categories differently. For example, items in a Homework category may be weighted less than items in an Exam category.
- **Smart Views** allows for an instructor to create specialized views by students, categories, column item scores, total calculated scores, etc.
- **Column Organization** sends the instructor to a new screen where one can change the layout and settings for the Grade Center view.
- **Student Visibility** allows the instructor to hide and show student users.

- **Email** gives quick access to the instructor to email selected users found in the Grade Center.

Reports: Instructors can generate reports from the information posted within the Grade Center. Examples include the entire grade statistics, by Category, or by individual.

Grade History: This option allows instructors to track the history grading updates/changes within the Grade Center by instructor and TA users. This allows one to see who entered grade changes and when they were submitted.

Current View/Sort Columns By/Order: These drop-down lists allow instructors to toggle between different Smart Views and the Full Grade Center view, set a view as the *Default*, sort columns by different parameters, and sort by *Ascending* or *Descending* order.

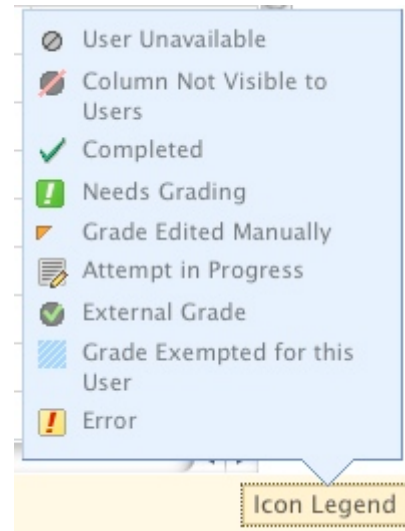
Work Offline: This drop-down list allows instructors to filter the Grade Center items. Only items that match that type will appear in the Spreadsheet View.

- **Upload:** Instructors may upload Grade Center information into Blackboard using the Upload Grades feature. The upload will fail if the user name for each row of data is not present. Also, the Grade Center will not process the data for any user that is not enrolled in the course. Changes to the first name and last name columns will not be processed.
- **Download:** Instructors can download and save a Grade Center as a comma-delimited file for use in

Supporting Student-Grade Center Interaction

Publishing grades on the Grade Center is a form of communicating with your students. Think about how you can use it best to support student learning and motivation in your particular course. Here are some tips:

- Set your Grade Center up before the start of the term, and spend some time talking to students about it before you actually post grades there. Students who have not used the My Grades feature before will need some basic information about how it works and where it is located (see: the Student Access section below).
- Use the Grade Center to make students more aware of how their participation – both on the discussion board, if you are using it, and in-class discussions and activities – is being assessed. For instance, if feasible, you might post weekly participation grades. If that seems too labor-intensive, think about posting participation grades at least three times over the course of the term.
- Be sure to think about timing when it comes to posting grades. Students already have a tendency to preference grades over feedback, and posting grades prior to giving feedback will reinforce the idea that the grade is more important than the feedback that you provide with it.
- Consider using Blackboard's Assessment features for assignments in your course. Students can submit their assignment electronically and you can be sure that feedback has been returned to them before you post their grade.
- If you aren't using Blackboard's Assessment features, be sure to return assignments to students before making their grade visible on the Grade Center.



a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel. This file, or Grade Center items in this file, can be uploaded back to the Grade Center at a later date.

Grade Center Icon Legend

If a Grade Center value is not a representation of a grade or blank '-' symbol, it will be one of the following symbols:

- *User Unavailable*: User is unavailable in Blackboard, such as the rare instance of a student having an account locked.
- *Column Not Visible to Users*: Grade column item is not visible on the student end.
- *Completed*: Item has been completed by the Student.
- *Needs Grading*: Needs Grading. The item has been submitted by the Student and needs to be reviewed by the Instructor. Tests that include Essay questions will have this symbol when they are submitted.
- *Grade Edited Manually*: Instructor or TA has manually revised (changed) an individual grade.
- *Attempt in Progress*: A Student is currently using the Assessment or Assignment.

- *External Grade:* Should be set to the grade the instructor wants to be known as the final grade for the course.
- *Grade Exempted for this User:* Instructor or TA has exempted an individual student grade.
- *Error:* Grade Center Error.

