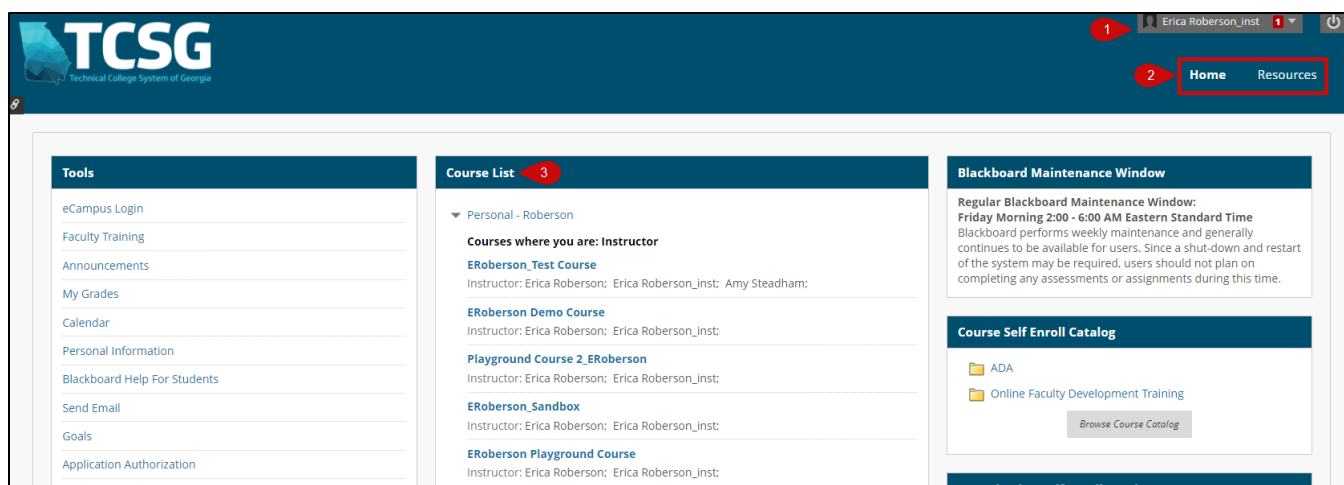


## Blackboard – Getting Started – Quick Guide

This handout provides a basic overview of Blackboard and its features. Depending on the Blackboard setup at your college, some of the features may or may not be available or could appear differently. Throughout the guide there are links to GVTC handouts and/or Blackboard Help that will provide additional information. **NOTE:** All TCSG colleges use the Blackboard Learn Original Course View.

### System Navigation

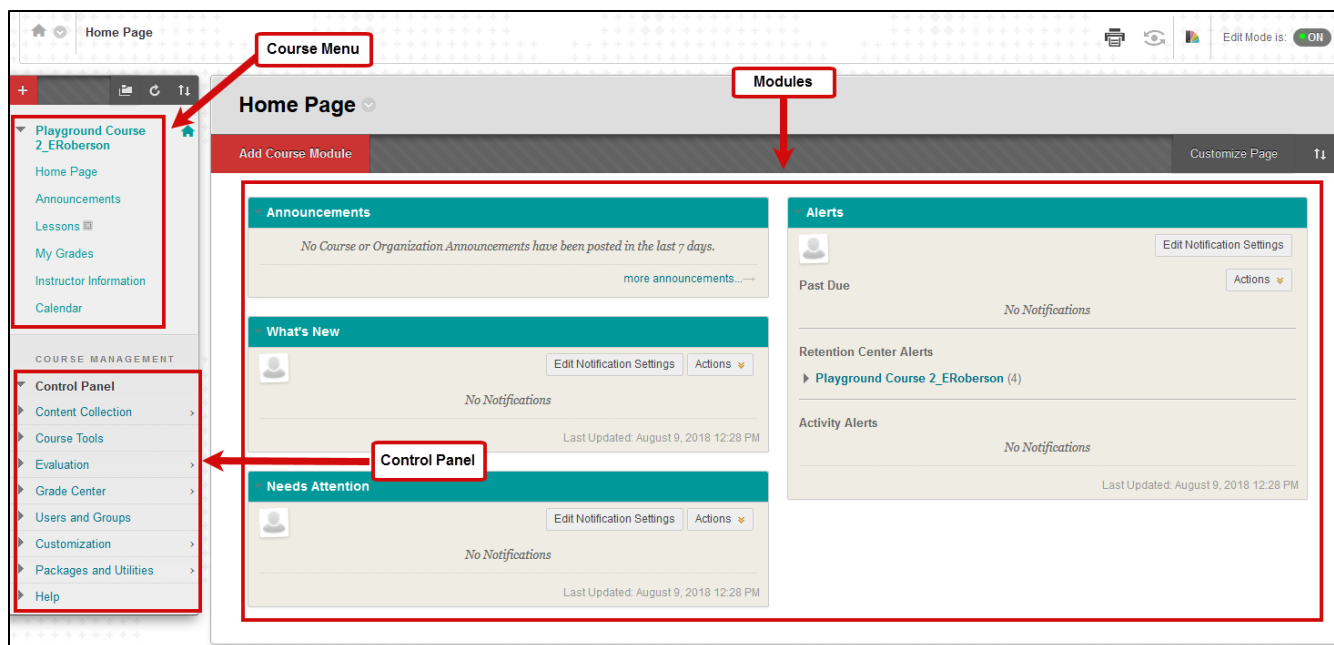
Upon logging into Blackboard, the homepage will appear. The homepage consists of the Global Navigation menu, tabs, and several modules. The Global Navigation menu and tabs always remain at the top of the screen.



