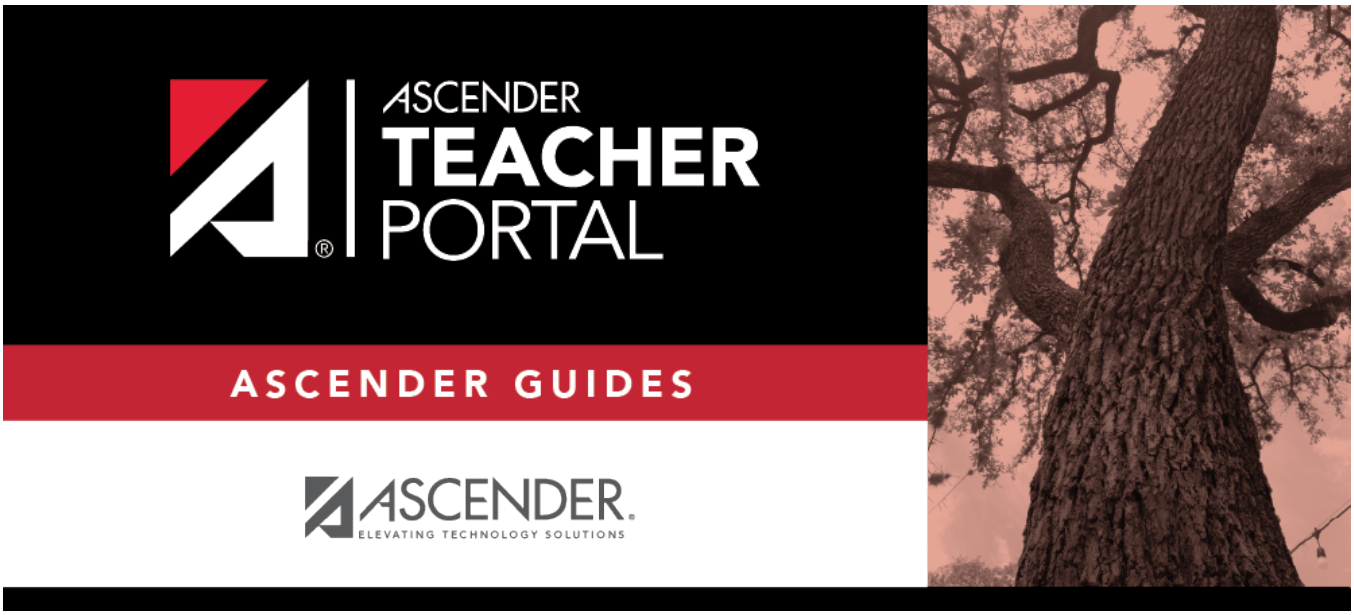

First Day of School

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Teacher Guide to ASCENDER TeacherPortal

Beginning of School Year

Create assignment categories.

Settings > Manage Categories

This page allows you to establish categories that describe the types of assignments you will use in the selected semester and course-section.

