

## The Basics of Organizing the Grade Center

Using the Grade Center has many time saving advantages for you and your students. It keeps all of your grades in one place, and automatically interacts with the graded items (assessments) in your course so that you don't have to input grades twice. Students can track their progress under "My Grades" at any point. It also calculates students' final grades for you.

If you have already created Assignments, Discussion Boards, Tests, and other **assessed items** in your course, then much of the Grade Center will already be set up. Whenever you create a new graded item and assign it a point value, Blackboard **automatically** creates a new column for the item in the Grade Center and assigns it to one of the default categories.\* Although you can create Grade Center columns manually, we recommend you use Grade Center integration for all assessments (assignments, tests, quizzes, etc.) that you create within Blackboard, and only create manual columns for ePortfolio or other off-Blackboard assignments.

This guide assumes that you have already created all of the assessed items in your course, and walks you through the steps necessary to:

- Rename Grade Center columns (Steps 3-5),
- Add Grade Center columns (Steps 6+7),
- Re-order Grade Center columns (Steps 8+9),
- Delete unnecessary columns (Step 10), and
- Hide columns from instructor or student view (Step 11).

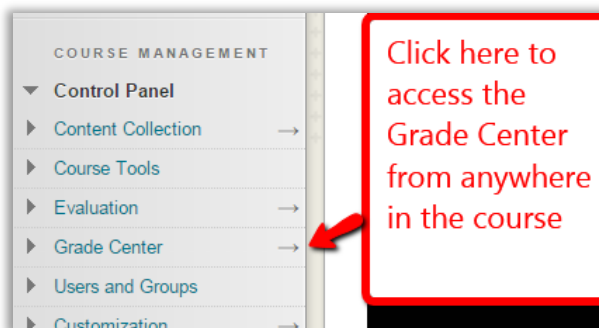
**Not covered in this guide:** For instructions on how to set up a Total or Weighted Total column to calculate students' final grades see our quick guides "Calculating Final Grades Using Total Points" and "Calculating Final Grades Using the Weighted Total Column": <http://spsfaculty.commonscunycuny.edu/quick-guides/>.

**Important:** If you choose to display grades as letters, make sure you select "**Letter SPS.**" This ensures that letter grades will be calculated according to the **SPS undergraduate** grading point schema. If you are teaching a graduate course at SPS, do not use any of the letter schemas in Blackboard.

\* The Grade Center makes use of Categories and Columns. **Columns** in the Grade Center correspond to each individual item in the course that will be graded. **Categories** are groupings of columns (such as Discussions, or Tests) which can be used for calculating a final grade in a Weighted Total column.

### Step 1

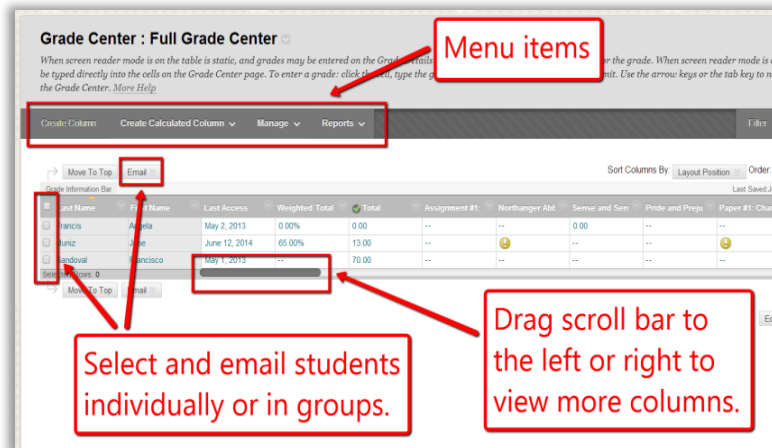
First, navigate to the Grade Center. From anywhere in the course, find the Control Panel on the lower left section of the page. Click on the right-facing arrow next to "Grade Center."



Step 2

Once in the Grade Center you will see menu items tabs along the top. The center is laid out as a table listing the students enrolled in your class by row, and columns listing the assessed items in your course. You can view more columns by scrolling to the right.

From here you can easily **email students**, either individually or in groups, by ticking the boxes to the left of their names and clicking the “Email” button.

