

For the following subject, you want the following:

- The pdf file Blackboard Gradebook explanation (see item #1 below)
- Your Blackboard gradebook open on the screen
- This audio file playing

1. Open the [Blackboard Gradebook explanation file](http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/hanna/HANDOUTS/Fall2008/UnderstandBbGradebookcolor.pdf)

<http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/hanna/HANDOUTS/Fall2008/UnderstandBbGradebookcolor.pdf>

To find this file,

- Click on the link above or
- login to Blackboard and go into this course.
On the left-side menu, click on 'Gradebook Explanation'

2. Open your Blackboard gradebook

- Click on 'Your Geo 1 Grades' in the left-side menu in Blackboard for this course


Understanding your Blackboard Gradebook

- Your Blackboard gradebook will show your exam scores as soon as you have finished each exam.
- Your gradebook is a summary list of your scores.
- Your term total of points will accumulate throughout the term.
- Scroll to the bottom of your gradebook to check your term total at any time.

UNLIMITED ATTEMPTS

- I have chosen to allow students unlimited attempts (until the timeout deadlines) at all of the major module exams.
- Your LAST attempt is what counts.
- The score of your last attempt should automatically be added to your term total of points at the bottom of your gradebook.

SYMBOLS where there should be numerical scores

- If you look at your summary list of exam scores and one of your scores shows a padlock  or exclamation symbol ! – **CLICK ON IT!** *The legend at the bottom of the Blackboard gradebook does not account for what happens when an instructor has allowed unlimited attempts on so many quizzes and exams.*
- Once you click on the padlock or exclamation symbol, Blackboard will bring up a list of your attempts (and scores) on that exam.

- If your last attempt shows a numerical score, then you should be fine.
✓✓ Double-check by going back to your summary list of scores and add up your exam scores and make sure that your exam is counted in your term total.

→ If your last attempt does not show a numerical score, (if it is blank, or shows a padlock or ! symbol), then you need to retake the exam – before the timeout deadline.

- If your last attempt shows an ! symbol, that means that you went over the timelimit, and you need to retake the exam before the timeout deadline. *If you do not retake the exam before the timeout deadline, your score for that exam will be zeroed after the timeout deadline expires.*
- If your last attempt shows a padlock symbol, that means that something glitched when you exited the exam. It may have been you, or it may have been the computer hardware or software or a server somewhere. But somewhere, something glitched and your exam was not properly recorded. To ensure that you get points for your exam, you need to retake the exam before the timeout deadline.

↪ Always leave yourself enough time to retake the exams if you need to. Never push yourself into taking the exams right before the timeout deadlines, because if you do, that's when you will have a computer problem, or a power outage, or Blackboard will go down for service, or your cat will barf on your hard drive, or your sister will have a baby or something will happen that will suddenly mean that you don't have your exam finished properly. The deadlines won't be extended. You have unlimited attempts for weeks and weeks before the timeout deadlines.

↪ A padlock symbol means that at least one of your attempts at the exam was not finished (and/or recorded) properly. And Blackboard never forgets. If you try an exam seven times and the first time you abort the exam, but then you retake the exam completely six more times (increasing your score each time, hopefully), then the score of your last attempt will count and be added to your term total. However, Blackboard's summary display will still show a padlock symbol, even though it was only the first exam that you aborted.

↪ If you have padlock or exclamation symbols in your summary gradebook display, you need to click on those symbols to see what your exam scores are.

↪ The instructor is not going to manually remove those symbols from your gradebook summary list. Don't wait for the symbols 'to go away', because they aren't going to. You need to click on the symbols to see what your scores are.

↪ Records of your exams are available to you by simply clicking on the symbols.

↪ Make sure that your last attempt shows a numerical score. If it doesn't, you need to retake the exam before the timeout deadline.

- ↪ Only your last attempt on each exam counts. No previous attempts count.
- ↪ Always check your term total after each exam, and make sure that your exam points are included in your term total.
- ↪ Make sure that none of your last attempts show ! symbols. If any of your last attempts show ! symbols, then the ! will be zeroed after the timeout deadline expires and you won't have any points for that exam. Therefore, if you have an ! for your last attempt on an exam, retake the exam before the timeout deadline.

If at any time you send me an email or phone message question about your gradebook or your exam scores, do not put your class on hold while waiting for a reply from a remote communication. The class goes on and deadlines will not be extended because you were waiting for a reply. Keep studying and keep working on the exams and exam questions while waiting for a reply. If your exam points are not showing up in your term total – simply retake the exam, don't just wait around hoping that things will be magically fixed.

Being able to take courses online is a huge privilege and convenience. Being able to take the courses online allows students to be able to take the exams almost whenever and wherever they want to. Being able to take the courses online means that the instructor can allow the students to retake the exams an unlimited number of times.

