

Becoming Familiar with the Grade Book

One of the most important modules that come with the Blackboard system is its Grade Book feature. This great tool allows instructors to easily keep track of the student's progress via a spreadsheet like interface. The Grade Book contains rows that represent the members of the course. The columns usually contain information about the various coursework assigned.

Note: The Grade Book module is only accessible from the **Teach Tab**, under Instructor Tools.

Your location: **Grade Book**

Grade Book

Create Column ▾ Enroll Members Import from Spreadsheet Grade Book Options ▾

Reorder Columns

Grades Members View All Custom View SCORM Grades

<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name ▾ Alphanumeric	First Name ▾ Alphanumeric	User ID ▾ Alphanumeric	Role ▾ Alphanumeric
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luong	Dang	DLuong	Section Designer, Section Instructor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Demo	webct_demo_360143001	Student
<input type="checkbox"/>	Studentica	Fake	Fakestudent	Student

Send Mail Export to Spreadsheet Grant Access Deny Access Unenroll

(XX) - Indicates a grade that is partial or not complete
^XX - Indicates a grade that has been overridden

Above is the homepage of the Grade Book. Here, one can:

- Administer grades
- Manage course members

Before going into more details about the choices mentioned, let's talk about customizing the Grade Book display to your liking.

► Personalizing the Grade Book

Initially, the Grade Book is automatically populated with several columns that cannot be edited. These default columns include: Last Name, First Name, User ID, Role, Midterm and Final. In addition, Blackboard will automatically create a corresponding column in the Grade Book whenever a new assignment, gradable discussion or assessment is assigned.

To modify column settings, click on the **Grade Book Options** button, select **Column Settings**. In here, you can edit the column heading, change the column type, realign the column, toggle the graded column option, specify the number of decimals displayed and enter the maximum value of the column.

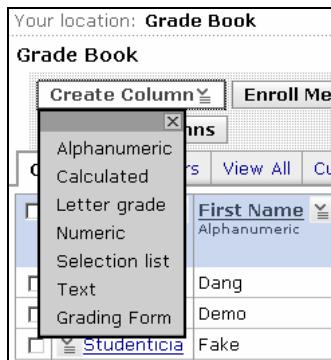
If the Grade Book becomes too large, one can freeze the Last Name and First Name columns to make viewing the data easier. To freeze or unfreeze the columns, click on the **Grade Book Options** and select **Unfreeze Columns** or **Freeze Columns**.

To reorder the columns, click on the Reorder Columns button. A list will popup, the leftmost column will be on the top of the list. Let's say there are three columns: Quiz 1, Quiz 2 and Quiz 3. They are arranged from left to right in that order. To move Quiz 3 above Quiz 1, check the square next to Quiz 3, and then click on the icon to the left of Quiz 1. The Reorder Columns page also allows you to hide or show columns.

Above the blue bar that contains the column headings, one can find the Grade Book Tabs. These allow one to switch between different views of information about course members.

- **Grades** – displays the default columns and any grade-related columns
- **Members** – all default columns and any non grade-related columns. This view is meant to hold descriptive information
- **View All** – all columns
- **Custom View** – all columns initially, then any column changes will be saved
- **SCORM Grades** – columns that are automatically added for gradable SCORM modules. This view is only accessible with a SCORM module imported

► Administer Grades



There are different column types, selecting the best one for each assignment will make managing the class easier.

- **Alphanumeric** – string or text, useful for holding descriptive information (Ex: student's email address)
- **Calculated** – displays a number that is calculated from other column(s) that are also numeric (Ex: midterm)
- **Letter grade** – displays a letter grade from a numeric column
- **Numeric** – manually entered numerically values
- **Selection list** – a drop-down list of values to describe or grade a student (Ex: Class {Freshman, Sophomore...})
- **Text** – a long string of text, useful for holding extended descriptive information
- **Grading Form** – an array of criteria that is useful for evaluating more than one objective at once (Ex: spelling, grammar and style of an essay)

Rather than just explaining how each column type works, we'll go through the process of setting all of them up for a fake course. Some instructors like to pass out an information card during the first day of the class that ask for information such as email address, a little personal history and previous experience with whatever the course topic is. So, let's create three columns to keep track of all that.

