UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
FACULTY CENTER FOR LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

Weighting Grades in Blackboard with Categories

Weighting grades in Blackboard allows you to show your students what their standing is in your class. Weighting grades by category takes into account all the tests, exams, quizzes and assignments, then displays the students standing based on percentages allocated to each category (e.g. - 10% attendance, 15% homework, etc.).

Before you start with Weighted Grades, it is advisable to first set up all your assessments and columns. Then you will need to make sure that all of them are categorized according to the categories you plan to use in weighting.

Create Categories

In order to do weighted grades by categories, you must first assign your exams, quizzes and assignments into a category. It may be necessary to create categories other than the default ones in Blackboard.

- Go to the *Full Grade Center.*
- Click on **Manage.**
- Click on **Categories.**
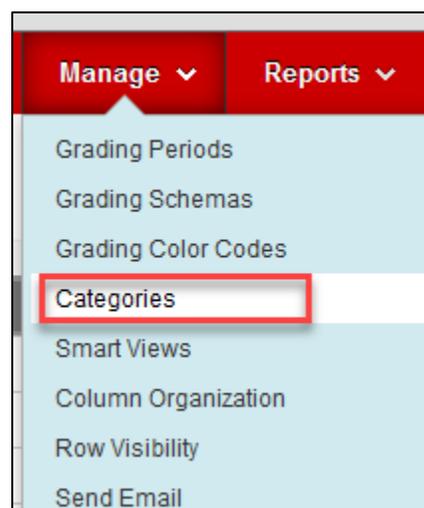
If you don't see a category that you want, you can create one.

1. Click **Create Category**.
2. Type in the name of the *Category* that you want to use. Then click **Submit**. You do not have to put in a *Description*.
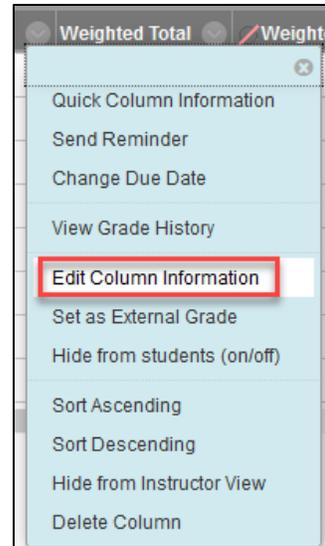

Enter name of category you want to create

Assigning Categories to Columns

Once you have categorized all of your assessments, you can now assign the categories to the appropriate Grade Center columns. You will need to do this for every assessment and assignment column.

1. In the *Grade Center*, click on the down arrow to the right of the title of your assessment/assignment.
2. Click **Edit Column Information**.
3. Scroll down until you get to the option of Category.

Drop down to change the Category

4. Click on the category that you want to use. It is recommended that you use a category name that is the same as what you are assigning. For example, if you are giving Exams, use a Test or Exam Category.

Weighted Grade Column

Once your Grade Center columns are assigned categories, you can now weight the grades appropriately (as per your syllabus.)