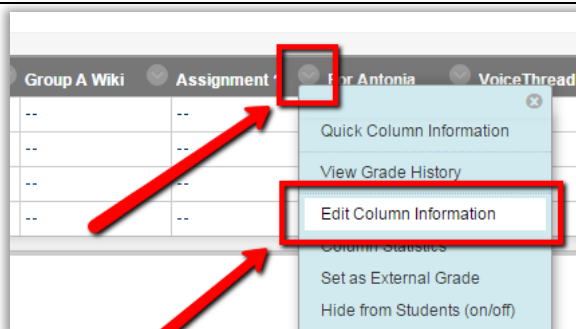


Note: No students are listed in dev course sites.

Step 3

**Rename Columns**

To rename a column in the Grade Center, click the drop down menu to the right of the column’s title and select “Edit Column Information” from the list.

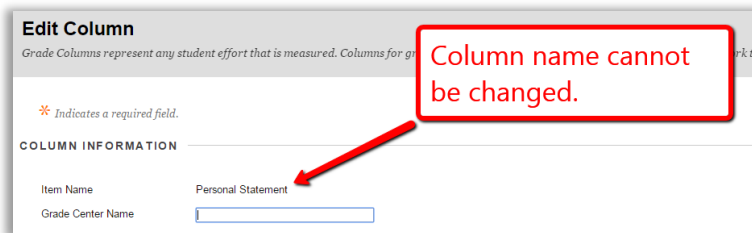
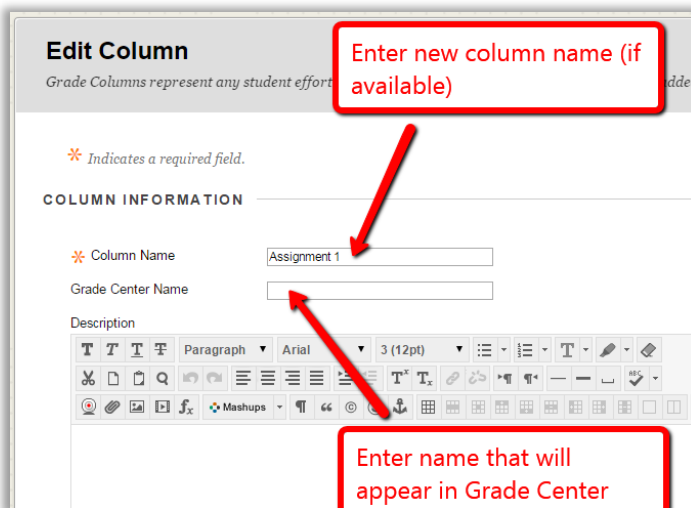


Step 4

Enter the new name of the column in the “Column Name” field (if available, see below\*).

The “Grade Center Name” field refers to the column title as it will appear in the Grade Center *only* (not in students’ My Grades). This might prove useful if the Column Name is too long to display clearly in the Grade Center grid, or if it is confusingly similar to other Column Names (see examples below in Step 5).

\* Column Names for assignments, tests or discussions *cannot* be changed in the Grade Center (see screenshot at bottom). You can only rename these items by changing its name in its content area. “Grade Center Name,” however, can always be modified.



Step 5

- 1) In the example at right, notice how these three columns all appear to have the same title in the Grade Center grid.
- 2) When editing the columns' information, however, we can see that they all have different titles, though too long to be displayed in the Grade Center grid.
- 3) By adding a short, descriptive "Grade Center Name"...
- 4) ...we can clear up any confusion in the Grade Center grid (while also retaining the items' original titles in My Grades so as to avoid any confusion for students).

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Step 6

**Add Columns**

On the Grade Center main page, scroll right to make sure each of the assessed items in your course (i.e., discussion forums, tests, and other assignments that will receive a grade) has a column.

If a column does not appear for an item that will be submitted through Blackboard, check the item's settings to make sure the "graded" option has been selected. If there are assignments in your course submitted outside of Blackboard (e.g. on ePortfolio), you can add a Grade Center column by clicking "Create Column" on the top menu bar.

**Grade Center : Full Grade Center**

When screen reader mode is on the table is static, and grades may be entered on the Grade Center page. To enter a grade, click on the table cell for the grade, and press the spacebar, and press the spacebar, and press the spacebar. Use the arrow keys or the tab key to navigate.

