

How to use the Section Merge Tool on Blackboard

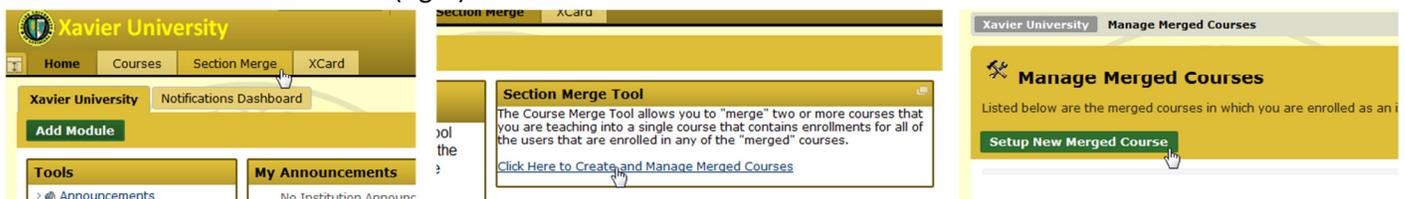
Introduction

The new section merge tool allows faculty to combine multiple sections into one single Blackboard course. After the sections are merged, only the **primary course** (or “**merged course**” in Blackboard terminology) is visible to instructors and students. The other **secondary sections** (or “**source courses**” in Blackboard terminology) will be hidden from view. For example, let’s assume an instructor is merging courses course A, course B, and course C. The instructor would select one of these courses (let’s say course A for this example) as the primary (or merged) course. Courses B and C would then become the source courses. The Section Merge Tool moves the enrollments of courses B and C to Course A and hides the source courses (B and C) from view. The primary (merged) course will be the container that holds the student enrollment from all three sections.

The advantage in combining multiple sections in this fashion is the elimination of the need to post the same content repeatedly. However, combining sections also creates a Grade Center roster that contains the enrollments from all the combined sections which can make grading more challenging. If courses are unmerged (disassociated in Blackboard terminology) for any reason, student submitted work (assignments, tests, and grades) will be **LOST** as the tool only keeps track of course enrollments and not student submissions. Courses should only be merged at the beginning of the academic term before any student work has been submitted. Due to these and other complications associated with merging sections, we recommend that this feature be utilized by advanced Blackboard users only.

Creating a new Merged Course

1. Log into Blackboard and click on the “**Section Merge**” tab as shown on the image below (left). Click on the “**Click Here to Create and Manage Merged Courses**” link as shown on the image below (center). Click on the “**Setup New Merged Course**” button as shown below (right).



2. On the “**Select Courses to Merge**” page, carefully select the courses you would like to merge as shown below. Make sure all the selected courses are from the current academic term as there could be a multitude of similarly named courses on Blackboard from previous academic terms. After making the selections, click on the “**Submit**” button.

Select Courses to Merge

Select the courses you wish to merge into a single course by checking the box that appears in this step. After you have made your selections, click the “Submit” button at the bottom of the page and return you to the previous page without saving any changes.

Selection	Id	Name
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	82155.BIOL.1230.11.MERGE	MERGE.General Biology (Fa11)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	80953.BIOL.1230.01.MERGE	MERGE.General Biology (Fa11)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	80022.BIOL.1230.07.MERGE	MERGE.General Biology (Fa11)
<input type="checkbox"/>	80671.BIOL.3110.03.MERGE	MERGE.Genetics (Fa11)

3. On the “**Select an Existing Course**” page, select the **ONE** section that will become the **primary** (or merged) course from the list of courses chosen from step 2 as shown below and click on the “**Submit**” button to proceed to the next step.

Selection	Id	Name	Merge Type
<input type="radio"/>	82155.BIOL.1230.11.MERGE	MERGE.General Biology (Fa11)	NONE
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	80953.BIOL.1230.01.MERGE	MERGE.General Biology (Fa11)	NONE
<input type="radio"/>	80022.BIOL.1230.07.MERGE	MERGE.General Biology (Fa11)	NONE

4. If the merge process completed successfully, you will receive a confirmation message on the top with a green background as shown below. This step completes the section merge process.

Merged Course [80953.BIOL.1230.01.MERGE] was successfully associated with Source Course(s) [80022.BIOL.1230.07.MERGE, 82155.BIOL.1230.11.MERGE].

Manage Merged Course: 80953.BIOL.1230.01.MERGE

The current Source Courses are shown in the list below.

[Add Additional Source Courses](#)

Modifying a Merged Course

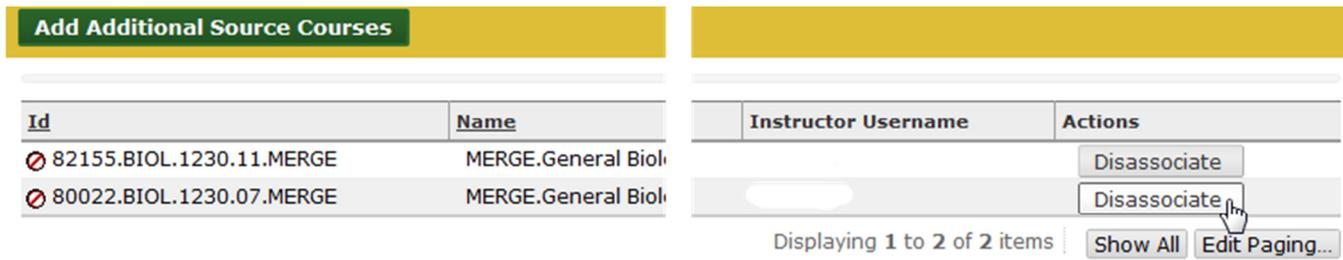
It is possible to add or remove sections from a merged course as long as the instructor is still assigned to teach those sections. **If any of the secondary (source) courses that are part of a primary (merged) course have been assigned to another instructor in Banner, please contact a Blackboard administrator for assistance in modifying the merged course.** If there is a chance there might be section teaching assignment changes at the beginning of the term, it is a good idea to wait for these changes to be completed before merging sections.

