Returning Results Using the Blackboard Grade Centre

NUI Galway's Online Results Return system automates the exchange of final module marks between Blackboard Learn and our Student Information Systems (i.e. Quercus+). Using a defined column (Final Mark or Calculated Final Mark) in the Blackboard Grade Centre, instructors can post final module marks for approval and transfer, and the Student Information System can retrieve submitted marks. This replaces the previous method of using whitesheets. Instructors on any Blackboard module can enter and approve marks for transfer to the Student Information System.

Instructors and Graders can also release provisional results to students using the Blackboard Grade Centre in a defined Provisional Mark column. These results are shared between the instructor and the student and are not sent to the Student Information System.

The Blackboard Grade Centre can also be used to calculate grades and share grades with students at the instructor’s discretion.

There is also an option to work offline in Excel and upload your results to the Blackboard Grade Centre using our instructions.

If you need to:

- Learn more about the Blackboard Grade Centre, please visit page 3.
- Learn more about releasing marks to your students, please visit page 4 and 11.
- Learn more about submitting final marks (formerly whitesheets), please visit page 10
- To learn how to work in Excel while using the Blackboard Grade Centre, please visit page 22
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Blackboard Grade Centre

1. OVERVIEW OF THE GRADE CENTRE
   - Parts of the Grade Centre ................................................................. 3
   - Visibility of Marks to Students ..................................................... 4
   - Managing and Organising the Grade Centre .................................... 5
   - Organising Columns ........................................................................ 6
   - Using Your Own Columns .................................................................. 9
   - Automatically Generated Columns .................................................. 9
   - Create Column .................................................................................. 9

2. RETURNING AND CALCULATING MARKS
   - Provisional Marks ............................................................................. 11
   - Using Grading Schemas .................................................................... 13
   - Weighted Columns ............................................................................ 17
   - Final Marks ........................................................................................ 19
   - Mark Approval and Transfer ............................................................. 20

3. RETURNING MARKS FOR VISITING AND 2ND SITTING STUDENTS
   - Returning Marks for Visiting Students ............................................ 21
   - Returning Marks for 2nd Sitting Students ....................................... 21

4. USING EXCEL IN THE GRADE CENTRE
   - Exporting from the Grade Centre ..................................................... 22
   - Importing from Excel to the Grade Centre ....................................... 24

APPENDICES
   - Frequently Asked Questions ........................................................... 26
   - Importing to Excel with Student IDs Beginning in 0 ......................... 28
   - Who to Contact ................................................................................ 31
1. Overview of the Grade Centre

Parts of the Grade Centre

The Blackboard Grade Centre is available in your modules under Course Management. Click into the Full Grade Centre to gain access.

The Full Grade Centre will appear with the following parts:

1. **Username and Student ID**: Your students are identified by their student ID number in both columns.
2. **Last Access**: This column shows you when a student last accessed this module. This can be used to monitor student engagement.
3. **Course Instance**: The Course Instance column indicates the course code where a student is enrolled. This can be useful for organisational purposes.
4. **Provisional**: This column is used to release provisional marks to your students. These marks are between you and your students, and are not sent elsewhere.
5. **Final Mark**: This column is used to send final marks to the Student Information System.

Please note:

This is the default view of the Grade Centre. Additional columns will appear if instructors add them. This can be done through adding elements such as assignments, Turnitin assignments, Qwickly Attendance or even manually adding columns. If you are missing any of these columns, please proceed to the Frequently Asked Questions section of this manual.
Visibility of Marks to Students

In the Grade Centre, columns can be either hidden or visible to students. By default, the columns are set up as follows:

Final Mark
As indicated by the pink stroke beside the title, the Final Mark column is hidden from students by default. This column replace the whitesheets for returning results and should remain hidden from students.