1. If you don't already have a Weighted Total column in your grade center, click on **Create Calculated Column**, then click on **Weighted Column**.
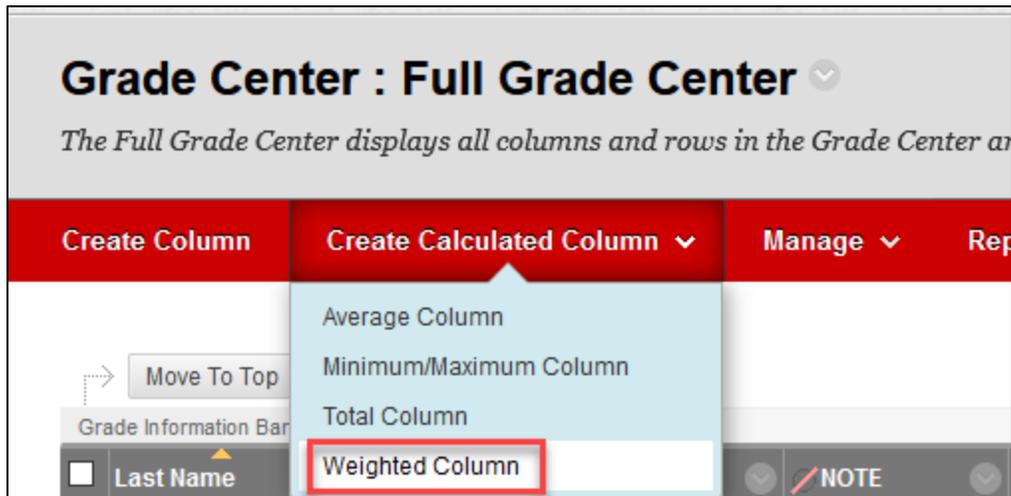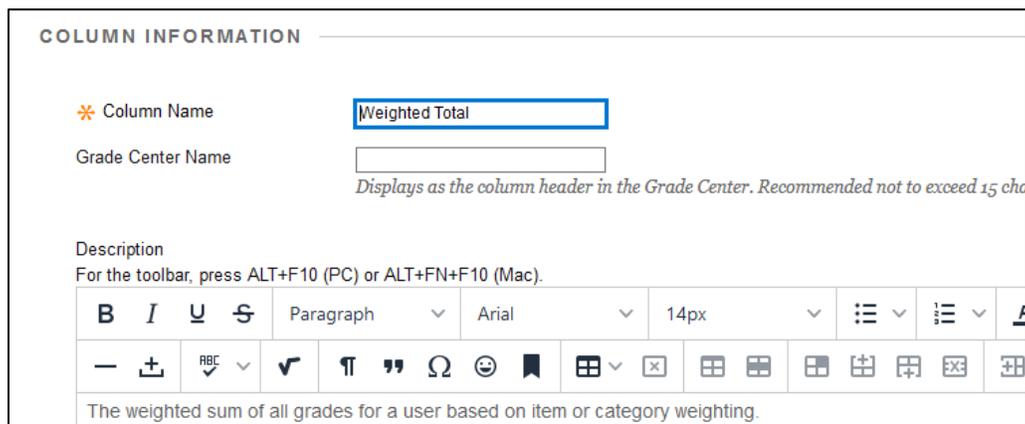

Create Calculated Column > Weighted Column

2. If you already have a Weighted Column, click on the gray arrow in column heading and select **Edit Column Info.**

Note: You may have several weighted columns and total columns already, especially if you have copied the course repeatedly. You only need one – Delete the extra weighted total and total columns.

You can give your *Weighted Column* a name (*Course Grade, Class Grade, etc.*).

Name the Weighted Column

Click on the drop down box, *Primary Display*. This will allow you to decide how you want the grade posted on your *Weighted Column*. *Percentage* is most commonly used.

Set Primary (and Secondary) Display

Choose either Columns to Select or Categories to Select

You can weigh it by Column or Category, or a combination of both.

Selecting Columns and/or Categories

Columns to Select: These are all the columns in the Grade Center. You can add *Columns to Select* and they can be added to the *Weighted Grade* total. This could be for a single assignment that is due that does not require a Category.

Categories to Select: These are Assignments/Assessments that are *Categorized* together. Use categories if you don't know how many tests or homework assignments you will be giving.

Selected Columns: This is where the Columns and/or Categories are weighted.

Now you are ready to set up your other options.

OPTIONS

Select No for the first option to exclude this Grade Center column from calculations. Select No for the second option to hide this column from Students in My Grades. Select Yes for 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

Click Submit to proceed.

Cancel   **Submit**

Weighted Column Options

Include this Column in Grade Center Calculations – Click Yes.

Show this Column to Students – This will hide the column from the students view.

Show Statistics (average and median) for this column to Students in My Grades – This will show statistics for the whole class.

How Weighted Grades using Categories works:

When you use **Categories for Weighted Grades** with columns equally graded, Blackboard takes the grades from each category and comes up with a grade for that category. Blackboard will then take all the grades for each category and put them together. It then will take into account how much each category is weighted. You will then get your final weighted grade total.
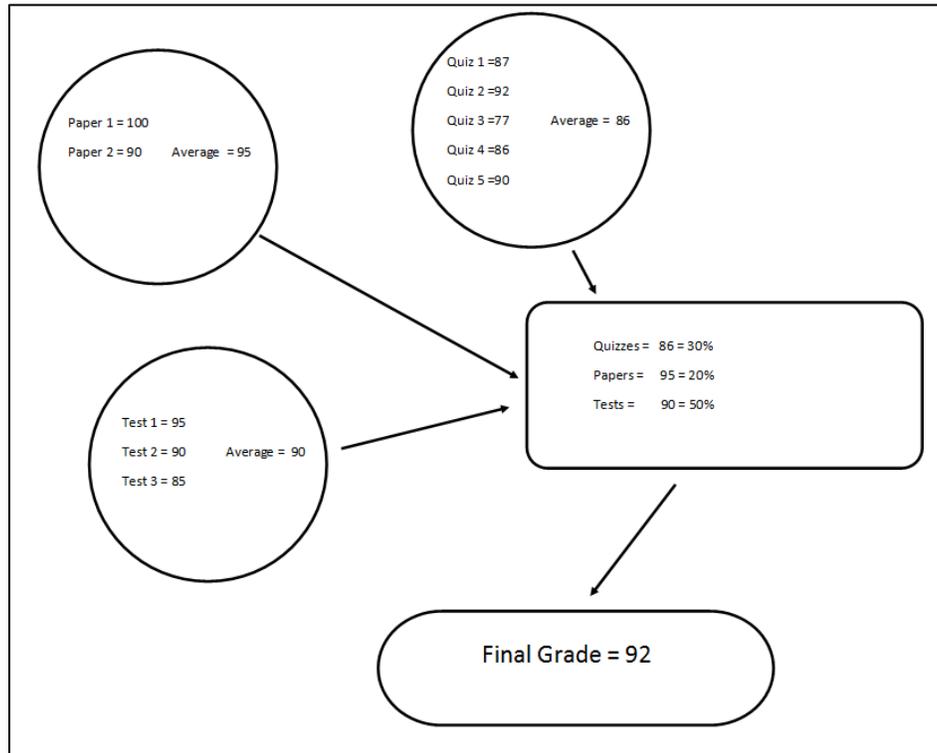
How Weighted Grades are Calculated

Diagram of how Grades are Weighted

If you selected to weigh some columns proportionally, then assignments with more points will be allocated a higher proportion. So, for example, if I had five homework assignments and four were worth 20 points, but one was worth 100 points, the 100-point homework assignment would be weighted more towards calculating the overall grade.

1. In the *Categories To Select* box, select the categories that you want to use.

2. Click on the right arrow to bring over your categories.

3. In the *Selected Columns* box:

- Add the weight totals for each category.
- Optional:
  - You can decide to drop the lowest or highest score(s).
  - You can use the lowest/highest value(s) to calculate.
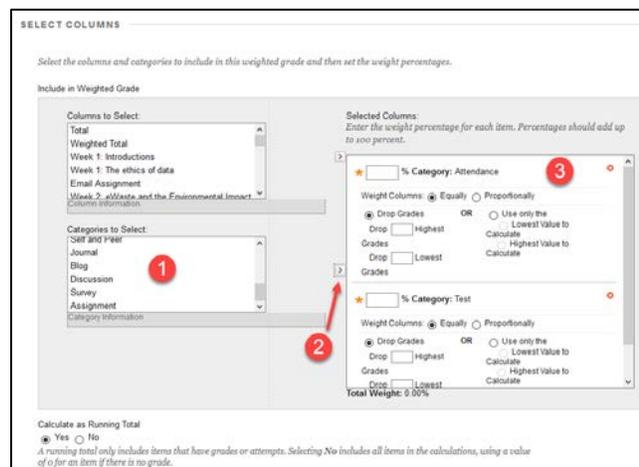
When you are done weighting your grades, please be sure that the *Total Weight* equals 100.

Ensure Total Weight: 100%

Calculate as a Running Total: This option will determine if particular assignments or assessments will be calculated if they are not completed. Dashes in a cell mean they aren't being included in the calculated weighted grade. Be sure to put a zero down if a student fails to turn in an assignment!


Calculate as Running Total

Testing Your Weighted Grades

Once you are done with Weighted Grades, it is a good idea to test it to make sure it is going to work.