1. To modify a merged course, click on the “**Section Merge**” tab. Click on the “**Click Here to Create and Manage Merged Courses**” link. You will see a list of merged courses. At the far right of each merged course, you will see a “**Modify**” button as shown below.

Id	Name	Actions
80125.CHEM.1010.01.MERGE	MERGE.General Chem	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 80149.CHEM.1020.01.MERGE		Memberships Remerge Modify
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 81018.CHEM.1020.02.MERGE		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> 83015.CHEM.1010.05.MERGE		

Clicking on the “**Modify**” button will bring up the “**Manage Merged Course**” page. Here you can add more sections to the merged course by clicking on “**Add Additional Source Courses**” button or you can remove associated source courses

by clicking on the “Disassociate” button located at the far right of each source course as shown below.

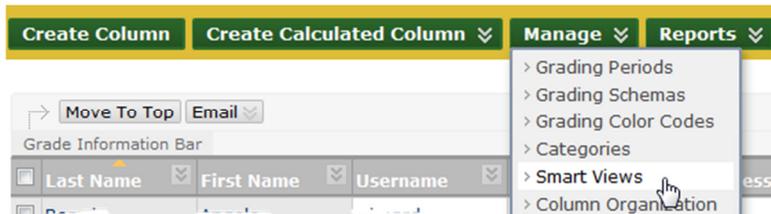


2. If all the source courses of a primary (or merged) course are disassociated, then the primary (or merged) course will revert back to its original state as a single regular course.

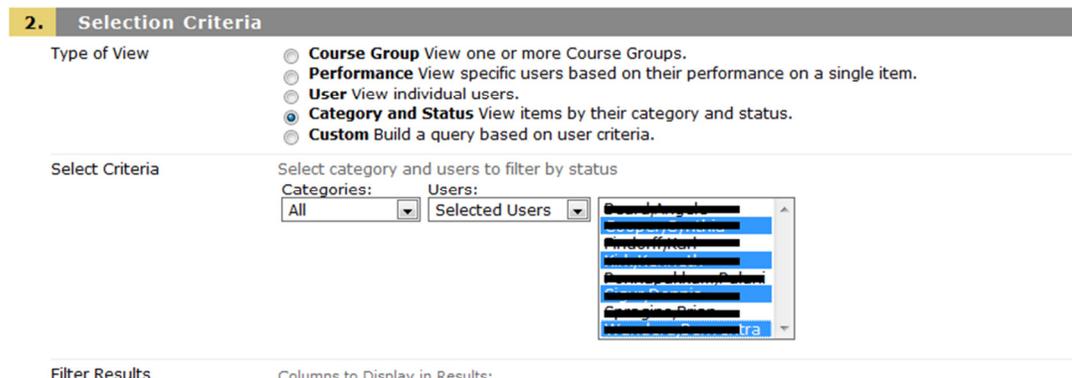


Creating “Smart Views” in Grade Center to simplify the use of the Grade Center in a Merged Course

1. Merging Blackboard courses will create a Grade Center roster that contains all the students from all the merged sections. This can make using the Grade Center complicated. To overcome this problem, instructors can create “Smart Views” in the Grade Center of the merged course. These “Smart Views” allow instructors to view members of each section separately in the Grade Center. To create a “Smart View” go to the **Control Panel** of the merged course, click on the “Grade Center” link and then click on the “Full Grade Center” link. Hover the mouse over the “Manage” button and then click on the “Smart Views” link as shown below.



2. Click on the “Create a Smart View” button. On the “Create Smart View” page, give the view a name (e.g. Section 1) and a description. Put a check mark next to “Add as Favorite”. Under “Selection Criteria” section, choose “Category and Status” for the “Type of View” portion as shown below.



Under the “**Select Criteria**” portion, make sure “**All**” is chosen for “Categories:” and “**Selected Users**” for “Users:” as shown on the image above. You can select then individual students that belong to one section of the merged course. Press and hold the CTRL key (Windows) or Command key (Mac) to make non-contiguous selections from the list. You may have to refer to your Banner Web course roster list to verify in which section each student is enrolled. After all members of a particular section have been chosen from the list, click on the “**Submit**” button.

3. The newly created Smart View will now be listed here on the **Grade Center** menu on the **Control Panel** of the course as shown below since it was tagged as a favorite view. Clicking on the smart view will open the Grade Center showing only those students in enrolled in that one particular section.

The screenshot displays the Blackboard interface. On the left is the **Control Panel** with a tree view including **Grade Center** and **Section 1**. A red arrow points from **Section 1** to the **Current View** dropdown in the **Grade Center**. The **Grade Center** header is yellow and contains the title **Grade Center : section1**. Below the header are buttons for **Create Column**, **Create Calculated Column**, **Manage**, and **Reports**. The **Current View** dropdown is set to **section1**, with **Category** set to **All Categories** and **Status** set to **All Statuses**. Below this are **Filter** and **Work Offline** options. The **Grade Information Bar** shows **Sort Columns By** set to **Layout Position** and **Order** set to **Ascending**. The table header includes columns for **Last Name**, **First Name**, **Username**, **Student ID**, **Last Access**, **Availability**, **Weighted Tot**, and **Total**.