Merging Sections in Blackboard (updated August 2019)

By default, a Blackboard course site is created for every section of a course. Instructors who have courses with multiple sections or cross-listed sections, and who desire to use/maintain only one Blackboard course site, can request that their sections be merged. This procedure will aggregate all of the enrollments into one section.

Some Terminology:

- Parent/Master/Target – this is the section that will aggregate all of the enrollments; this is the section that Instructor(s) will use post-merge.
- Child/Source – the enrollments from the Child sections will be aggregated in the Parent/Master section; Instructor(s) will not use the Child section(s) and they will not be made available to students.
- Child Course ID – a new column that appears in Users and the Grade Center that contains the Course ID of the Child/Source enrollment.

Notes:

- Any submitted assignments or grades entered into individual sections prior to a course merge do not transfer to the merged course. Therefore, it is probably best to request a course merge before the semester is underway.
- If a student switches sections from a Child section to the Parent, the enrollment is REMOVED from the Child section.

To request a merge:

- Send an email to blackboard@jhu.edu listing all of the sections you want merged. Make sure you identify the section you want all others to be merged into – that is, identify the ‘target’ section (usually section 01).
- Please identify sections in the full Blackboard course id format, e.g., AS.123.456.01.FA19.
- You will receive a confirmation email when the merge is complete, usually in 1-2 days.
- Note: It is possible to merge any Blackboard course section, including ‘AS’ sections with ‘EN’ sections, for example.

After a course is merged:

- All students are added to the target or parent section of the course (this is usually section .01 but not always). Instructors will still see the remaining sections, which can be ignored.
- Drops and adds are maintained by the Blackboard server. If a student adds the course after a section merge, he/she will automatically be added to the target section.
- Students essentially lose their section identities once a course is merged; they are combined into one alphabetical list in the grade center.
- There is a way to filter the grade center by section by setting up Smart Views so that instructors and TAs can grade by section.
Identify Child Course ID

After your merge has been completed, you can view the enrollments in the Parent section. Note that there is a column which shows the student’s original section.

If you view the students in the grade center, there is a Child Course ID column which also shows the original section for each student. If the cell is blank, the student was originally in the Parent section.
Smart Views

If you want to create a smart view for each original section, it requires a few steps.

- Go to the full grade center and choose Manage → Smart Views.

- Choose Create Smart View

- You will create a smart view for each section. For courses with sections, for example, .01 - .08, this would be the .02 - .08 sections. Section .01 is usually the parent section. Each section requires the creation of its own smart view; they cannot be created in bulk. See screen shot on next page
• Start by creating a smart view for section .02. You will name it Section .02 and then check to add as favorite, so it will appear in the grade center tab of the course tools menu.
• Choose the custom option and select the criteria Child Course ID CONTAINS .02.
• You will repeat this process for each child course ID.

Be sure to check the ‘All Columns’ criteria so that the Smart View shows all assessments for each student for each section:

Create Parent Section Smart View

• To create a Smart View for the students who were in the parent section (usually .01), you will need to create a manual column. Go to Grade Center and choose ‘Create Column.’
• Fill in the information as shown in screen shot. Be sure to also choose the settings to disassociate with grade center, and do not show to students.

• Once this column is added, you will only need to enter data for the students from the parent section. These will be apparent, because the field is blank in the Child Course ID.
• Enter .01 in the Child ID Manual (Do not delete) column. You will need this data for the smart view. There is no need to enter other section numbers because these smart views have already been created. You can hide this column when you’re finished but do not delete.

• Now, create the Smart View for the parent section. See the screen shot:
• The Smart Views will appear below the course menu in the course tools section: