Total and Weighted Total Columns in Blackboard

Two calculated columns are created by default and appear in new UNH courses—the Total and Weighted Total columns. If you grade using a system that adds all points (such as the "1000 point scale"), you probably want to use the Total column. If you grade by weighting categories of items, you probably want to use the Weighted Total column. It's ok to use both – but <u>only one can be set as the External Grade</u>. The external grade column is the column where students can see their final grade in their My Grades area in Blackboard.

After logging into Blackboard, you will land on the My Institution page.
From the list under My Courses, click on the course name.

You will land on the home page of the course.

Total Column

- By default, the Total column is set as the external grade column. The external grade column is indicated by a green checkmark ✅ on the column's header. <u>You can set any column as the external grade column by scrolling over the column header and clicking on the grey circle with down-pointing arrow</u> ⊘. Select Set as External Grade. You must set another column as the external grade before you can delete the Total column.
- The Total column is the sum of all grade columns (the numerical score of all grade columns added together). Exempted items are ignored; calculated columns and Ungraded items are not included.
- You can change the column's settings and the columns included at any time; calculations update automatically.
- You are not allowed to type directly in a Total column's cell to edit the calculated grade. Therefore, no contextual menu appears when you move your mouse pointer over an individual cell in a Total column.

Weighted Total Column

- If you want to set the Weighted Total column as the external grade, scrolling over the column header and click on the grey circle with down-pointing arrow and select Set as External Grade.
- The weighted column can calculate a grade for the term, in which, for example, the Test category, the Assignment category, and the Homework grade column are each given a certain percentage of the grade for a course. You may want to create your categories before you set up the Weighted Total column.
- You must edit the column to select the columns to include in the weight calculation; there are no default settings.

Using Categories

There are 7 default Categories: Assignment, Survey, Test, Discussion, Blog, Journal, Self and Peer. You can create additional Categories such as Participation, Homework, Quizzes, etc.

Create a Category

To create a Category, click on Grade Center in the Course Management area, and then click on Full Grade Center.

In the Full Grade Center, click Manage and then click Categories. Click Create Category then assign a Name and click Submit.
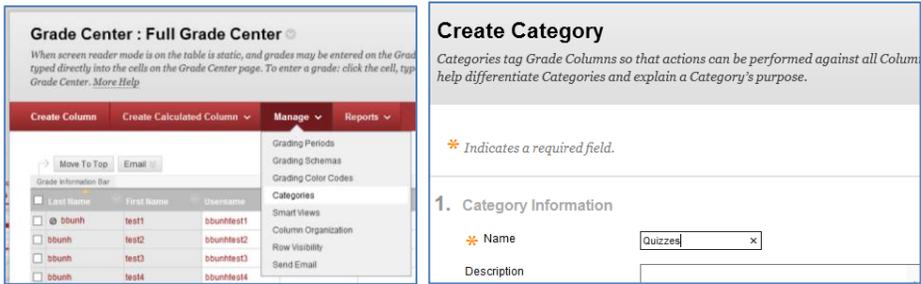
You can assign items in the Grade Center to Categories to make it easier to weigh those items as a group. The least complicated way is to give each item in a category the same weight. In the example below, 4 assignments each have an equal weight of 5% - this makes the Assignment category worth 20% of the final grade. However, you can weigh items in a category proportionally.

You don't need to assign a category for stand-alone items, but you can if you want to. For instance, in our example, the Participation column is a stand-alone item so we won't bother to create or assign a category.

Example of a Simple Weighted Column for the Term based on 1 column and 3 categories:

- o Assignments = 20% (4 items at 5% each) (each has a Point Value of 100)
- o Chapter Quizzes = 20% (4 items at 5% each) (each has a Point Value of 100)
- o Midterm Test and Final Test = 50% (2 items at 25% each) (in this example, the Midterm has a Point Value of 100 and Final has a Point Value of 200)
- o Participation = 10% (1 item at 10%) (Point Value of 100)

Setting Up the Weighted Total column

After categorizing your items, you must set up the Weighted Total column so that it calculates.

1. Click the grey circle with the down-pointing arrow next to the Weighted Total column name and click Edit Column Information.
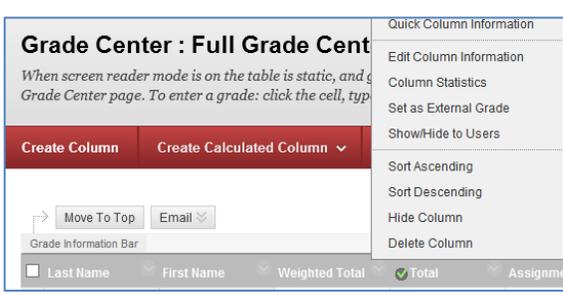
The Column Name can be changed but the default name "Weighted Total" is appropriate.

2. Choose the Primary Display to be a Score, Letter, Text, Percentage or Complete/Incomplete. Calculated grades display in this format in both the Grade Center and in My Grades for students.

You can chose a Secondary Display but this display option is shown to you in the Grade Center only – it does not appear in My Grade for students.

3. Select the columns and categories to include in this weighted grade and then set the weight percentages.
4. In our example, we added the Categories first, then added the stand-alone column of Participation. Click on the first category (you will then see all of the items associated with that category appear in the Category Information box) then click on the corresponding right-pointing arrow to add it to the Selected Columns area.
5. Enter the total percentage of weight for that category. In our example, we are weighing all the Assignment and Quiz items equally. The 2 tests will be weighed equally even though the Final is worth 2x the Point Value of the Midterm.
6. Continue adding all the Categories and Columns that represent items in your Grade Center.
   The Total Weight should add up to 100%.

Tip: To see the column information of any column, scroll over the header and look in the Grade Information Bar. For example, when scrolling over the Total column header, we see the type of column (Total Grade), the total points possible for the course (Possible: up to X) and the full column name.
The category would also be listed if the column had been categorized.

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3