

Weighted Totals

Many instructors use a weighted total to calculate their grades. This lesson explains how to set up a weighted total using categories.

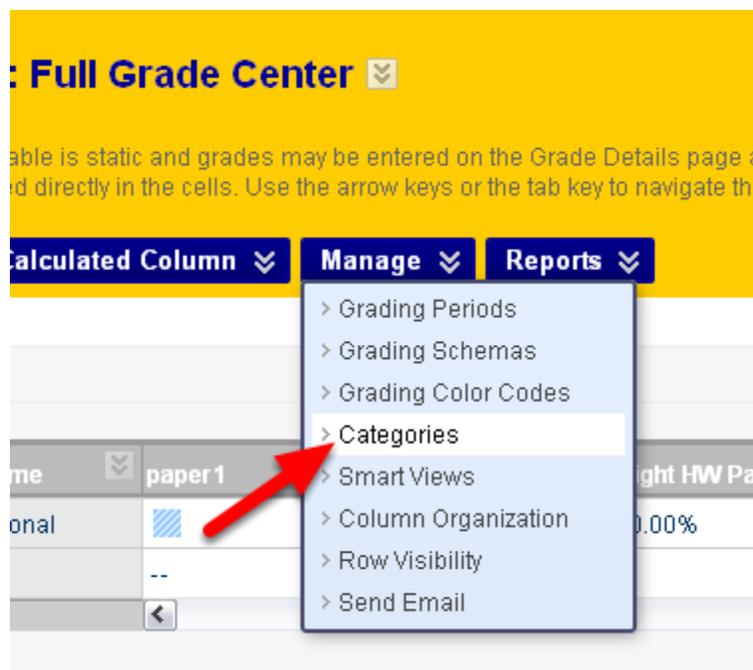
Set up your grading scheme in your syllabus

Your syllabus should let your students know your grading scheme. For example:

- Discussion Participation = 15%
- Quizzes = 20%
- Workshop Piece = 20%
- Essay (including rough draft) = 20%
- Midterm, Final Exam = 25%

The totals should add up to 100%. The actual weighting will of course reflect the goals and objectives of your own course.

Set up categories to match the categories in your syllabus



Define categories in Blackboard to match the categories in your syllabus. In the Full Grade Center you will go to "Manage" and then choose "Categories".

For more details go to

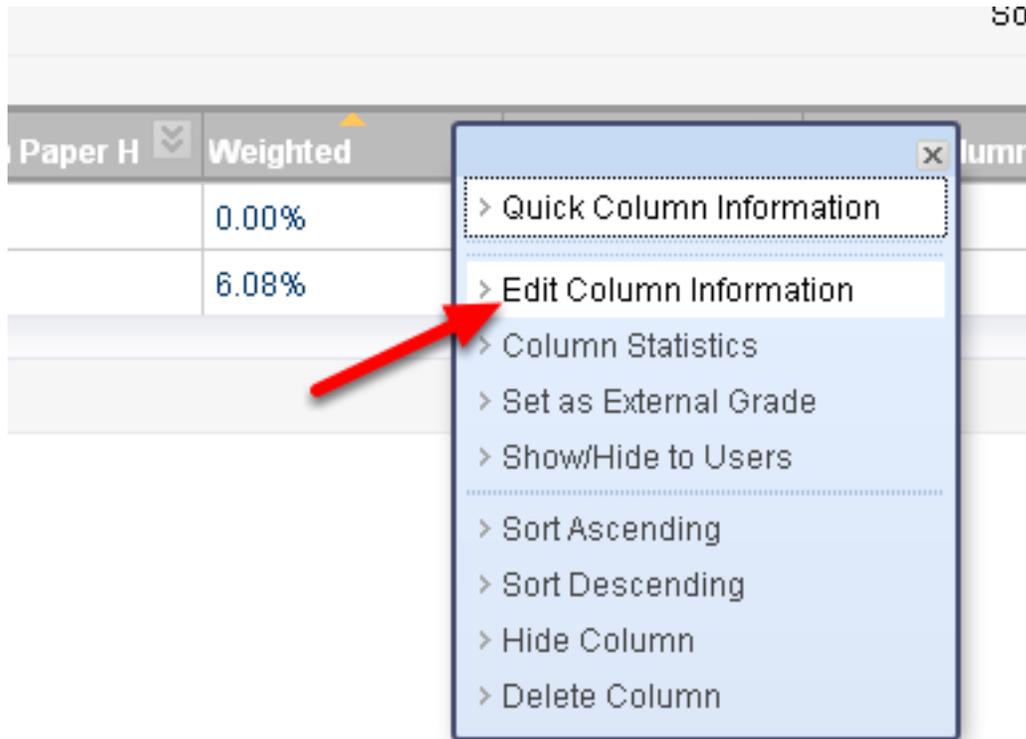
<http://blackboardhelp.wordpress.com/2011/05/23/creating-and-managing-categories/>

