

Blackboard Grade Center: Beyond the Basics

This guide introduces the advanced features for organizing the Grade Center in Blackboard. You will learn how to customize the look of your Grade Center by applying color-codes for grading progress (Steps 1-6), or for students' grades (Steps 7-11). This guide will also show you how to rename your Grade Center columns (Steps 12-13), how to sort columns by various column criteria (Step 14), how to filter columns from view (Steps 15-17), and how use and create "Smart Views" for your Grade Center (Steps 18-24).

Note: This guide assumes you are already familiar with setting-up, managing and using your Blackboard course Grade Center. To learn the basic functions of the Grade Center, or to reacquaint yourself with the fundamentals of the Grade Center, see our "Organizing the Grade Center" Quick Guide: <http://spsfaculty.commons.gc.cuny.edu/quick-guides/>.

Step 1

First, we need to get to the Grade Center. From anywhere within the course, look for the Control Panel in the lower left section of the screen. Click on the right-facing arrow next to "Grade Center."

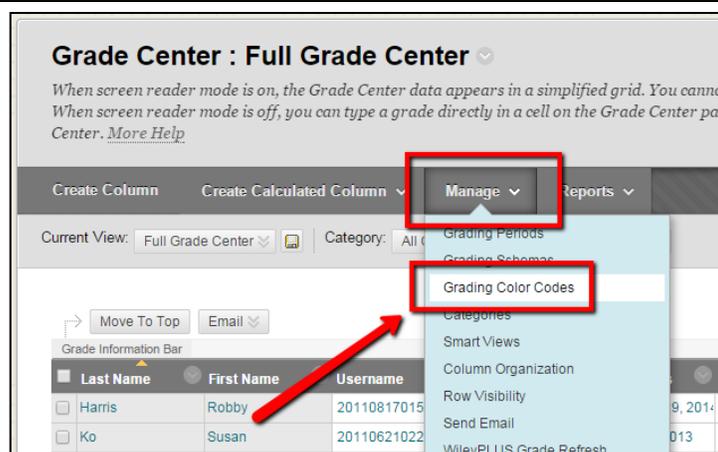


Step 2

Color-coding

Grading color codes apply background and text color to items in the Grade Center that meet specified criteria, such as grading status or grade range.

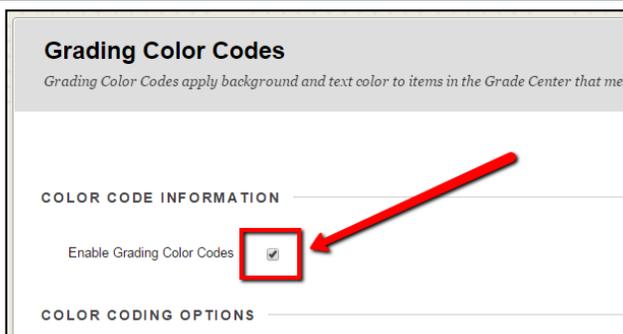
To add color codes, hover over the "Manage" tab at the top of the Grade Center page and select "Grading Color Codes" from the dropdown menu.



Step 3

Tick the box next to "Enable Grading Color Codes."

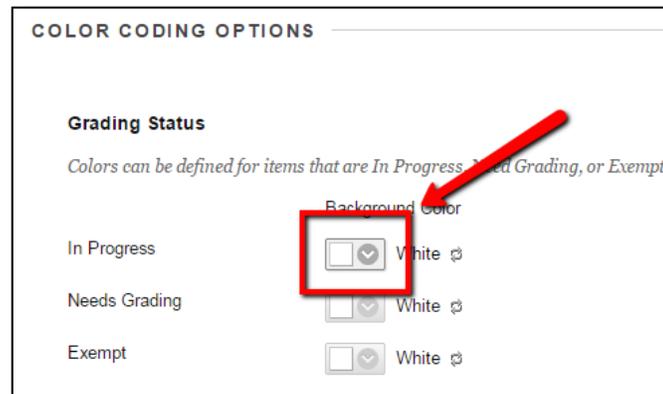
Note: To disable color coding at any point, simply return to the "Grading Color Codes" page, un-tick this box and click "Submit".