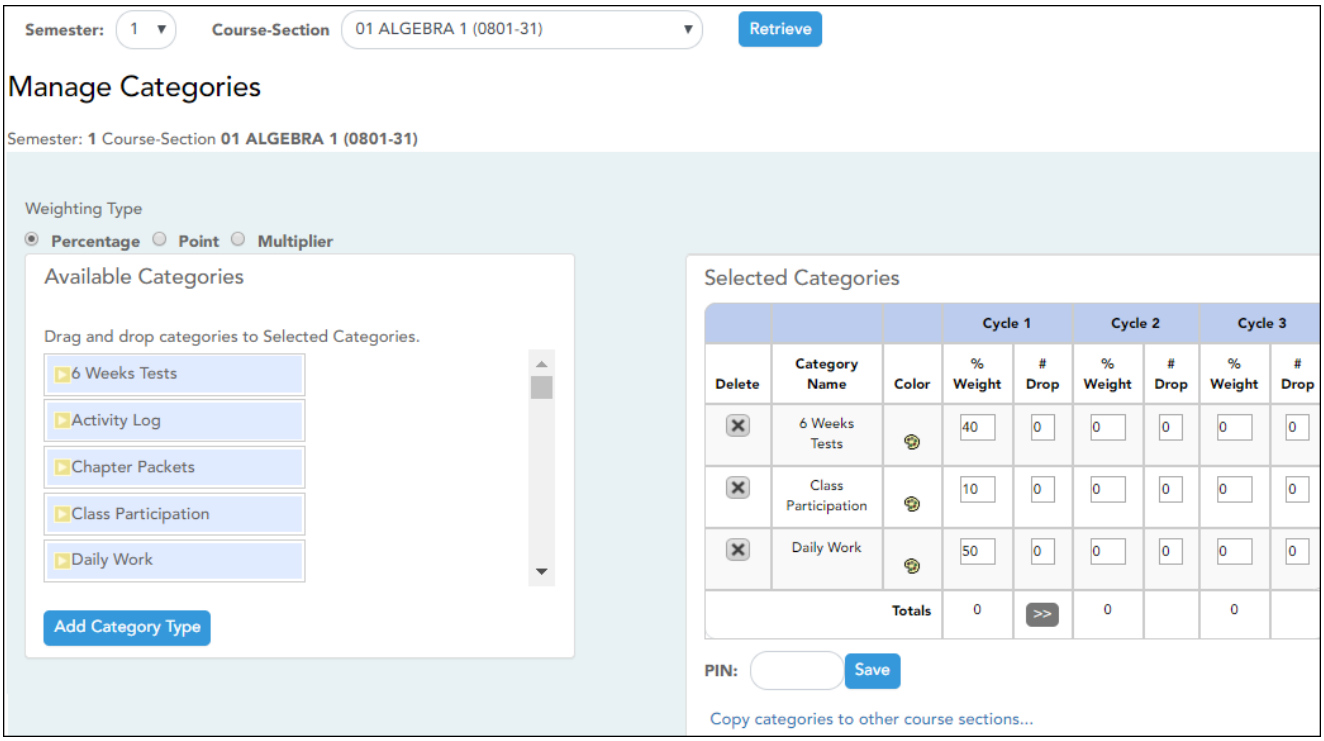
An initial set of categories, defined by the campus, is set at the beginning of the year. If you have an assignment that falls under a category that is not included in the list, you can create a new category, if allowed by the campus. The category you create is added to the master list and will be available for all teachers to use. The list of categories will continue to grow as you and the other teachers add categories.

For your selected categories, you must specify the type of weighting to use for calculating averages (percent-based, point-based, or multiplier-based). You can also assign your own category colors to enable color-coding of assignments on the Assignment Grades page.

From this page, you can also copy categories from one course to other course-sections.

This page is disabled for standards-based courses, because categories are not used for these courses.

This page should not be used for course-sections that are skills-based courses, because categories are not used for these courses.



About grouped course-sections and teacher changes:

If the course-section is part of a group, and the teacher for a course changes during the year, the new teacher will not be able to make changes to categories. The following message will be displayed: “This course belongs to a group for another teacher. No category maintenance may be done except by that teacher.”

In order to resolve this issue so that the new teacher can maintain categories for the course, a TeacherPortal administrator must delete the course from the group. Then, the new teacher can create a new group if needed.

The administrative user must do the following:

1. Log on to TeacherPortal and impersonate the new teacher.
2. While impersonating the new teacher, go to Manage Courses. Select the course-section, and then click ✕ to delete the course from the group. Repeat for all applicable courses.
3. Click **Save**.

❑ Specify a course-section:

Semester	Select the semester to set up categories for.
Course-Section	Select the course-section to set up categories for.

❑ Click **Retrieve**.

The available categories are listed under **Available Categories**, and your current category list for the selected course-section is displayed under **Selected Categories**.

❑ Under **Weighting Type**:

Select the weighting type to use for the categories. You must use the same weighting type for all cycles in a semester.

