# Weighting Grades in Blackboard

The Blackboard Grade Center can accommodate a number of different grade weighting schemes (the process by which grades are weighted for a course's final grade). This document describes one very basic scenario, but should give you ideas for others if desired.

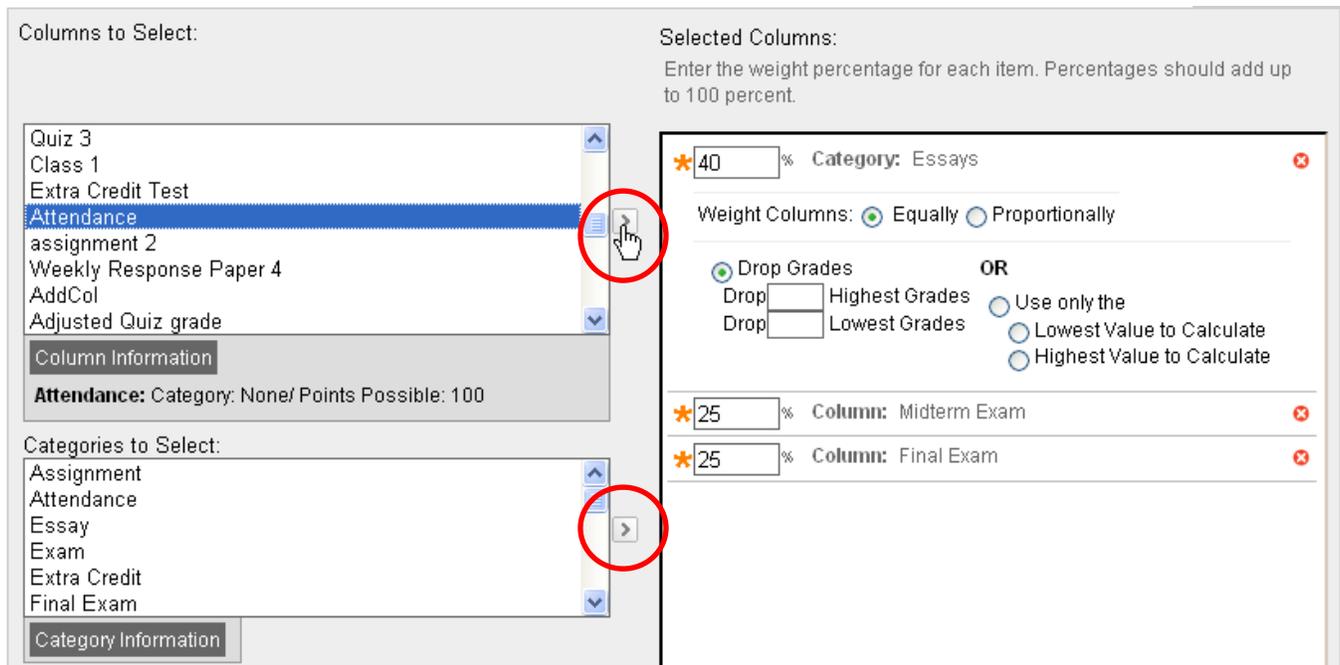## Using Categories gives you flexibility

Before starting to set up the weighting scheme, it's a good idea to make sure that all of your grade center items have a category associated with them. This will give you additional options when setting up the weighting. Click the "chevron" (double drop-down) for each item and select "Quick Column Information" to check whether there is a category. If not, then select "Edit Column Information" and add an appropriate category (you can also define your own in Manage --> Categories).
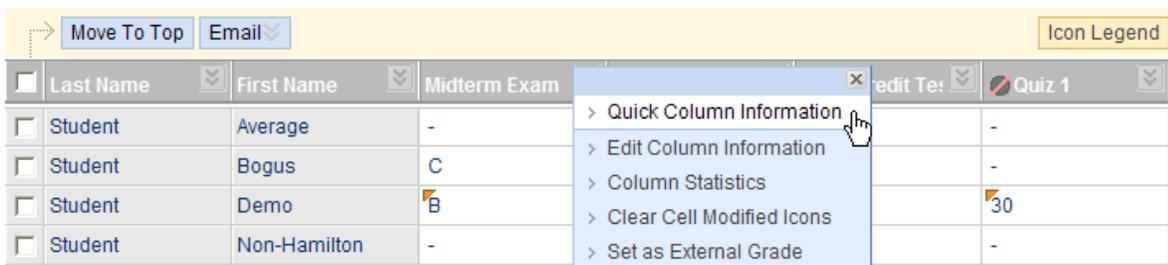
Setting up your grade weighting scheme

You should have a column called "Weighted Total" in your grade center (if not, create one by clicking the "Create Calculated Column" button and selecting "Weighted Column"). Click the "chevron" for the Weighted Total column and then select "Edit Column Information." You will see an area which is unique to the weighted column and this is where you will set up your grade weighting scheme.

You should be able to replicate the weighting scheme on your syllabus in this "Select Columns" area. As you can see, we can mix categories (quizzes, essays) in with individual columns (exams, attendance). You can also select calculated columns (total, average, min/max or weighted) which you have created to reflect specific grading needs (see below).

As long as each essay-like item has the category "Essay," it doesn't matter how many there are; Blackboard will calculate the grade for this category based on however many items are in the category and weight them equally (each one has the same number of points possible) or proportionally (each one has a different number of points possible). You can also choose to drop the X number of lowest (or highest!) grades or use only the lowest or highest value of the group.

A Few Other Considerations

Adding Columns to the Grade Center: Most of the time you will probably use the "Create Column" option in the tool bar; this is the correct option for manually-entered grades (such as exams or essays). Certain types of assessments in Blackboard will create their own columns in the Grade Center for you. These are: tests and quizzes created through the Test or Survey Manager; Discussion Board forums or threads (if you pick the Graded option); blogs, journals and wikis (if the grading option is selected); and Assignment or SafeAssign content types.

What you can include: you can select either Columns or Categories for your final grade calculations. If you select a Category, make sure all the columns you wish to include have the same type of Category (Quiz, Exam, Essay, etc.). If a Category is selected, you will have additional options to drop the specified number of lowest grades (or other options as above). If all the columns in a Category have the same Points Possible, then you will want to weight them Equally; if they do not (e.g., one quiz is worth 10 points and one is worth 25 points), then you should select Proportionally.

Setting the Total Weight (Percentage): usually this will be 100%; however, you can have less than 100% (if not all your columns are in the Grade Center yet) or more than 100% (you are giving out extra credit). You will get a warning message, but you can then save the page.

Weighted Total vs. Total: the two columns are created by default in every Blackboard space. The Total column shows the number of points attained out of the total possible. The Weighted Total shows the current total as determined by the weighting scheme set in the Edit Column Information page as above. If you set up a Weighted Total, then it does not matter how many total points there are possible in the course assignments; there could be 100 points total, or 450, or 2175 for all the assignments. The final grade will be calculated proportionately according to the weighting scheme.

Calculate as Running Total: the default option is "Yes," which means that the grade is determined based on items graded, not on all items possible. This gives a more accurate sense of where a student is at any point in the semester.

Adding your own Weighted Total Columns: You can add your own weighted total columns if that would be helpful in calculating or tracking grades. For example, a Participation grade might actually be comprised of 40% Discussion Board postings, 40% classroom participation, and 20% Attendance. You could create an additional "Weighted Total" column to set this part of the final grade. Make sure to have all the columns created first, with the appropriate categories assigned, and then create a calculated column and set the weights for these sub-grades, in the same type of window as above.