Grade Center in Blackboard

Grade Center is a central repository for assessment data, student information, and instructor notes. The following guide will assist you in accessing, exploring, utilizing and customizing Grade Center.

Accessing Grade Center

Step 1. Click to enter your course, then select the Grade Center link in the Control Panel area.

Step 2. In the Course Management area, select the gray arrow or one of the options listed below Grade Center.

Exploring Grade Center

The Grade Center is made up of rows and columns of student information and gradable items. Cells in the grid contain data specific to corresponding students. All cells and column headings contain menus for various actions. The user can access information or navigate to other pages to interact with the Grade Center.
Sending Email from Grade Center

Email can be sent to selected students, all students, selected observers, or all observers directly from the Grade Center.

To send an email from the Grade Center page:

**Step 1.** Select which users you would like to send email to by clicking on the checkbox to left of their name. If you would like to send email to all users, click the box at the top left corner.

**Step 2.** Place your mouse cursor over the Email link (below the Grade Information Bar) and select whether you would like to e-mail the selected users, both the selected users and their observers, or only the observers of the selected users.

**Step 3.** Type a Subject for the email.

**Step 4.** Write your message.

**Step 5.** You may attach files to the email by clicking Attach a file underneath the message section.

**Step 6.** Click the Submit on the right to send the email.
View a Single Student’s Grade

No student may see another student’s grade. It is the Law.

If you wish to discuss the Grade Center with a student:

Step 1. Hold your mouse over the students’ name and click the gray drop down arrow.
Step 2. Select Hide Other Rows.

Display all students:

Step 1. Hold your mouse over the student’s name and click the gray drop down arrow.
Step 2. Select Show All Rows.

Setting Up Grade Center in Blackboard

Grade Center is setup with student names, usernames, IDs, and automatically creates grade columns for work done on the system in Discussion Boards, Assignments, Tests and Surveys. The Grade Center has a default Grading Schema.

Adding a Grade Column

To create a grade column, follow these steps:

Step 1. On the Grade Center page, just above the Grade Information Bar, click the Create Column button.

Step 2. Enter the column name in the Column Name text box. Entering a Grade Center Display Name is optional; it will appear in place of the Column Name in Grade Center for you and in My Grades for students. This may be useful for shortening column widths. It is also optional to write a Description of the item.

Step 3. Use the drop-down menu to select a Primary Display (the format in which you prefer grades to be displayed in both Grade Center and in My Grades). You will need to enter grades in the same format as the display you choose.
The **Secondary Display** is *optional* and will appear in parenthesis behind the primary display only in Grade Center.

**Step 4.** Although choosing a **Category** for the grade column is *optional*, this feature is **strongly recommended** if you would like to weight grades according to type (Assignment, Survey, Test, Discussion, etc.) and **necessary if you would like to drop highest/lowest grades**.

**Step 5.** Enter the amount of points possible for the item in the **Points Possible** text box.

Including a **Rubric** or **Due Date** for the item is optional.

**Step 6.** In the **Options** area, choose whether you would like to include the mark in the final grade, whether the grades will be visible to students, and whether you would like class statistics (average and median) to be visible to students in My Grades.

**Step 7.** Click the **Submit** button on the right.

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4. **Submit**

*Click Submit to proceed. Click Cancel to quit.*
Modify a Grade Column

Step 1. Select the column’s Action Link (the gray arrow icon pointing downward) at the top right of the column title.

Step 2. Select Edit Column Information from the drop down list.

Step 3. Edit settings as needed and click the blue Submit button.

Creating Categories

Grade Center Categories are a classification for Grade Center Columns.

Categories are used to:

- Organize and view Grade Center data
- Weight Grades
- Drop lowest scores (may drop more than 1)

NOTE: Anything that is created using the Assignment Manager Tool is automatically assigned a category.

To create a new category, follow these steps:

Step 1. Click Manage in the Action Bar of Grade Center and select Categories from the Action Link menu.