One way that you can test your grades is to add yourself as a student in your class. You can enter *Student Preview Mode* by clicking on the eyeball icon to the left of the Edit Mode button. Then click **Exit Preview**. Upon exit, you will be asked if you want to retain preview data that was generated during previewing.
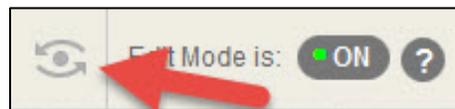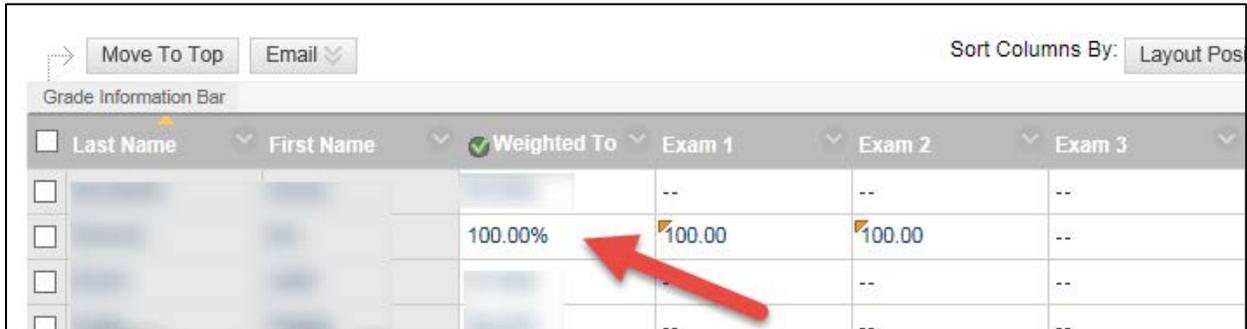

Student Preview Mode Icon

Return to the Grade Center. For each assesment under your "preview_user", you should give a perfect score. After giving all your assesments a 100, the Weighted Total should also be 100%

(or A if displaying letter grades). If not, you will need to go back and check to make sure you have allotted each category correctly.

Note: Please do not use current students and change their grades for testing purposes. Use Student Preview instead.

You can then add grades to see the end result.

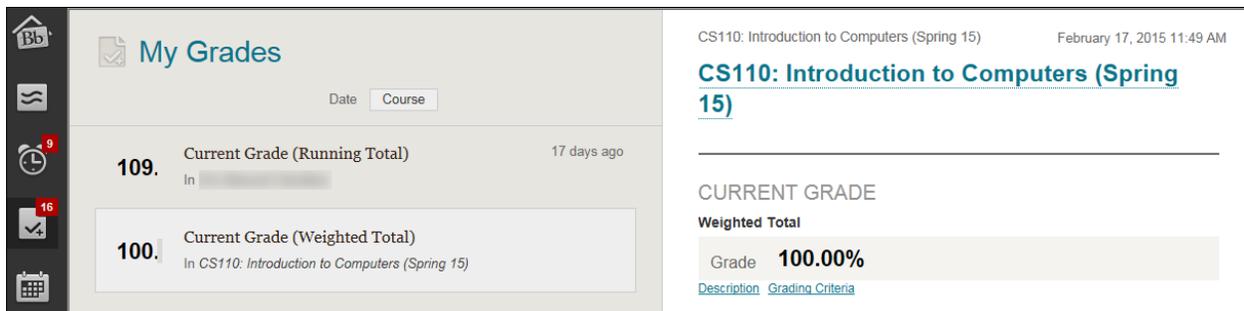**Check the Preview User's Weighted Total**

Preview Mode is also helpful to see exactly what the students see (they don't see the full Grade Center, only their own grades).

- Go to the **Tools** section.
- Click **Grades**.

Viewing Grades as the Preview User

Getting Help with Technology at the University of Hartford

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 and Staff needing support with Blackboard or other instructional technologies, should contact FCLD.
Phone: (860) 768-4661   **Email:** fcld@hartford.edu
Website: http://www.hartford.edu/fcld

Student Blackboard Support
The following is student support for Blackboard only. All other support technical support issues need to be addressed to the Office of Technology Services (below).
Phone: (860) 768-4636   **Email:** bbsupport@hartford.edu
FAQ/Submit a Ticket: http://www.hartford.edu/studentbbsupport

Information Technology Services (ITS) 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: (860) 768-4357   **Email:** helpdesk@hartford.edu
Website: http://hartford.edu/ots

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) 768-4357   **Website:** http://www.hartford.edu/mts