Step 4

Under "Color Coding Options," you have the option to define different colors for three grading categories: "In Progress," "Needs Grading" and "Exempt."

To select a color, click the dropdown menu to the right of the grading category you'd like to color.

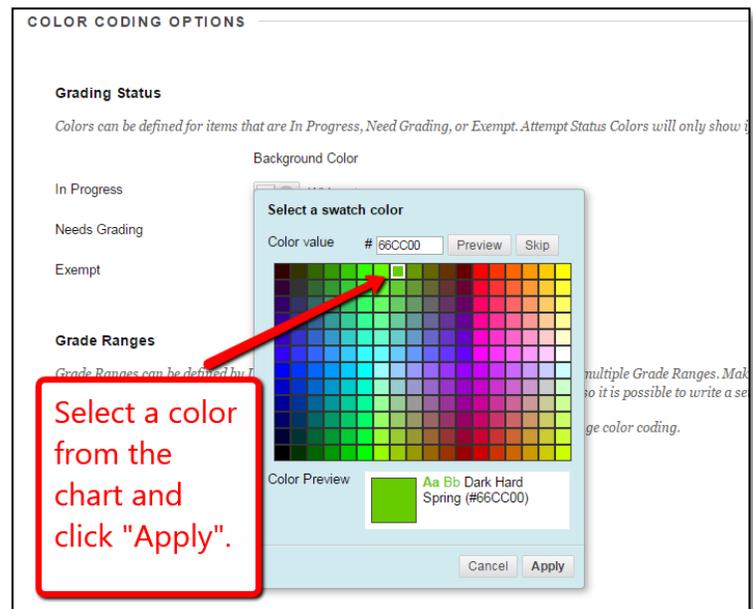
Step 5

Select a color from the chart by clicking it.

Note: If you are familiar with hexadecimal color coding, you may enter your preferred color code in the color value number box at center-top of the color selection window.

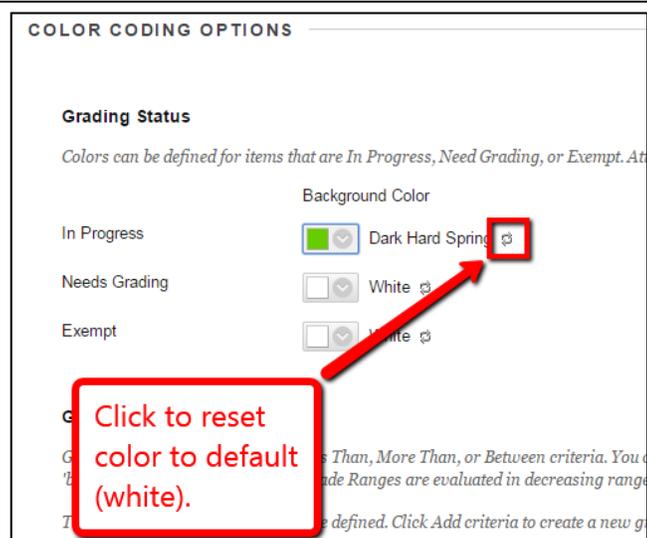
Click "Preview" to see a preview of the color.

Click "Apply" to apply your chosen color to this grading category.

Step 6

A preview of your chosen color now appears in the dropdown menu of the grading category. To reset the color to its default, click the reset icon next to the color's name.

Repeat this process for each grading category whose color you'd like to define.



Step 7

You may also define colors for specific grade ranges, for example to indicate grades below or above a particular score.

To do so, click the "Add Criteria" button in the "Grade Ranges" section.

Grade Ranges

Grade Ranges can be defined by Less Than, More Than, or Between criteria. You can 'between 10 and 20', but 10 does. Grade Ranges are evaluated in decreasing range order.

There is no color coding grade range defined. Click Add criteria to create a new grade range.

Add Criteria

Click **Submit** to proceed. Click **Cancel** to go back.

Step 8

Click the dropdown menu under the "Criteria" section to define the grade range to be colored. You may define this range in terms of either "More Than or Equal To," "Less Than," or "Between" a particular grade percentage. Enter the grade percentage(s) in the boxes to the right of the dropdown menu.

Grade Ranges

Grade Ranges can be defined by Less Than, More Than, or Between criteria. You can 'between 10 and 20', but 10 does. Grade Ranges are evaluated in decreasing range order.