Step 2. Click Create Category.

Step 3. Enter a Name for the Category. Entering a Description is optional but can help differentiate Categories and explain a Category’s purpose.

Step 4. Click the Submit button on the right to create the Category.
Adding, Editing and Downloading Grades

Grades can be entered into the Grade Center in a variety of ways. Scores from gradable items that have been added to the content of a course such as online tests, exams, and surveys are automatically entered into the Grade Center. Grades from an external source, such as a Comma-separated Value File or an Excel spreadsheet, can be uploaded to the Grade Center. Other grades can be manually entered into the Grade Center.

Entering Grades

You have two options for manually entering or changing grades in Grade Center. The first option, Option A, allows you to enter or change grades for the entire class and/or individual students in a spreadsheet-like way. Option B allows you to override a student’s grade, to attach feedback or grading notes to the grade, and to view Grade History.

On the Grade Center page, enter a grade by clicking on the cell in which you would like to put a grade (you may need to scroll to the right to find the column) and type the grade directly into the cell (in the same format you chose for Primary Display when you created the column).

Press Enter on the keyboard to save the grade and to move to the cell below.

Uploading Grades from External Sources

To eliminate repeated entry of Grade Center data in several tools, Instructors can do offline grading and then upload grades into Grade Center. Instructors can upload grades from external sources such as a Comma-separated Value .csv file or an Excel spreadsheet. Data must be formatted specifically to upload correctly and be synched with existing Grade Center data.

To upload or download grades:

Step 1. Place your mouse cursor over the Work Offline and click Upload or Download.
Step 2. For detailed instructions visit www.gvsu.edu/it/learn and look under “Grade Center”.

Adding Comments to a Grade Entry

Adding comments to a grade provides a way that Instructors can give additional feedback to Students on their performance. It is also a way Instructors can expand on grading decisions or take notes for future reference or to share with other instructors, TAs, or Graders.

Any grade entry can have comments added to it. Comments are entered through the Grade Details page or directly through the Grade Center. Comments entered in the Feedback to User textbox appear to Students when they access the grades. Comments entered into the Instructor Notes textbox cannot be accessed by Students.

Entering Comments through the Grade Center View Spreadsheet

It is necessary to have a grade entered before adding comments.

To enter a comment, follow these steps:

Step 1. In Grade Center, move the cursor over an entered grade.

Step 2. Click the gray drop down arrow, and then select Quick Comment from the menu.

Step 3. Enter text into the Feedback to User textbox to share with the student.

Step 4. Enter text into the Instructor Notes textbox for reference. Instructor notes are available to other users such as TAs and Graders who have access to the Grade Center.

Step 5. Click Submit to save comments.
Entering Comments through the Grade Detail Page

To add a comment, Feedback to User or Instructor Notes, within the Grade Details page, follow these steps:

**Step 1.** In the Grade Center, move the cursor over an entered grade.

**Step 2.** Click the gray drop down arrow, and then select View Grade Detail from the menu.

**Step 3.** In the Grade Detail page, select Manual Override. Textboxes will now appear for both the Instructor Notes and Feedback to User.

**Step 4.** Enter text and click Save in the Actions Column.


Adding a Voice/Video Comment with Ensemble Video

**Step 1.** In the Grade Center Action Bar, move the cursor over an entered grade.

**Step 2.** Click the gray drop down arrow, and then select Quick Comment from the menu.

**Step 3.** Click Text Editor if you want to add a voice/video message to your students using Ensemble Video. Then click Ensemble Video. The video must already be in Ensemble before adding it to the feedback.
Creating Grading Schemas

A Grading Schema matches scores to specific grade displays. For example, in a Grading Schema in which a percentage of 87.5 to 89.5 equals a B+, this score results for an 88 is a B+. If the grade display Letter option is chosen, the B+ will display to the Student.

