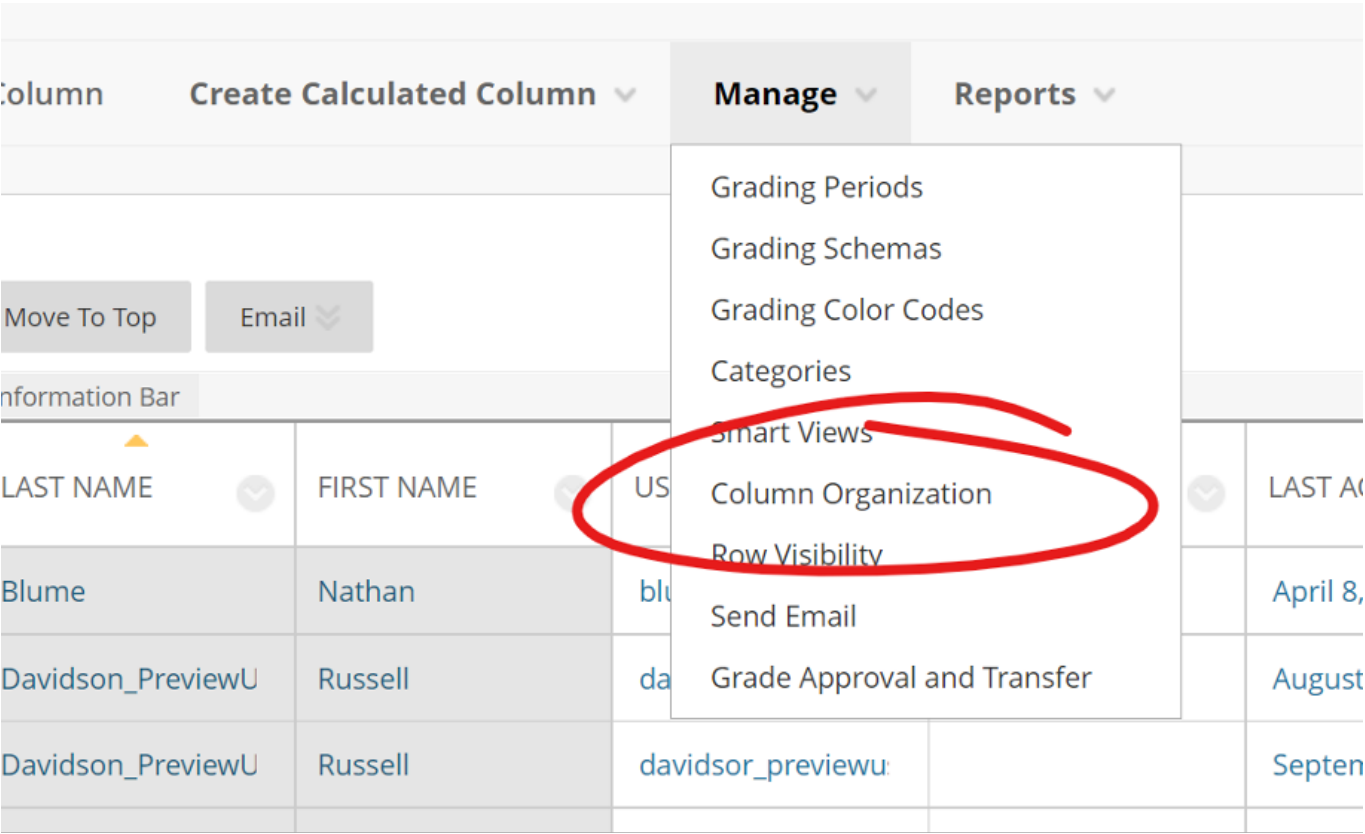


Grade Center Check-in

By Russell Davidson, Associate Director for Digital Education

Blackboard’s Grade Center is a powerful tool that can simplify the process of tracking student performance and calculating grades. But, like any tool, it is only effective when used properly and if used improperly it can do more harm than good. As a result, it is a good idea to check in on your Grade Center’s setup before finalizing grades for entry in Banner.

Key to reviewing the Grade Center in a classic-style course site is [the Column Organization page](#). This page provides a quick overview of your Grade Center, showing all columns, hidden or not, their point values, and what category has been applied to each.



Show and Delete Unused Columns

It is not uncommon for courses to have some number of hidden columns in the Grade Center. While hiding a column that is not currently in use can be a useful way to keep the Grade Center view manageable, some courses contain hidden columns that are holdovers from previous terms. The first step in making sure your Grade Center is set up and scoring

properly is to show all these unused columns in the main view. The Column Organization page lets you see ALL these columns. Check the boxes left of their names, then choose SHOW / HIDE at the bottom of the page and choose SHOW to make the columns visible in the main Grade Center Page. Make sure to click SUBMIT to save your change.

Then, back on the full Grade Center page, confirm the columns do not have any scores in them, then delete them. If an unused column is connected to an assignment or test that has been added to a content area, you'll need to delete those content-area items before you can delete their Grade Center columns.