There is no color coding grade range defined. Click Add criteria to create a new grade range.

Criteria

Between 95 % and 90 %

More Than or Equal To

Less Than

Between

Click **Submit** to proceed. Click **Cancel** to go back.

Step 9

Define the background color and text color by clicking on their respective color menus as in Step 5 above. You will see a preview of the color code under "Indicator Preview".

Click "Delete Criteria" in case you'd like to remove the color code.

Click "Submit" to apply the color codes and return to the Grade Center.

Background Color **Text** **Indicator Preview**

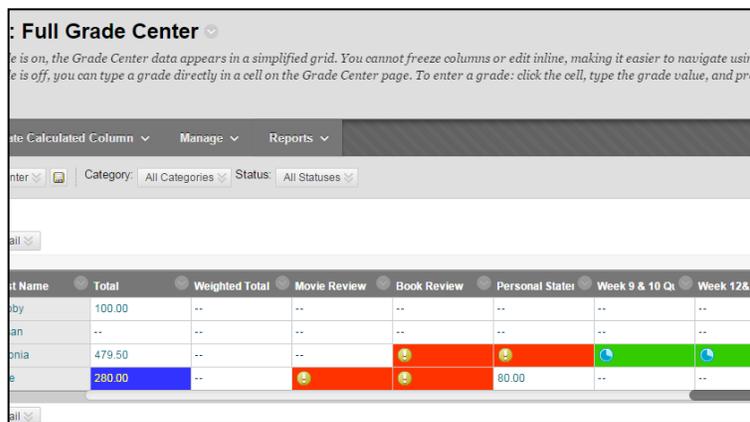
Light-Hard-Blue Yellow Text Delete Criteria

Click **Submit** to proceed. Click **Cancel** to go back.

Step 10

Review your color codes in the Grade Center.

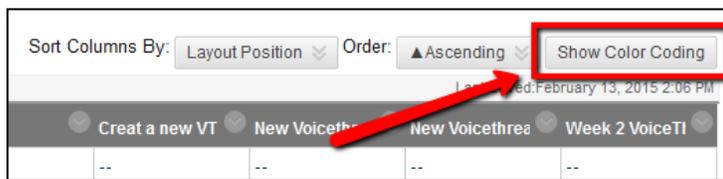
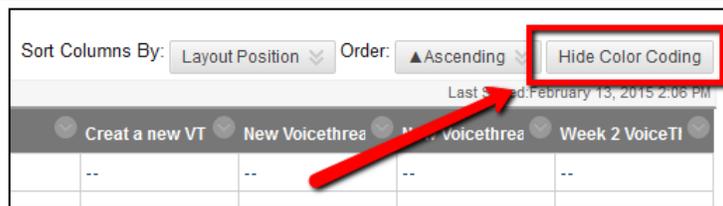
You may redefine your Grade Center color codes at any time by revisiting the "Grading Color Codes" page and repeating steps 4-9.



Step 11

You may toggle color-coding off at any time by clicking the "Hide Color Coding" button at the top-right of the Grade Center grid.

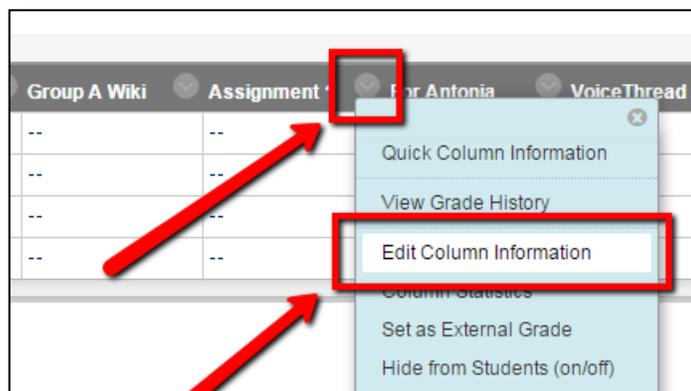
Toggle color-coding back on by clicking the same button which will then read "Show Color Coding."



Step 12

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.

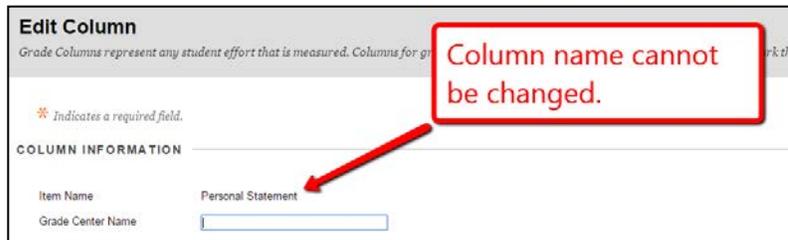
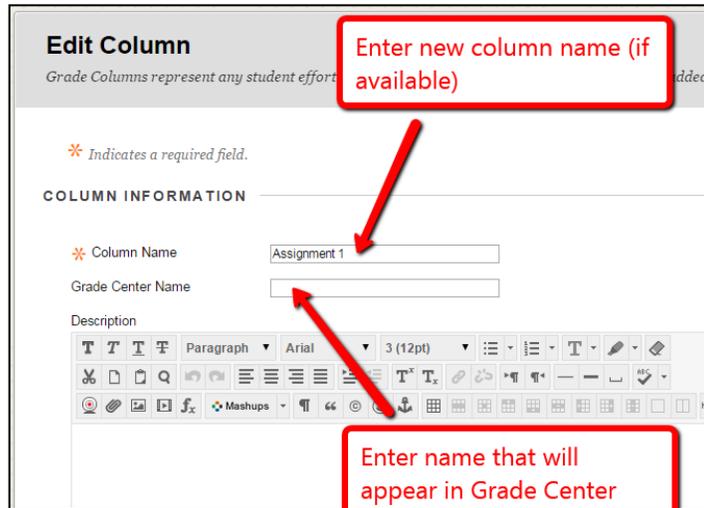


Step 13

Enter the new name of the column in the "Column Name" field (if available).*

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 13 cont."

*Note: 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.



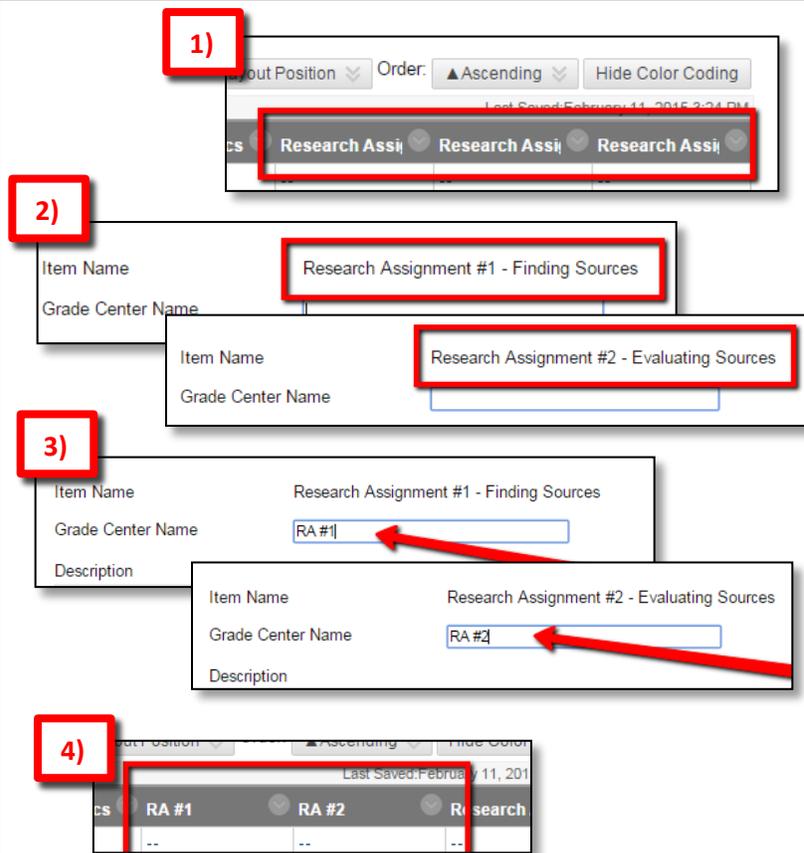
Step 13 cont.

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).

