Troubleshooting Grade Center Issues: Blackboard 9.1 (October 2014 Release)

The Grade Center is the tool for Instructors to manage graded items and grade totals. It is where you will go to grade student work and provide feedback.

- The Grade Center is a tool for instructors
- My Grades (called Grades on the course menu) is a tool for students. It is where they see the grades and feedback entered through the Grade Center.

For instructions on setting up and using the Grade Center, visit eLearning’s On Demand Tutorials. Tutorials specific to the Grades can be found at https://www.cpcc.edu/elearningcommunity/tools/blackboard/grades-and-grading.

Common Issues
Click on an issue to link to possible solutions.

- Can’t find a column for a specific assessment
- Multiple Total and/or Weighted Total Columns
- Total not calculating correctly
- Weighted Total not calculating correctly
- Points Possible for an assessment is incorrect
- Columns are out of order / all mixed up
- Students can’t see their grades
- I don’t want students to see their grades yet
- Can’t scroll in the Grade Center

All tutorials mentioned in the guide can be found on the eLearning Website, https://www.cpcc.edu/elearningcommunity under On Demand Tutorials.
Can’t find column to match the assessment

If you go to enter grades and do not see a column in the Grade Center for the assessment, there are multiple things to check.

Hidden

First check to see if the column is hidden from instructors in the Grade Center.

1. Click on Manage, then select Column Organization from the action bar.

2. Hidden columns are show in gray italics. Click on the box or boxes to the left of the hidden assessment(s) that you wish to display back in your Grade Center.

3. At the top or the bottom of the Column Organization screen, select Show/Hide to and select Show.

4. Click Submit and this assessment will now show in the instructor view in the Grade Center.

Renamed

Second, check to see if the Grade Center column was renamed and no longer matches the name of the assessment.

1. Enter Student Preview Mode.
2. Find the assessment and take it (take the test, submit the assignment, post to the discussion board, etc.)
3. Exit Student Preview and choose to “Keep the preview user and all data”
4. Return to the Full Grade Center and locate the row for your student preview user. It will be named with your first name and your lastname_previewuser (i.e Jane Smith_previewuser)
5. Scroll through the Grade Center to find the assessment that this previewuser submitted. It may have the Needs Grading icon , a score (for a self-grading test), or the In Progress icon .
6. If the name of the column that contains the newly completed assessment does not match the name of the assessment itself, you’ve found your problem! You can rename the column if desired by editing the column information and changing the Grade Center Name field.

Make blank to have the Grade Center Name match the assessment’s name
Missing
Finally, the column might be missing altogether. This happens most often when the assessment is not taken in Blackboard but is instead on a 3rd party / publisher platform or is an in-class activity. You may need to create a column to enter the grades manually. See tutorial on Creating Columns to Manually Enter Grades for instructions.

Multiple Total and/or Weighted Total columns
Each semester, your new empty course shell contains both a Total and a weighted Total column. If you then copy a master or previous semester course into the new shell, you add the Total/Weighted Total columns from that course too. This can add up if you don’t clean up every semester.

To Delete Unwanted Calculated Columns:
1. You cannot delete a column that is Set as External Grade as indicated by the green checkmark. See the External Grade tutorial for instructions on changing the external grade column.
2. Delete a column by click on the contextual menu icon at the top of the column and then choosing Delete Column from the menu.

Note: You cannot delete a column that is Set as External Grade or one that is linked to a graded tool in Blackboard (such as an assignment or test).

Total is not calculating correctly
Blackboard does most of its calculations with 4 decimal places, but then rounds the result and displays only 2 decimal places. If you are calculating grades manually, use 4 decimal places to get a closer match to Blackboard’s math.

Other things to check when a Total is not calculating correctly:
1. Choose Edit Column Information from the Total column’s contextual menu to check these options.
   - Does the Total include “All Grade Columns” or “Selected Columns and Categories”? Does this match your expectations? If it is using only selected column and categories, are the correct ones included?
   - Are you calculating as a running total or not?
     - Yes - Columns and categories without grades aren't included in the total calculation. With this option set to “Yes”, you must enter a grade of zero (0) in the grade center to tell Blackboard to calculate it as a zero. Any empty/null grade (shown in the Grade Center as a dash - ) is ignored with the assumption that this assessment has not yet occurred.
     - No - All blank/null grades are counted as zeros (0) in computing the total. This means that Total will not be a true reflection of the final grade until every assessment included in the calculation has been completed and graded.