Provisional Mark
The Provisional Mark column is not hidden from students by default. It should be hidden from students until you wish to release these marks, which is covered on the next page. It is also set as their external grade as evidenced by the green tick beside the title. This means that students can go to the Report Card widget on their Blackboard home page and view all their Provisional grades for their modules.
Managing and Organising the Grade Centre

As previously covered, the Grade Centre has default columns and settings. That is how you will find your Grade Centre when you first begin to use it.

Showing and Hiding Columns

As an Instructor or a Grader on a module, you are responsible for managing the information students can see. Thus, we stress the importance of learning to show and hide columns.

By default, the Provisional column is not hidden from students. You should hide this column until you are ready to release your marks, and this can be done as follows:

1. Click on the chevron beside the title and choose Edit Column Information:

2. Scroll to the bottom of this page to the Options section, and select No in the Show this Column to Students option. Click Submit when you are finished making this change.

3. When you return to the Grade Centre, you will see that the column is now hidden as evidenced in the pink stroke beside the title. Simply reverse this step to release this column to students when you are ready.
Returning Results Using the Blackboard Grade Centre

Organising Columns

1. If you like to reorganise your columns, there is an option to do so under Manage > Column Organisation:

2. This area will allow you to drag and drop columns around to your liking. It is **not** advised that you use the Total column as its calculations derive from the adding of all columns.

Using Course Instance Codes

A column now appears in the Blackboard Grade Centre to indicate the course instance code in which a student is registered. This column is not only useful for organising large numbers of students, but it also indicates if a student is properly registered for their course or not.

If no course instance code appears beside a student’s name, this indicates that the student was manually added to the Blackboard course. No course instance beside the name means that the student is not registered for the module and an official mark cannot be returned for this student.

The lecturer or module co-ordinator must email reghelp@nuigalway.ie with a request to register the student for the module in the SIS (Quercus). Note that students cannot directly request a change to their registration after online registration has closed.
The course instance column appears as follows:

![Course Instance Column Example](image)

You can use this information to better organise your Grade Centre in two ways.

(a) Organising the Full Grade Centre by Course Instance

1. For a small class, you can organise the Grade Centre using the Course Instance column by simply clicking on the column name:
2. This will reorganise the class list by course instance rather than surname:

![Course Instance List](image)

3. In this instance, a student without an associated course instance code is present, and their registration should be checked.

(b) Creating Smart Views

For organising larger classes, there is an option to create Smart Views that can separate students into smaller groups based on their course instance code. This could come in useful for returning marks for international students, or in modules with a variety of course instance codes.

1. In the Full Grade Centre, go to Manage > Smart Views:
2. Click on Create Smart View:
3. In the Create Smart View area, follow these instructions before clicking Submit:

4. Once created, the Smart View will appear as under the Full Grade Centre area in your menu:

5. This area can now be accessed similarly to your Full Grade Centre. You can input marks and download the new area in Excel.
Using Your Own Columns

If you have using Blackboard for students to submit assignments or complete tests, you may have columns in your grade centre that you would like to calculate your students’ marks.

You might also wish to create a column to keep a record of marks, for instance a final exam that might be paper based. In this section, we will look at the types of columns available to you, and how to use them to calculate marks.

It is not advised that you rename or delete any default columns.

Automatically Generated Columns

When instructors create an assessment, for instance an assignment or MCQ, they will often select the option to have that assessment appear in the Blackboard Grade Centre. While these columns can be used to release grades to students or for record keeping, they can also be used to help calculate Provisional and Final Marks. If you would like to move straight on to Calculated Columns, please refer to page 17.

Create Column

You might choose to create a standard column to include assignments in the Grade Centre that take place outside of Blackboard. These might include paper based exams, presentations or lab reports.

1. You can create a standard column in the Grade Centre by clicking on Create Column:

2. You can then name and select the appropriate settings for this column. After you submit, the column will appear at the end of your Grade Centre.