Step 1. To create or edit a Grading Schema, click Grading Schemas underneath Manage on the Grade Center page.

Step 2. To edit the “Letter” grading schema, hover your mouse over “Letter” and click on the gray drop down arrow to the right of the Letter title and select Edit.

Step 3. Determine the total number of grades you will put in your grading schema (typically 12) and create additional rows as necessary (make sure there is one row for each grade) underneath schema Mapping.
Step 4. Enter percent ranges for each grade in the left column and the percentage for which each grade will calculate as in the right column.

NOTE: The percentage range given for each grade value must begin with the lesser value listed first. The values must also overlap. For example A = 90 – 100%, B = 80 – 90%, C = 70 – 80% and so on. Ranges must be set up in this way to avoid gaps that could occur when a score falls in between two numbers in the range. The range of 80 – 90% includes all grades up to but not including 90%. The top range does include 100%.

Step 5. Click Submit on the bottom right when finished.

Customizing and Organizing the Grade Center

Sorting Columns

The Grade Center, by default, lists Students’ First and Last Names first, followed by their usernames, student IDs, last access and availability. Columns for gradable items and calculations of sets of graded items appear across the page. To facilitate seeing Grade Center data in different ways, Instructors, TAs, and Graders may sort all visible columns within the Grade Center based on categories (test, assignment, etc.), due date, creation date, points possible or display name.

To sort the columns according to the criteria listed above:

Step 1. Place your mouse cursor over Display Name (next to “Sort Columns By”) and select the criteria by which you would like to sort the visible columns.

Step 2. Place your mouse course over Ascending (next to “Order”) and select whether you would like the rows to appear in Ascending or Descending order from left to right.
NOTE: Sorting based on the criteria defined here is not saved across sessions. Once the browser is closed, the view will default back to its default view.

Showing and Hiding Grade Columns

Step 1. To show or hide columns, click Column Organization Under Manage on the Grade Center page.

Step 2. Check the boxes (to the left of the column names) for the columns you would like to hide or show.

Step 3. Place your cursor over the Show/Hide button and select whether you would like to Hide Selected Columns, Show Selected Columns, or Show Selected Columns in All Grade Center Views. Then click Submit to save the changes.
Moving Columns

Step 1. To reorganize columns, click Column Organization underneath Manage on the Grade Center page.

Step 2. Click on the arrow beside the Column Name and drag the row to the desired location.

Step 3. Click Submit on the right to save your changes.

Note: You may move rows from the Not in a Grading Period section to the Shown in All Grade Center Views section.
**Hide users**

Users can be hidden from the Grade Center View, reducing the number of rows in the grid. Hidden users are not deleted from the Grade Center and can be revealed at any time. To hide students follow these steps:

**Step 1.** Place your cursor over **Manage** on the Grade Center page and select **Row Visibility**.

![Grade Center: Full Grade Center](image)

**Step 2.** Select the desired users and choose to **Hide Users** from the Grade Center View. Show users who have been hidden by selecting them and clicking **Show Users**.

1. **Set Rows Visibility**

   Select the desired rows and choose to **Hide** them from the Grade Center View. Show rows that have been hidden by selecting them and clicking **Show**.

![Rows Visibility](image)

**Step 3.** Click **Submit** to save your changes.

**NOTE:** Users that are hidden will appear grayed out on the Users page and will not appear in the Grade Center View. Users that are shown will appear in black text on the Users page and will appear in the Grade Center View.
Creating Smart Views

Smart Views are views of the Grade Center based on a variety of student criteria. This enables Instructors to create certain views of the Grade Center—based on performance criteria for gradable items such as Assessments or Assignments—that quickly track Students. There are five different Types of Smart Views that specify the Student information:

- **Course Group:** View one or more Course Groups (Groups must be made before they are selected for a Smart View).
- **Performance:** View specific users based on their performance on a single item.
- **User:** View individual users.
- **Category and Status:** View items by their category and status.
- **Custom:** Build a query based on user criteria.

