



Troubleshooting Grade Center Issues

In order to troubleshoot issues with the Grade Center in Blackboard, you **must know** the following:

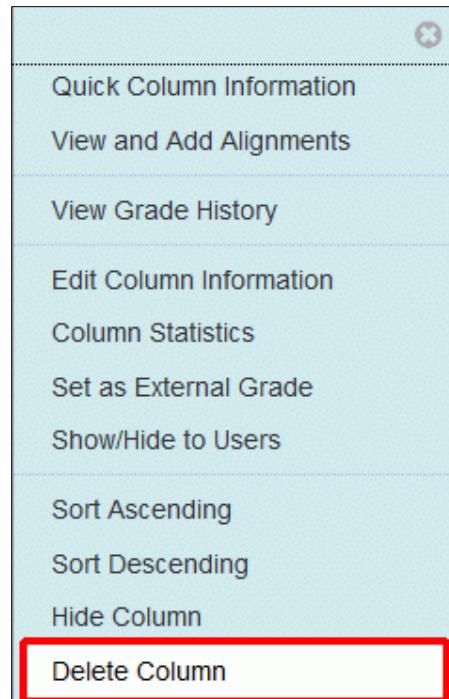
1. **Hiding a column in the Grade Center only hides it from the instructor's view.** It does **not** hide it from the students' view.
 - a. In order for the students not to be able to see column information when they check "My Grades," instructors need to select "No" in section 3, beside "Show this column in Grade Center calculations" when creating the column.

The screenshot shows a '3 Options' dialog box. It contains instructions: 'Select No for the first option to exclude this Grade Center column from calculations. Select No for the second option to make this Grade Center column unavailable in My Grades. Select Yes for the third option to display column statistics in My Grades.' Below this, there are two sections: 'Include this column in Grade Center calculations' and 'Show this column in My Grades'. Each section has two radio button options: 'Yes' (green) and 'No' (blue). The 'No' radio button in the 'Show this column in My Grades' section is highlighted with a red box.

To change that setting on an existing column, select "Show/Hide to Users" from the options in the column header to toggle between showing and hiding that column's information. A column not visible to students appears with a red slash in the column header.

2. **You must "unhide" a column you have hidden from yourself in order to check the settings** and to modify them if necessary. "Unhide" the column via Control Panel > Grade Center > Full Grade Center > Manage > Column Organization. Select the hidden columns and then choose "Show Selected Columns" from the options beneath the "Show/Hide" button.
3. **If an item is not to be included in the grade center calculations, you must "Edit Column Information" for the column and select "No" in section 3, beside "Include this column in Grade Center calculations."** (See the screen shot above.)
4. **If you import a Grade Center (exported from a previously taught course) into a new course shell (through an export/import of the entire course or just the Grade Center), you will need to modify the Grade Center to reflect the addition of any new assessments and/or the elimination of old assessments.** You should also update all Due Date.
5. **It is better to remove an unwanted column than to simply hide it.** In order to remove columns from the Blackboard Grade Center, you must know how they were created.

- a. Columns automatically created by Blackboard when you deploy a Test, Survey, Assignment, or Turnitin Assignment must first be removed from the Content Area in which they are deployed before you will see the “Delete Column” option in the drop down list in the Grade Center column header.
 - b. A Discussion Board, Journal, Blog, or Wiki set up to be graded will automatically create a corresponding column in the Grade Center. To remove those columns, you must first remove the Discussion Board, Journal, Blog or Wiki from the Content Area in which it is deployed. While removing that assessment, you will be asked what you want to do with the column in the Grade Center.
 - c. Columns that you manually create can be removed at any time, even when they contain grades.
6. **The Weighted Total column can be weighted by column, by category, or by a combination of both column and category.**
- a. When weighting by column, only those columns set to be included in the Grade Center calculations will be available for selection.
 - b. When weighting by column, if you have not already created all your columns, you will need to adjust the Weighted Total column *each* time a new column is added to the Grade Center.
 - c. Weighting by category affords the greatest degree of flexibility for setting up the Weighted Total in a class where you will be adding items as you go, provided that you assign each item to the correct category when it is deployed or created.
7. **If you are using the default “running” Total and Weighted Total, at the end of the semester you *must* enter a grade of zero for any assessment that was not completed; otherwise Blackboard will calculate that student’s grade without penalty for the incomplete item.**
8. When we troubleshoot in ITS, we start by reviewing three things:
- a. Your syllabus to see what you have indicated you will grade and, if you are weighting, how each item will be weighted.
 - b. Modify > Column Organization.
 - i. Is everything you say you are grading listed in that view?
 - ii. Is each item assigned to a category? Is it assigned to the correct category? And do those categories correspond with your weighting scenarios?



- c. Are the points associated with each item, the points you have specified in your syllabus?

Name	Grading Period	Category	Due Date	Date Created	Points Possible
Weighted Total	Not in a Grading Period	Calculated Grade	None	0 (may vary by student)	
Total (External Grade)	Not in a Grading Period	Calculated Grade	None	278 (may vary by student)	
SMA: World History	Not in a Grading Period	Other	Sep 26, 2012	Sep 5, 2012	5
Presentation Blogs	Not in a Grading Period	Blog	Sep 19, 2012	Sep 5, 2012	50
Ann's Practice Test- Requires Respondus LockDown Browser	Not in a Grading Period	Test	None	Sep 11, 2012	25
Word History Retrieved - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser	Not in a Grading Period	Test	Oct 10, 2012	Sep 11, 2012	16
Group Presentations	Not in a Grading Period	No Category	Sep 21,	Sep 21,	50

- d. Total and Weighted Total Columns.

- i. If you are weighting grades, have you included the correct columns and/or categories in your weighting? Note that by default all Blackboard tests, regardless of whether you call them a quiz, a test, a midterm or a final exam, are all automatically assigned to the category of "Test." If you have online quizzes that you want to weight as a category, create a "Quiz" category (Manage > Categories), then manually assign all quizzes to that category (Manage > Column Organization > select the quizzes > select Quiz from the options beneath the "Change Category to" button), and then assign the correct percentage weight to that category.
- ii. When weighting by category, if the points possible for each item within the category is not the same, you must decide whether to calculate the weighting "Equally" (sum of percentages earned/number of items) or "Proportionally" (total points earned/total points possible). By default, Blackboard will weight them "Equally." More often than not, ITS has found that most faculty would manually calculate the score using the "Proportionally" method.

9. **By default, Blackboard calculates grades out to at least 3 decimal places and displays two decimal places**, rounding as it goes.

10. **Manually calculate at least one student's grade** as a final check of your settings and make sure that everything is calculating as expected. Try the Mercer University online Weighted Average Grade Calculator:

<http://www.mercer.edu/registrarcalc/weightedaverage.html>.