**Grade Centre**

When you deploy a test or add an assignment using the Assignment feature in your Blackboard course site these are automatically added as items in Grade Center. Grade Center allows you to track student progress, provide feedback to students, download grades to your computer – even create reports.The Grade Center is the page where all of the grading and calculating takes place. Each student has their own row to allow for easy organization. Each Grade Center item has it’s own column. Grade Center is very customizable and allows you to create various columns and change views whenever you like. Grade Center is now more like a spreadsheet. Grade Center allows you to simply click on the box for the assignment you would like to grade, type in a grade, and then hit Enter. Just like that, you grade is now saved into Grade Center. This tutorial will give an overview of the features associated with Grade Center.

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# Grade Center overview



**A) Create Column** – the Create Column option is used to add a new grade column to the Grade Center. Keep in mind that grade columns do not need to be manually added for any Blackboard-created Assignments, Tests or graded Discussion Boards – columns are automatically created for them. New columns are added at the end of the Grade Center. If a newly-created column is not visible, scroll the Grade Center data sheet horizontally.

**B) Create Calculated Column** – this button allows the creation of more advanced types of columns. Calculated columns can perform such things as weighting, averaging, or totalling grades.

**C) Manage** – the Manage menu is used to organize, manage and view columns, students and grading options. **A** **grading period is** used to designate a block of time in a course by which student work might be usefully grouped, such ‘Week1’, ‘Week2’, etc. This can be good for courses where there are a large number of assignments or evaluation columns – you can assign the items to specific week periods. Or perhaps the first three weeks of a course represent a unit about ‘Lab Safety’: defining a grading period for ‘Lab Safety’ makes it easy to group the student assessments which are related. **Grading Schemas** allow automatically graded columns (such as tests and quizzes) to be displayed with a letter grade, according to the score and letter grade mapping set forth in the schema. **Categories** allows for the creation and modification of Grade Center categories or classifications. There are four default Categories (Assignment, Discussion, Survey and Test) that cannot be removed or edited. **A smart view** is used to filter the Grade Center view by some frequently used criterion. Most often it is used to differentiate students that are part of some grouping in the course, e.g. ‘Tutorial 3 students’, or ‘Shakespeare Group 1 students’, but there are other useful views that might be defined: in this example, a smart view is used to identify students who are performing poorly in the course, so as to recommend student academic support services such as facilitated study groups, library research skills, writing centre, or math and statistics help. More on [Create/Edit Smart Views](http://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/support-using-technology/dmu-core-elt/blackboard/blackboard-how-do-i/blackboard-course-management/blackboard-assessment-tools/evaluation/grade-centre/create-and-edit-smart-views/%22%20%5Co%20%22Link%20to%20Create%20and%20Edit%20Smart%20Views%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**Column Organization** allows for arranging, displaying and hiding grade center columns. A “frozen column” separator is also available to be moved among grade center columns, keeping any columns placed before it in place during horizontal scrolling. **Student Visibility** is used to display or hide selected users in the Grade Center. The **Send Emai**l feature on the Manage menu brings up a blank email form in which \*any\* email address may be entered. This is slightly different than the Email option which appears directly above and below the list of enrolled users. A course instructor may check the box to the left of a student’s name to select them as the recipient email.

**D) Reports** – the Reports button allows you to generate and print detailed reports on one or more students. You may also view the grade history of a specific student. More on [Create/Edit Column](http://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/create-and-edit-columns/%22%20%5Co%20%22Link%20to%20Create%20and%20Edit%20columns%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)More on [Enter/Edit Grades](http://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/support-using-technology/dmu-core-elt/blackboard/blackboard-how-do-i/blackboard-course-management/blackboard-assessment-tools/evaluation/grade-centre/enter-and-edit-grades/%22%20%5Co%20%22Link%20to%20Enter%20and%20Edit%20Grades%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

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# Using Categories

When you create a weighted final grade, you will have two options. You can assign a percent weight to every item in your Grade Center, or you can assign a percent to groups of items, if those items have a category assigned. For example, you can assign each quiz as worth 10%, or you can assign a quiz category to each of them and say that the category quizzes is worth 40%. If you use categories, you also have the option of telling Blackboard to drop the lowest or highest grade in a category.

