Grade Center Tips and Tricks

Change your browser settings!
If changes you make in the Grade Center don't seem to "stick" until much later, your browser's cache is not being cleared properly. Changing these settings will solve the problem:

Internet Explorer 8, 9, 10

1. On the Menu Bar, click Tools, Internet Options
2. Under the "Browsing history" section, click the Settings button
3. Select "Every time I visit the webpage"
4. Click OK, then click OK again
5. Close Internet Explorer and then reopen it before doing any further work in Blackboard

Firefox 3.5 and newer

1. Type about:config in the Firefox Address Bar, then press Enter
2. Scroll down the page that appears until you find the entry: browser.cache.check_doc_frequency
3. If the Value column for this item does not contain 1, right-click on the entry, then click Modify
4. Type 1 in the text box provided, then click OK
5. Close Firefox and then reopen it before doing any further work in Blackboard

If you can't enter grades . . .
If you can't enter grades by typing them directly into a grade cell in the Grade Center, or if no columns appear to be "frozen" in place on the left side of the Grade Center window as you scroll to the right, you are working in Screen Reader Mode – you can switch back to the regular mode:

1. Open the Grade Center
2. Click the chevron arrows to the right of the Grade Center: heading at the top of the screen
3. Click on Turn Screen Reader Mode off

Entering grades directly into grade cells in Grade Center

1. Don't double-click or click twice in student grade cells before typing a grade into the cell in the Grade Center – double-clicking or clicking twice in the cell produces a negative score (i.e. -10)!
2. Press the Enter key after typing a score into a grade cell – this is the fastest, most efficient way to enter grades!
   a. If you click with the mouse in the next cell you'll need to click OK to continue entering grades
   b. If you press the Tab key you'll need to click into the next cell to proceed
Grade Details – An alternative method of entering grades

To enter grades for Blackboard graded items such as Exams/Tests and/or Assignments/SafeAssignments it's best to use the View Grade Details method rather than typing the scores directly into the student grade cell:

1. Click in any student grade cell, then click the chevron arrows icon on the right side of the cell
2. Click View Grade Details to access the Grade Details page for the current grade item for the current student
3. Click the left or right arrow button to the right of the "Column:" section to select a different column
4. Click the left or right arrow to the right of the "User:" section to select a different student
5. When you arrive at the desired student and/or column click the View Attempt button to view/grade submitted test/quiz questions or submitted assignment files, or click the Edit Grade button to simply enter scores and/or comments for this item
6. Click the Grade History tab to view the Grade History for this individual student and column

Display the "Grade Information Bar" to see "missing" column details

1. Click in any student grade cell for any column you wish to investigate
2. Look for the Grade Information Bar at the top of the grade rows to see the Grade Type:, Points Possible:, Displayed As:, and Visible to Users: information for that item
3. The Grade Information Bar information disappears when you click anywhere outside of a student grade cell

Display a count of enrolled students

1. To check to see if all students are currently shown: highlight the Manage option on the toolbar, then click Row Visibility
2. If any students are currently "hidden", check the box next to their name(s), click the Show Rows button at the top of the window, then click Submit
3. In the Grade Center, check the small check box at the left side of the Last Name column to select all rows
4. The Selected Rows: area in the lower-left corner of the Grade Center should show the count of currently displayed students
Display grades for ALL students

1. Click the chevron arrow icon next the student information cell
2. Click Show All Rows, OR
3. Highlight the Manage option on the toolbar, then click Row Visibility
4. Check the small box on the left side of the Last Name column to select all rows
5. Click the Show Rows button at the top of the window
6. Click the Submit button at the top or bottom of the window

Create Smart Views

Smart Views allow you to create/view custom views of the Grade Center to focus on just the information you want to see. There are several Smart Views already created, but you can also create your own Smart Views:

1. Highlight the Manage option on the toolbar, then click Smart Views
2. Click the Create Smart View button in the top-left corner
3. Add a unique name for this Smart View and a Description (optional)
4. Check the Add as Favorite box if you want to add this custom Smart View to the Control Panel below Grade Center for quick access to your most frequently used Smart Views
5. Choose the Type of View, Select Criteria, and Filter Results:
   a. Course Group View one or more Course Groups – allows you to display different groups of students in the Grade Center, provided you have used the Groups tool in the Control Panel to add students to different Course Groups
   b. Performance View specific users based on their performance on a single item – you can display different students based on performance on different grade columns and/or their status in the item (i.e. needs grading, no grade, etc.)
   c. User View individual users – allows you to select individual students to display from a list
   d. Category and Status View items by their category and status
   e. Custom Build a query based on user criteria – you can build a more complex query based on combinations of different criteria you select
6. Click the Submit button to create the Smart View

Using Smart Views

1. In the Grade Center window, click the Filter button to display the Filter Bar
2. Highlight the chevron arrow icon to the right of Current View: then click on the desired Smart View
3. To use Favorite Smart Views, click Grade Center in Control Panel, then click on the desired Smart View
4. Click Grade Center | Full Grade Center to return to the full Grade Center view

Use Calculated Columns to calculate grades your way!

You are no longer limited to ONE Total column and ONE Weighted Total column! You can create as many different total columns as you need and get creative with grade weighting using Calculated Columns!