Creating Graded Columns to the Grade Center

Instructors may add Grade Columns and grades to the Grade Center for work that has been done outside of Blackboard. For example, if a student manually hands in a project, the instructor may add a new Grade Column and all of the grades associated with it to the Grade Center.

Follow the steps below to add an

Create Column

column to the Grade Center:

1. From inside your Blackboard coursesite, locate the *Course Management* section.
2. Locate the *Evaluation* section and click on the *Grade Center* option.
3. Click once on the *Create Column* button.
4. Enter a *Column Name*. **NOTE:** When editing an Assignment or Assessment created within Blackboard, changing the Column Name will only change the Column Name in the Grade Center. It must also be changed in the course area where the Assignment or Assessment item appears.
5. An instructor can enter a *Grade Center Display Name* and a *Description* for each column (Note: These are not required fields).
6. Select a *Primary Display* category from the drop-down menu. If you want to include a *Secondary Display* you can also select that from the Secondary Display drop-down menu. 90.00 (A-)
An example would be to set Primary Display to Score and the Secondary Display as Letter, which would look like this for a 100 point item: Score = 90 and Letter = A-.
7. The following grade display options are included in the Blackboard System:
 - *Score* – Score is the raw score earned by the student. There is a limit of 6 digits. For example, 100.00 or 123456.
 - *Percentage* – Percentage is calculated with the following calculation: $(\text{Raw Score}/\text{Points Possible}) * 100$
 - *Text* – Text allows the Instructor to enter any string as the score for a Grade Center item. It does not have any calculable value. Scores that are entered as Text cannot be set to a numerical range. It is not possible to copy this display option, or modify the possible values.
 - *Letter* – Letter is a letter grade that equals a specific range of Percentages. For example, 94% to 97% equals an “A” Letter grade. (See the “Modifying Grade Schemes” section):

Create Grade Column

Grade Columns represent any Student effort that is measured. Columns are added to the Grade Center automatically for work done on the system in Discussion Boards, Assignments, and Tests and Surveys. Work done that is not automatically graded can be measured in the Grade Center by creating a Grade Column. [More Help](#)

* Indicates a required field. Cancel Submit

1. Column Information

* Column Name

Grade Center Display Name

Description

Visual Editor: On

Primary Display:
Grades must be entered using the selected format. Grades display in this format in both the Display Center and My Grades.

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

Category:

* Points Possible

2. Dates

Date Created: Oct 27, 2009

Due Date:
Enter dates as mm/dd/yyyy

3. Options

Select No for the first option to exclude this Grade Center column from calculations. Select No for the second option to hide this column from Students in My Grades. Select Yes for the third option to show column statistics to Students in 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

4. Submit Cancel Submit

- Complete / Incomplete* – This option signifies that a student has completed an item. It is the default option for Surveys.
- 8. Select a *Category* for the Grade Center Column from the drop-down list, which can be used to organize your Grade Center views.
- 9. Enter the maximum number of *Points Possible* for this item.

- 10. If needed an instructor can select a *Due Date* for the Grade Center Item from the drop-down list or click the *Calendar* icon and choose a date.

3. Options

Select **No** for the first option to exclude this Grade Center column from calculations. Select **No** for the second option to hide this column from Students in My Grades. Select **Yes** for the third option to show column statistics to Students in 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

- 11. Locate the *Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations* under *Options* (section 3).
 - Select the *Yes* radio button to include this item in the Grade Center calculations.
 - Select the *No* radio button if you want this Grade Center item to be excluded from summary calculations. **NOTE:** Excluding items from summary calculations also excludes them from weighting.
- 12. Locate the *Show this Column to Students* option.
 - Select the *Yes* radio button to allow students to view the item in their My Grades area.
 - Select the *No* radio button if you do not want students to see this item.
- 13. Locate the *Show Statistics* option.
 - Select the *Yes* radio button to allow students to view the average and median statistics from the Grade Center calculations.
 - Select the *No* radio button if you do not want students to view the average and median statistics from the Grade Center calculations.
- 14. Click the green *Submit* button.
- 15. The Grade Column you just added will now be visible.