Note: you'll need to have a student account enrolled in the class for the following steps. Please contact onlineeducation@ohlone.edu so they can set up a bogus account for you.

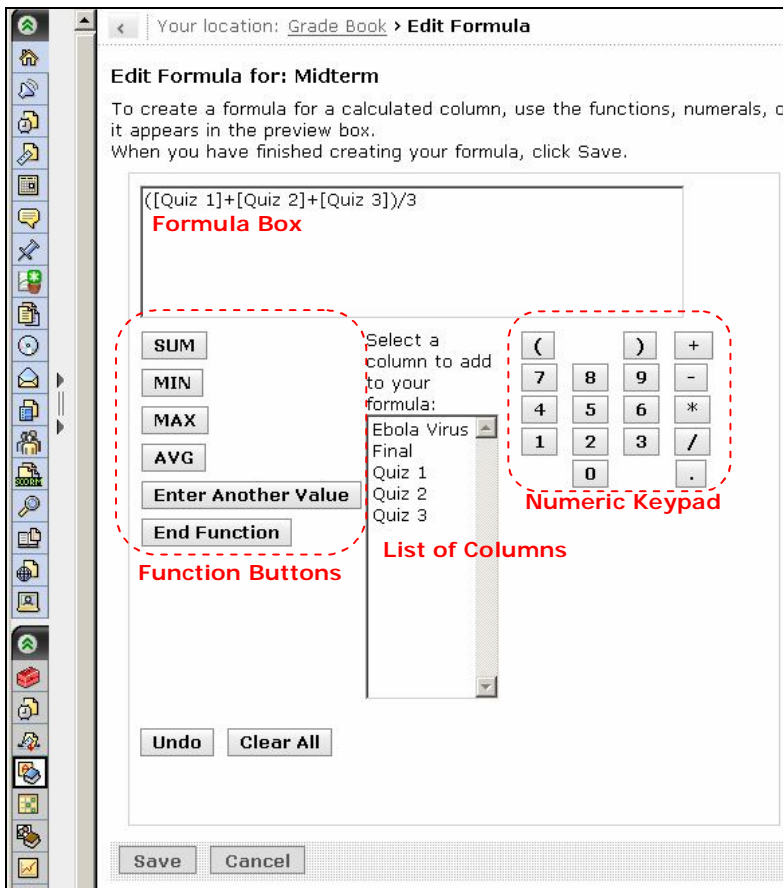
1. Click **Create Column**, select **Alphanumeric**.
2. Type "Email" for column label and make sure the Grade-related box is not checked. Hit **Save**.
3. Click **Create Column**, select **Text**.
4. Type "Personal Info" for column label and make sure the Grade-related box is not checked. Hit **Save**.
5. Click **Create Column**, select **Selection list**.
6. Type "Previous Exp" for column label and make sure the Grade-related box is not checked. Hit **Save**.
7. Click on the **ActionLinks Menu** for the Previous Exp column heading, select **Edit Column Select List**.
8. Type "Expert" in the Item field. Then click **Add Item** and type "Very Familiar". Repeat the process three more times for "Familiar", "Basic Understanding" and "Never Before". This step is only necessary for "selection list" column type.
9. Below is a screenshot of what we just did. The new columns are placed on the right. In my case, I have already entered some data for one of the students. To enter information, you simply click on the blue dashes in the appropriate cell. Alternatively, one can also edit all the rows under one column by clicking on the column's **ActionLinks Menu** and selecting **Edit Values**.