Once built and saved, Smart Views become a selectable list item on the Current View drop-down menu of the Grade Center page, enabling easy navigation from one view to another. Any Smart View can be saved as the default view of the Grade Center. The current default view can be changed at any time.

Adding a Smart Views

Smart Views of Grade Center data can be based on Groups that have been created in a Course. **NOTE: Groups must be made before they can be selected for a Smart View.**

To build a Smart View based on Group Membership, follow these steps:

**Step 1.** Click **Manage** in the Action Bar of the Grade Center.

**Step 2.** Select **Smart Views** from the Action Link menu.
Step 3 Click **Create Smart View**

Step 4. Enter a **Name** for the smart view. This is a required field and will appear in the Current View Action Link menu on the Grade Center page. It will also appear as a link to the Smart View on the Manage Smart Views page.

Step 5. Entering a **Description** of the Smart View is optional

Step 6. Select **Group** as the **Type of View** by selecting the corresponding radio button.

Step 7. In the **Select Criteria** section, select the groups to include in this Smart View. Hold down the Ctrl button to select multiple items from one drop-down list. The condition options are **Equal to** or **Not equal to**, and the **Value** of the group will be the Group name.

**Note:** “Select Criteria” area will look different for each “Type of View”
Step 8. Select the **Filter Results** by picking which Columns to Display in Results from the drop-down menu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filter Results</th>
<th>Columns to Display in Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Dropdown Menu" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Columns List" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** If you choose **Selected Columns Only** or **Selected Categories Only**, another list will appear to the right of the drop-down menu. Select from this list which columns you would like to display in the results.

**NOTE:** To select more than one item, hold down Ctrl and click on the desired items.

Step 9. To include hidden columns, select the check box to **Include hidden information**.

Step 10. Click the **Submit** button on the right to save the Smart View.

**Weighted Columns**

A Weighted Column calculates and displays a grade for a selected number of Columns based upon each column's respective worth of the total grade. Columns with text as the primary display cannot be displayed as a weighted grade. **Note:** New or Restored Courses will automatically contain a **Total Points** column and a **Weighted Grade** column. To configure the settings of these columns, select the column’s **Action Link** (the double arrows pointing downward in the column title) and select **Edit Column Information** from the drop down list.

**Step 1.** Enter the column name in the **Column Name** text box, underneath Column Information. Entering a **Grade Center Display Name** is optional; it will appear in place of the Column Name in Grade Center for you and in My Grades for students. This may be useful for shortening column widths. It is also optional to write a **Description**.

**Step 2.** Use the drop-down menu to select a **Primary Display** (the format in which you prefer the weighted score to be displayed in both Grade Center and My Grades). The **Secondary Display** is optional and will appear in parenthesis behind the primary display only in Grade Center; the Secondary Display will not be visible to students.
Step 3. Underneath Select Columns, select the columns and categories to include in the weighted grade and click the center arrow to add them to the Selected Columns area. After all columns and categories have been selected and added to the Selected Columns area, set the weight percentages.

Note: When a Category has been selected, several other options appear. Select to weigh columns within the Category Equally or Proportionally. Choosing Equally applies equal value to all Columns within a Category. Choosing Proportionally applies the appropriate value to a Grade Item based on its points compared to other columns in the Category. Also decide whether to drop high or low grades within the Category or use the lowest or highest value in the category. 

i.e. If you are dropping a score and the items have different point values use Proportional

Note: If you have created a column for an item and placed it in a category, weight either the column or the category for that particular item. If you weight both the column and the category, the item will be factored into the weighted grade twice.

Note: To delete a selected Grade Item or Category from consideration, click the red “x”.

Personal preference: If I am weighting grades, I ALWAYS set the Total column to No for Show this Column to Students When you are weighting the grades showing Total to the students can be very misleading.