

Categories and Weighted Grades in Blackboard

Using weighted grades requires three steps. Categories must be set up, the Weighted Total column is edited to use these categories to calculate the final grade in the course, and then the graded items in the course are assigned categories.

1. Access the **Full Grade Center**
2. Hover your mouse over the **Manage** button
3. Click **Categories**

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Full Grade Center interface. At the top, it says "Grade Center : Full Grade Center" with a dropdown arrow. Below that is a help text: "The Full Grade Center displays all columns and rows in the Grade Center and is the default view of the Grade Center. [More Help](#)".

There are four main buttons: "Create Column", "Create Calculated Column", "Manage", and "Reports". The "Manage" button is highlighted, and its dropdown menu is open, showing the following options: "Grading Periods", "Grading Schemas", "Grading Color Codes", "Categories", "Smart Views", "Column Organization", "Row Visibility", and "Send Email". The "Categories" option is highlighted with a black box.

Below the menu is a table with columns: "LAST ACCESS", "AVAILABILITY", "RUNNING TOTAL", and "WEIGHTED TOTAL". The table has three rows of data:

	LAST ACCESS	AVAILABILITY	RUNNING TOTAL	WEIGHTED TOTAL
<input type="checkbox"/>		Available	0.00	--
<input type="checkbox"/>		Available	0.00	--
<input type="checkbox"/>		Available	0.00	--

At the bottom, there is a "Selected Rows: 0" indicator and another "Move To Top" and "Email" button.

- Blackboard has some default categories already set up
To add categories, click the **Create Category** button

Categories

A Grade Center Category is a classification of Grade Center Columns. Categories are used to organize and view Grade Center data and can be used when creating Calculated Columns to perform operations on all Grade Columns in a Category. The Grade Center has nine default Categories: Assignment, Blog, Discussion, Journal, SafeAssignment, Self and Peer, Survey, and Test that cannot be removed or edited. [More Help](#)

Create Category

<input type="checkbox"/>	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	COLUMNS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assignment		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attendance		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class Participation and Homework		HW 1,HW 2,HW 3,HW 4,HW 5,HW 6,HW 7,HW 8,HW 9
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discussion		

- Return to **Full Grade Center** after adding categories
- Click the menu button (downward pointing arrow) for the **Weighted Total** column
- Click **Edit Column Information**

Grade Center : Full Grade Center

The Full Grade Center displays all columns and rows in the Grade Center and is the default view of the Grade Center. [More Help](#)

Create Column Create Calculated Column Manage Reports

Grade Information Bar Possible: 100 | Major Reading and Writing Projects | Project 1: Illustrating Ideas | 0 / 3 students have su

Sort Columns By:

<input type="checkbox"/>	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	LAST ACCESS	AVAILABILITY	WEIGHTED TOTAL	PROJECT ILLUSTRATING IDEAS	GATHER DATA / REPOF
<input type="checkbox"/>	H	Lee		Available	--	--	--
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Jessica		Available	--	--	--
<input type="checkbox"/>	H	Crystal		Available	--	--	--

- Quick Column Information
- Edit Column Information
- Column Statistics
- Set as External Grade
- Hide from students (on/off)
- Sort Ascending
- Sort Descending
- Hide from Instructor View
- Delete Column

- Scroll down to the **Select Columns** area of the Edit Weighted Column page.
- Click on a category to include

10. Click the right pointing arrow to add the category to the **Selected Columns** list
Repeat for each category

Note: If you have the option of using a running total or not. A running total ignores columns in which no grades have been entered so that a student has a sense of their overall grade in the course throughout the term. This is the best setting to use. Be sure to enter a 0 for any work that is not submitted rather than leaving the grade empty (null). The Grade Center will exempt a null value in the calculated running total meaning that the missed work is not counted against the student. You must enter a 0 for missed work to count as part of the overall course grade. It's a good idea to check the Grade Center at the end of each term to ensure that grades have been entered for each student/graded activity.

Enter the percentage for each category in the **Selected Columns** box
This should match the course syllabus.

The total of entered percentages is displayed at the bottom of the box.

SELECT COLUMNS

Select the columns and categories to include in this weighted grade and then set the weight percentages.

Include in Weighted Grade

The screenshot shows a web interface for selecting columns and categories for a weighted grade. On the left, there are two lists: 'Columns to Select' and 'Categories to Select'. The 'Columns to Select' list includes 'Running Total', 'Project 1: Illustrating Ideas', 'Project 2: Gathering Data and Reporting', 'Project 3', 'Chapter 1 Test', 'Chapter 2 Test', and 'Column Information'. The 'Categories to Select' list includes 'Problem Set', 'Quiz', 'Survey', 'Test', 'Discussion', 'Essay', and 'Category Information'. On the right, the 'Selected Columns' section shows two items: '25 % Category: Class Participation and Homework' and '40 % Category: Major Reading and Writing'. Below these items are options for 'Weight Columns' (Equally or Proportionally) and 'Drop Grades' (Highest or Lowest). At the bottom, there are 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons.

Note: In addition to setting the percentage for each category you also have the option to weigh items within a category equally or proportionally. Proportionally would take into account if an item is worth 25 points or 50 points, for example. So you can use points within a category but then use weights for the categories to calculate the overall grade if desired.

You will also see the option to drop grades within a category if you would like to utilize this option.

11. Click **Submit**
12. Return to **Full Grade Center**
13. Hover your mouse over the **Manage** button
14. Click **Column Organization**

Use check boxes to select activities then click the **Change Category to** button at the bottom of the page to assign the desired category to each activity

The screenshot shows the 'Full Grade Center' interface. On the left, there is a list of activities with checkboxes: 'Weighted Total (External)', 'Total', 'Chapter 1 Quiz', and 'Chapter 1 Assignment'. A dropdown menu is open over the 'Chapter 1 Quiz' activity, listing categories: 'No Category', 'Survey', 'Test', 'Discussion', 'Blog', 'Journal', 'Self and Peer', 'Assignment', and 'SafeAssignment'. The 'Change Category to...' button at the bottom of the menu is highlighted with a red box. Below the menu, there are buttons for 'Show/Hide' and 'Change Grading Period to...'. At the bottom of the interface, there is a note: 'Click Submit to proceed. Click Cancel to go back.'

Name	Grading Period	Category	Due Date	Date Created	Points Possible
Weighted Total (External)	Not in a Grading Period	Calculated Grade		Mar 28, 2014	0 (may vary by student)
Total	Not in a Grading Period	Calculated Grade		Mar 28, 2014	70 (may vary by student)
Chapter 1 Quiz	Not in a Grading Period	Test	None	Mar 30, 2015	20
Chapter 1 Assignment	Not in a Grading Period	Assignment	None	Mar 30, 2015	50

NOTE: As you add graded items to the grade center, ensure that the proper Category is assigned. If an activity is added to the course and it is not in one of the Categories specified for the Weighted Total, the activity will not be included in the overall grade calculation. The Column Organization page is a great place to go to check the category assigned to each column.