Spreadsheet		Reorder Columns					Grade Book O	
grades								
	Role	Midterm	Final	Ebola Virus	Previous Exp	Email	Personal Info	
	Alphanumeric	Calculated	Calculated	Numeric (out of 5)	Selection List	Alphanumeric	Text	
	Section Designer, Section Instructor							
001	Student	--	--	--	Familiar	test@gmail.com	Recently graduate	
	Student	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Access		Deny Access		Unenroll				

10. In order to illustrate how the remaining column types work, we'll create three numeric columns. Title them Quiz 1, Quiz 2 and Quiz 3. For each one, change the Decimals setting to 0, Maximum value to 100, make sure the Grade-related column option and Released to Student are checked, and choose Average Only for the Release Statistics option.
11. I went ahead and entered some mock data for the new columns.

Quiz 1 ▾	Quiz 2 ▾	Quiz 3 ▾
Numeric (out of 100)	Numeric (out of 100)	Numeric (out of 100)
95	83	100
--	--	--

- Next up is the "Calculated" column type, for this we'll pretend that this class' midterm grade is an average of the three quizzes. Your Grade Book should already have a Midterm column that is set to "Calculated". Open up the column's **ActionLinks Menu** and select **Edit Column Formula**.
- The Edit Column Formula screen looks confusing at first, but it is actually very easy to master. To get an average of the three quizzes, I entered in **([Quiz 1] + [Quiz 2] + [Quiz 3])/3** using the Numeric Keypad. Hit **Save** when you're done.



Tips

- » Undo will remove the last value entered
- » Clear All will remove everything in the Formula Box
- » To curve a test, create a new calculated column and title it "Test # Curved". Then

- » add or subtract the desired number of points from the original test.
- » Use the Min or Max function to find the lowest or highest score, respectively, to be used in the calculation of the final grade.

14. Back out on the Grade Book homepage, we can see that there is now a grade for the Midterm column.

Midterm Calculated	Final Calculated	Ebola Virus Numeric (out of 5)	Quiz 1 Numeric (out of 100)	Email Alphanumeric	Quiz 2 Numeric (out of 100)	Quiz 3 Numeric (out of 100)
92.67	--	--	95	test@gmail.com	83	100

15. Next up is the "Grading Form" column type. This is mainly useful for grading assignments with multiple objectives, typically essays. First, we'll have to create a grading form. Under Instructor Tools on the navigation bar on the left, click on **Grading Forms**. Then click on the **Create Grading Form** button.

Create Grading Form

*Title:

Description:

To edit the name of a criterion or performance indicator, click its Edit icon.

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators		
	* Need Improvement	* Meet Expectations	* Exceptional
* Spelling	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> 11 *points	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> 22 *points	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> 33 *points
* Grammar	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> 11 *points	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> 22 *points	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> 33 *points
* Style	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> 11 *points	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> 22 *points	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; height: 30px; width: 100%;"></div> 34 *points

Total (out of): 100

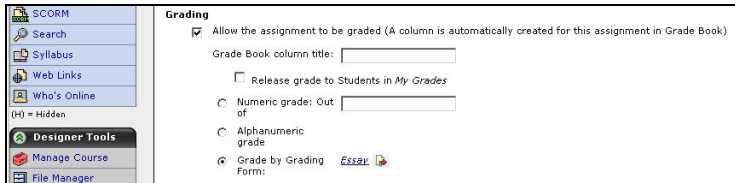
* Required field

This grading form has three criteria: spelling, grammar and style. Each criterion has three performance indicators: need improvement, meet expectations and exceptional. Since the essay will be out of 100 points total, each criterion is worth 33 points max (34 for style to make an even 100). The 33 points for each criterion is further divided by three for the performance indicators.

Of course, one can split the points in numerous ways. There is no reason why style couldn't have more points than spelling. You can add or remove a criterion or performance indicator if desired. You can also edit the name by clicking on the yellow pencil next to each one. And ideally, there'd be some kind of description of the scale so the students will know how they

are graded.

