

Blackboard Upgrade Results and Community Feedback

Based on reports from the faculty beta-testers and initial feedback, the results of the upgrade have been mostly positively received. Below are the areas faculty members are highlighting as the benefits of Blackboard 8.0:

The Grade Center

Those familiar with the Gradebook feature in NYU's previous version of Blackboard will likely agree that the new Grade Center feature in Blackboard 8.0 is this version's most significant change. In initial faculty feedback, it was acknowledged that although the new Grade Center takes time to learn, more than 60 percent of the faculty surveyed reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with the new look.

Smart View

Faculty members found the option to view a subsection of the Grade Center via the Smart View feature to be extremely useful for grading various groups or sections of students within a course site.

Send Email

The ability to send email to specific students directly from the Grade Center was considered an excellent new feature.

Grade Modified Manually

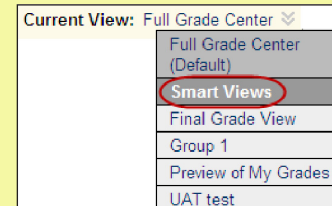
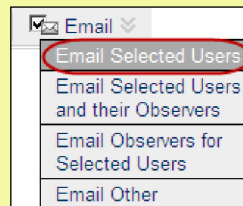
Faculty members commented that seeing grade changes and grade history at a glance in the Grade Center is helpful.

Grading Schemas

The ability to create new grading schemas, in addition to the "Letter" grading schema, that can then be applied to one or more specific columns in the Grade Center, was also deemed useful.

Hide Class Average

Instructors liked the option to select whether to display the class average for an assignment, on a per-assignment basis.



Communication

The communication tools in Blackboard 8.0 have been enhanced. As previously mentioned, the ability to send email directly from the Grade Center is just one of these enhancements. Other features faculty members responded favorably to include the following:

Subscriptions

Instructors and students can now elect to subscribe to receive email notifications of new posts to a discussion board forum or thread. This avoids having to continually check Blackboard for new posts.

Announcements via Email

The text of announcements can be pushed out to students via email to help alert them to important aspects of their Blackboard site.

NYU Home Blackboard Courses Channel

"Refresh Blackboard Course List" Button

As the Blackboard Courses Channel automatically updates only every couple of hours, this button will refresh the channel immediately to reveal a newly created course site or an updated availability status.

Blackboard FAQ and How-To's

The channel now includes a search box for the new knowledgebase that contains the Blackboard 8.0 Frequently Asked Questions, how-to's, and new tutorials that can be downloaded as PDFs or viewed as video tutorials.