Troubleshooting Blackboard’s Grade Center

**ISSUE: Instructor can’t see many of their grade columns; cluttered view.**

By default, the grade center is set up so that the first five columns include student information such as *Student ID, Last Access*, etc. Because there is so much information, instructors have to scroll to see actual grade columns.

**SOLUTION:** Reduce student information columns so that only *Last Name, First Name*, and possibly *Username* appear.

- Click Manage → Column Organization.
- Click the checkbox next to items you wish to hide.
- Under the Show/Hide dropdown menu, select Hide Selected Columns.
- Submit.

**ISSUE: Total & Weighted Total columns may show students a grade of ‘0.’**

In all new courses, the grade center shows two columns by default, *Total* and *Weighted Total*, but they have a default value of ‘0’ since grades haven’t yet been added (i.e. there’s nothing to calculate as a total). Until grades are entered, students may see ‘0’ when they view their grades, which is misleading.

**SOLUTION for instructors who use the Grade Center:**

First delete one of the two columns since they are redundant (instructors use one or the other but not both grading scenarios), then hide the remaining column from students until grades have been entered.

To delete a column:

- Select Delete Column using the chevron dropdown menu next to the column label.
- Select OK when prompted.

To hide a column from students:

- Select Edit Column Information using the chevron menu next to the column label.
- Scroll down to Options and select No for Show this Column to Students.
- Click Submit.

**SOLUTION for instructors who do not use the Grade Center:**

Hide the two default columns so students can’t see them when they click on My Grades.

To hide a column from students:

- Select Edit Column Information from the chevron menu next to the column label.
- Scroll down to Options and deselect Show this Column in My Grades.
- Click Submit.
ISSUE: Instructor can’t remove column with green checkmark (External Grade).

The External Grade, which is identified by a green checkmark in the header, is a function used with the Blackboard portal, which the University does not have implemented. By default, one column in the Grade Center must have this checkmark, but the instructor can never remove a column that is marked as the External Grade, leading to frustration.

SOLUTION: Create a ‘null’ column, make it the External Grade column, and then hide it.

- From the ribbon menu in the Grade Center, select Add Grade Column.
- Fill in Points Possible to be 0, leave it set to No Category, and set ”No” for all choices in Option 3 (which excludes the column from calculations, and hides it from My Grades). Now it is a ‘null’ column.
- Select Submit.
- From the full Grade Center view, select the chevron menu in your ‘null’ column.
- Select Set as External Grade.
- Select the chevron dropdown menu again and select Hide Column.

ISSUE: Too many “Total” Columns

Instructors often add their own calculated column for final grades in addition to the two default total columns, with the result that students see three columns, two of which have the same name, but differing values.

SOLUTION: Remove one or both of the pre-made Total or Weighted Total columns, so that only one remains.

- Using the chevron dropdown menu next to the column label, select Remove column.
- Select OK when prompted.

ISSUE: Blackboard letter grades don’t match what instructor uses.

Blackboard ‘translates’ letter grades into scores when it calculates grades. Since these may or may not correspond to the instructor’s own translation, total grades and total weighted grades may not be what the instructor expects.

SOLUTION: Create a custom grade schema and use it instead of Blackboard’s default schema.

- From the ribbon menu in the grade center, select Manage → Grading Schemas.
- Next to Letter, select Copy.
- Select Modify, and give it a name.
- Change both sides of the column to reflect customized grading.
- Click Submit.
- Using the Modify Column, set the Primary Display and/or Secondary Display to customized schema. You will need to do this when creating new columns as well.
ISSUE: “View Final Grade” or “Preview of My Grades” Smart Views don’t work.

Some courses have default Smart Views. The Final Grade View no longer works if we remove the calculated columns as stated above, and Preview of My Grades requires choosing options and does not appear to do what it purports to do.

SOLUTION: Remove these Smart Views.

- From the ribbon menu in the Grade Center, select Manage → Smart Views.
- From the list of Smart Views, select Remove next to the one you wish to remove.
- Click OK when prompted.

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Faculty Center for Learning Development (FCLD)
FCLD provides consulting and instructional support to faculty and staff who are using technology in teaching and learning. The FCLD Faculty Lab in Mortensen 203a is available for faculty support and use and is equipped with instructional technology-related equipment including: PCs, Macs, scanners, and projectors as well as support staff. Faculty wishing to use the lab may contact FCLD.

Phone: (860) 768-4661 Email: fcld@hartford.edu
Website: http://www.hartford.edu/fcld

Office of Technology Services (OTS) Help Desk
For general computer and Internet/network support questions (not directly related to the classroom but rather passwords, Internet/email problems, Banner/Self-Service, campus Facebook).

Phone: 768-4357 (on campus) or (844) 292-3213 (off campus)
Email: ots@hartford.edu
Website: http://hartford.edu/ots

Student Blackboard Support: (860) 515-3742 or http://www.hartford.edu/studentbbsupport

Media Technology Services (MTS)
Faculty should contact MTS for assistance scheduling or implementing classroom technology (2-Way interactive video classrooms, Smart Podiums, laptops, etc.), for setting up WebEx accounts, or for scheduling and instruction for a wide variety of media equipment and resources like LCD data projectors, CD/cassette players, TVs and VCRs, digital video, and more.

Phone: (860) 768-4643 (Main) or (860) 768-4662 (Tech Line)
Website: http://www.hartford.edu/mts