1. The [Global Navigation menu](#) is in the top-right corner of the screen and consists of the users' course and personal settings. Users can select their name to open the menu.
2. Underneath the Global Navigation menu are tabs. If you have a [Notifications](#) tab (not pictured), it will consist of modules that alert users of important items that need to be reviewed. The notifications are for all courses that users are enrolled in.
3. The [Course List](#) module displays all courses in which the user is enrolled.

### Course Navigation

The Course Home Page consists of modules that provide details about the course. The course menu is available on the left of the screen. The menu is collapsible to increase the viewing area and will automatically collapse in certain scenarios such as monitors set to a lower resolution, using magnification, or mobile devices with smaller screens. The course menu contains links that create the top-level navigation for the course. The Control Panel underneath the course menu, is where instructors access course tools and settings. There are also [shortcuts](#) available to help users navigate the course.

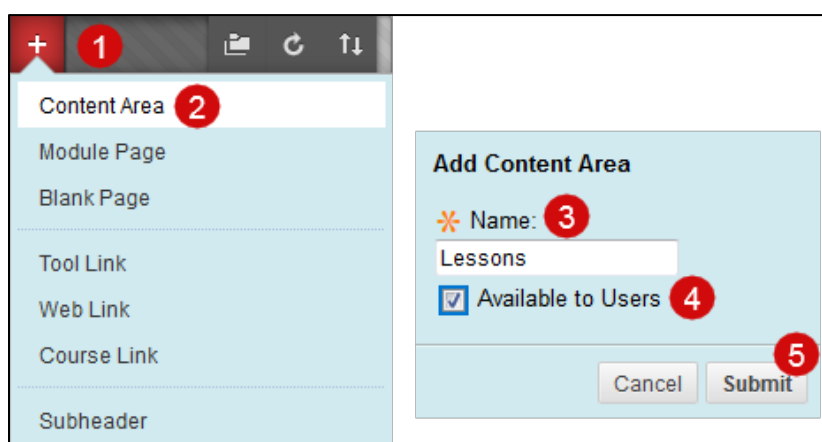


Instructors can add links to the course menu to provide organization and navigation for the course. The links give users access to course materials and tools.

**NOTE:** Before making changes to any template or blank course provided by the college verify the college policy regarding adding to, removing from, or modifying the courses menu.

### How to add a Content Area link to the Course Menu

1. Select the **Add Menu Item** button (+) above the course menu.
2. Select **Content Area** from the list.
3. The *Add Content Area* window will appear. Enter a name for the content area in the *Name* field.
4. Select the checkbox **Available to Users** to make the content area available to students.
5. Select **Submit**.



### How to add a Tool link to the Course Menu

1. Select the **Add Menu Item** button (+) and select **Tool Link** from the list.
2. The *Add Tool Link* window will appear. Enter a name for the tool link in the *Name* field.

3. For *Type*, click the drop-down arrow and select the tool link.
4. Select the checkbox **Available to Users** to make the link available to users (students).
5. Select **Submit**.

## Communication Tools

Blackboard provides several ways to communicate with students. Some of which include Announcements, the Calendar, Email, and Discussions.

### Announcements

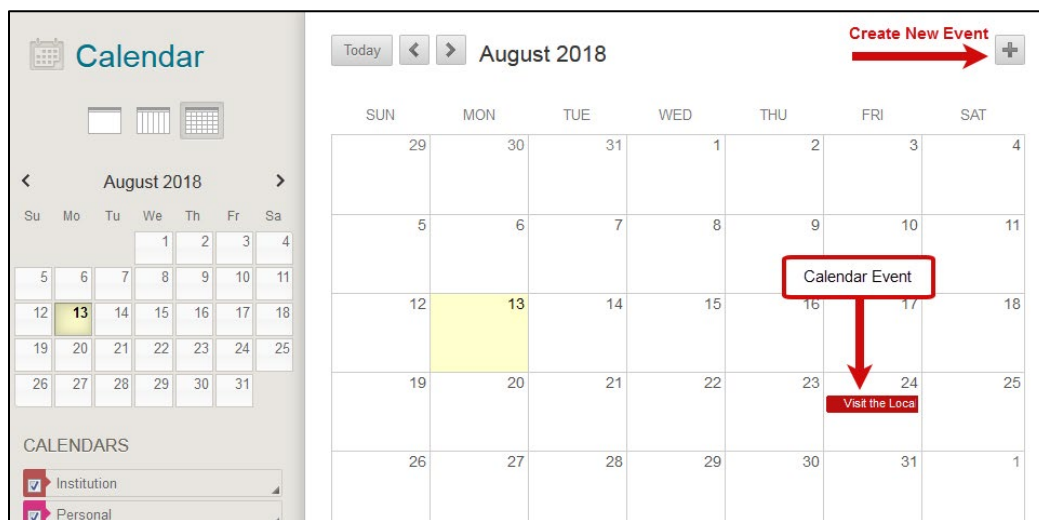
[Announcements](#) are a great way to quickly update students on important course information.

1. Add the *Announcements* tool link to the course menu.
2. Select **Announcements** from the course menu. The Announcements page will appear.
3. Select **Create Announcement**. The Create Announcement page will appear.
4. Enter a title in the *Subject* field.
5. Type the announcement in the *Message* content editor.
6. In the *Web Announcement Options* section, there is an option to send the announcement as an email by selecting the **Email Announcement checkbox**.
7. Select **Submit**. The announcement should appear on the *Announcements* page.

## Calendar

The [calendar](#) can be used to remind students about important dates such as future tests and assignment due dates. Course items with applied due dates in the settings automatically appear in the calendar; however, instructors can create events as well.

1. Add the *Calendar* tool link to the course menu.
2. Select the **Calendar** link from the course menu.
3. Select the **Create New Event** button (+) in the upper-right corner.
4. The *Create Event* window will appear. In the *New Event Name...* field, enter a name for the calendar event.
5. Verify the correct course is selected in the *Calendar* field.
6. Choose a Start and End Date and time. If the event will last all day, select the date, and then select the checkbox “All Day”.
7. Select **Save**. The event should appear on the calendar.



## Email

Blackboard's [email](#) tool allows instructors to send email to anyone in the course. Blackboard is not a self-contained email system, it only allows for a message to be sent from inside the system. That message is received by the user's email provider and any replies return to the sender's email provider – replies are not visible inside Blackboard.

1. On the *Control Panel*, select **Course Tools**.
2. Select **Send Email**. The *Send Email* page will appear.
3. Select a link to specify the recipient(s) of the email.
4. The *Email Information* page will appear. Enter a subject in the *Subject* field.
5. Type a message in the *Message* field.
6. Select **Attach a file** to upload a file from the computer.

## 7. Select **Submit**.

The left screenshot shows the 'Send Email' interface with the following options:

- Send Email** (Numbered 2)
- Send emails to others in your course without having to switch to your email provider. [More Help](#)*
- All Users**  
Send email to all of the users in the Course.
- All Groups**  
Send email to all of the Groups in the Course.
- All Teaching Assistant Users**  
Send email to all of the Teaching Assistant users in the Course.
- All Student Users**  
Send email to all of the Student users in the Course.
- All Instructor Users**  
Send email to all of the Instructor users in the Course.
- Single / Select Users**  
Select which users will receive the email.
- Single / Select Groups**  
Select which Groups will receive the email.

A red bracket groups the 'All Users' through 'All Instructor Users' options, with a red circle and number 3 next to it.

The right screenshot shows the 'EMAIL INFORMATION' form with the following fields:

- To**: Roberson\_inst, Erica; Roberson, Erica; Roberson\_inst\_PreviewUser, Erica
- Invalid Email**: Inst-Account, Demo
- From**: Erica Roberson\_inst - eroberson@tcsg.edu (eroberson@tcsg.edu)
- Subject**: Welcome to the Course! (Numbered 4)
- Message**: For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+Fn+F10 (Mac). The message body contains: 'Chapter 2 Test due date has been extended to August 30, 2018.' (Numbered 5)
- Path**: A copy of this email will be sent to the sender.
- Return Receipt**: ☒ (Numbered 6)
- Attachments**: [Attach a file](#)

**NOTE:** The email tool can also be added to the course menu for easy access.

## Discussions

Discussions are a great way to encourage student engagement, especially in online courses. When using discussions, make sure that the instructions and guidelines are clearly defined. The instructor has the option to moderate the discussions to ensure that everyone is following the guidelines of the discussion board. Instructors can also participate in discussions. To access the discussion board, the instructor can add a link to the course menu or a link can be added to a content area (either to the board or a forum). The discussion board can also be accessed via Course Tools (if access to this feature is provided to the students).

The screenshot shows the 'Discussion Board' interface with the following elements:

- Create Forum** button
- Search** button
- Forum** (Numbered 1)
- Description** (Numbered 2)
- Total Posts**, **Unread Posts**, and **Total Participants** (Numbered 3)

The forum topic is titled 'B.B. World 2018 Discussion' and has a description: 'Write a summary of Chapter 1, then write a paragraph of your thoughts on the chapter. Reply to at least two of your peers. Your replies must be detailed in at least one paragraph.'

The forum topic has 1 total post, 1 unread post, and 1 total participant.

1. Forums are where topics are discussed. The instructor creates the forum topic, and students create threads within the forum to discuss the topic. The forum must be created before students can begin creating threads. To create a forum, select the [Create Forum](#) button. Select the forum title to view the threads within the forum.
2. The description describes the instructions/requirements for the forum.
3. This area summarizes the contents of the forum. It shows the number of posts, the number of unread posts, and the number of participants.

After selecting the **Create Forum** button, the discussion forum page will appear.

**Forum: B.B. World 2018 Discussion**

Forums are made up of individual discussion threads that can be organized around a particular subject. A thread is a conversation within a forum that includes the initial post and all replies to it. When you access a forum, a list of threads appears. [More Help](#)

Create Thread Grade Discussion Forum Subscribe 1

Alignments Search Display ▾

Thread Actions ▾	Collect	Delete	Date ▾ 2	Thread 3	Author 4	5 Status	6 Unread Posts	7 Total Posts
Thread Actions ▾	Collect	Delete	8/13/18 10:07 AM	Discussion 1	Erica Roberson_inst_PreviewUser	Published	1	1

Thread Actions ▾ Collect Delete

Displaying 1 to 1 of 1 items | [Edit Paging...](#)

1. Within the forum, create threads, grade threads within the forum, and/or subscribe to the forum.  
**NOTE:** Some of these are only available if the forum is marked as gradable. Forums where students must post first can also change the display options.
2. The date shows when the thread was posted to the forum.
3. Thread title.
4. The author of the thread.
5. Shows the status of the thread.
6. The number of unread posts within the thread.
7. The number of posts within the thread.

## Instructional Content

There are several types of content that can be used in a Blackboard course, such as a folder, item, blank page, file, web link, mashups, and learning modules. Each of these are described in the [Introduction to Basic Content Types](#) handout.

Content types can be added to a content area, learning module, or a folder. Select the content type from the menus available within the content area. The menus are *Build Content*, *Assessments*, and *Tools*.