Percentage	If selected, you must assign percentages to each category. The percentages must total 100%.
Point	Point values are determined when the assignment is created. They are not entered on the Manage Categories page. Point values for each category accumulate as assignments are added. When using point-based weighting, the categories are only used for grouping similar assignments. The calculation is based on the total points, not weighting.
Multiplier	If selected, you must provide a multiplier number (between 1-9) for each category. For multipliers greater than one, the individual assignment grades are counted multiple times.

See the Calculate Averages guide for an explanation of calculating averages for each weighting type.

NOTE:

The category weight for current cycle can be changed for the current cycle, as long as grades have not been posted.

You cannot change the weighting type for the second semester of a two-semester course. The weighting type must be the same for all semesters of a course.

If you post an override cycle grade for a student even if there are no categories for the course, the weighting type is automatically set to percentage.

Each weighting type is only displayed if the campus allows the weighting type (or if the teacher has already started using the weighting type before the restriction was put in place). Any weighting types not allowed by the campus are not displayed. If you are using a weighting type that the campus decides to disallow partway through the current year, the following applies:

• You can continue to use the weighting type until the end of the current year. After the current year, that weighting type will no longer be available.

• If you select another weighting type during the current year, you will not be able to reselect the disallowed weighting type.

If a category is specific to a particular weighting type (as specified at the campus level), the category is only displayed on this page if the appropriate weighting type is selected.

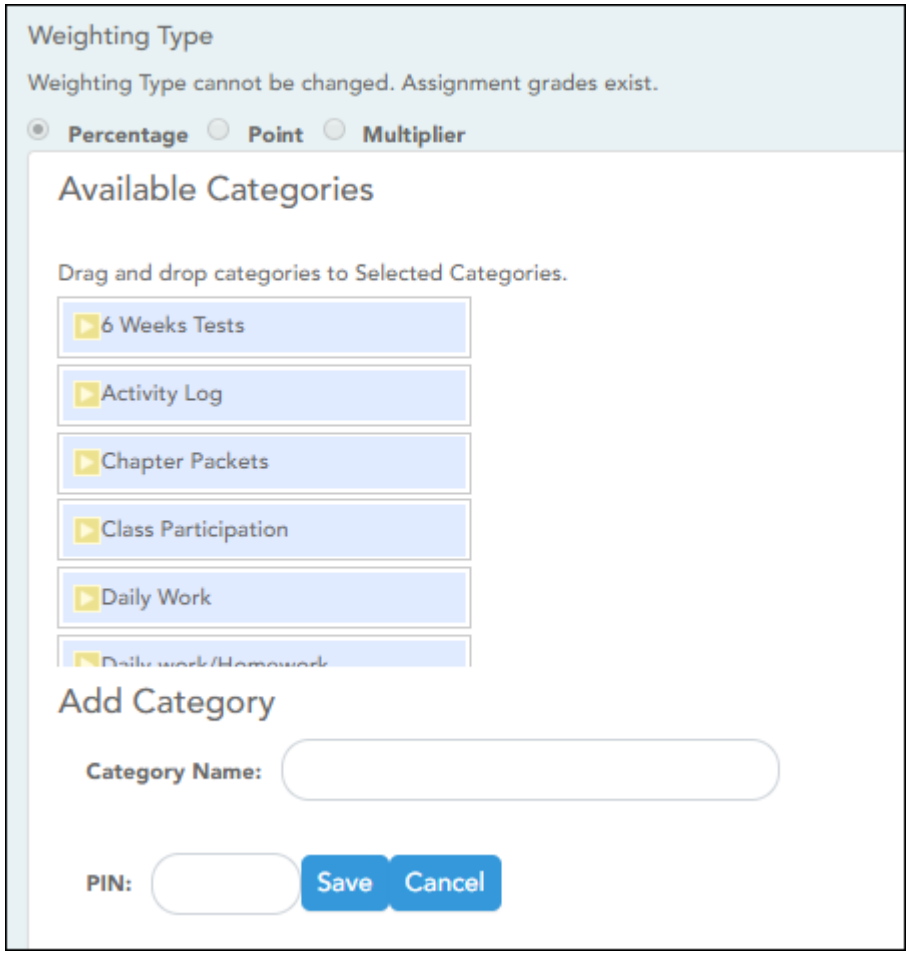
❑ Under **Available Categories** (left side):

The available categories are listed in alphabetical order.