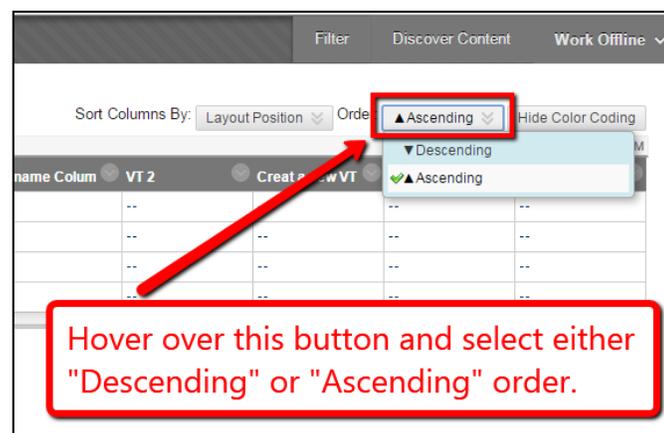
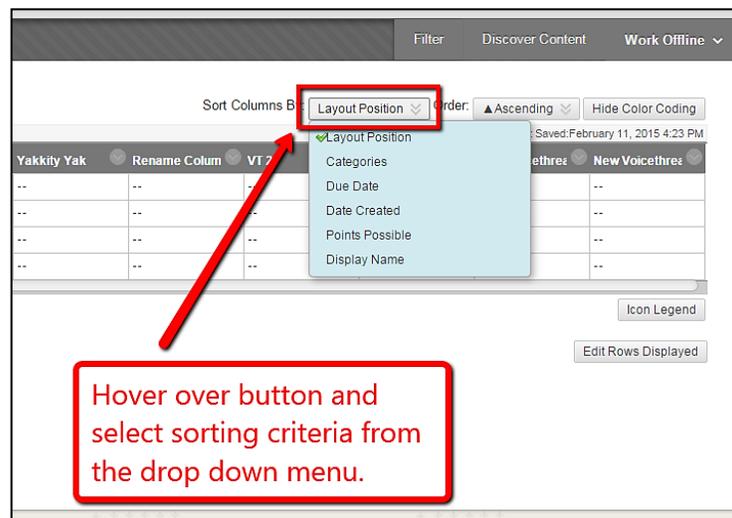


Step 14Sorting Columns

By default, the Grade Center organizes columns chronologically in the order they were created with the oldest columns at the left and more recently created columns to the right. This is called "Layout Position." Periodically, though, you might want to re-sort the order of columns according to other criteria.

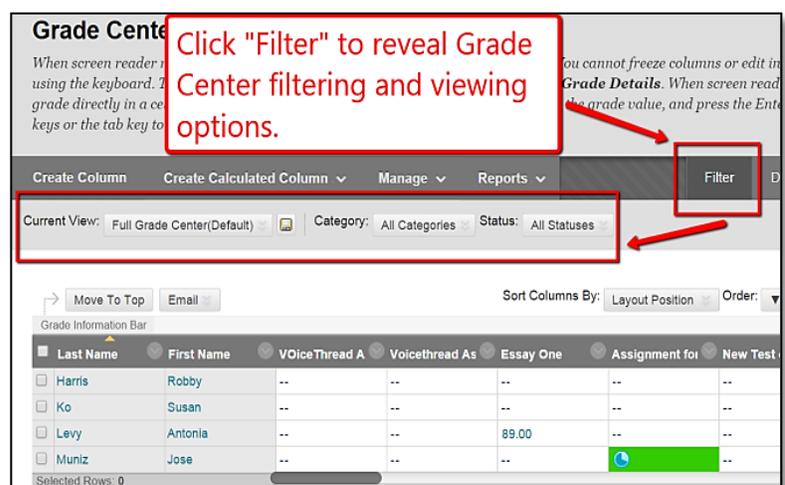
To re-sort Grade Center columns, hover over the grey button to the right of "Sort Columns By" at the top of the Grade Center Grid. Then, select the criteria from the drop down menu according to which you'd like to sort your columns, such as Categories, Due Date, etc.

Next, hover over the grey button to the right of "Order" and select either "Descending" or "Ascending" from the drop down menu. Columns in the grid will re-sort accordingly.

