Interpreting the Physics 24 Grades Spreadsheet

Most of the spreadsheet entries are self-explanatory. The six entries in the "summary" block depend on where we are in the semester, and are explained later in this document. Be sure to read the explanations before you ask questions about the spreadsheet!

You should be aware of the following spreadsheet features.

There are six sets of columns containing exam, end material, quiz, homework, boardwork, and lab scores.

"**Exam Total**" is the total of your three highest exam scores. A blank is considered the same as a zero.

"**EM**" is your end material test score.

"**Quiz Total**" is the total of your ten highest lecture quiz scores. A blank is considered the same as a zero.

"**Homework Total**" is the total of your five highest homework scores. A blank is considered the same as a zero.

"**BW Total**" is the number of boardwork points you would get if the semester ended right now. You can earn up to 100 boardwork points this semester. Your lowest boardwork score is dropped. If you have only one boardwork score, it is used, and no scores are dropped. By the end of the semester, all students will have two or more boardwork scores.

"**Lab Total**" is the raw total of your lab scores. The lowest lab score is dropped. A blank is considered the same as a zero. Your total lab points (after the lowest is dropped) are multiplied by 0.3 before being added into your Physics 24 course points. You can earn up to 150 lab points this semester (500 points maximum times 0.3 equals 150).

The **Summary** columns contain a summary of your current physics 24 status.

Because different students will have different numbers of boardwork and lab scores reported as the semester progresses, the "BW" and "Labs" points are handled in a special way.

**How boardwork is handled.** Cell E4 is supposed to contain one of three values: 0, 0.5, or 1. A value of 0 indicates "before midterm," a value of 0.5 indicates "between midterm and finals," and a value of 1 indicates "final grades." Before midterm (E4=0), boardwork and labs are not included in your "Total" and "." After midterm (E4=0.5), half the possible boardwork points (50) and your first three labs (90 possible points) are included in the total course points. In other words, your boardwork score is divided by 2 before being added to your "Total," and the sum of your first three labs is multiplied by 0.3 before being added to your "Total."
How lab scores are handled. The "Lab Total" entry is the sum of all your lab scores and is not used in calculating your lab points between midterm and finals. Instead, column BM, which contains either zero (before midterm), the sum of your first three lab scores only (after midterm), or the sum of all your lab scores with the lowest score dropped (at finals), is used. The number in this column is multiplied by 0.3 before being put into your lab score column under “summary.”

Between midterm and finals (E4=0.5) half of your total possible boardwork points (50 out of 100) and up to 90 of your total possible lab points (out of 150) are included in the total course points.

At final grade time (E4=1) all of the possible boardwork points (100) and all of the possible lab points (150) are included in the total course points.

Why is the spreadsheet programmed like this? Because lab reports are not handed back on a regular schedule, it is impossible for a recitation instructor to know if a missing lab grade is a grade that will be entered later, or a grade that is truly a zero. The number of lab reports returned to recitation instructors varies from student to student as the semester progresses. This version of the grades spreadsheet lets you see your lab scores as they are recorded, but credits them to your "Total" in two bunches, one at midterm and the other at finals. If you have a blank for a lab score where the spreadsheet expects a numerical value, your course percentage will be dramatically lowered. This serves as a powerful reminder that it is critical for you have five good lab scores. If you have a missing lab score, you may enter a projected score in the blank and see how your course total and percentage will improve.

If E4=0.5 and you have four, five, or six lab grades recorded, only the first three are included in your course points and percentage. To "count" all lab scores, change E4 to 1, but remember that the spreadsheet then expects you to have six non-blank lab scores.

Manipulating the spreadsheet.
Feel free to enter projected grades to see how they affect your course totals. Keep this in mind: some of the narrow blue cells and some cells in row 1 contain numbers or formulas used in calculating your total and percent. Do not delete any of these cells, and expect your grades to be accurate! Cell E4 is the midterm/final flag. You may change the value in this cell to project your grades (0.5 for midterm, 1 for final grades). A value other than 0, 0.5, or 1 in E4 will result in meaningless totals.