If a category weight is locked (by campus admin), a lock icon is displayed next to the category name. The weight specified by the campus must be used and cannot be changed.

❑ Click **Add Category Type** to add a new category to the list of available categories.

The **Add Category** section is displayed below the available categories.



NOTE: If the campus disallows teachers from adding categories, the **Add Category Type** button is disabled; you must use the categories established by the campus.

Add Category	**Category Name**	Type the name of the new category. You cannot type a name that is already included in the list of available categories. Type carefully to avoid spelling errors. Category names are case-insensitive (e.g., if “quiz” already appears in the list, you cannot add “Quiz”).
	PIN	Type your four-digit PIN.

❑ Click **Save**.
The new category is displayed in the list of available categories in alphabetical order. You can then add it to your **Selected Categories** list.
IMPORTANT: Once a category is added to the list of available categories, it cannot be deleted from the list. If you add a category by mistake, you must contact your campus administrator to have it removed at the campus level. The category cannot be removed if it has assignments associated with it.

❑ To add one of the **Available Categories** to the **Selected Categories** list, do one of the following:

- Click-and-hold the category and drag it to the **Selected Categories** list.
- Click for the category.
- Double-click the category.

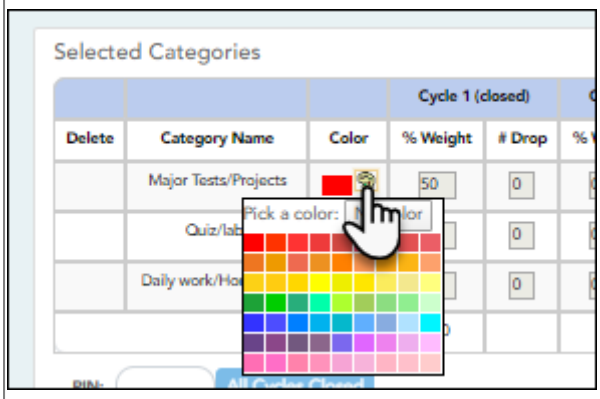
The category is added to the bottom of the **Selected Categories** list. If there is a default or locked weight, that weight is copied to all open cycles.

❑ Under **Selected Categories (right side)**:

All selected categories for the specified course-section are displayed for all cycles in the semester.