Modifying Grade Schemas



Blackboard has a default Grading Schema (below), which instructors may modify.	
97% to 100% (or higher) = A+ 94% to 97% = A 90% to 94% = A-	77% to 80% = C+ 74% to 77% = C 70% to 74% = C-
87% to 90% = B+ 84% to 87% = B 80% to 84% = B-	67% to 70% = D+ 64% to 67% = D 60% to 64% = D-
59 or below = F	

- 1. To modify the Blackboard default *Grading Schema*, or add a new scheme, go to the *Manage* button in the Grade Center.
- 2. Choose *Grading Schemas*.

3. You will now see a list and unless you have added other schemes already there will be only *Letter* listed.
4. To edit an existing schema click on the double down arrows next to the schema name and select Edit.
5. To create a new schema click on the green *Create Grading Schema* button.
6. You can change the schema *Name* or leave it the same, and you can add in a brief description (not required field).
7. Revise the breakdowns as needed. Note: If you omit a grade level such as A+ you will need to properly adjust the “will calculate as” percentage column.
8. Submit.

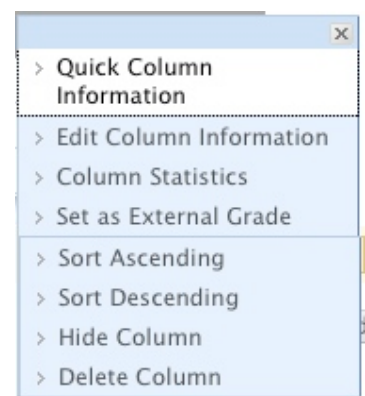
Column Organization

The *Column Organization* page allows the instructor to modify the main Grade Center spreadsheet views.

1. From inside your Blackboard coursesite, locate the *Course Management* section.
2. Locate the *Evaluation* section and click on the *Grade Center* option.
3. Click on the *Manage* button.
4. Select *Column Organization* on the drop-down menu, which takes you to a new screen layout.
5. **To set the order for items to be listed**, click on the shaded box (look for the up and down arrows or compass arrow icon) at the far left to each column name and drag that specific item to the placement you want. 
6. When done moving the columns to the order you want click on *Submit* at the bottom right.
7. You can also *Show/Hide* columns by checking off the box on the left of the column you want to Show or Hide, and then choose the option you want from the Show/Hide drop down menu. 
8. You can also *Change Category to...*another category (such as assignment to test).
9. And you can *Change Grading Period to...*
10. The changes will be made in your main view. NOTE: If the order does not look correct make sure that your *Sort Columns By* is set to the *Layout Position*.

Grade Center Columns Options (to access the options click the double down arrows to the right of the column title)

- **To view the column information** select *Quick Column Information* from the drop down menu.
- **To edit a column**, select *Edit Column* from the drop down menu. You will return to the form you filled out when you first added the item to the Grade Center (see the “Create Graded Columns to the Grade Center” section above). Make the necessary modifications and click the *Submit* button. Click *Ok* on your receipt page.
- **To view column statistics** select the Column Statistics.



- **To use this column as the main course display grade** select *Set as External Grade* (note: most likely you will want to have your overall course score as the External Grade).
- **To set the sort order for the column as Ascending or Descending** choose the preferred option.
- **To Hide the column from the main Grade Center view** select Hide Column. To Show the column you will have to go into the Organize Grade Center area (see “Organize Grade Center” step #7 above).
- **To delete a Grade Center column**, select the *Delete Column*. A warning will appear. Click Ok to delete the item. **NOTE:** Removing a Grade Center item is irreversible, and in order to remove a column you must also make sure it is not set as the *External Grade*. If you want to remove a column that is set as an *External Grade* you will need to choose another item (column) to be *Set as External Grade*.

Manage Grade Center Categories

The Manage Grade Center Categories page displays categories and category descriptions. Instructors may create new Grade Center categories, which can then be used in selected Smart Views. Categories can also be used in weighting grades. For example, items in the Exam Category may have a greater weight than items in the Assignment category.