**Creating a category**

1. Click the Manage button in the main Grade Center window
2. Select categories
3. Click the Create category button
4. Enter a name and description for the category
5. Click Submit

**Assigning a Category to an Item**

1. In the grade center main window, click the single down arrow on the right edge of the column you wish to assign a category to. This arrow appears when the mouse is hovered over the column
2. From the menu, select Edit Column Information
3. In the category drop down box, select the appropriate category for the item
4. Click submit

More on [Create/Edit Categories](http://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/support-using-technology/dmu-core-elt/blackboard/blackboard-how-do-i/blackboard-course-management/blackboard-assessment-tools/grade-centre/createedit-categories/)

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# Weighting Columns

**Creating a Weighted Column (such as final grade)**

1. In the main grade center window, click the Create Calculated Column button
2. From the menu, select weighted column
3. Enter a name for the grade you are assigning
4. Optionally, you can enter a shorter display name for the grade center
5. You can enter a description for this grade if you wish
6. Select the primary display you would like (percentage, score, letter)

**Note:** It is possible to create a custom grading schema. If you do so, that schema will also be available as a display option.

**Setting the Weight Using Individual Columns**

1. If you wish to have a secondary display, enter that.
2. To calculate the grade, select from the left side of the screen which columns (scores) should be included in the final grade
3. Use the arrow in the window to move those from the left to the right side
4. Once you have selected the columns to include, enter the percent weight each item will have in the final grade
5. They should add up to 100%.

**Setting the Weight Using Categories**

If you have created and assigned categories to the columns in your grade center, you can assign the weight to the categories rather than to each item.

1. When setting the weight of items, use the area ‘categories to select’, and add each category (quizzes, exams, assignments, or whatever you use in your class
2. Enter the weight that the entire category gets in the final grade. In this example, all quizzes together are worth 30%, exams are worth 60% and assignments worth 10%.
3. You can choose to apply the percent equally to all items in the category or proportionally based on the point values assigned to items in the category
4. You can also have Blackboard drop the lowest or highest grade, or use only the lowest or highest value in a category.

**Calculate as a Running Total**

1. Immediately under the weighting, you are asked if you wish to calculate the grade as a running total
2. If you leave the default ‘yes’, then students will be able to view their grade throughout the semester to see how they are doing ‘so far’. The running total will not include any columns where a grade has not been entered.
3. If you check ‘no’, then the grade center will calculate the grade as if all empty grades are zero.
4. If you are using the running total feature, then you must be sure not to leave any blank grades at the end of the term, as that column will not be included at all in the final grade, and Blackboard will calculate the student’s grade based only on the columns where you have entered data.

**Options**

1. Under Options, verify:
* that you wish to include this column in the grade center calculations
* whether you wish students to be able to see this grade in their My Grades view
* whether you wish student to be able to see statistics for the class when they see their grade
1. When all the options are set as you wish, click submit
2. As you enter grades in the grade center, the weighted grade will recalculate.

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# Organising Your Grade Center

By default Blackboard displays a number of fields in the Grade Center aside from Grades like Last Access and Availability while pushing any new columns to the far right of the screen. You can reorganize your columns and display to maximize the space available. To reorder your Grade Center go to Manage > Column Organization and move your cursor over the icon of four interconnected arrows for the column you wish to move. Then click on the arrows drag the column and drag it into the place you wish it to appear. A green bar will appear across the top of the screen indicating your change. When finished click Submit to save your changes. In the Column Organisation screen you can also hide columns from the main display. This does not permanently delete the columns or associated content, it only removes them from view. To hide a column, check off the column(s) you want to hide and go to Show/Hide and select the option you want from the dropdown. Any changes made on this screen are not automatically saved in the Grade Center. Once you make changes, a green bar will appear at the top of the screen notifying you to click Submit to save them.