3. Standard columns will require grades to be entered manually. The most fitting uses for these columns might be to enter the results of a paper based exam, or to include the results from a presentation.
2. Returning Marks

In this section, we will be focusing on the return of **Provisional marks** and **Final marks**. We will also be looking at the use of **Excel** to upload marks.

**Provisional marks** are released to your students via Blackboard. These marks are between the instructor and the student. They can be released as a number or a letter grade, and you can calculate these using grade schemas.

**Final marks** are entered and then extracted to the Student Information System. This column replaces the whitesheet system. Final marks should be returned in modules. Course instances (i.e. 5BBS1) are not Blackboard modules; they are the parent programme Blackboard space, and do not have a Final Mark column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Programme</th>
<th>Module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1617-5BBS1: BBS1 Bachelor of Business Studies (in International Hotel Management)</td>
<td>1617-SC5101 Viva Voce Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We will also look at the process for returning marks for **visiting** and **2nd sitting** students. It is still possible to use **Excel** in your marking process, which we will be outlining in this section.
Provisional Marks

By default, the Provisional mark column is set to display as an external grade as evidenced in the green tick beside the title. This means that when released, students can access this grade on their Blackboard home page or via the mobile app Bb Student.

Provisional results can be entered manually, or via Excel, which will be covered on page 22. In this column, you can enter a numerical grade or a letter grade. This will depend on practices in your school or college. Once the marks are satisfactorily entered, you can release them to students by showing the column to your students using the following steps.

You can also use Grading Schemas in your Provisional column to modify how your students see their grades. This can be useful for displaying letter grades.

1. In its current view, the Provisional column is hidden from students. To display it, you can click on the chevron beside its name, and click Edit Column Information:

   ![Edit Column Information]

2. In this view, scroll down to Options and choose Yes beside Show this Column to Students:

   ![Options]

3. Click Submit and when you are returned to the Full Grade Centre, you will see that the column is no longer hidden as the pink stroke has disappeared:
4. This is how the mark will appear to students in the My Grades area:
Using Grading Schemas

The Grading Schemas tool can assist you in automatically aligning a letter grade with your already calculated numeric grade.

1. Go to Manage > Grading Schemas:

2. There is a default schema present in each module. If you wish to create your own, choose to Create Grading Schema:

3. Now you can name your Schema and choose your options. In this case, we have chosen three bands:
   a. Under 40% = Fail
   b. 40% - 60% = Pass
   c. Over 60% =Honours
4. Click Submit and your schema will appear and a success message will be displayed.

5. To apply this Grade Schema to a column, go to the column and choose to Edit Column Information:

6. The options for this form are as follows:
   a. The Primary Display is what is shown to students.
   b. The Secondary Display is an additional field that is only visible to instructors within the Grade Centre.
   c. The Points Possible is the number originally set and should not be changed.
7. To use your Grade Schema, click on the Primary Display and choose your new schema from the list:

8. Click Submit and begin to add marks to this column. As you do, you will notice your Grade Schema has applied:
9. If you wish to display the actual mark in the Grade Centre for your own reference, then you can choose to display the Score from the Secondary Display:

![Secondary Display](image)

10. The column will now appear with Marks and Grades:

![Marks and Grades](image)

11. The Primary Display column is visible to instructors and students, and the Secondary Display column is only visible to the instructor. You can choose which grade you would like to release to your students.
Weighted Column

1. Adding a weighted column can be used to calculate from existing columns in your Blackboard Grade Centre.

2. A weighted column will prove to be useful if you would like to complete calculations in the Grade Centre using existing columns. In the example below, the columns to be calculated are Essay and Exam. In this case, marking might be completed on Blackboard on assignments submitted via Blackboard Assignments or Turnitin. You can also enter grades manually to columns in this case of a paper-based exam.

3. Once all the columns are present in your Grade Centre, you can edit the column to include the correct weightings.

4. You will be brought to a new window where you will see the available columns that you can now select and drag over to the area on the right to set your weightings.
5. Now you can enter the percentage weighting of each column. Your Total Weight must equal 100%, hence the need to have all your columns ready, even if no marks are in them yet.