1. From inside your Blackboard *Grade Center*.
2. Click on the *Manage* button.
3. Click on the *Categories* link.
4. **To create a new category**, click the *Create Category* button. Enter a *Title and Description* for the new category and click the *Submit* button.
5. **To edit a category**, click the double down arrow icon next to the title of the category you want to edit, and then select *Edit*. You will return to the form you filled out when you created the category. Make the necessary modifications and click the *Submit* button.
6. **To delete a category**, click the double down arrow icon next to the title of the category you want to edit, and then select *Delete*. Click Ok to remove the item. **NOTE:** Categories included with the Blackboard cannot be modified or removed.
7. Click the *Submit* button to return to the *Grade Center*.

Weighting Grades

Instructors can set a weight for each Grade Center item to determine a final grade. For example, a final exam may be worth 25 percent of a student’s grade while a reading quiz may be worth only 10 percent. Instructors can adjust Grade Center weights according to category or item.

1. From inside your Blackboard *Grade Center*.
2. Click on the *Create Calculated Column* button and choose *Weighted Column* from the drop down options.
3. Fill in the information needed such as Column Name and Primary Display.
4. In the Select Columns section (#3) select either the *Columns* or *Categories* you want to include in the weighted calculations.
5. For the *Selected Columns* now “Enter the weight percentage for each item. Percentages should add up to 100%.”

6. Select the *Options* you want.
7. Submit.

The two options for weighting:

- Weight by Item is to weight grades by name as they are defined in the Grade Center. For example, the midterm exam can be weighted differently than the final exam. Enter the percentage to weight each item in the Selected Columns area.
- The Weight by Category is to weight grades by the category. For example, all Assignments will have the same weight and all Quizzes will have the same weight. Enter the percentage to weight each category in the Selected Columns area. NOTE: When Weight by Category is selected:
 - Each item in a category is worth the same weight, regardless of total points. For example, if quizzes are worth 25% as a category, a quiz worth 50 points will not be weighted more than a quiz worth 15 points.
 - The weight for each item is calculated by taking the weight for the category and dividing that by the number of items in the category.
 - The number of items in the category is counted as the number of items the instructor has created in that category. Therefore, if Quizzes have a 100% weight and a student takes an exam and gets a perfect score, his or her weighted total will be 100%. If the instructor adds a second quiz, the student's weighted total will drop to 50%, since the weight for each item is divided by two. Since the student has not taken the second exam yet, their score for it is zero.

It is important to note when weighting grades that:

- The Grade Center items that have not been completed by students are still calculated in the weight. Instructors may choose to exclude items from calculations by clicking on the Weighted Column drop down menu (the double down arrows located to the right side of the column name) and choose *Edit Column Information*.
- The percentages in the selected option, either Weight by Category or Weight by Item, must add up to 100 percent. An error message will appear if the percentages do not add up to 100 percent.
- If an item has a weight of 0 percent, 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 *Selected Columns* area.

Adding and Modifying Student Grades

To enter grades by Grade Center item:

1. Locate the column of the item you want to enter grades for.
2. Click on the first student grade cell in the column you want to enter grades (ex: Week One Assignment) so that the '-' symbol is now highlighted.
3. Enter the student grade and press your enter/return key. The cell you just entered the grade in will cycle ("Saving") briefly before moving to the next cell.

4. Now the next individual student cell will be highlighted and repeat the process in 2 and 3 above until you are finished. Note: At anytime you can skip around to any column and to any individual student grade cell.

To modify grades by student:










1. Locate the individual student cell (grade) you want to modify.
2. Click on that cell so that the grade is completely highlighted.
3. Change the grade and press your enter/return key.
4. The grade will now be updated and the cell will include an orange triangle in the upper left corner. This is the *Grade Edited Manually* icon, which can be removed by clicking on the individual cell's double down arrows and selecting *Clear Cell Modified Icon*.

To add Comments or view the Grade Details:

1. The *Quick Comments* option allows the instructor or TA to enter both comments that the individual student can view and/or comments only the instructor or TA can view.
2. The *Grade Details* option sends the instructor or TA to a page where one can view the individual grade information and entry information (who updated the grade and when the grade was updated).