You should have categories corresponding to everything in your syllabus. In this case:

- Discussion

- Quiz
- Workshop Piece
- Essay
- Exam

Create or Edit a Weighted Total



The "Weighted" Column is created automatically when a new blackboard shell is created. Look for this column, click on the two downward facing arrows to the right of the column header and from the menu choose "Edit Column Information"

You can also add a new column by moving your mouse over the "Create Calculated Column" button and choosing "Weighted Column". If you do so, then delete the Weighted Column that came with your course. The Delete Column choice is visible in the menu above. When you copy a course which has a weighted column into a blank shell you also end up with two weighted columns - delete the one you are not using.

Notice also that you have a choice to "Show/Hide" the column to Users. If you hide the column it will appear in your grade center with a circle with a red slash next to it - indicating it is hidden from students but not from you. This is a good way to display information that might be useful to you (such as unweighted total points) but is confusing to students.

Enter Column Information

 indicates a required field.

1. Column Information

1 * Column Name **Name**

Grade Center Display Name **Name**
Displays as the column header in the Grade Center. (100 characters)

Description

Normal | 3 | Arial | **B** | *I* | U | abc | x_2 | x^2 | [List Icons]

[Rich Text Editor Icons]

Path: [body](#)

2 Primary Display **Display**
Calculated grades display in this format in the Grade Center. (My Grades)

Secondary Display **Display**
This display option is shown in the Grade Center only.

