

## Calculating Final Grades Using Total Points

Once the Grade Center in your course has been set up with a column for every assessment or evaluation, you can easily create a column to automatically calculate students' final grades. (For information about how to set up the Grade Center refer to our **Basics of the Grade Center** quick guide: [http://spsfaculty.commons.gc.cuny.edu/quick-guides/.](http://spsfaculty.commons.gc.cuny.edu/quick-guides/))

This guide walks you through the process of setting up a **Total Points** column that calculates the running total across all assessment columns. Using Total Points will calculate final grades by simply adding up all of the points a student has earned and dividing it by the total points possible. In this grading scheme, the weighing of assignments is done by assigning different number of points possible; i.e. an assignment is worth more towards the final grade the more points it is assigned. For example, a paper worth 100 points counts for more towards a student's final grade than a quiz worth 10 points.


In addition to calculating the final grade, you can also set up additional Total Points columns to show students their cumulative points for a group of assignments (e.g. all quizzes), or for students' mid-semester grades.

This guide explains the steps necessary to:

- Check columns in the Grade Center for accuracy (Step 2)
- Add a secondary display for final grades (Steps 4+5)
- Add a new Total Column for a select group of assignments (Steps 6-10)

**Important for grading:** Since the Total Points Column tracks student progress on an ongoing basis as a running total, you must always enter a value (such as 0, or another number) for any missing work so that column will actually be factored into a student's final grade. If you enter no grade at all, the assignment will be regarded as not submitted (and graded) yet and therefore it will not be counted toward the total grade.

**Important for grade display:** If you choose to display grades as letters, make sure you select "**Letter SPS**" from the menu. This ensures that letter grades will be calculated according to the **SPS undergraduate** grading point schema. If you are teaching a graduate course at SPS, do not use any of the letter schema on Blackboard.

<p><u>Step 1</u></p> <p>First, navigate to the Grade Center: From anywhere within the course, look for the Control Panel in the lower left section of the screen. Click on the arrow next to "Grade Center."</p>	 <p>Click on the right-facing arrow to access the Grade Center from anywhere within the course.</p>
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Step 2

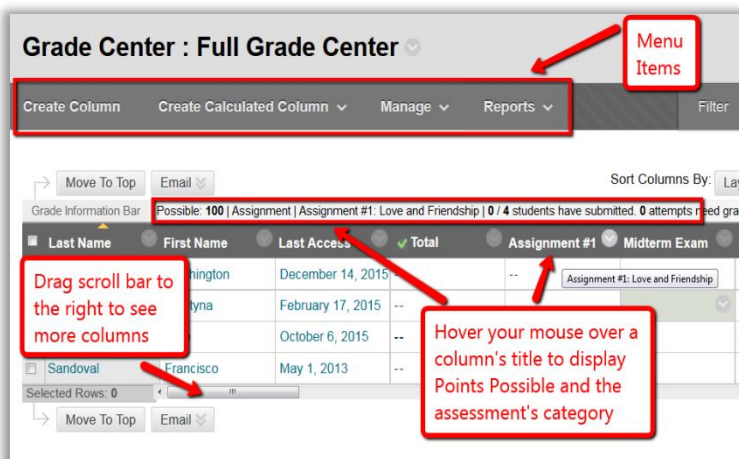
**Check for Accuracy**

This takes you to the full Grade Center. You will see some menu items on the top, and a table listing the students enrolled in your class, along with columns listing the assessed items in your course.

Scroll right to make sure each of the assessed items (i.e. discussion forums, tests, and other assignments that will receive a grade) has a column.

Hover your mouse over the title of each column to review if the correct number of points are assigned to each assignment.

Note: In a dev course site, no students will be listed.

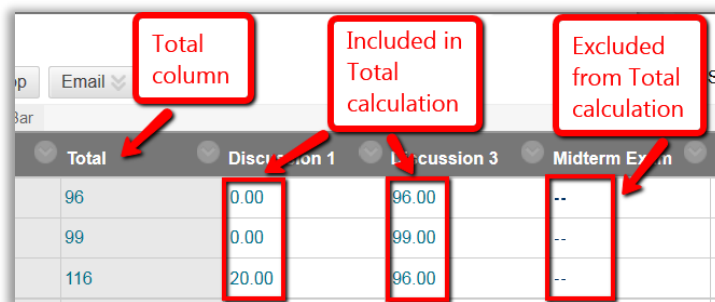


Step 3

All courses at SPS include a "Total" column by default (marked by a green checkmark).