But taking the courses online also has a price. And the price is that students must deal with computer issues. Most students encounter some sort of computer issues along the way as they take online courses. What type of issues you encounter will depend on the semester and what hardware or software you have. Computer problems do happen (there are those who've had their computer crash, and those who will). Computer problems will happen, and dealing with them is the price for being able to take the exams online an unlimited number of times and whenever you want to.

Because computer issues do happen, and because students can use the exams as a learning tool if they can retake them, I have allowed you unlimited attempts on all of the major exams. Therefore, if you are taking an exam and the power goes out, you can simply wait until the power comes back on, and retake the exam. Similarly, if you are taking an exam and your computer crashes, you can find another computer and retake the exam.

If your home computer doesn't work, there are computers at many public libraries, as well as here at the LPC campus (computer center and library, for example).

If you want to reduce the number of padlocks in your Blackboard summary gradebook, then you want to avoid aborting exams by simply closing the browser window. Every time you do that, the attempt will get recorded in your gradebook either with no score or with a padlock symbol.

The Submit Button: In order for an exam score to be properly recorded in Blackboard, you must click (once only) on the Submit button at the end of the exam (that's at the bottom of the last question).

For most exams, if you decide to exit early, you need to fast-forward to the last question. The fast-forward button is a double-arrow button at the bottom of each question. Once you have fast-forwarded to the end of the exam, click on Submit and Blackboard will ask you if you really wanted to submit the exam with some of the questions left blank (it will give you a list of the ones left blank). Simply say yes, you really do intend to finish the exam with those questions blank.

Blackboard will then grade the questions that you did answer and that score will show for your latest attempt at that exam. Check your gradebook to make sure. You can still retake the exam if you want to.

If you exit an incomplete exam any other way, Blackboard will not score any of the exam, and you won't even get points for the questions that you did answer, and you'll get a padlock symbol (or no score) in your gradebook. You'll simply have to retake the exam.

To summarize, online exams and courses are a privilege, not a right. There are tremendous advantages (such as unlimited attempts at your exams) and flexibility by taking online exams, but there is also a price (you have to take the exams early in order to make sure that you can deal with computer issues if they come up).

Your Blackboard gradebook shows your term total as it increases throughout the term, it shows a summary list of your exam scores, and you can click on your scores to bring up your history of attempts on each exam. Your last attempt counts. If your last attempt doesn't show a numerical score, retake the exam before the timeout deadline.

UNLIMITED ATTEMPTS

Because I allow unlimited attempts on almost all exams and on so many exams and quizzes, it is very common for students to begin taking an exam and then change their minds and decide that they want to take it sometime later. So they abort the exam. And even though I've given directions (use the Submit button), most students won't fast-forward to the last question and properly hit submit. Instead, most students will just close their browser windows and head off to do their next activity. As a consequence, padlock symbols abound in the gradebooks, and I can't clear them all. The padlocks are going to stay there and you simply have to click on them to bring up your record of scores.

What it means is this: If you abort an exam without 'submitting' the exam, no one is going to give you a ticket or such, you'll just have padlock symbols in your gradebook. Click on the padlocks for more information.

Because so many students open exams, answer a few questions and then hop out of the exams, the averages that Blackboard displays for each exam typically looks ridiculously low until after the timeout deadline expires. Once everyone has fully completed the exams, and the timeout deadline expires, the Blackboard gradebook averages typically range in the 70-80s.

The Instructor's Gradebook Display

The instructor's class gradebook shows a summary spreadsheet of all of the last attempts for all students on all exams and quizzes.

Example: you took an exam 25 times and aborted the first 24 attempts and have 24 padlocks followed by a numerical score for your last attempt.

- In your summary gradebook, you would see a padlock symbol for that exam. You would have to click on the padlock symbol, and that would bring up a list of your 25 attempts and you would see that you had a numerical score for the last attempt. The last attempt is what counts, so you should be fine. To double-check, you go back to your summary grade list and add up all of your exam scores to make sure that you have all of your points.
- In the instructor's gradebook, the instructor simply sees the score of your last attempt. The instructor does not know that you took the exam 25 times and aborted the first 24. The instructor does not see a padlock symbol, but sees the score of your last attempt. If the instructor wants to, they can click on your exam score and that will bring up the list of 25 attempts, with the first 24 showing as padlocks symbols. But the instructor is unlikely to do that, as your last attempt is showing a score, and that's what counts.
- The instructor will only see a padlock or exclamation symbol for your score if that is the result of your last attempt. The instructor's gradebook spreadsheet is a summary of the last attempts for all of the exams and quizzes.
 - If your last attempt shows an exclamation symbol, that means that you went over the time limit, and your score will be zeroed for that exam.
 - If your last attempt shows a padlock, then the instructor will look at the exam if it was saved. Typically, no answers are saved and the student's score is a zero.