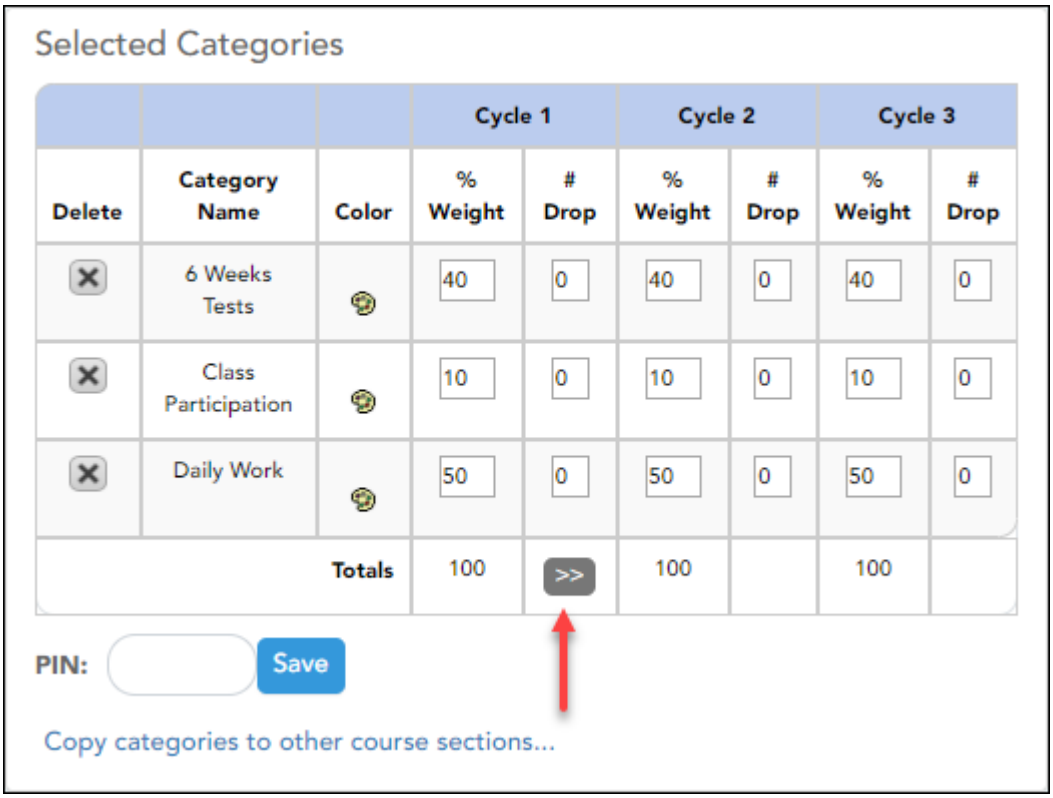
The table changes according to your selection in the **Weighting Type** field. For each cycle, the column heading is **% Weight**, **Points**, or **Multiplier** according to your selection.

Cycle #	If a cycle is closed, the column heading for the cycle displays **(closed)**, and the data cannot be changed.
% Weight	If the **Weighting Type** is **Percentage**, type the percentage for each category. The percentages must total 100% for the cycle. If you select a category created at the campus level, and the campus entered a weight for that category, the weight is displayed in the **% Weight** field for the category. You can change the weight, unless the campus locked the weight for the category. If the weight is locked, the weight is displayed in the field and cannot be changed.

Points	If the **Weighting Type** is **Point**, you cannot enter the total point values in the **Points** field. The field automatically displays the sum of the total points entered for all assignments for the category. For example, on the Administer Assignments page, if you enter five quizzes in the Quiz category, each with total points set to 100, the field displays 500.
Multiplier	If the **Weighting Type** is **Multiplier**, type a value between 1-9.
# Drop	For each cycle, type the number of items to be dropped during a cycle. For example, you may want to drop the student's three lowest grades from the homework category. The student's category average will always reflect the dropped grades. If you do not want to drop any grades from the category, type 0. Only non-excluded grades are dropped. If you exclude an assignment for a student on the Assignment Grades page, the assignment is not counted as one of the grades that will be dropped. Note that you can specify on the Manage Assignments page if you do not want to drop a specific assignment within the category. **WARNING:** If all assignments in the category do not have the same total points value (as entered on the Manage Assignments page), the calculations for dropping a specified number of assignments for the category may result in an average that is different than expected. If the total points value varies, the grade with the lowest number of points may not necessarily be the lowest grade.
Color	Click the icon to select a color for the category. A window opens allowing you to select a color. Click a color to select it.  The selected color is used to color-code assignments on the Assignment Grades page. By default, no color is assigned to the category. The color can be changed any time.
	Click to remove a category from your **Selected Categories** list. **NOTE:** You cannot delete a category that has assignments associated with it during any cycle. To delete a category, you must first delete all grades and assignments for the semester, including grades for withdrawn students. All grades must be deleted before you can delete assignments.

Copy values from one cycle to another:

After you enter the weighting type value and number of assignments to drop for cycle 1, you can click >> to copy the values to cycles 2 and 3.