16. Click **Save**. The next step is to create an assignment to be associated with the Grading Form that we've just set up. Click on the **Build** tab, click **Assignments**, **Create Assignment**.
17. Enter "Essay" for the title. The description is optional. Under Student submission format, select "Text". Under Assignment recipients, select "All Students individually". Under Grading, make sure "Allow the assignment to be graded..." is checked. Also check "Grade by Grading Form:" and select the one we've just set up.



18. There are other options to explore. These settings will be enough to get us going for now. Click **Save**.
19. Now that we have created an assignment and associated the grading form to it, Blackboard has set up a column for the assignment in the Grading Book for us. If you'd like to actually test grade an assignment using the grading form, you'll have to switch to Student View and submit a fake essay.
20. To demonstrate the final column type, "Letter grade", let's use the Final column that is already set up for us. We'll pretend that the final grade for this class is an average of the midterm and essay grades. Open the **ActionLinks Menu** for the Final column, select **Edit Column Formula**. Enter $[(\text{Midterm}) + (\text{Essay})] / 2$ in the Formula Box.
21. Assuming you've uploaded a fake assignment and graded it, the Grade Book will calculate an average score based on the midterm and essay grades and display it in the Final column.

Your location: **Grade Book**

Grade Book

<input type="checkbox"/>	Last Name Alphanumeric	First Name Alphanumeric	User ID Alphanumeric	Role Alphanumeric	Midterm Calculated	Final Calculated	Quiz 1 Numeric (out of 100)	Quiz 2 Numeric (out of 100)	Quiz 3 Numeric (out of 100)	Essay 2 Grading Form (out of 100)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luong	Dang	DLuong	Section Designer, Section Instructor						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student	Demo	webct_demo_360143001	Student		92.67	90.83	95	83	100
										89.00

22. Click **Create Column**, select **Letter grade**. Title it Final Grade and change the "Based on numeric/calculated column" option to "Final". Hit **Save**.
23. Blackboard has a default grading scheme that is commonly used. However, it is possible to change the ranges around. Open up the column's **ActionLinks Menu** and select **Edit Column Letter Grade Scheme**.

► **Managing Grades**

At times, there might be a need to override a score from an automatically graded test. To do so, open up the Grade Book, locate the student and the appropriate grade. Click on the existing score to open up the Edit Value box where you can enter a new score. Keep in mind that all overridden scores will have a caret symbol next to them to indicate that there has

been a change.

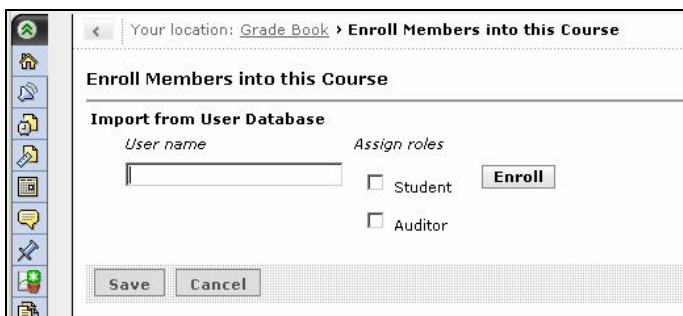
The Grade Book also has an Audit History tool that tracks all changes to grades. To view the log for a single student, open up the account's **ActionLinks Menu** and select **Edit Member**. Then click **View Audit History**.

► Managing Members

With the Grade Book, instructors can enroll and remove students. In addition, the Grade Book allows an instructor to edit a student's information, view his/her performance report and send mail to him/her.

Note: The exact account name is required for the enrollment process. Also, that account must already exist in the school database.

1. Click on the Enroll Members button on the Grade Book homepage.



2. Enter the account name, select the appropriate role and click **Enroll**. Hit **Save**.

To the left of each account name is the **ActionLinks Menu**. Accessing it allows you to **Edit Member**, **Send Mail**, **View Performance Report**, **Deny Access** (only prevents the user from accessing the course, doesn't remove the user from the course) and **Unenroll Member**. It is also possible to access this menu for multiple members at once. Simply check the square next to the desired accounts and choose from the actions in the gray bar below the names.