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# Grading Colour Codes

In Blackboard 9.1, Grade Center submissions can now be color coded by status (In Progress, Needs Grading, Exempt) or by grade criteria (between, more than of less than specific percentages.) To access this feature, go to Control Panel > Grade Center> Manage> Grading Color Codes. Check the box to Enable Grading Color Codes. Click on the single down arrows next to an existing criterion, select a color from the dropdown menu and click Apply. To create a criterion based on percentages click on Add Criteria and then enter the percentages, select a color and click Submit. To toggle the colour codes, click the ‘Hide Colour Coding’ button. [More on Grading Colour Codes](http://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/support-using-technology/dmu-core-elt/blackboard/blackboard-how-do-i/blackboard-course-management/blackboard-assessment-tools/evaluation/grade-centre/colour-codes-in-grade-centre/%22%20%5Co%20%22Link%20to%20Colour%20Codes%20in%20Grade%20Centre%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

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# Grade Center Reports

You can get reports created through the Grade Center, including grade history and ‘create report’ which gives you a printed report for each student showing their grades to date. Click the reports button in the main grade center window to run reports.

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# Needs Grading

When a student turns in an assignment that you created via the assignment tool or a test that Blackboard does not automatically grade for you, it will appear in the “Needs Grading” section. The Needs Grading view which is created for instructors by default can be accessed from the Grade Center menu in the control panel. This option will only appear when there are new submissions or assessment attempts to be graded, which are usually indicated by the green exclamation point icon in the Grade Center. Once in this page all submissions/attempts ready for grading are displayed. There are two ways that you can grade, you can do ‘Grade All’ or you can use the contextual menus.

**Grading Using Grade All**

1. Click the ‘Grade All’ button to begin grading and reviewing. Attempts appear in the order they were sorted on the Needs Grading page. Once attempts have been graded, they do not appear on the Needs Grading page and the number of items updates to reflect the current number that needs to be graded.
2. In the Grade Current Attempt section, assign a grade and feedback for the current assignment attempt. When available, click Save and Next (to go to the next student) or View Previous to navigate through or grade the attempts in the queue one at a time. If no grade is assigned for the attempt, clicking Save and Next will not change the status of the attempt. If multiple attempts have been allowed, a Student’s grade is not released until all of the attempts have been graded.

**Grading Using Contextual Menus**

Use an assignment’s contextual menu to Grade All Users or Grade Anonymously. For tests, the contextual menu also includes Grade Tests by Questions and View All Attempts. A total number of attempts for the selected items are listed in parentheses.

1. Click the contextual icon (down arrow) next to an uploaded assignment or test to begin grading and reviewing. Click Grade All Users. A total number of uploaded assignments for that particular assignment will be listed in parentheses.
2. In the Grade Current Attempt section, assign a grade and feedback for the current assignment attempt. When available, click Save and Next (to go to the next student) or View Previous to navigate through or grade the attempts in the queue one at a time. If no grade is assigned for the attempt, clicking Save and Next will not change the status of the attempt. If multiple attempts have been allowed, a Student’s grade is not released until all of the attempts have been graded.

**How to download submitted assignments to your computer**

1. In Grade Center, navigate to the assignment column for which you wish to download assignments for.
2. From the contextual menu for this assignment column (single drop down arrow), select ‘Assignment File Download’
3. In the download assignment view, you can either select the checkbox at the top left which will select all students or you can only choose those papers that you want individually.

Alternatively, you can choose ‘Select Ungraded’ to collect only ungraded assignments. This screen also gives you an overview of who has submitted an assignment, the date and time of the submission, and what has and has not been graded.

1. Click Submit.
2. Click the ‘Download Assignments Now’ link in the message
3. Find the downloaded folder on your computer with the assignment’s name. which should contain the student assignment submissions selected

**Note:** When you have graded everything in the Needs Grading section for a particular assignment you will not be able to click on ‘Save and Next’. You will have to click on ‘Save and Exit’ to get back to the Needs Grading screen. When you have finished grading all submitted assignments there will no longer be any items listed on the Needs Grading screen. **Note:** Instructors can use filters to grade by assignment, student, or category. There’s even an option to Hide User Names, which allows instructors to grade anonymously by masking actual student names until all grading has been completed.