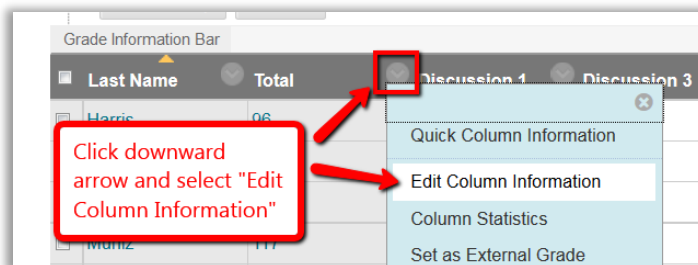
By default, the column calculation is set to:

- Include all assessments/grade columns in the calculation.
- Exclude any ungraded items
- Exclude columns with text as the grade, such as "Complete / Incomplete"
- Exclude calculated columns (such as Total or Weighted Total)



**Step 4**  
**Add Secondary Display**

The primary grade display for a Grade Center column is both visible to the instructor in the Grade Center as well as to students in My Grades. In addition to the total score (i.e. points), for your own information/convenience, you might want to display the grade in the Total Column as either percentage or the SPS Letter Grade. To do so, click on the downward arrow next to the Total Column's title and select "Edit Column Information."

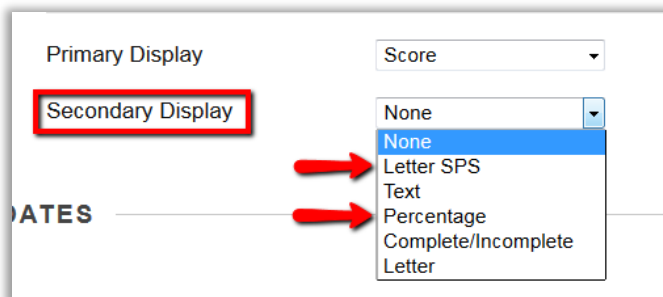


**Step 5**

On the next page, select either Percentage or Letter SPS as "Secondary Display" for this column. Then, click Submit to save your changes.

Important: Make sure you select "Letter SPS" (not "Letter") from the menu so that letter grades will be calculated according to the **SPS undergraduate** grading schema. If you are teaching a graduate course at SPS, do not use any of the letter schema on Blackboard.

This will display the percentage or letter grade in parentheses next to the total score. Note that this will only be visible to instructors in the Grade Center, **not** to students in "My Grade." If you would like to show percentage or Letter SPS grades to your students as well, create an additional Total Column (see Steps 6-10).



Total
96 (87.27%)
99 (90.00%)
116 (105.45%)

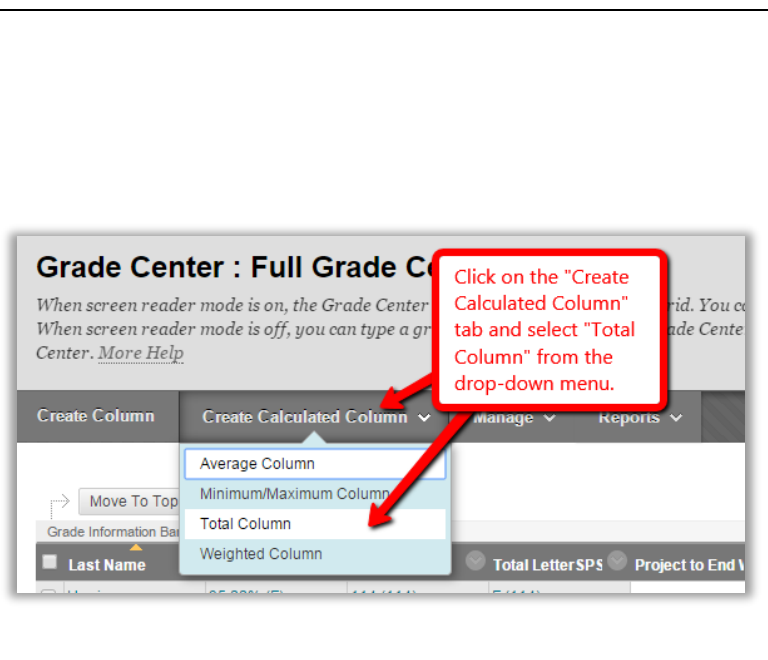
Total
96 (B+)
99 (A-)
116 (A)

Step 6

**Create Additional Total Column**

You can create additional Total Columns in the Grade Center, for example to display the total score as percentage or Letter SPS grade to students, or to calculate a cumulative grade for a group of assignments (such as all essays; or the mid-semester grade).

To create a new Total column, in the Grade Center click on the “Create Calculated Column” tab and select “Total Column” from the drop-down menu.