6. As you can see below, weightings have been applied to each column and the Total Weight is now correctly set at 100%. You would not be allowed to submit and move on from this window if the calculation did not equal 100%. Please note that the default setting is to calculate marks as a running total. This should be set to “No” so that missing work would correctly affect the overall grade.

7. Once you have set up all your columns, you can add your grades and the column will calculate accordingly. In this case, the breakdown was:

   Essay = 40%
   Exam = 60%

8. You can see these calculations below. Please remember that only numbers can be included and this column cannot be edited.

9. Please note that this column cannot be used to return marks. This can only be completed through the Final Mark column by manually entering marks of uploading from Excel.
Final Marks

The Final Mark column that appears in your modules is in place for the extraction of results, and can be viewed as a replacement to the whitesheets. A mark between 0 – 100 or INC can be included in this column. This is the only column that will extract marks; the use of any other column in its place will be ignored.

These results should remain hidden from students. Once you have either manually entered or uploaded these marks (see page 29), they can then be approved and transferred.

As this is a default column that is automatically included in your grade centre, it is strongly advised that you not rename, hide or delete it. If you modify the column settings, marks returned will not be accepted into the SIS (Quercus).

You can return marks as many times as you like up until the deadline. You can extract marks as many times as you like. Only the last extraction, prior to the deadline, will appear on the Student Information System.
Mark Approval and Transfer

1. Go to Manage at the top of the Full Grade Centre and choose Mark Approval and Transfer:

![Manage Menu](image)

2. You can now choose to Perform Extract:

![Perform Extract](image)

3. You will then receive a notice that this has been done successfully:

![Extract History](image)

4. You can also check the log of extracts that have been completed by revisiting the Mark Approval and Transfer area:

![Extract History Log](image)
3. Returning Marks for Visiting and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Sitting Students

Returning Marks for Visiting Students

To complete this task, you can refer to previous sections of this user guide for assistance. The process is as follows:

1. Prepare your Grade Centre for marks return – you can sort your visiting students using \textbf{Course Instance} codes (1EM1, 1OA1, 1SWB1)
2. Enter the mark for visiting students in the \textbf{Final Mark} column using 0 – 100 or INC
3. Complete the Mark Approval and Transfer Process

Returning Marks for 2\textsuperscript{nd} Sitting Students

1. When returning second sitting results, two columns will appear called 2\textsuperscript{nd} Sitting and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Sit Mark. The R in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Sitting column indicates that the student a grade is expected to be entered for the student.

2. To return a mark for a 2\textsuperscript{nd} sitting student, simply put a 0 – 100 or INC in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} Sit Mark column and complete the Mark Approval and Transfer process.
4. Using Excel in the Grade Centre

Blackboard allows you to export the Grade Centre from your course, so that you can work on it offline (in Excel for example) and import again later. The process is very easy, but there is one aspect to which you should pay close attention.

Some of our student IDs, which start with the year in which the student first registered, being with a 0 digit (zero). When the exported file from Blackboard is opened in Excel, Excel thinks that the student IDs are numbers, and removes any leading zeroes. So, the student number 08123456 (for example) becomes the number 8,123,456. This leads to problems when you try to reconcile the student IDs with other data, or when you try to import the file back to Blackboard.

The following steps allow you to export the Grade Centre from a Blackboard course and then import it into Excel without losing correct student IDs.

If your module contains no student ID starting with 0, please follow these instructions. To work from Excel if you do have students with a 0, please refer to the corresponding section in the Appendix.

Exporting from the Grade Centre

1. Log into your Blackboard and go to the course where you want to export the Grade Centre. In the Control Panel, click on Grade Centre, and then Full Grade Centre.