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# Upload Feedback associated with Grade

1. In the Grade Center view the exclamation icon against the student column for the assignment submission indicates that the submission needs grading.
2. From the contextual menu (single drop down arrow) select ‘View Grade Details’
3. Scroll to the Section “Attempts” and click “Open Attempt”
4. Download the file under Section 3, “Review Current Attempt” by clicking on the link of the attached file.
5. Once you have downloaded the file, you can open it by double clicking on the file in your download folder.
6. After you make your edits and comments (on the students file, i.e. using track changes or unless you create a seperate feedback sheet, you can save the student’s document and add your name to the title or something else to distinguish it from the student’s original file (though you may want to retain an identifier to distinguish the student).
7. Go back to the original assignment page in Blackboard that should still be open and move to Section 4, “Grade Current Attempt”
8. You can also upload the student’s paper on which you made the comments by browsing for the local file and attaching it
9. IMPORTANT You \*must\* click “Attach”, or the file will not really be uploaded.
10. It’s also possible to add instructor comments to the student in Section 4, “Comments” and Instructor notes. Note, instructor notes can only be viewed by you as an instructor, not the student.
11. After clicking “Submit” You will be brought to a “Grade Details” screen. Note the Current grade, the feedback to use and grading notes.

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# Emailing from the Grade Center

You may notice something in the Grade Center that you wish to discuss with a student (such as a low grade or a missing assignment). You can easily email a student or students from the grade center by checking the checkbox before their name and clicking the e-mail button. If you e-mail multiple students from the grade center or from elsewhere in the Blackboard course, they will not see who else the message is addressed to. The To: box in the email message will show the course name.

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# How do students view their grades in Blackboard?

Students can view their grades and engage with text based or multimedia feedback via the Blackboard shell providing the ‘My Grades’ link has been enabled by the Instructor. The Blackboard assessment tools such as Tests, Assignments and Surveys offer the ability to automatically interact with the Grade Centre and therefore My Grades. Third party tools such as Campus Pack and TurnItIn can also interact with the Grade Centre and My Grades but with slightly limited functionality. However, it is important that where grades and/or feedback is being administered via the Grade Centre the My Grades link should be enabled as the students will not be able to see their grades in Blackboard nor engage with feedback in Blackboard without access to the My Grades view. A guide to enabling the My Grades link on your Blackboard shell is available [here](http://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/support-using-technology/dmu-core-elt/blackboard/blackboard-how-do-i/blackboard-course-management/blackboard-assessment-tools/evaluation/grade-centre/enabling-the-my-grades-tool-link/).

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# Work Offlline

The Work Offline button (far top right in the Grade Center view) is for those who still prefer to use their own spreadsheet software or for when you would like to work on grades when there is no internet service. This button is for the uploading and downloading of grades to Grade Center.

Using Work Offline we can export the entire Grade Center or a selected column for working with in productivity software such as Excel.



Under 1) Data, select what to include in your download.

Under 2) Options if you leave the defaults you can download an Excel compatible file.

Under 3) Save Location choose where you want to save your downloaded file.

You will then be able to Open With/Save As to Excel and work offline. On the next screen click Download. Do not click OK or you will navigate away from the download screen without your file. A calculated column is an evaluation item derived from other mark columns. This is good for making intermediate calculations, or summarizing a series of grades, such as ‘Total Quiz Mark’. There are a few ‘gotchas’ to look out for in relation to a calculated column:

* “include in grade calculations” must be selected on all the mark columns which are intended to be assessed in the calculation;
* uploading and downloading values can only alter real columns; uploaded grades will not import into a calculated column; and
* “0” must be entered for a student-item or the weighting is not applied to that student-item.

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# Hiding Columns in the Grade Center and other Grade Center ‘Gotchas’

**Hiding Column Does Not Hide Grades from Students**

Selecting ‘Hide Column’ from the contextual menu only makes the grade column invisible to those who can edit the Grade Center, not to the students. If you wish to make a grade column unavailable to students in the My Grades tool,  you must select Edit Column Information from the column heading’s contextual menu, then in the Options area Edit Column page, select No for Show the Column to Students, then Submit.

**Making an Assignment Grade Column Unavailable to Students Does Not Make Their Scores Unavailable**

If the grade is for a Blackboard Assignment, even selecting No for Show the Column to Students will not prevent the student from seeing the number of points earned when they view the Assignment page itself. Either make the Assignment unavailable or create a separate column to enter to the grades.

**Hiding a Student Does Not Make the My Grades Unavailable to that student**

Selecting ‘Hide User’ from the contextual menu next to a student’s name only makes the user invisible to those who can edit the Grade Center.  My Grades cannot be made unavailable on a user-by-user basis, only course-wide.

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