Five Tips for Creating a Friendly Gradebook

Instructor View: Control Panel> Grade Center

Student View: Course Menu> My Grades link

Overview:
• Many instructors rely on the course gradebook in Blackboard to share progress and grades with students.
• The Grade Center is the Instructor’s view of the gradebook.
• Students view their grades via the My Grades link inside their course.
• New courses come with the My Grades link on the course menu by default. If you have an older course without a My Grades link, you may need to add one. See “Adding a My Grades Link to the Course Menu”.
• The Grade Center options impact:
  • how the instructor view is organized.
  • how grades are calculated.
  • how scores and/or percentages display in the instructor view.
  • what students see in their My Grades link.
• Review the Step by Step instructions for “Showing Grades to Students”.

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Tip #1: Keep Scoring Simple

Consider your course’s scoring strategy for your tests, across categories, and the total points for the course. A strategy that totals up to an even number like 1000 or 100 across a semester is a lot easier to understand (and troubleshoot) than one that totals up to an odd number with trailing decimals, like 1332.55.

Tip #2: Hide or Delete Unnecessary Grade Columns

To provide an uncluttered gradebook for both the instructor and the student views:

- Hide a column from the student view first, then hide it from instructor view.
- Hide or delete extra grade columns from copied or migrated courses. Unless you do this, the extra columns will display in the student view, causing confusion.
- **Warning:** Deleting a column that contains student data will delete the data.

Step by Step instructions:
- **Showing/Hiding Grades from Students**
- **Instructor View: Hiding/Showing Columns**
- **Instructor View: Remove a Column**
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Tip #3: Name and Organize Your Columns

By default, column names come from the graded activity title. You can rename them so they make more sense, especially if you create new columns or have similar ones from old tests that you have not deleted.

You can move your columns around to make them match the course flow. Do this on the Manage>Column Organization page.

Tip #4: Check the Column Calculations

- You can create new columns to calculate as desired without entering formulas.
- Many instructors create categories like Tests, Assignments, and Presentations that are worth a certain percentage of the total course grade.
- If your columns are not calculating as expected, check your settings. Be sure they are pulling in the right grade columns or categories.

Weekly Quizzes = 15%
Assignments = 25%
Discussions = 20%
Midterm & Final = 40%
Total = 100%

Step by Step instructions:
- Renaming a Grade Center Column
- Moving a Grade Center Column
- Creating Running Weighted Totals
- Creating a Calculated Total Column
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Tip #5: Check the Student View

Instructors can use fake student accounts set up for each college to confirm that students see what you want them to see. Steps:

1. Add fake account to your course.
   - Contact Blackboardhelp@uams.edu or your college’s elearning rep for the fake student account info.

2. Create data for the fake student.
   - Either log in as the fake student and complete the graded activity or manually enter grades for this student in the Grade Center cell.

3. Log in as the student and check the gradebook view via the My Grades link.
   - When they click on the highlighted grade it will take them to whatever test info you have made visible (score, submitted answers, correct answers.)
   - There are multiple default columns that show up in student view that you cannot hide (such as alignments and last activity).

For help with setting up your gradebook, view the Step by Step instructions on the UAMS Blackboard support site. Or, contact BlackboardHelp@uams.edu.