



Blackboard Quick Reference Guide

Analyzing Data with Grade Center



This guide moves beyond the “Getting Started” guide to show you ways of analyzing student grades. You can view statistics, add special calculation columns, apply extra weight to specific grade items, and create reports, custom views and grading schema.




View Test Results

You may wish to view an analysis of how your students answered test questions and overall student performance on a test. This could help you evaluate the validity of test questions.




- Step 1:** Go to **Control Panel>Grade Center**.
- Step 2:** Click the double chevron next to the Grade Center column name (the test name).
- Step 3:** Select **Attempts Statistics**. The test results will display, showing each test item and the answers provided.

View Statistics

To view statistics for a single student:

- Step 1:** In the spreadsheet, click the down arrow  symbol to the right of the student’s name (or username), then click **User Statistics**.
- Step 2:** To switch to a different student, choose the name from the User drop-down menu at the upper right corner of the screen, then click **Go**. (To quickly switch from one student to the next, click the  or  symbol.)
- Step 3:** Click **OK** to return to the spreadsheet.

To view student statistics for a grade item:

- Step 1:** From the down arrow  symbol to the right of the column heading, click **Column Statistics** from the menu.
- Step 2:** To switch to a different grade item, choose the name from the Column drop-down menu at the upper right corner of the screen, then click **Go**. (To quickly switch from one grade item to the next, click the  or  symbol.)
- Step 3:** Click **OK** to return to the spreadsheet.

The Reports feature also allows you to view student statistics.

Create a Grade Report

Step 1: Click  Reports .

Step 2: Determine the Header Information you want to include in the report by checking or unchecking boxes and entering desired information as needed.

Step 3: Determine which Users you want included. Select Users will display a list box from which you can choose. Use Ctrl-click method to select more than one user.



The “hidden users” option means those users you made hidden in the spreadsheet.

Step 4: Determine what User Information you want included in the report.

Step 5: Determine which Columns you want included. All Columns in Category and Selected Columns will display a list box of columns from which you can choose. Use Ctrl-click method to select more than one column.

Step 6: Determine what Column Information you want included in the report.

Step 7: Determine the Footer Information you want to include in the report.

Step 8: To take a glimpse of the report, click **Preview**. A separate browser window appears. Closing this window returns you to the Report creation screen.

Step 9: To generate the report, click **Submit**. A separate browser window appears. Closing this window returns you to the Grade Center spreadsheet screen.





You can print the report from either the Preview or Submit button. Student information is displayed on separate pages. Your browser may contain a command to send the page as an email message.

Give Extra Weight to Grade Items

If you want to apply extra weight to a particular item (or category), you can assign a percentage to that item. Then, in the spreadsheet view, you can compare the normal Total to the Weighted Total for your students’ scores.

To apply weights:

Step 1: From the **Weighted Total** down arrow  symbol, click **Modify Column**.

Step 2: In the Columns or Category section, select a grade item (column), then click .



To select more than one item, use Ctrl-click on subsequent items.

Step 3: Enter the percentage(s). See the sample below.



The percentage numbers should add up to 100% -- you’ll receive a warning message if they don’t.

Step 4: Click **Submit**.

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

* 40	%	Column: Final Exam	✕
* 30	%	Column: Midterm	✕
* 30	%	Category: Essays in Grading Period All	✕

Weight Columns: Equally Proportionally

OR

Drop Grades Use only the

Drop highest grades Lowest value to calculate

Drop lowest grades Highest value to calculate

Proportionally is based on its points compared to other items in same category

Total Weight: 100%



The Weighted Total displays percentages for each student. By changing the display of the Total column to percentage, you can then compare the two totals to see how it affects overall grades.

To clear weights:

- Step 1:** From the **Weighted Total** down arrow symbol, click **Modify Column**.
- Step 2:** On the far right side of the Selected Columns area, click the symbol. The item disappears from the list.
- Step 3:** Repeat the previous step, if desired, for each weighted category. Then click **Submit**.

Drop Lowest Score in a Grade Category

For example, you can drop the lowest quiz score. This can be accomplished by manually exempting the lowest quiz score for each student. Or you can use an option in the Weighted Total column (not Total column), but with the following caveats:



To make this work, you first need to have assigned a category to all items of a similar nature (e.g., quizzes), and all items in that category have the same value. Percentage display should be used. Also, only works in Weighted & Average columns and won't work in Total columns. The percentages need to add up to 100%.

- Step 1:** From the **Weighted Total** down arrow symbol, click **Modify Column**.
- Step 2:** Select Percentage for the *Primary Display*.
- Step 3:** In the Category section, select a category, then click .
- Step 4:** Enter the number of items in the “lowest grades” part of the *Drop Grades* section.
- Step 5:** Make any further changes, then click **Submit**. You can now compare the Total column percentage (which includes all grade items in the specified category) with the Weighted Total column (which excludes the lowest score in the specified category).

Create and Use Custom Views of the Spreadsheet

To aid in your analysis of student grades, you can create “smart views” of the data, then save them for convenient use in the future. You can selectively view students by performance, for example. If you’ve organized your students into groups (using the Groups feature from the Control Panel), you can then create a special view of their grades. Or just select students by name.

To create a smart view:

Step 1: From the  **Manage** menu, click **Smart Views**. A predefined view appears in the list: Final Grade View.

Step 2: Click  **Add Smart View**.

Step 3: Enter a Name and optional Description.

Step 4: Select one of four view types. The type you choose affects the criteria you set.

Type of View	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Group (Select one or more groups.)
	<input type="radio"/> Benchmark (Select users based on their performance.)
	<input type="radio"/> Focus (Select individual users.)
	<input type="radio"/> Investigate (Build a full query based on user attributes.)