2. If the Total includes “All Grade Columns”, make sure that you do not have extra columns hidden from the instructor. If Running Total is set to Yes AND students cannot access the hidden assessment, then this should not
matter. However, if Running Total is set to No and/or a student submits a hidden assessment, it may be included in the total column calculation. Review the section on Hidden Columns earlier in this guide for more information.

3. Make sure that all columns that are included in the Total have the correct Points Possible. See instructions later in this tutorial for more details.

4. Make sure that Extra Credit columns are set up correctly to be calculated as extra credit. See the Extra Credit tutorial for more details.

**Weighted Total is not Calculating Correctly**

See tutorial on Troubleshooting Weighted Totals for a checklist of things to review and instructions.

**Points Possible are Incorrect**

From the Full Grade Center, you can check the column information in two ways:

- Mouse over the column name and view in the Grade Information Bar
- Click on the contextual menu for the column and choose Quick Column Information

If the Points Possible is not correct, the Total will not calculate as expected. You can edit the assessment (Assignment, Test, etc.) or edit the Points Possible from the Grade Center. Editing the assessment itself is usually better as you can see other contributing factors, such as using a rubric that has a different point scale.

To Edit the Points Possible in the Grade Center:

1. Choose Edit Column Information from the column’s contextual menu.

2. Change the Points Possible and click Submit.
Columns are in a weird order

As graded assessments, manual entry columns, and calculated columns are added to the Blackboard Grade Center, the columns appear at the end of the Full Grade Center. Students and Instructors will both see the items in the order shown in the Grade Center.

To Reorder Grade Center Columns:

1. Click on Manage, then select Column Organization from the action bar.
2. Hover your cursor over the four-headed arrow icon to the far left of an item. The cursor itself will change to a four-headed arrow.
3. Hold down the left mouse button and drag the item to its preferred position in the listing and release. The item has been moved.

Students can’t see their grades

Student can access their grades in two ways; via the Global Navigation Menu / My Blackboard or from a link within the course. The Global Navigation Menu is always available to them and allows them to view grades for all courses in which they are enrolled. Typically, when student report an inability to see any grades in a course, it is because the Instructor has not added a link from within the course. A link to Grades is part of CPCC’s Standard Navigational Template and should be added to all Blackboard courses.

If students are reporting that they can see Grades for the course, but specific grades are missing, the instructor can check the following:

- Is the column hidden from students? See the tutorial on Customizing the Grade Center for instructions on showing / hiding columns.
- Sometimes, if an assessment is no longer available to student to view, they cannot see it in their grades or feedback for that assessment either. To test for this enter Student Preview Mode, and click on Grades on the course menu. If it is missing, you can exit Student Preview, find the assessment and change the availability. Reenter Student Preview to see if this solved the problem.
I don’t want students see the grades yet
Student can access their grades in two ways; via the Global Navigation Menu / My Blackboard or from a link within the course. The Global Navigation Menu is always available to them and allows them to view grades for all courses in which they are enrolled. For this reason, even if you do not provide a link to Grades in your course, students can still get there. The only way to hide grades from students complete is to hide the individual Grade Center columns from them. See the tutorial on Customizing the Grade Center for instructions on showing / hiding columns.

Can’t scroll
Grade Center horizontal scroll bars can go missing because of settings in your operating system. Follow the instructions below for your OS.

Mac OS X:
1. Click Apple > System Preferences
2. Click on General
3. Unser Show Scroll Bars, choose Always
4. Close any open System Preference windows

Windows XP and Vista:
1. Log out of Blackboard and close all browser instances
2. Right-click on your Windows Desktop, and select Properties
3. Switch to the Appearance tab, and click on the Advanced button
4. In the Advanced Appearance window, select Scrollbar from the Item drop-down
5. Reduce the size to 17 (the default) and click OK then Apply
   NOTE: If the size is less than or equal to 17, reduce it further
6. Open a new browser window and access the Grade Center
   NOTE: If the horizontal scrollbar does not appear, repeat and reduce further

Windows 7:
1. Log out of Blackboard and close all browser instances
2. Right-click on your Windows Desktop, and select Personalize
3. Click on Window Color at the bottom of the Personalization window
4. Click on Advanced appearance settings
5. In the Window Color and Appearance window, select Scrollbar from the Item drop-down
6. Reduce the size to 17 (the default) and click OK then Apply
   NOTE: If the size is less than or equal to 17, reduce it further
7. Open a new browser window and access the Grade Center
   NOTE: If the horizontal scrollbar does not appear, repeat and reduce further