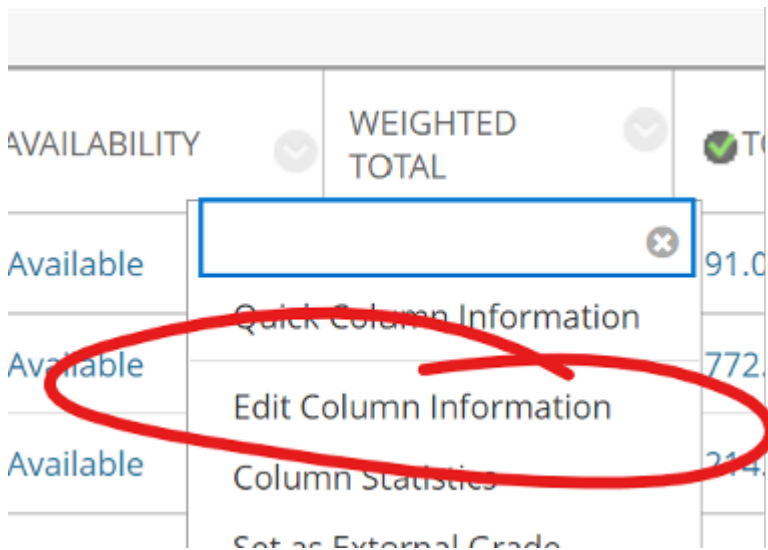
Check Point Totals

If you are using a POINT-TOTAL to calculate final grade, rather than a weighted total, next you will want to make sure each remaining column has the right number of points assigned. This is most easily done from the Column Organization page's POINTS POSSIBLE column. If you are using a point-total, you can skip the weighted total bits that follow and jump ahead to Zero Points.

	Name ▾	Grading Period	Category ▾	Due Date ▾	Date Created ▾	Points Possible ▾
✚	☐ Homework 01	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment	None	None	25
✚	☐ Homework 2	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment	None	None	0
✚	☐ Homework 3	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment	None	None	25
✚	☐ Test 01	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment	None	Feb 23, 2016	60
✚	☐ Test 02	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment	None	Mar 1, 2022	60
✚	☐ Test 03	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment	None	Sep 6, 2016	10

Check Weighted Total

If you are using a WEIGHTED TOTAL, then you need not worry about points possible, but you *will* want to confirm the category assignments are correct for each column. First, go to the FULL GRADE CENTER and click the options button next to the Weighted TOTAL column heading, and choose EDIT COLUMN INFORMATION.



Scroll down to the SELECTED COLUMNS area, and make sure you have the right columns and categories selected, and that their percentages are correct. The “Weight Columns” section lets you decide whether columns in a category are valued equally or proportionally. Put another way, if you have a 20-point column and a 10-point column in the ASSIGNMENT category, should the 20-point column have an equal weight to the 10-point column (converted to a percentage before it is factored in), or should it be worth twice as much (Proportionally).

Selected Columns:
Enter the weight percentage for each item. Percentages should add up to 100 percent.

✱

15

%

Category: Survey

✕

Weight Columns:

☒ Equally
 ☐ Proportionally

☒ Drop Grades

OR

☐ Use only the

☐ Lowest Value to Calculate
 ☐ Highest Value to Calculate

Drop Highest Grades

Drop Lowest Grades

✱

85

%

Category: Assignment

✕

Weight Columns:

☒ Equally
 ☐ Proportionally

☒ Drop Grades

OR

☐ Use only the

☐ Lowest Value to Calculate
 ☐ Highest Value to Calculate

Drop Highest Grades

Total Weight: 100.00%

You will also want to make note of which CATEGORIES you are using and which COLUMNS. In the next step, we are going to make sure these are all appropriately assigned. Finally, make sure the Total Weight at the bottom of this window displays 100.00%.

Check Column Categories

The penultimate step for weighted totals is to make sure your columns are not being counted twice. For example, if you have the ASSIGNMENT category set to 25% of the total, you will want to make sure ONLY the assignments have the assignment category, not any columns that are getting calculated separately, like "Final Paper." The easiest way to do this



is from the Column Organization page, which lists the category for all your columns. You can also *change* a category from this page by checking the box left of an item and choosing CHANGE CATEGORY TO at the bottom of the page.

Zero Points

The final step for both Weighted- and Point-Total grading is to make sure that you give students a 0 on any work they have not completed. Blackboard's Grade Center defaults to a running total. This means that any empty cell in the Grade Center (any cell marked "-") is not being factored into the student's grade. This is referred to as a "null" grade and is exempt from calculation. If a student has not completed an assessment and has not earned an exemption in some way, they should be given a 0 for that assessment.

Need Help?

If this all sounds like a bit too much, contact the us and schedule an in-person or online appointment. We would be happy to walk through your Grade Center with you to ensure your students' grades are being calculated accurately.