Below are samples for each type:

Group

Select Criteria	Select the groups to include in this Smart View. Hold down the Ctrl button to select multiple items from one drop-down list.		
User Criteria:	Condition:	Value:	
<input type="text" value="Group"/>	<input type="text" value="Equal to"/>	<input type="text" value="Group 1"/> <input type="text" value="Group 3"/> <input type="text" value="Group 2"/>	

Benchmark

Select Criteria	Select the user criteria to include.		
User Criteria:	Condition:	Value:	
<input type="text" value="Grade on Essay 1 (Score)"/>	<input type="text" value="Equal to"/>	<input type="text" value="20"/>	

Focus

Select Criteria	Select the users and columns to include in this Smart View. Hold down the Ctrl button to select multiple items from one drop-down list.		
Users:	<input type="text" value="Selected Users"/>		
	<input type="text" value="Choke, Jr.,Artie"/> <input type="text" value="Choke, Sr.,Artie"/> <input type="text" value="Choke,Artie"/>		

Investigate

Select Criteria	Select the users' grade criteria to benchmark.		
	User Criteria:	Condition:	Value:
1	Grade on Essay 1 (Score)	Equal to	20
			<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
	User Criteria:	Condition:	Value:
2	Grade on Midterm (Score)	Equal to	40
	<input type="button" value="Add User Criteria"/>		
Formula Editor	1 AND 2		
	<input type="button" value="Manually Modify"/> Change the operators and insert parentheses to modify how the formula is completed.		

Step 5: Under the Filter Results section, select either All Columns or choose specific columns.

Step 6: Click **Submit**.

To use a smart view:

Step 1: From the **Current View** menu, click the smart view name. The spreadsheet is filtered, based on the criteria you set for the smart view.



To make this view the default, click .

Step 2: To return to the default view, click **Full Grade Center** from the **View** menu.



There are two pre-defined smart views: Final Grade View (includes pre-defined Total Points and Weighted Grade columns) and Preview of My Grades (shows columns visible to students).

Create Custom Calculation Column

You can create an extra column that displays one of four statistics: Weighted, Total, Average or Minimum/Maximum. This column can include all grade items or only ones you select (e.g., just quizzes). The following steps use the Average statistic as a sample:

To create an Average calculated column:

Step 1: From the **Add Calculated Column** menu, click **Average**.

Step 2: In the *Column Information* section, enter a Column Name

Step 3: Optionally you can include a Grade Center Display Name and a Description.

Step 4: Choose a **Primary Display** option from the drop-down list.



Secondary Display allows for alternate display (shown in parentheses) in the spreadsheet cells – but does not display for students under My Grades link.

Step 5: In the *Select Columns* section, select to include either all columns or selected columns. “Selected Grade Columns, Calculated Columns and Categories” will display a list box of columns and categories from which you can choose.

Step 7: In the *Options* section, choose either **Yes** or **No** for the following items:

4 Options

Select **No** for the first option to exclude this Grade Center column from calculations. Select **No** for the second option to make this Grade Center column unavailable in My Grades. Select **Yes** for the third option to display column statistics in My Grades.

Include this column in Grade Center calculations Yes No

Show this column in My Grades Yes No

Show Statistics (average and median) for this column in My Grades Yes No

Step 8: Click **Submit**.

Create Grading Schema

A grading schema determines how student scores are translated into percentages. The Grade Center includes a pre-defined schema for determining letter grades (what is an A+ , B-, etc.) based on percentage ranges. This schema can be customized or a whole new schema can be devised.

To customize the Letter schema:

Step 1: From the  **Manage** menu, click **Grading Schemas**.

Step 2: For the Letter schema, click **Modify**.

Step 3: In the *Schema Mapping* section, you can alter percentages and display options, and insert/remove rows.



The left side of the table is for automatically calculated grades (e.g., Blackboard-generated tests or assignments) and the right side is for manually entered grades.

Step 4: When finished, click **Submit**.

To create a new grading schema:

Step 1: From the  **Manage** menu, click **Grading Schemas**.

Step 2: Click  **Add Grading Schema**.

Step 3: In the *Schema Information* section, enter the Name and an optional Description.

Step 4: In the *Schema Mapping* section, map how grades will be determined, in terms of percentage ranges and display options. For example, you can map the following pass_fail schema:

Grades scored between	will equal	Grades manually entered as	will calculate as
<input type="text" value="60"/> % and 100%	<input type="text" value="Pass"/>	Pass	<input type="text" value="75"/> %
<input type="text" value="0"/> % and less than 60%	<input type="text" value="Fail"/>	Fail	<input type="text" value="25"/> %



The left side of the table is for automatically calculated grades (e.g., Blackboard-generated tests or assignments) and the right side is for manually entered grades.

Step 4: When finished, click **Submit**. The new schema is added to the list.


Step 5: Click OK to return to the spreadsheet.

To apply a schema:

- Step 1:** Either create a new grade column or modify an existing one. (See “Getting Started with Grade Center” guide).
- Step 2:** In the *Column Information* section, choose the schema from the Primary Display or Secondary Display drop-down menus.
- Step 3:** Make any other necessary changes, then click **Submit**.

Send Email to Students

Grade Center provides a convenient method for sending email to students directly, instead of using the separate Send Email feature from the Control Panel.

- Step 1:** At the left side of the spreadsheet, check the box(es) for the student(s) you want to send email to.
- Step 2:** From the  **Email** drop-down menu, click **Email Selected Users**.
- Step 3:** Enter the Subject and Message.
- Step 4:** Click **Submit**.