Uploading or Downloading Grade Center Items for Working Offline

To eliminate potential double entry of Grade Center data, you can perform offline grading and import grades into the Grade Center. You can also upload grades from external sources such as an Excel spreadsheet or a comma separated values (CSV) file. You must format data specifically to upload correctly and to synchronize with existing Grade Center data.

Formatting External Files for Uploading

To synchronize external data to Grade Center data, unique identifiers are necessary for each student and for each column in the Grade Center. The unique identifier used for each student is the student's user name. The unique identifier for each column is a column ID number. Column ID numbers are generated by the system and should not be changed or deleted. Columns that do not have column ID numbers in an uploaded file will create new columns in the Grade Center.

> **IMPORTANT!** Columns that you add to the Grade Center from an external file are added as text columns with points possible equaling zero (0). Text columns cannot be included in calculated columns, such as weighted, total, average, and minimum/maximum. To learn more, see Calculating and Exempting Grades. Convert text columns to other columns types and add points possible by editing the column after the upload.

Each data file you upload to the Grade Center requires a header row with one record per line subsequently.

The format of the data file uploaded to the Grade Center is determined by the type of delimiter you use to parse the data into separate columns. Data files are tab delimited with a file extension of XLS or comma delimited with a file extension of CSV.

Data in each column of comma-delimited files (file extension of CSV) must be contained within a quote character, the most common being quotation marks (" "). Data in each column of tab-delimited files does not require a quote character.

Tips for Working With External Data

Blackboard recommends using tab-delimited files for uploading into the Grade Center to avoid having to use quote characters and because tab-delimited files open directly in Microsoft Excel. Tab-delimited files will also open directly in Microsoft Excel.

To obtain a file that is formatted correctly for uploading, download the full Grade Center first and open it in a text editor or spreadsheet application. Existing columns will have column ID numbers that must be included in future uploads.

Batch File Standards

Batch files are TXT files that hold large quantities of information to upload to the system. Each batch utility contains specific instructions on creating the batch file. The following batch file standards are universal.

- Each file must be one of the supported file types: TXT or CSV.

  Note: Microsoft Excel versions 2003 and later automatically insert double quotes in every field if the worksheet is saved as a CSV file.

- Each file must be in DOS format. Files in MAC or UNIX format must be converted to DOS.

- Each field must be enclosed in double quotation marks, for example: "ENG_201"

- If quotation marks appear in a field, use an escape character to indicate that the next character does not mark the end of the field. The escape character is a backslash (\), for example: "\"ENG_201\""

- Each field must be separated with one of the following delimiters: comma, colon, or tab. When selecting AUTO, only one type of delimiter may be used in each batch file, for example: "ENG_201","English Literature" or " "ENG_201":"English Literature"

- Each record must be on a separate line, for example:

  "ENG_201","English Literature"

  "ENG_201","English Literature"

- Do not include blank lines between records. The blank line will be processed and return an error.

- Blackboard recommends that each batch file not exceed 500 records because of timeout restrictions associated with most browsers.

How to Upload a File to the Grade Center

1. On the action bar, point to **Work Offline** and select **Upload**.

2. Browse for the file. Files are uploaded from your computer, or if available, from the Content Collection.

3. Select the delimiter type: **Comma**, **Tab**, or **Auto**. Choosing **Auto** attempts to automatically detect the delimiter used in the selected file.

4. Click **Submit** to upload the selected file.

5. Review the list of data from the file to be uploaded on the **Upload Grades Confirmation** page. Clear the check boxes for any data to be excluded from the upload. Using this method, it is possible to upload only the columns of data you want from the file.

   Review the **Data Preview** column to be sure the correct data is being uploaded. Data that appears incorrectly can denote an improperly formatted file. The data preview will only show a sample of the data in each column in the file.

6. Large files take significant time to process and a warning message appears for any files that need extra time to process. To avoid long processing times, break up large files into separate uploads.

7. Click **Submit** to confirm and upload the file.

Note: Any file you upload that contains an "Incomplete" for a grade entry will be set to null, with no grade or text displayed. Any file you upload that contains "Complete" for a grade entry will be set to an override grade of the maximum points possible (100% for a grade item) in a column that has the primary display of Complete/incomplete. Any file you upload that contains a numeric entry will be a numeric entry.

How to Download Grades From the Grade Center

You can download full or partial data from the Grade Center. Once downloaded, grades and comments accessed through the **Quick Comment** feature or **Manual Override** page can be changed and added offline and later uploaded to the Grade Center.

1. On the action bar, point to **Work Offline** and select **Download**.
2. Select the data to download:

Option	Description
Full Grade Center	Contains all columns and associated data. Comments will not be included, and you cannot add them offline.
Selected Grading Period	From the drop-down list, select a grading period. You must create grading periods before they are chosen.
Selected Column	From the drop-down list, select one column and its data. Select the check box to **Include comments for this Column**, which will download comments from the **Quick Comment** feature or **Manual Override** page. You can edit included comment text offline.
User information	Columns containing student data such as username are included.

3. Select the file delimiter, **Comma** or **Tab**.
4. Select whether to **Include Hidden Information** in the downloaded data. Hidden information includes columns and students who have been hidden from the view in the downloaded file.
5. Select the location for the download. Click **Browse** to select a folder in the Content Collection.
6. Click **Submit**.
7. On the next **Download Grades** page, click **Download** and save the file. Do not change the file name while saving because the Grade Center needs the information it contains to deliver it to the appropriate column when uploading.

How to Download Grade History Data

1. On the action bar, point to **Reports** and select **View Grade History**.
2. On the **Grade History** page, click **Download**.
3. Select the **Delimiter Type** for the file.
4. Select **Yes** to **Include Comments** or **No** to exclude them from the download.
5. Click **Submit**.
6. Click **Download** to save the file to your computer.

Working Offline

After the file is downloaded and opened in the appropriate editing software, you can make changes. If you download the full Grade Center, you can change and add grades, and save the file for uploading. If you downloaded a single column, you can add or change grades and comments, and save the file for uploading.

Editing Comments

Comments will be downloaded only when you select a single Grade Center item and the option to include its associated comments. The comments downloaded and uploaded will be for the grade (accessed in the **Quick Comment** feature or **Manually Override** page) and not the attempt (accessed in the **View Attempt** or grading pages).

Four comment-related columns are included in the downloaded file. If you added comments online, those will be included in the download. Otherwise, you may add comments offline and upload them to the full Grade Center to appear in the **Manually Override** or **Quick Comments** areas.

Add or edit comments in the **Grading Notes** and **Feedback to User** columns.

Links within comments to rich media, such as images or sound files, should be inserted and edited online.

When your editing to grades and comments is complete, save the file, return to the full Grade Center, and click **Work Offline** > **Upload**.

Comment-Related Columns

Column Name	Description
Grading Notes	Grade Center column-specific comments visible only to an instructor or TA.
Notes Format	Smart Text, Plain Text, or HTML.
Feedback to User	Grade Center column-specific comments visible to students.
Feedback Format	Smart Text, Plain Text, or HTML.

Feedback Format Options

Format Type	Description
Smart Text	Automatically recognizes a link, the ENTER key as a paragraph tag, and accepts HTML tags.
Plain Text	Displays text as it is written in the text area. Plain text does not render HTML code. HTML code will appear as text.
HTML	Displays text as coded by the user using HTML tags.

Viewing and Downloading Grade History (Flash video | 1m 17s) |

[Working Offline With the Grade Center](https://help.blackboard.com) (Flash video | 3m 30s)