**Lessons** ▾

Build Content ▾ Assessments ▾ Tools ▾

## Edit Mode and Student Preview Mode

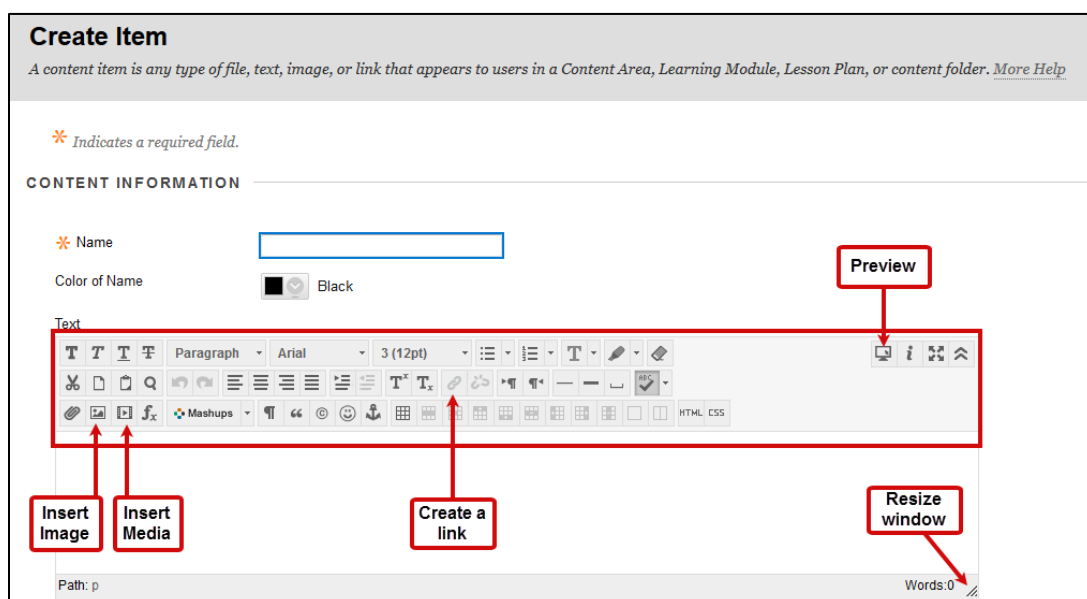
Blackboard has two modes that allows instructors to view the course as a student. When [Edit Mode](#) is enabled, instructors have the ability to make edits to course content. When Edit Mode is disabled, instructors can preview the course content without editing options while still maintaining their use of Course Management tools. The instructor also has access to the control panel. The [Student Preview Mode](#) will create a student account for the instructor. The account will include the instructor's name (e.g. Doe\_PreviewUser). Student Preview Mode will show the course exactly as a student would see it.

Both the Edit Mode and Student Preview Mode can be accessed in the upper-right corner of the screen underneath the tabs (see screenshot below).



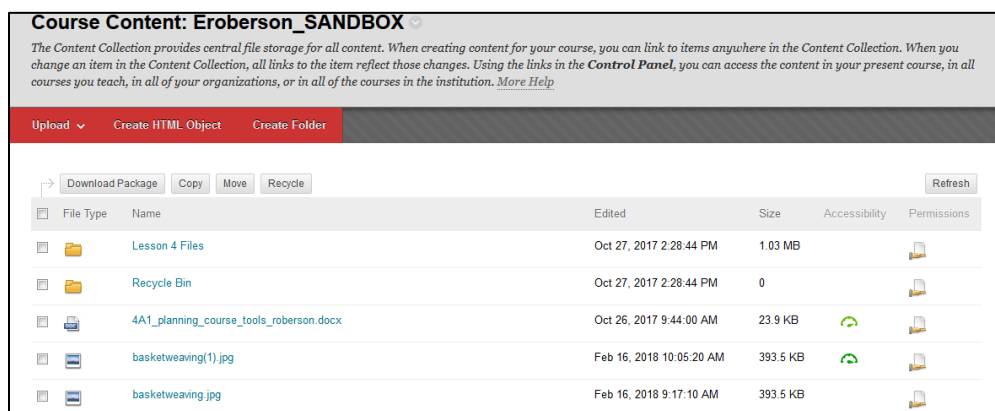
## The Content Editor

The [content editor](#) appears when working in content areas such as assignments, tests, and discussions. It's also available in many other areas. Within the content editor, there are options to add text, images, videos, tables, links, and attachments.



