Preventing & Detecting Grade Miscalculations

Blackboard Learn

There are few mysteries in the Grade Center. Reviewing your Grade Center columns' basic information and settings can help ensure that grades are accurate and in turn helps eliminate the following common errors.

	Description	**Detection Techniques**
Data Entry Error	Instructor typed grade in wrong *Primary Display* format or exceeded column's *Points Possible*.	*Quick Column Information* tool *Secondary Display* *Grade Schema*
Hidden Column	Instructor hid a column from students or oneself.	*Column Organization* tool *Student Preview Mode*
Excluded Column	Instructor excluded a grade from a *Total* or *Weighted Total* calculation.	*Quick Column Information* tool
Duplicate Column	Instructor created multiple copies of the same columns, impacting column organization and final grade calculations.	*Column Organization* tool *Student Preview Mode*

Using the Quick Column Information Tool

A quick way to check a column for data entry errors or exclusion from calculated columns is to use the Quick Column Information tool. Click the gray context arrow at the top of a column and select the "Quick Column Information" link from the menu that appears to view this tool. A pop-up window will list information about the column.

Use this list as a reference to make sure that:

- Data entry of grades in this column matches the ***Primary Display*** format.
- Data entry of grades in this column dos not *exceed* the ***Points Possible***.
- The column is assigned to a correct **category** for Weighted Total calculation.
- The column is ***included in calculations***.
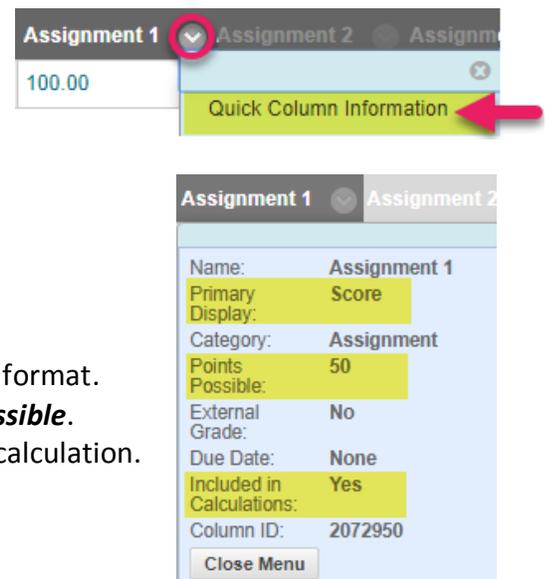
Using a Secondary Display

Secondary Display is an optional tool for viewing grades in another format to troubleshoot accuracy. It appears within parentheses ( ) next to the Primary Display and is visible only to the instructor.

To equip a *Secondary Display* on a column, follow these steps:

1. Roll your mouse over the head of the column, click the gray context arrow, then select **EDIT COLUMN INFORMATION** from the menu that appears.
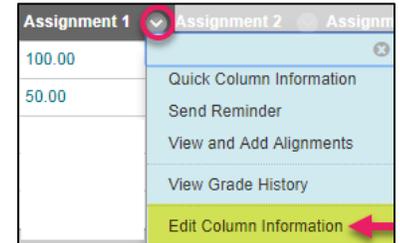
2. On the **EDIT COLUMN INFORMATION** page that appears, locate **SECONDARY DISPLAY** and select a value from its drop-down menu.

3. When you are done, click **SUBMIT** to apply these settings. You should now be able to compare the values you see in student grade cells for *Primary Display* and *Secondary Display* to confirm accuracy.

Detecting a Data Entry Mismatch

When a grade value is entered into a cell in a format that differs from the column's assigned Primary Display, the grade will be calculated incorrectly for that column and will impact your Total or Weighted Total calculations. A *Secondary Display* will help you catch data entry mistakes.

For example, let's say that you have an assignment worth a maximum of 50 points. But, you have typed in assignment grades based on 100 points. With only a Primary Display, it is not obvious that there is a problem.

But, with a Secondary Display equipped, you will see that the grades you have entered exceed the column's maximum points possible, resulting in percentage grades over 100%. This has a direct impact on Total or Weighted Total calculations.

Making Corrections to Display-Related Data Entry Errors

If you find that you have a date entry mismatch that is contributing to a miscalculation, you can correct the problem using these steps:

1. First, print or write down what the student's actual grades should be. This is important for the last step.

2. Next, roll your mouse over the head of the column, click the gray context arrow, then select **EDIT COLUMN INFORMATION** from the menu that appears. On the **EDIT COLUMN INFORMATION** page that appears, review the column's Points Possible and Display Settings. Make changes if needed to the Points Possible, Primary Display, and Secondary Display settings. Then, click Submit.

3. Lastly, enter the correct grades into student grade cells. Check your *Secondary Display* to confirm that the values are correct.

Checking a Letter Grade Schema

If you have set a column's Primary Display or Secondary Display to a [Letter Grade Schema](#) to automatically assign letter grades based on percentages, review the selected schema's grade ranges using these steps.

1. In a course's Full Grade Center, roll your mouse over the **MANAGE** button and select **GRADING SCHEMAS**.

2. On the Grading Schema's page, roll your mouse over the name of the schema you want to review and edit. Click the context arrow that appears and select **EDIT** from the context menu.

3. On the Edit Grading Schema page, scroll down to the **SCHEMA MAPPING** section. In the **GRADES SCORED BETWEEN** and **WILL CALCULATE AS** sections, review the percentage values associated with each letter grade and make adjustments as needed.

4. When you are done, click the **SUBMIT** button to save your work.

SCHEMA MAPPING

Grade Center columns that are automatically graded, such as Tests, will be converted to this display option according to the grade mapping provided below. To enter grades in the Grade Center manually using this display option, mappings from each symbol into a percentage of points possible must be provided.

Grades Scored Between	Will Equal	Grades Manually Entered as	Will Calculate as	Insert Rows
94 % and 100 %	A	A	97 %	
90 % and Less Than 94%	A-	A-	92 % Delete Row	←
87 % and Less Than 90%	B+	B+	88.5 % Delete Row	←
84 % and Less Than 87%	B	B	85 % Delete Row	←
80 % and Less Than 84%	B-	B-	81.5 % Delete Row	←
77 % and Less Than 80%	C+	C+	78.5 % Delete Row	←
74 % and Less Than 77%	C	C	75 % Delete Row	←
70 % and Less Than 74%	C-	C-	71.5 % Delete Row	←
67 % and Less Than 70%	D+	D+	68.5 % Delete Row	←
64 % and Less Than 67%	D	D	65 % Delete Row	←
60 % and Less Than 64%	D-	D-	61.5 % Delete Row	←
0 % and Less Than 60%	U	U	58 % Delete Row	←

*Click **Submit** to proceed. Click **Cancel** to go back.*

Cancel   Submit

Column Organization

The *Column Organization* tool displays all Grade Center columns associated with the course and the order in which they are organized. Using this tool, you can locate hidden or duplicate columns, as well as make changes to column order or categorization.

Student Preview Mode

The Student Preview Mode tool is useful for adding a test student to your course's Grade Center to troubleshoot calculations as well as view the course's My Grades area. Using this tool can help you identify duplicate or missing columns.