2. In the Full Grade Centre, you will see a list of all your students, their student numbers, the last access date, and several columns representing assignments and/or running totals. If you have used the Blackboard course for assignment submission, there will be a column for each assignment you created.

3. To export the Grade Centre, click on Work Offline > Download in the top, right of the screen.
4. You will be presented with the **Download Grades** screen. In most cases, you can accept the default settings. Click **Submit** at the bottom of the screen.

5. Click **Download** when prompted. Save the file in a meaningful place on your own computer.
Importing from Excel to the Grade Centre

You can work from this spreadsheet offline and re-upload it when you are finished. In this case, a new column was added called Quiz and results were entered offline in Excel:

1. Blackboard recognises the Username column and will allocate marks accordingly. When you are ready to upload, go to the Full Grade Centre and choose **Work Offline > Upload:**

2. Using the default settings, browse for your file and click Submit once it is attached:

3. When the file was uploaded successfully, Blackboard informed the instructor that new results were being added to the Grade Centre:
4. This column now appears in the Grade Centre:
Appendices

Frequently Asked Questions

1. I don’t have a Final Mark column in my module’s Grade Centre?

In this instance that you do not see the default Final Mark column, you should first check Manage > Column Organisation (see page 6) to check if the column exists, but is hidden from instructor view. In this instance, you can select the column and choose to show it again in your Grade Centre.

*Please keep in mind that this column has been created for you and that it should not be deleted or recreated. If it is missing, please log a ticket with the Service Desk.

2. I don’t use Blackboard, how am I going to return results?

Whether you use Blackboard in your teaching or not, a module will exist on Blackboard. You can follow instructions on how to gain access to your module here.

3. What do I do with these columns?

You can complete your calculations in Excel, or use a Calculated Column in the Grade Centre. See the Using Your Own Columns section of this document.

4. I missed the deadline for the return of marks. What do I do?

Please contact your college office or Examinations for further advice.
5. My columns don’t add up correctly; what can I do to fix this?
   Please refer to our Using Your Own Columns section to check that you have set up your Grade Centre correctly. If you are still encountering difficulties, please contact the Service Desk.

6. I copied content from my module last year to my new module and now I have two Final Mark columns. How can I rectify this?
   If you have copied the Grade Centre from a previous year, go to Manage > Column Organisation and hide the erroneous columns from the previous year in order to start fresh. Check the dates aligned with these columns to ensure that the current Final Mark column is used. If you encounter any difficulties, please log a ticket on the service desk so that we can assist.

Marks Return FAQ from Examinations:

http://www.nuigalway.ie/exams/FAQ/marksreturn.html
Importing to Excel with Student IDs Beginning in 0

The following instructions are illustrated using Excel 2016, but a similar process should work in other versions of Excel.

This process only needs to be completed once. After the data has been imported and you have been working on the file in Excel, just save the file as normal. The next time you will be able to open it properly in Excel by double clicking.

1. Open Excel. From the Data tab, choose Get External Data from Text.

2. In the file selection window, change the file type to “All Files” and then browse to find the file you saved at the end of step 5.

3. Click Import. You will be presented with the Text Import Wizard. In Step 1, ensure that the file type is Delimited (default). Click Next.
4. In step 2, select either Tab or Comma, depending on how you downloaded the file. If you didn’t change any defaults, then the file will be Tab-delimited. Click Next.
5. In step 3, select the Username column and change the Column Data Format to Text.

6. You will be asked where you want to put the data. Click OK. You should now see that the data from the Grade Centre has been properly imported, retaining the student numbers in the correct format.
Who to Contact

Contact the following departments for assistance with the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examinations</th>
<th>• Deadlines and schedules for all students excluding 1OA1 and 1EM1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Office</td>
<td>• Deadlines and schedules for 1OA1 and 1EM1 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>• Course instance code is blank or incorrect course instance code appearing for a student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Desk</td>
<td>Missing columns Return and release of results General support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CELT</td>
<td>• Training &amp; documentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>