## The Content Collection

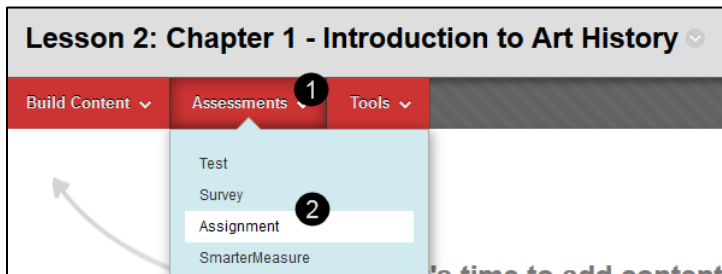
The [Content Collection](#) is a space within Blackboard that stores files and folders for the course. The instructor can manage and organize the files from within the Content Collection. Files that are uploaded to the course in an area outside of the content collection are automatically saved to the content collection.



## Assignments

Assignments can be created in a content area, folder, or learning module.

1. Select the **Assessments** menu.
2. Select **Assignment**.

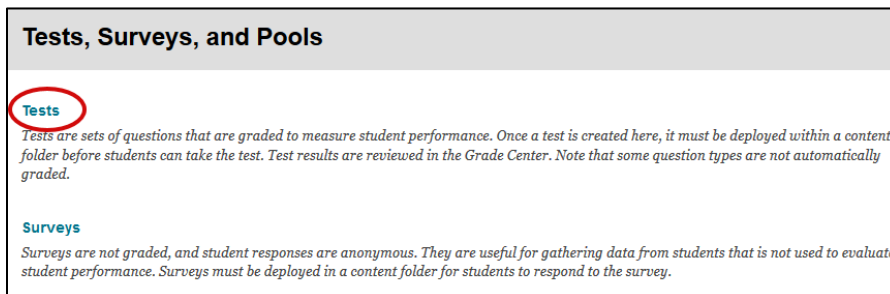


Review the [Creating Assignments](#) handout for instructions on how to create an assignment.

## Tests

Instructors can [create tests](#) to evaluate students' knowledge on a specific topic(s).

1. From the Control Panel, select **Course Tools**.
2. Select **Tests, Surveys, and Pools**.
3. The *Tests, Surveys, and Pools* page will appear. Select **Tests**.



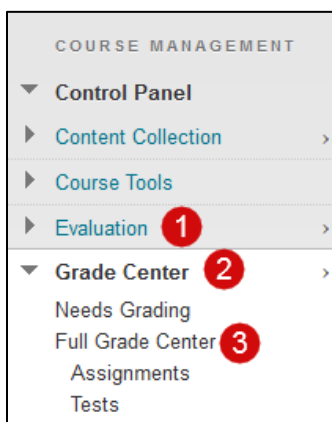
## The Grade Center

The Grade Center can be used to calculate grades and monitor student progress. Not only can instructors manage grades for assessments, but also items that do not have to be submitted through Blackboard, such as presentations or class demonstrations. It is important that the Grade Center is set up correctly so that the students' final grade is accurate. For additional instructions, see [Six Steps to Setting Up the Grade Center](#).

To access the [Grade Center](#):

1. From the Control Panel, select **Evaluation**.
2. Select **Grade Center**.

3. Select **Full Grade Center**. This is the default view of the Grade Center.



The Full Grade Center displays all students in the course, along with their grades. Instructors can hide/show columns in the Grade Center. The first column cannot be hidden. To hide columns, go to the [Column Organization](#) page.

