How to Create Grade Columns

If a grade column is not created automatically, you can create grade columns for any student work you want to grade. For example, you can create a column to record participation grades.

Example:

In the preceding image, two grade columns are shown:

- Participation: Created manually by an instructor to record participation grades.
- Chapter 1 Test: Created automatically by the system when an instructor created and deployed the test.

The data in the "Participation" column is populated when an instructor manually assigns the grades. The data in the "Chapter 1 Test" column is populated when students complete their tests and the test is scored automatically by the system. If the test includes questions that an instructor must grade, such as an essay or short answer question, the needs grading icon (⾃) appears in the students’ cells after the tests are submitted.

When you create Grade Center columns, you can do the following:

- Choose how the grade appears. You can display the grades in the Grade Center grid and on students’ My Grades pages as a score, letter, text, percentage, or as complete/incomplete.
- Associate it with a category and grading period.
- Exclude or include the column in any potential Grade Center calculations, such as when creating a calculated column.
- Determine whether the column’s results appear on students’ My Grades pages.

Use the following steps to create a grade column.

1. In the Grade Center, click Create Column on the action bar.

2. On the Create Grade Column page, type a brief, descriptive Column Name. This name becomes the column name in the Grade Center and on students’ My Grades pages. If this name is too long to display clearly in the Grade Center, you can type a short, descriptive name in the Grade Center Name box.

   Only the first 14-15 characters typed in either name box appear in the column heading in the Grade Center grid. If you point to the column heading, you can see its full name on the Grade Information Bar.
3. Optionally, type a **Description**. You can use the content editor functions to format the text. Information provided here appears to students when they click the item name in *My Grades*.

4. Make a selection in the **Primary Display** drop-down list. The selection is the grade format shown in the Grade Center and to students in *My Grades*. If you created any custom grading schemas, they appear in the list. Five default options appear:

   - **Score**: A numeric grade appears in the column. This is the default setting. If you do not make a selection, the score appears in the grid.
   - **Letter**: A letter grade appears in the column. The default grading schema is used to assign letter grades. For example, a score of 21/30 equals 70% and appears as a C.
   - **Text**: Text appears in the column when you create a custom text grading schema. Examples of text values include: Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor –OR- Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. If you create no custom text grading schema, and the **Text** option is selected, you are allowed to type text in the column’s cells. If you choose to share the column results with students in *My Grades*, they will see the text values for their grades.

   *When you convert a numeric score to text without creating a custom text grading schema, and then return to numeric scoring, values that cannot be converted display a zero after conversion. Therefore, if you want to include text as grades, Blackboard recommends creating a custom text grading schema and associating it with the columns."

   - **Percentage**: A percentage appears in the column. For example, a score of 21/30 appears as 70%.
   - **Complete/Incomplete**: When a student submits an item, a check mark (✔) appears in the column, regardless of the score achieved.

5. Optionally, make a selection in the **Secondary Display** drop-down list. The default setting is *None*. The same options appear except for the option chosen as the **Primary Display** and **Text**. The default **Text** option does not appear as you cannot edit a secondary value from a column's cell. If you create a customized grading schema based on text and have not used it as the **Primary Display**, it appears in the list. In the Grade Center column, the secondary value appears in parentheses. The secondary value does not appear to students.
6. Optionally, you can associate the column with a category by making a selection in the **Category** drop-down list. The default setting is **No Category**. You can use categories to filter Grade Center data, create smart views that focus the view of the Grade Center data, and create calculated columns.

![Category Drop-down List]

7. In the **Points Possible** box, type the total points. Entries must be numeric.

8. If grading periods exist, you can associate the column with a grading period by making a selection in the **Grading Period** drop-down list. If no grading periods exist, the drop-down list does not appear. You can use grading periods to filter Grade Center data and create calculated columns.

![Grading Period Drop-down List]

9. Optionally, select the option next to **Due Date** and type a date (mm/dd/yyyy) or use the pop-up **Date Selection Calendar**. Columns that you assigned a due date to are associated automatically with a grading period if the due date falls within the date range of the grading period. The option to automatically associate columns with a grading period is set when creating or editing a grading period. You can use due dates with the Early Warning System/Retention Center to generate an alert if a test or assignment is not submitted on time. To learn more, see [Early Warning System](#) or [Using the Retention Center](#).

10. Select the **Options**.

    - **Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations**: Select **Yes** to make the column available for potential inclusion when creating calculated columns.
    - **Show this Column to Students**: Select **Yes** to display the column to students in **My Grades**.
    - **Show Statistics (average and median) for this Column to Students in My Grades**: Select **Yes** to include statistical information with the grade value when shown to students.

---

Blackboard **Learn**: Creating and Managing Grade Center Columns

© Copyright 2016 Blackboard Inc.
11. Click **Submit**.

After you create a grade column, you can:

- Associate a rubric with it to make grading easier and less subjective.
- Assign grades.
- Include the column when creating calculated columns.