Whether you start a new column or edit column information -

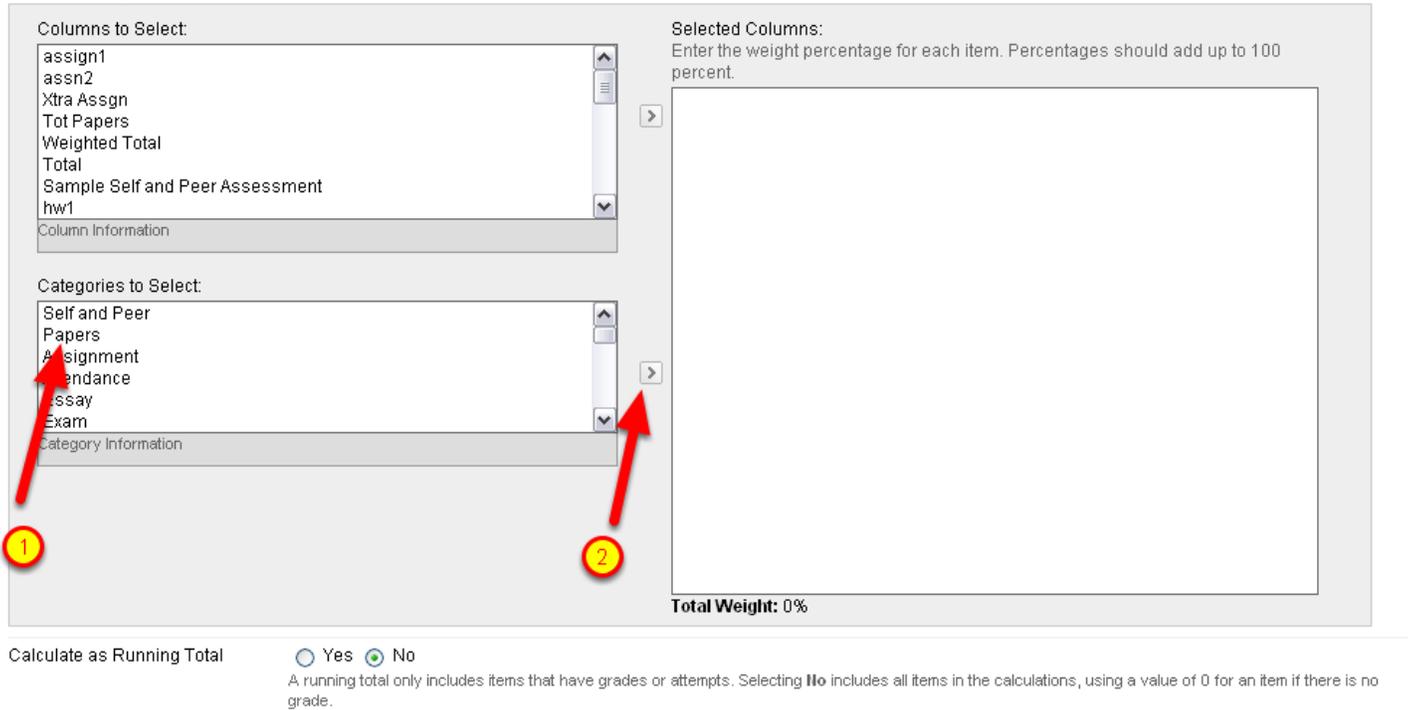
1. Your column needs a column name. The grade center display name may be a shorter version of this.
2. Primary Display is generally set to Percentage. It is not recommended that you set it to "Letter" because the exact letter grade is not meaningful until the end of the semester when all the grades are entered.

Scroll Down to Select Columns

3. Select Columns

Select the columns and categories to include in this weighted grade and then set the weight percentages.

Include in Weighted Grade



Columns to Select:

- assign1
- assn2
- Xtra Assgn
- Tot Papers
- Weighted Total
- Total
- Sample Self and Peer Assessment
- hw1

Column Information

Categories to Select:

- Self and Peer
- Papers
- Assignment
- Attendance
- Essay
- Exam

Category Information

Selected Columns:

Enter the weight percentage for each item. Percentages should add up to 100 percent.

Total Weight: 0%

Calculate as Running Total Yes No

A running total only includes items that have grades or attempts. Selecting **No** includes all items in the calculations, using a value of 0 for an item if there is no grade.

You can weight by item (grade column) or by category

In this example we will weight by category

1. Click on a Category Name on the left (one that matches you syllabus)
2. Click on the right facing arrow to move it into the box on the right.

Set the weight and other options

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

% Category: Discussion

Weight Columns: Equally Proportionally

Drop Grades Drop **OR** Use only the
 Lowest Value to Calculate
 Highest Value to Calculate

Highest Grades Drop

Lowest Grades

Once you've chosen a category and clicked the right-arrow, it will be on the list to the right. Set the percentage and options.

1. Enter the percentage mentioned in your syllabus.
2. Decide if you want the items to be weighted equally of proportionally. If equally, all that matters is what percent of the total score the student got on each item (such as 17 of 20 points). An item that is 20 points will "count" the same as an item that is 10 points. If you check "proportionally" a 20 point item will count twice as much as a 10 point item.
3. If you choose to drop some of the scores (the two lowest quizzes for example) then enter a number (the number 2 in the lower box)

Enter all categories

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

% Category: Workshop Piece

Weight Columns: Equally Proportionally

Drop Grades **OR** Use only the
Drop Lowest Value to
 Calculate
 Highest Value to
Highest Grades Calculate
Drop

Lowest Grades

% Category: Exam

Total Weight: 100%

Enter all the categories from your syllabus and give them the appropriate weights.