Step 15Filters

Filters allow you to only display Grade Center columns matching a specific grading category or grading status.

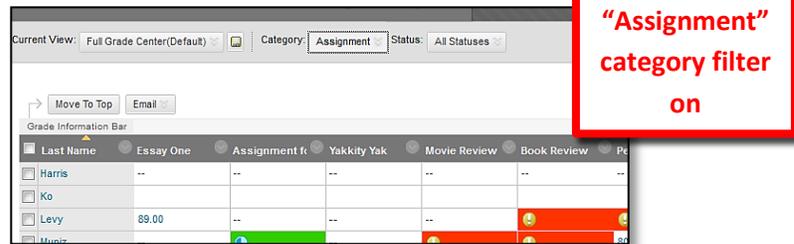
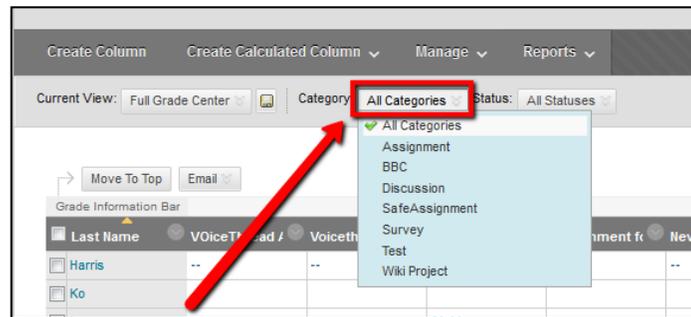
First, click the "Filter" tab in the grey bar above the Grade Center grid to reveal the filter options.



Step 16

To filter columns by category, hover over the "Category" button and select one of the grading category from the drop down menu.

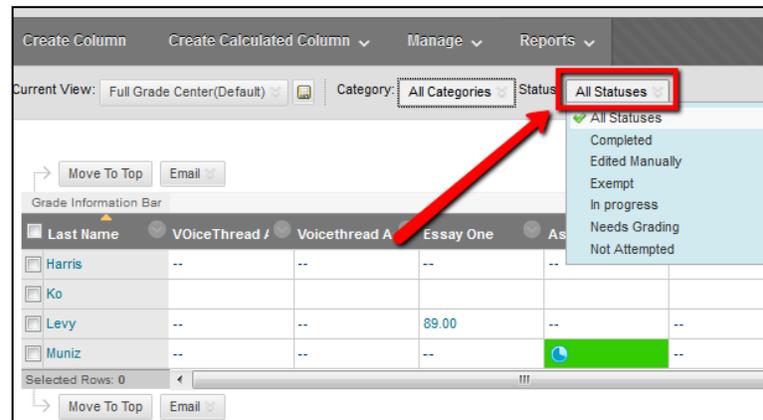
Now, only columns associated with the chosen grading category will be displayed.

Step 17

To filter columns by grading status (i.e. "Completed," "In progress," "Needs Grading," etc.), hover over the "Status" options and choose the grading status from the drop down menu.

Now, only columns associated with the chosen grading status will be displayed.

Note: You can combine the "Category" and "Status" filters in order to narrow your Grade Center view even further.



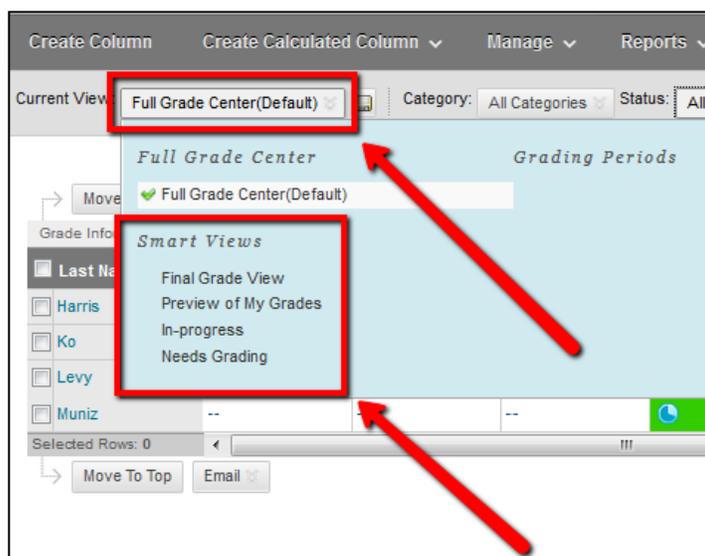
Continued on page 8.