1. Highlight the Create Calculated Column option on the toolbar, then click Average Column, Minimum/Maximum Column, Total Column, or Weighted Column
Extra credit
In older versions of Blackboard instructors could add a column worth zero total points possible to the Gradebook, and then give students points in that column for extra credit. It was simple, easy, and the Total column counted the extra credit properly.

In the Blackboard 8 Grade Center the Total column did NOT include the extra credit (or any other column with zero points possible assigned), but ignored it instead. In Blackboard 9.1 this bug has been fixed! You can once again add a column with 0 points possible to the Grade Center and then give students points in that column. Any Total columns that include the extra credit column(s) will calculate the extra credit properly.

Do you only see 2 – 3 rows in Grade Center? Here's the fix!
If you see only a small number of rows of student grades displayed in the Grade Center, there are two possible causes:

1. The number of rows displayed in the Grade Center depends on the screen resolution setting on your computer. If the resolution is set to 800 x 600 or less, only one row of student grades may appear. If set to around 1024 x 768, you may only see 2 – 3 rows of student data.

Change the resolution:

Windows XP:

- Go to the Windows Desktop area
- Right-click on any empty area of the Desktop
- Select Properties from the shortcut menu
- Click the Settings tab in the Display Properties dialog box
- Under 'Screen Resolution' move the slider bar to the right to select the desired higher resolution (1280 x 1024 or higher recommended)
- Click OK

Windows Vista:

- Go to the Windows Desktop area
- Right-click on any empty area of the Desktop
- Select Personalize from the shortcut menu
- Click Display Settings in the Control Panel window
- Move the slider bar to the right to select the desired higher resolution (1280 x 1024 or higher recommended)

Windows 7:

- Go to the Windows Desktop area
- Right-click on any empty area of the Desktop
- Select Screen resolution from the shortcut menu
- Select the desired Resolution:
  - Click OK
2. OR - The Grade Center may have been changed to display only selected students.
Change the Grade Center settings:
If the screen resolution isn't the problem, check the Grade Center user settings:

- Open the Grade Center
- Move the mouse pointer over the 'Manage' option at the top of the screen
- Click Row Visibility in the menu that appears
- In the Row Visibility screen, check the Status column for each user - any user whose status is 'Hidden' will not appear in the Grade Center
- Place a checkmark in the box to the left of each hidden user you wish to display, OR
- To select all users, check the box to the left of the Last Name column
- Click the Show Rows button
- Click Submit to return to the Grade Center

When Grade Center scroll bars stop working!
If you can no longer scroll vertically or horizontally in the Grade Center using the scroll bars, check the number of columns (items) you have added – if there are more than 100 items the scroll bars stop working as expected – once you scroll to the far right side of the Grade Center window, you can no longer scroll back to the left or up and down until you close the Grade Center and re-enter it!

Solution #1:

1. **Delete any unneeded columns**: click the chevron arrows to the right of the column header to be deleted, then click Delete Column
   a. If there is no Delete Column choice available, this item is either an Assignment, a SafeAssignment, or a Test/Survey which is graded by Blackboard and must be removed from the Content Area where it's deployed
   b. Any grades entered in this column will also be deleted!

Solution #2:

1. **Hide selected columns** so there are less than 100 columns visible at any time:
   a. Click Manage at the top of the Grade Center
   b. Click Column Organization
   c. Place a checkmark to the left of each column you wish to hide temporarily
   d. Highlight Show/Hide at the top of the Column Organization page
   e. Click Hide Selected Columns
   f. Click the Submit button at the bottom-right side of the page to return to the Grade Center – the selected columns should be hidden
   i. Hiding a column does NOT delete any grade data
   ii. Columns hidden in the Grade Center are NOT hidden from the students' My Grades view of the Gradebook
Missing vertical scrollbars in Grade Center

If the vertical scrollbar disappears completely from the right side of the Grade Center in Firefox, and/or the up and down scroll arrows don't move the screen up or down a few rows at a time in Internet Explorer, change the scrollbar size in your Windows XP Display Properties settings:

1. Logout of Blackboard and close the browser (Firefox or Internet Explorer)
2. Click the Windows Start Button, then click Control Panel
3. In the Control Panel window, double-click Display Properties or Display
4. Click the Appearance tab at the top of the Display Properties dialog box
5. Select a number less than 20 from the Size: option (17 is the default value)
6. Click OK
7. Click OK again to close the Display Properties dialog box, then close the Control Panel window
8. Reopen the browser and login to Blackboard again. The scrollbars and buttons should work properly in both Firefox and Internet Explorer

Scores displayed as "Text" aren't calculated in any Total columns

If the Primary Display option for any Grade Center column is set to "Text", any points entered into this column are NOT calculated in any Total columns.

Unfortunately, any new columns added to the Grade Center during an upload from a spreadsheet file are automatically set to "Text" with Zero Points Possible!

To include these grades in Total columns:
1. Click the chevron arrows next to the column heading in the Grade Center
2. Click Edit Column Information
3. Change the Primary Display from Text to Score, Percentage, or Letter
4. Change the Points Possible value from 0 to the desired value
5. Click Submit

Use the Grade Information bar to check each column to see if any items are set to display as “Text” if any Total or Weighted Total columns do not total correctly.