Calculate as Running Total? Yes or no?

% Category: Exam

Total Weight: 100%

Calculate as Running Total Yes No
A running total only includes items that have grades or attempts. Selecting **No** includes all items in the calculations, using grade.

Under the category list you will find the choice of whether or not to Calculate as Running Total.

- If **YES** then blanks in the gradebook will not count - only the items that have grades or for which zero has been entered will count.

- If NO then blanks will count as zero

Running total YES may give a better number as the semester goes by, but can still be misleading (e.g., if a student has done well on a number of quizzes that are not weighted highly but then take an exam with a much greater weight and don't do so well - their percentage can change drastically. Students should always be made aware that grades are not complete until everything is graded.

Running total NO may also be misleading if all or your items are not yet in your gradebook or are not yet in the right category.

Other Options

4. Options

Select **No** for the first option to exclude this Grade Center column from calculations. Select the third option to show column statistics to Students in My Grades.

Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations Yes No

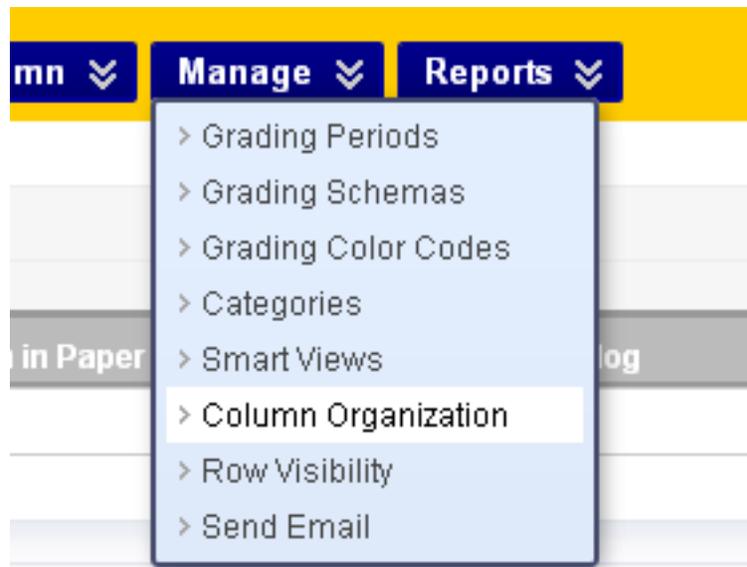
Show this Column to Students Yes No

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

Set other options. Usually you will NOT want to include this column in Grade Center Calculations (i.e., it is not part of the Total). You can choose to show/hide this column from students and change this option later.

When you are done click Submit

Make sure all your items are in the correct categories



Throughout the rest of the semester you will need to make sure all your items are in the correct categories. Go to Manage then Column Organization to view and change categories in bulk

For more details go to

<http://blackboardhelp.wordpress.com/2011/05/23/creating-and-managing-categories/>

Many items automatically go into categories

- Graded Discussion Forums go into "Discussion"
- All online quizzes, tests, etc go into "Test"
- All assignments (tool for accepting and returning papers) go into "Assignments"

This means you will have to move things to correct categories. For example - if your online tests include both "Quizzes" and the midterm and final exams, you'll need to move the quizzes into the category "Quiz" and the midterm and final into a category "Exam" (or leave them in "Tests" and use that only for these items). Similarly if the Assignment feature is used for turning in assignments that fit into different categories, you'll need to manually move each into its correct category. This can be done either by editing Column Information individually (using the dropdown menu next to the column header in the main Grade Center) or by going to Manage and Column Organization as shown above.