

Blackboard Focused Workshop Gradebook

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I. Creating and Managing Items in the Gradebook

The Gradebook posts all Student grades associated with Tests and Assignments. The Gradebook also accommodates scores for work completed outside of the Blackboard Learning System. Instructors may also view the results of Surveys through the Gradebook.

The Gradebook opens to the View Spreadsheet page. The Spreadsheet lists Students in rows and graded items in columns. All features of the Gradebook can be accessed through the Spreadsheet.

Items in the Gradebook are categorized. This enables Instructors to:

- sort and filter items by category. For example, Instructors may only want to view items in the Exam category on the View Spreadsheet page.
- weight categories differently. For example, items in a Homework category may be weighted less than items in an Exam category.

Gradebook Settings

Instructors use the Spreadsheet Settings page to adjust the Student information that displays in the Gradebook. Instructors can also choose spreadsheet display options for the My Grades tool to hide Class Average or Comments, if desirable.

Manage Categories

The Manage Gradebook Categories page displays categories and category descriptions that are included in the Gradebook. Instructors may create new Gradebook categories. Categories can be used in weighting grades. For example, items in the Exam Category may have a greater weight than items in the Assignment category.

Manage Display Options

Instructors may make changes to the display options from the Manage Display Options page. Display Options define the scale for presenting grades.

- Score – Score is the raw score earned by the Student.
- Percentage – Percentage is calculated by using the following calculation: $(\text{Raw Score}/\text{Points Possible}) * 100$
- Letter – Letter is a letter grade that equals a specific range of Percentages. For example, 94% to 97% equals an "A" Letter grade. Instructors may modify these settings on the Modify Grade Display Options page.
- Text – Text allows the Instructor to enter any string as the score for a Gradebook item. It does not have any calculable value. Scores that are entered as Text cannot be set to a numerical range. It is not possible to copy this display option, or modify the possible values.

Entering Grades

- *By Item*-Click on the name of the Gradebook Item, then click **Item Grade List**. You will be able to use the TAB key and enter grades for all users.
- *By User* – Click on the name of the user in the gradebook, then click **User Grade List**. You will be able to use the TAB key and enter all grades for that user.
- Grades can be entered for an individual user/item by clicking on the dash in the appropriate gradebook cell.

Grade Totals and the Null Option

Current Gradebook calculations for Total and Weighted Total include item that have not been scored. An option to ignore ungraded items, or nulls, when calculating the total and weighted total is available to instructors. When nulls are ignored, the Total and Weighted Total columns in the Gradebook are renamed to Running Total and Running Weighted Total

Follow the steps below to set the Gradebook to ignore ungraded items.

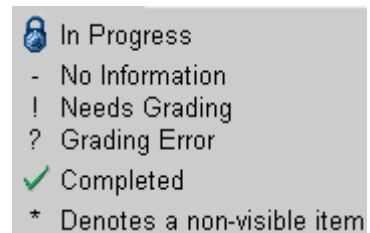
1. Open the Gradebook.
2. Click Total or Weighted Total. After setting one to ignore or include ungraded items, be sure to set the other one.
3. Click Item Information.
4. Select Yes or No for Ignore Ungraded Attempts.

Tip: The Running Total and Running Weighted Totals should use the Percentage or Letter Grade display option when ignoring ungraded items. This will display student performance only on completed items.

Gradebook Symbols

Every Student has a value for every Gradebook item. If the value is not a representation of the grade, it will be one of the following symbols:

- Padlock: In Progress. A Student is currently using the Assessment or Assignment. (or has been locked out)
- Dash: No Information. A Student has not taken the Assessment or submitted the Assignment.
- Exclamation Point: Needs Grading. The item has been submitted by the Student and needs to be reviewed by the Instructor. Tests that include Essay questions will have this symbol when they are submitted.
- Question Mark: Gradebook Error.
- Checkmark: Item has been completed by the Student.
- Asterisk: Item is not visible.



II. Grade Weighting

Instructors can set a weight for each Gradebook item to determine a final grade. For example, a final exam may be worth 25 percent of a Student's grade while a reading quiz may be worth only 10 percent. Instructors can adjust Gradebook weights according to category or item.

Select **Gradebook** on the Course Control Panel.

Select **Weight Grades**.

- a. Click **Weight by Category** to weight grades by the category they are assigned. For example, all Assignments will have the same weight and all Quizzes will have the same weight. Enter the percentage to weight each category in the boxes to the left.
- b. Click **Weight by Item** to weight grades by name as they are defined in the Gradebook. For example, the mid-term exam can be weighted differently than the final exam. Enter the percentage to weight each item in the boxes to the left.

Important Information about Weighted Grades

- Gradebook items that have not been completed by Students are still calculated in the weight. Instructors may exclude items from calculations on the Add/Modify Gradebook Item page, however, this is not optimal if the grade will be considered as part of the final grade at a later point. If the instructor is unsure, include the Gradebook Item in the calculations and give it a weight of zero. It is then quite easy to change the weight of grades throughout the term.
- The percentages for Weight by Category must add up to 100 percent. An error message will appear if the percentages do not add up to 100 percent.
- The percentages for Weight by Item need not equal 100 percent. This allows the Instructor the freedom to adjust weighting throughout the term. Please note that a total of more than 100 percent is not allowed, and a total of less than 100 percent, while allowed, will slightly inflate the weighted total of individual items.