Step 18Smart Views

Another option in the filter bar is "Smart Views." These are focused views of the Grade Center that display only the columns associated with specific categories and/or grading statuses.

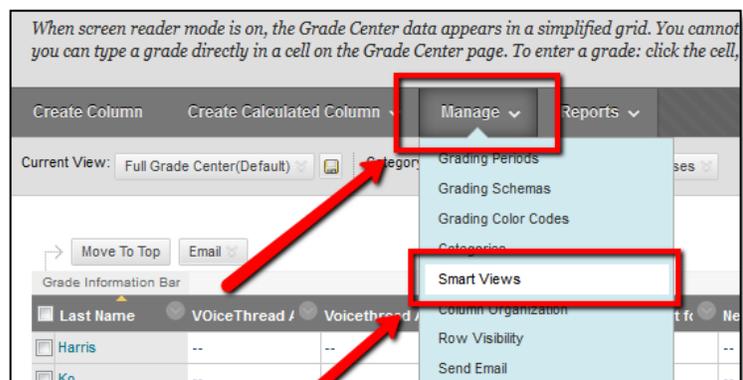
Essentially, "Smart Views" are saved filters that you don't have to recreate each time you want to see them.

In the Grade Center filter bar, hover over the "Current View" button to see all available default "Smart Views" and click the view you'd like to see.

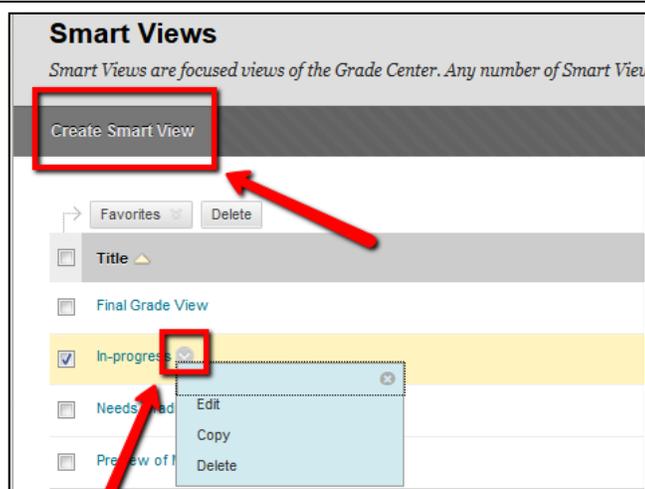
Step 19

Aside from Blackboard's pre-set Smart Views, you can create your own customized views.

To do so, click the "Manage" tab above the Grade Center grid and select "Smart Views" from the dropdown menu.

Step 20

Click "Create Smart View" to create a new Smart View, or click the dropdown menu button next to an existing Smart View and select "Edit" to modify it.



Step 21

On the next page, give the view a short, descriptive name and choose the criteria of the columns you want displayed.

Create Smart View
A Smart View is a focused look at the Grade Center. It shows only the data that matches a set of criteria. Smart Views are useful to quickly...

Indicates a required field.

SMART VIEW INFORMATION

Name

Description

Step 22

Under selection criteria, you can set the **type of view**. There are four views from which to choose. Each view has its own specific selection criteria:

1) Select **Performance** to show only those users who achieve a certain grade value on a specific assessed item. Select the user criteria, conditions and value.

2) Select **User** to view only selected students. Choose student names from the user list.

3) Select **Category and Status** to view only specific grading categories and/or selected students.

Optional: For any of these views, you may choose to **filter** the results according to various criteria. To do so, in the "Filter Results" field at the bottom of the "Selection Criteria" section, open the dropdown menu and make a selection from the list to define the filter criteria. You may also choose to include hidden columns/information by ticking the box to the right of the dropdown menu.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Type of 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.