**Grade Center : Full Grade Center**

*The Full Grade Center displays all columns and rows in the Grade Center and is the default view of the Grade Center. [More Help](#)*

1 Create Column 2 Create Calculated Column 3 Manage 4 Reports

Filter Work Offline

Current View: Full Grade Center(Default) Category: All Categories Status: All Statuses ☒ Show attempts that don't contribute to user's grade

Grade Information Bar Last Saved: August 14, 2018 11:32 AM

Sort Columns By: Layout Position Order: ▲Ascending

	Last Name	First Name	Username	External ID	Last Access	Availability	Weighted To	Introductions
	Roberson_inst_Pre	Erica	inst_eroberson_pre		July 11, 2018	Available	97.50%	5.00
	Roberson_Preview	Erica	eroberson_preview		June 8, 2018	Available	89.50%	5.00
	Roberson_ta	Erica	ta_eroberson	ta_eroberson	August 14, 2018	Available	100.00%	5.00
	Roberson_ta_Preview	Erica	ta_eroberson_pre		July 3, 2018	Available	90.50%	5.00

Selected Rows: 0

Move To Top Email

Icon Legend

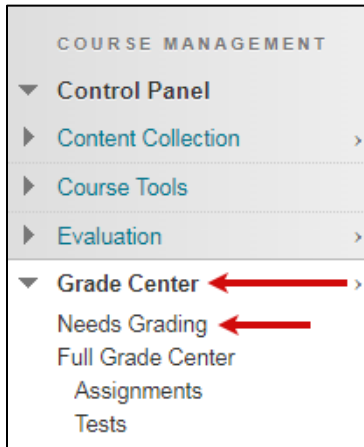
Edit Rows Displayed

1. Create Column – Add items to the Grade Center for manual grading (create a new column).
2. Create Calculated Column – Create averages, min/max, total, and weighted columns.
3. Manage – Manage Grade Center settings such as grading periods, grading schemas, categories, and more.
4. Reports – Create reports and view the grade history for students.

## Grading Submissions

Grades can be assigned in the Grade Center either automatically or manually. Tests and surveys that do not contain questions, such as essay, short answer, etc., can be graded automatically without the instructor reviewing the submission first. Other assessments will require the instructor to review the student's submission and assign a grade. There are multiple ways to [grade submissions](#):

- Option 1 – Access the items that need to be graded from the Needs Grading page. From the *Control Panel*, select **Grade Center**, and then **Needs Grading**.



- Option 2 – From the Grade Center, identify the items that need to be graded by selecting the **Needs Grading icon**.

Introductions	Current Events	UBW and the Ec
5.00	18.00	100.00%
5.00	10.00	90.00%
5.00	!	!
5.00	--	--

- Option 3 – Enter a grade for an item done outside of Blackboard directly into the gradebook cell. When the cell is selected, a textbox will appear allowing the instructor to manually type in the student's grade.

Introductions	Current Events
5.00	18.00
5.00	10.00
5.00	!
5.00	<input type="text"/>

## Accessibility

Blackboard encourages the creation of accessible content. [Ally](#) is a Blackboard tool that automatically scans files uploaded and deployed into Blackboard courses and provides an accessibility score and feedback for the instructor to help make the file(s) more accessible. Ally also generates alternative formats available for users to download.

The image shows two overlapping windows from the Blackboard Ally tool. The left window, titled 'Accessibility score for: GE Master Second Major Form with Campus 2017-2018 rev 11 08 2017.doc', displays a 27% accessibility score with a red gauge. It includes a message: 'This document contains images that are missing an alternative description' and two buttons: 'What this means' and 'How to add descriptions'. Below this is a dashed box for file upload with a 'Browse' button. The right window, titled 'Download alternative formats', lists six options: Tagged PDF (Structured PDF for improved use with assistive technology), HTML (For viewing in the browser and on mobile devices), ePub (For reading as an e-book on an iPad and other e-book readers), Electronic braille (BRF version for consumption on electronic braille displays), Audio (MP3 version for listening), and Translated version (A machine translated version of the original document). At the bottom of this window are 'Cancel' and 'Download' buttons. Red arrows point from labels 'Ally Feedback' and 'Alternative Formats' to the respective windows.

Accessibility score for:  
GE Master Second Major Form with  
Campus 2017-2018 rev 11 08  
2017.doc

27% All issues ⓘ

This document contains images  
that are missing an alternative  
description

What this means

How to add descriptions

Drop file to upload  
or

Browse

Download alternative formats

- Tagged PDF  
Structured PDF for improved use with assistive technology
- HTML  
For viewing in the browser and on mobile devices
- ePub  
For reading as an e-book on an iPad and other e-book readers
- Electronic braille  
BRF version for consumption on electronic braille displays
- Audio  
MP3 version for listening
- Translated version  
A machine translated version of the original document

Cancel Download