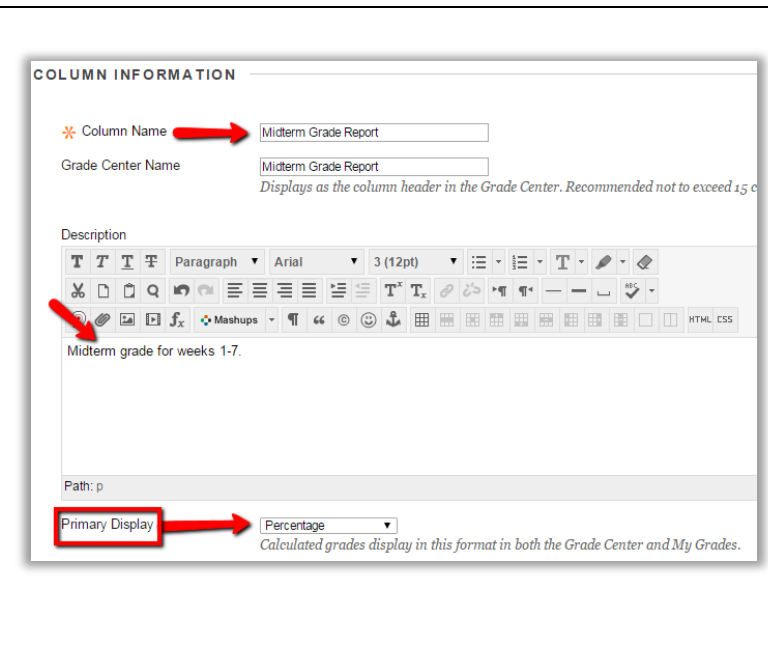


Step 7

On the next page, add a meaningful title, such as “Mid-Semester Grade” or “Final Letter Grade.”

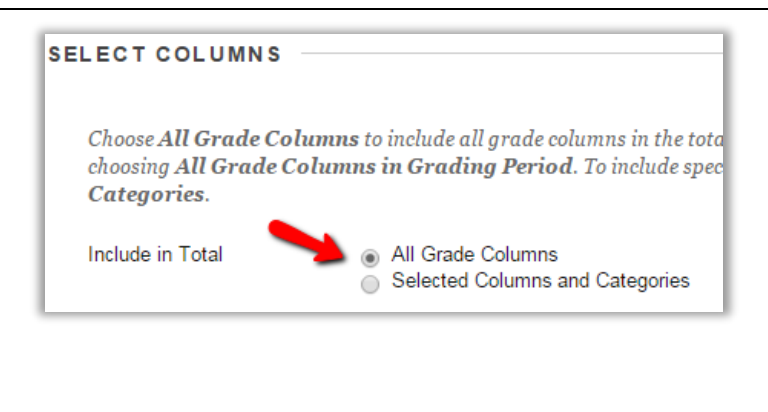
Add a description if you’d like (not required).

From the drop-down list next to “Primary Display” select how to display the grade in the Grade Center as well as to students in “My Grades” (score, percentage, or SPS Letter Grade).



Step 8

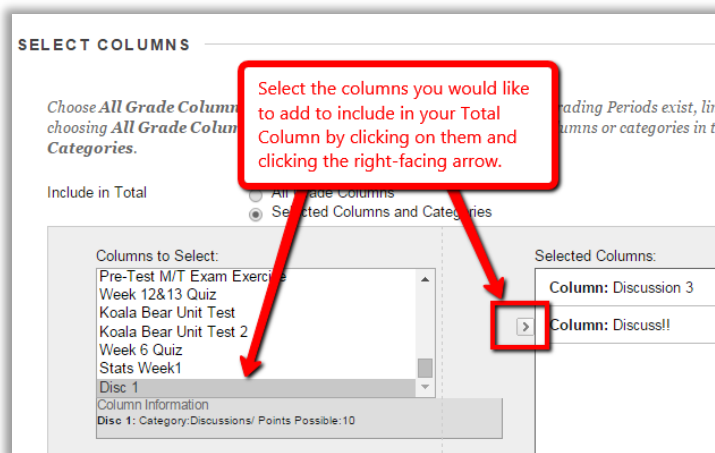
Under the “Select Columns” section the default setting is to Include “All Grade Columns” in the total. **Leave as is if you are creating this column simply to display the final grade as percentage or SPS Letter Grade to students (and continue with Step 10).**



**Step 9**

If you wish to create a Total Column for a group of assignments (such as all essays, or the mid-semester grade), click “Selected Columns and Categories” which will expand the menu.

Under “Columns to Select” click on the assessments you wish to include in this Total Column, then click on the right-facing arrow to add it to the calculation.



**Step 10**

In the bottom “Options” section of the menu you can opt to make the column available for use in other calculations in the grade center, show it to students, and share statistics on the median and average.

Remember to click Submit to create the new Total Column. It will be listed all the way to the right in your Grade Center. You can move the column by selecting Manage > Column Organization from the Grade Center menu.

**Important reminder for grading:** When calculating the final grade as a running total, you must enter a value (such as 0, or another number) for any missing work before that column will be factored into that student’s final grade. If you enter no grade at all the assignment will be regarded as not submitted (and graded) yet.