Select Criteria

Select the user criteria to include

User Criteria: Grade on Animal Sounds Assessment (Score) Condition: Equal to Value: C

Filter Results

Grade on Assignment 1 (Score)
Grade on Assignment for Jose (Score)
Grade on Attendance of IIT SANDBOX (DEV) (2014-02-19 11:01:37 -0500 - 2014-02-19 11:07:10 -0500)

SELECTION CRITERIA

Type of 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.

Select Criteria

Select the users and columns to include in this Smart View. Hold down the

Users:

Selected Users
All Users
Selected Users

Levy, Antonia
Ko, Susan
Muniz, Jose
Harris, Robby

SELECTION CRITERIA

Type of 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.

Select Criteria

Select category and users to filter by status:

Categories: All Assignment BBC Discussion
Users: Selected Users

Levy, Antonia
Ko, Susan
Muniz, Jose
Harris, Robby

Filter Results

Columns to Display in Results:

All Columns
All Columns
None (Show user information only)
All columns shown to users
All columns hidden from users
Selected Columns Only
Selected Categories Only
Selected Grading Periods Only

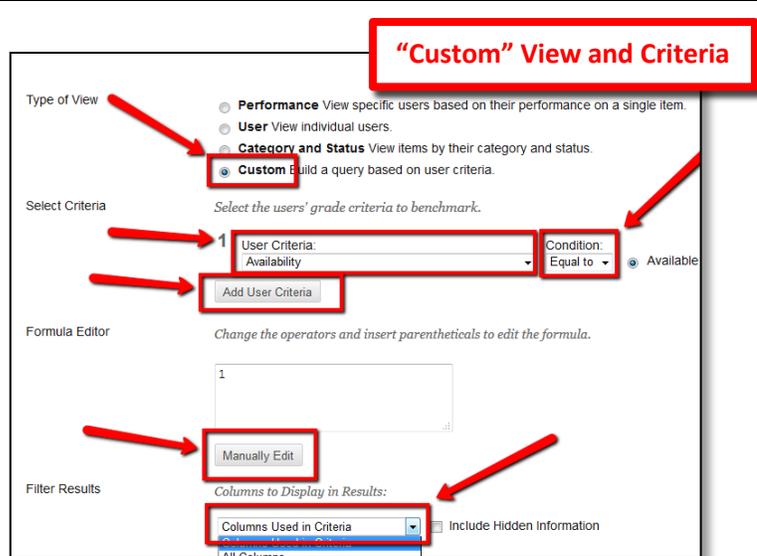
Include Hidden Information

Click Submit to proceed. Click

Step 22 cont.

4) Select **Custom** to create your own customized view based on criteria you define. You may add as many criteria as you like.

Click "Submit" to save the "Smart View" and return to the "Smart View" homepage.

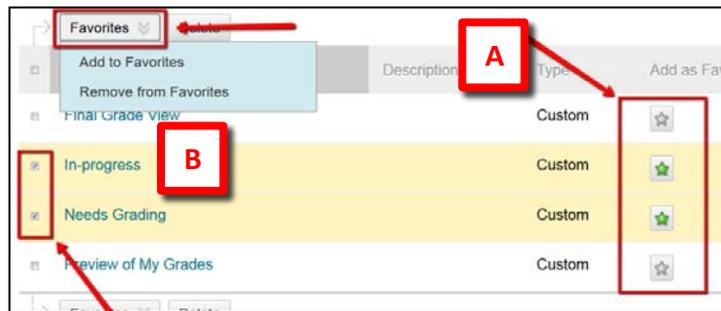
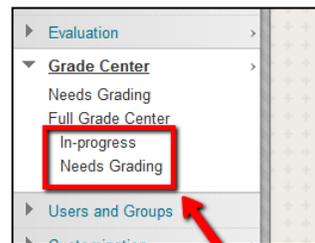


Step 23

You may add any of your Smart Views as a "Favorite," which then appear as sub-entries in the "Grade Center" section of the Control Panel.

To add Smart Views as Favorites, either

[A] click on the star icon in the "Add as Favorite" column, or [B] select a Smart View from the list, hover over the "Favorites" button at the top of the page and click on "Add to Favorites" in the dropdown menu.



Step 24

The "Full Grade Center" is the default view of the Grade Center. You may change the default view to any of your Smart Views by selecting a Smart View from the "Current View" dropdown menu and then clicking the diskette icon in the filter bar.