Student Access to their Blackboard grades

When students log in to Blackboard with their username and password, the system knows who they are and shows them **only their individual grade information** for your course in the *View Grades* tool located on the students My UO page or through your coursesite (if you have allowed access to Tools). The *My Grades* page includes information on the following (Important note: Instructors have the option to turn off and on various information in the student view through the Grade Center):

-  Item name (the name assigned by the instructor or TA in the Grade Center)
-  Details about each individual graded item (Category and Description).
-  Due date for each item.
-  The last time the item was submitted, modified, or graded.
-  Individual item grade and total points possible for that item.
-  The total number of points they have accumulated in the Running Total.
-  Information about the class average on each Assessment.
-  Grade weighting. This is the relative importance of the item when determining a final grade.
-  Any comments added by the instructor specifically entered for student viewing.

You may need to give your students instructions about how they can access their grades for your course. The following is an example you can use for your course:

1. Go to the UO Blackboard website at <http://blackboard.uoregon.edu>.
2. Locate the Login box and enter your *uoregon username* (e.g. jdoe99) and the *corresponding password* (same as your email account).
3. You will enter a page entitled *My UO* that will welcome you by name.
4. Locate the *Tools* box in the upper left corner.
5. Select *View Grades*.
6. Locate the course you want to check grades for and click on that link.

Downloading the Grade Center

Instructors can download and save a Grade Center as either a tab-delimited file (.xls) or a comma-delimited file (.csv) for use in a spreadsheet program such as Microsoft Excel. The Grade Center items in this file can be uploaded to the Blackboard Grade Center at a later date. Downloading these files does not remove any information from the Grade Center.

1. From inside your Blackboard coursesite, locate the *Course Management* section.
2. Locate the *Evaluation* section and click on the *Grade Center* option.
3. Click on the *Work Offline* button then *Download*. Read and follow the *on-screen instructions* carefully.
4. Select either the *Tab* or *Comma Delimited Type* radio button.
5. Keep *Include Hidden Information* as *No*.
6. Click the *Submit* button.
7. Click the *Download* button.
8. To access the downloaded Grade Center, open a spreadsheet program, such as Microsoft Excel, pull the File menu down to *Open* and locate the downloaded file on your computer. More than likely, the Grade Center file should have a .xls or .csv extension after the file name. If prompted, tell Excel the file is either tab or comma delimited.

NOTE: The Total and Weighted Total columns are included in a Grade Center download. However, these columns will not be included in a Grade Center Upload, because they are generated by calculations within the Grade Center. The instructor cannot manipulate the data for these areas.

Uploading the Grade Center

Instructors may upload grade information into Blackboard using the Upload Grade Center page. The upload will not process data for any student not enrolled in the course and will fail if the user name for each row of data is not present. Changes to the first name and last name columns will not be processed. **NOTE:** For best results, instructors should manipulate and upload a Grade Center file that has been downloaded first from the Blackboard.

1. From inside your Blackboard coursesite, locate the *Course Management* section.
2. Locate the *Evaluation* section and click on the *Grade Center* option.
3. Click on the *Work Offline* button then *Upload*.
4. Click the *Choose File* or *Browse* button and locate the file on your computer.
5. Select the *Delimiter Type* of your original file (if you unsure about the file type select *Auto* first).
6. Click the *Submit* button.
7. From the *Upload Grades Confirmation* screen to *Import* section, make sure that the *radio button* next to the *column* you want to upload is selected. **NOTE:** Only columns that have been changed since the download can be checked.
8. Click the *Submit* button. You may get a dialog box asking if you want to replace the data. Click the *Ok* button.
9. When a Grade Center is uploaded the existing grades are not automatically written over or lost.

The values for total and weighted total will not be processed as part of the upload. Only the scores for the individual Grade Center Items will be uploaded.

Once the upload has been completed any items (columns) added in the Excel spreadsheet will now be included in the Grade Center information and calculations. These new items will also be available for all future Grade Center downloads.

If the name of a column in the source does not match the name of a column in the destination, you will be notified. You may decide whether or not to proceed with the upload.

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About Our Organization...

The University of Oregon supports the teaching endeavors of its faculty and graduate students through the Teaching Effectiveness Program (TEP), a division of Academic Learning Services.

The Teaching Effectiveness Program offers a variety of activities and services to engage the academic community in viewing, assessing, and improving undergraduate instruction. TEP services are free to faculty members, graduate teaching fellows (GTFs), and university departments.

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TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS PROGRAM
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