Click here to create columns for assignments submitted outside of Blackboard.

Create Column    Create Calculator    Reports

Grade Information Bar    Last Saved: February 11, 2012

Last Name	First Name	Last Access	VoiceThreads	Weighted T
Francis	Angela	May 2, 2012		

### Step 7

You will be taken to the “Create Grade Column” page. Enter a title for your column (you don’t need to add a description) and set the mode in which the grade will be displayed.

**Note:** To display grades as letters, make sure you select “Letter SPS” from the menu. This ensures that letter grades will be displayed according to the SPS **undergraduate** grading point schema. If you are teaching a graduate class do not choose any of the letter grade options.

Set the points possible for the assignment and add a rubric (if using one) by clicking “Add Rubric.” You can also set a due date that will be integrated into the course’s calendar.

If you are not using a weighted total to calculate grades ignore the “Category” menu. Otherwise, select the appropriate category here. If the category has not been created yet, see our “Weighted Total Column” guide for how to create categories and mapping columns to it.

When you’re done, click “Submit.”

**1. Column Information**

\* Column Name: ePortfolio Assignment

Grade Center Name: [Empty]

Description: [Text Editor]

Path: p

Score: [Score]

Points Possible: 100

Associated Rubrics: Add Rubric

Dates: Due Date: 10/30/2014

Category: No Category

Annotations: "Enter a name for your column" points to the Column Name field. "Set the display mode (i.e. score vs percentage)" points to the Score dropdown. "Set the category if it already exists." points to the Category dropdown. "Set the points possible" points to the Points Possible field. "Add Rubric" points to the Add Rubric button. "Due Date" points to the Due Date field.

### Step 8

#### Re-order Columns

By default, new columns appear all the way to the right in the Grade Center.

You can re-order the columns in the Grade Center from the “Column Organization” page. To open this page, hover over “Manage,” and select “Column Organization” from the drop-down menu.

New Columns appear all the way to the right.

Grade Center : Full Grade Center

When screen reader mode is on the table is static, and grades may be entered on the Grade Details page enter a grade: click the cell, type the grade value, and press the Enter key to submit. Use the arrow keys

In the Grade Center, hover over "Manage" and select "Column Organization"

Manage

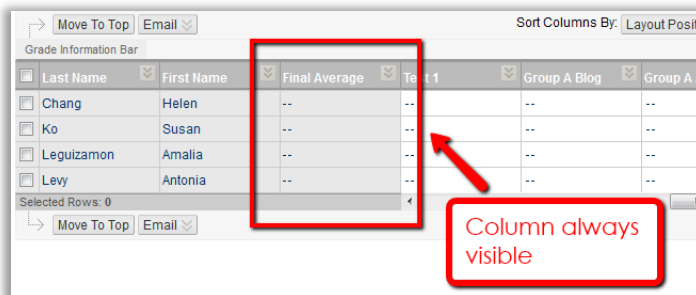
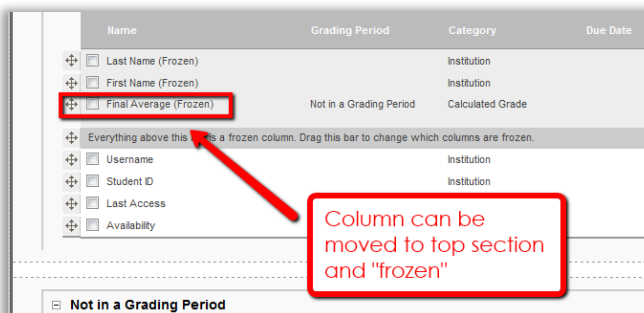
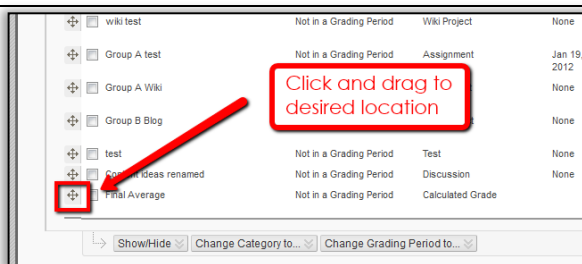
Column Organization

### Step 9

On the “Column Organization” page columns are listed vertically. The higher an item is on the list the further to the left it will appear; the last column on the right would be at the bottom of the list. Drag the arrows icon to move the column to the desired position.