When Weight by Category is selected, the following information will apply:

- Each item in a category is worth the same weight, regardless of total points. For example, if quizzes are worth 25% as a category, a quiz worth 50 points will not be weighted more than a quiz worth 15 points.
- The weight for each item is calculated by taking the weight for the category and dividing that by the number of items in the category.
- The number of items in the category is counted as the number of items the Instructor has created in that category. Therefore, if Quizzes have a 100% weight and a Student takes an exam and gets a perfect score, his or her weighted total will be 100%. If the Instructor adds a second quiz, the Student's weighted total will drop to 50%, since the weight for each item is divided by two. Since the Student has not taken the second exam yet, their score for it is zero.

III. Gradebook Download and Upload

Download

Select **Gradebook** on the Course Control Panel.

Select **Download Grades**

Select **Tab** as the delimiter type, and click Submit.

Click on the Download button and select a location to save the file. (Downloading the file does not remove that information from the gradebook)

Upload

Instructors may upload Gradebook information into the Blackboard Learning System from the Upload Gradebook page. Instructors may select a specific Gradebook item, such as a Quiz or a Test, to upload, as well as, specific Student grades within the Gradebook item to upload. **Note:** For best results, Instructors should manipulate and upload a Gradebook that has been downloaded from the Blackboard Learning System. It is not advised that Instructors create a new Gradebook from scratch then upload it.

IV. Other Tools

Course Statistics

The course statistics can be used in a number of ways to help you effectively manage your course. You can easily see which students are accessing your course site, when, and how often they are doing so. Also, by analyzing the statistics, you can determine when the heaviest usage is and tailor your schedule around that. For example, if students are most active on Saturday and Sunday, it would be important to post announcements or assignments on Friday. You can also get data about how many times students have posted messages in particular forums and use that data to assign grades for the Discussion Board. The Course Statistics control panel displays data in a graphical format. You can also export the data into a .csv format, which can be opened with Excel.

Early Warning System

The Early Warning System is a tool used to communicate warnings to Students or Observers that a performance problem is beginning to appear or has become more serious. Warnings can be generated based on graded performance, late or missing course work, or attendance within the online course. The Instructor can choose to communicate a particular warning to the Student. In addition, the Instructor has control over the message each time a warning is communicated. The Instructor can use the default message or modify it to more accurately communicate the seriousness of the situation.

The Early Warning System does not continuously monitor the course. The Instructor must check the Early Warning System periodically and click Refresh to discover incidents of Student performance that trigger an alert. Early Warning System keeps a log of alerts sent to users. The log is searchable and can be used to verify that a Student was alerted to a problem.

Performance Dashboard

The Performance Dashboard tool provides a window into all types of user activity in a course or organization. All users enrolled in the course are listed, with pertinent information about that user's progress and activity in the course.

V. Other Tips

Extra Credit - to add to Total Points for course

Note: These directions only work if you are not using any grade weighting scheme.

1. Create a **New Item** called Extra Credit, worth **0 points**, with **0% Weight**. For each student, enter the number of points you wish to add to their *total points for the course*.
2. Change the **Display Options** for the **Total** to **Display as Percentage**.
3. Change the **Display Options** for the **Weighted Total** to be **Not Visible to Students**.

Drop a Quiz or Test Grade

There are two options when this functionality is desired. One is to "Reset" the student's lowest quiz grade so that the value goes back to null. This works well for small classes where you can easily identify the lowest score. For larger classes, you may want to use the more complex method below:

1. The first step is to go into the gradebook and to make all the quizzes display as a percentage, and to exclude them from the calculations.
2. Next step is to add a Total Quiz Grade column:
3. Click the **Add Item** button in the Gradebook. From the Add Item screen give the item a name (like "Total Quiz Grade") for the points put the total number of points for all the quizzes, in this case 105. Click **Submit**
4. Once you have added the Total Quiz Grade column you need to adjust its weight:
5. Click the **Weight Grades** button in the gradebook. Choose **Weight by Item**. Type the total weight for all the quizzes in the box next to the Total Quiz Grade item, in this case 15. Fill in the weights of the other items in the list.
6. The next step is to download the gradebook to work on in Excel:
7. Click the **Download Grades** button in the gradebook. In the Download Grades screen click the **Download** button, then click the **save** button, then browse to the location you would like to save the gradebook (like My Documents, or your Desktop) and click the **Save** button. Now the gradebook is saved to your computer as a .CSV (Coma Separated Value file) that Excel can read.
8. Start Microsoft Excel and open the downloaded gradebook file. Replace the – in the cell for the Total Quiz Grade Column of the row of the first student with $=\text{(SUM(B2:G2) – MIN(B2:G2))}/5$. That's the formula that you need to use for this class, but it will change for other classes. B2 is the Excel cell that corresponds with Quiz 1, G2 corresponds to the Quiz 6 cell. Once you have input the formula in the first Row of the Total Quiz Grade column, you can cut-and-paste it into the other rows, Excel will automatically update the formula.
9. Save the gradebook file and quit Excel.
10. The final step is to upload the Total Grade Column back into Blackboard.
11. In your Blackboard course control panel click **Gradebook**. Next click the **Upload Grades** button. Click the **Browse** button then browse to the gradebook file on your computer and double click it. In the Choose Column to Import screen **click the radio button next to Total Quiz Grade for both the Choose Imported Item and the Choose Existing Item sections**. Click the **Submit** button. Next click **Select All** to upload the grade to every student. Finally click the **Submit** button.

**This will only work if your quizzes are displayed as percentages because they are each worth a different number of points.