If you move the column all the way to the top, above the gray bar, it can be “frozen,” which you may find useful for columns like the final average, as in the example screenshots to the right.

**Important: when done, click “Submit” to save changes.**

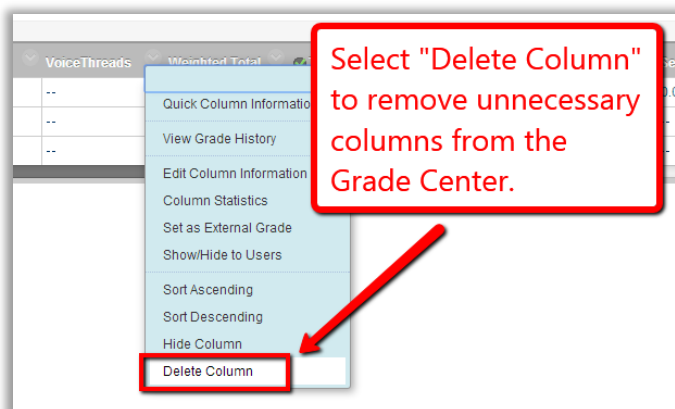


### Step 10

#### Delete Columns

On the Grade Center main page, scroll to the right to check for any columns listed for items you won’t use in your course (e.g. if you inherited the course from a previous instructor).

Remove any unnecessary columns by clicking the downward facing arrow next to the column title, then select “Delete Column.” Some columns, like “Student ID,” cannot be removed, but you can hide them from instructor or student view without removing them entirely from the Grade Center (see next step).



**Step 11****Hide Columns**

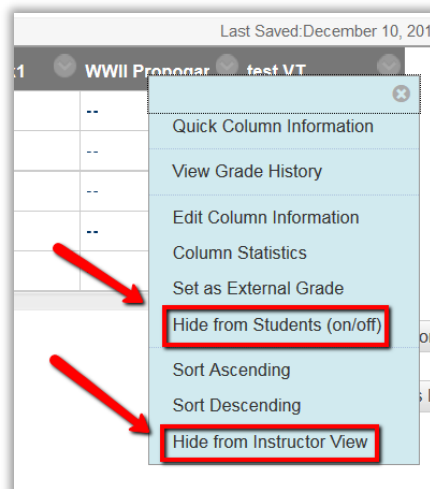
You can hide selected columns from instructor and/or from student view without removing the columns from the Grade Center.

To do so, click the downward arrow next to the column's title and select "Hide from Instructor View" or "Hide from Students (on/off)" respectively.

Important: Hiding columns from instructor view in the Grade Center does **not** hide them from student view; i.e. students will still be able to see these assignments in "My Grades." If you intend to hide columns from both instructor and student view, select "Hide from Students (on/off)" **first** before "Hide from Instructor View."

Columns hidden from students will be marked with a crossed-out circle to the left of its title.

You can check which columns might be hidden from instructor view in the Grade Center under "Column Organization" (see Step 8). Hidden columns will appear greyed out.



Total L	End	Midterm Exa	S
B+ (105)	--	--	--
B+ (106)	--	--	--
A (126)	--	--	--

A red box highlights the 'Midterm Exa' column header, and another red box highlights the 'B+ (105)' row with the text 'Column hidden from students' and an arrow pointing to the crossed-out circle next to the grade.

Name	Grading Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Project to End World Hunger	Not in a Grading Period
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Animal Sounds Assessment (Hidden)	Not in a Grading Period
<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion 3	Not in a Grading Period

A red box highlights the 'Animal Sounds Assessment (Hidden)' row, and a red arrow points to the crossed-out circle next to the assignment name.

With all your assignments added to the Grade Center you can now easily **set up the Total or Weighted Total column to calculate your students' final grades**. For more details see our quick guides "Calculating Final Grades Using Total Points" and "Calculating Final Grades Using the Weighted Total Column": <http://spsfaculty.commons.gc.cuny.edu/quick-guides/>.

Instructions about **advanced options** for setting up the Grade Center, see our quick guide "Grade Center: Beyond the Basics": <http://spsfaculty.commons.gc.cuny.edu/quick-guides/>.