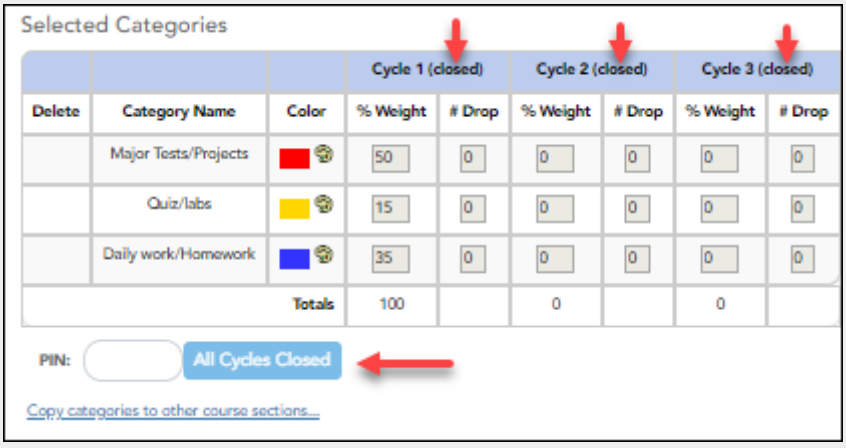


Save data:

PIN	Type your four-digit personal identification number (PIN).

❑ Click **Save**.

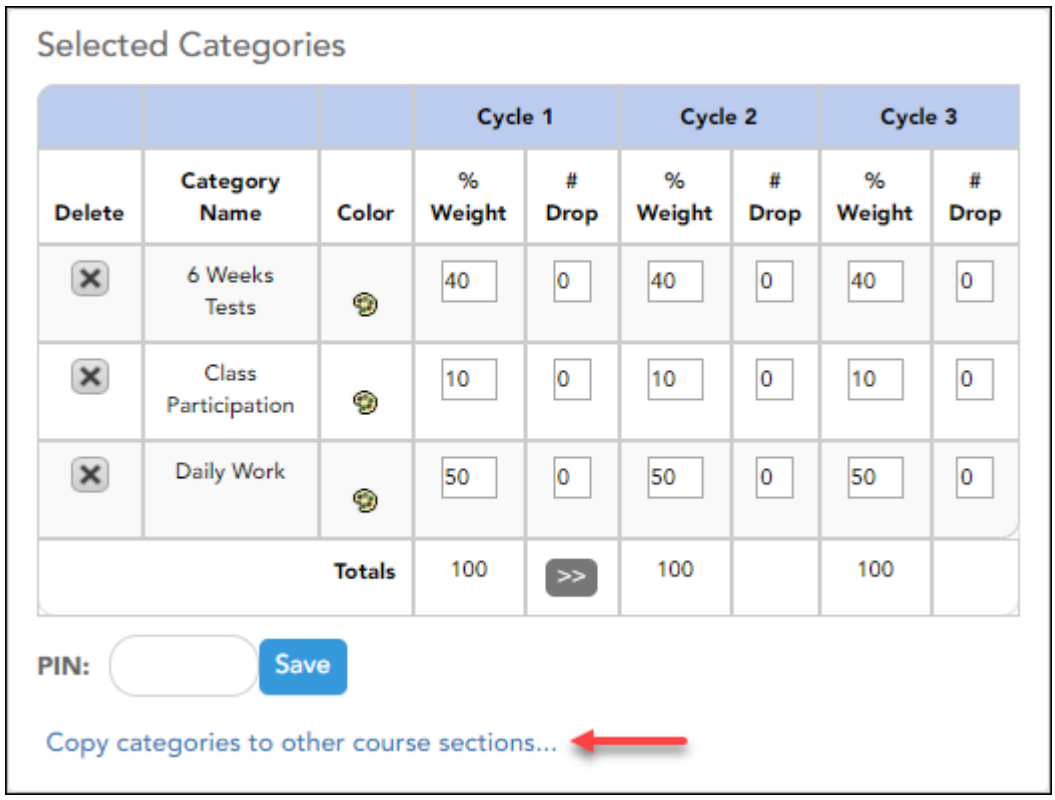
NOTE: If the cycle is closed, you cannot save any changes; the button is disabled. If applicable, the button says **All Cycles Closed**.



Copy categories from one course-section to another:

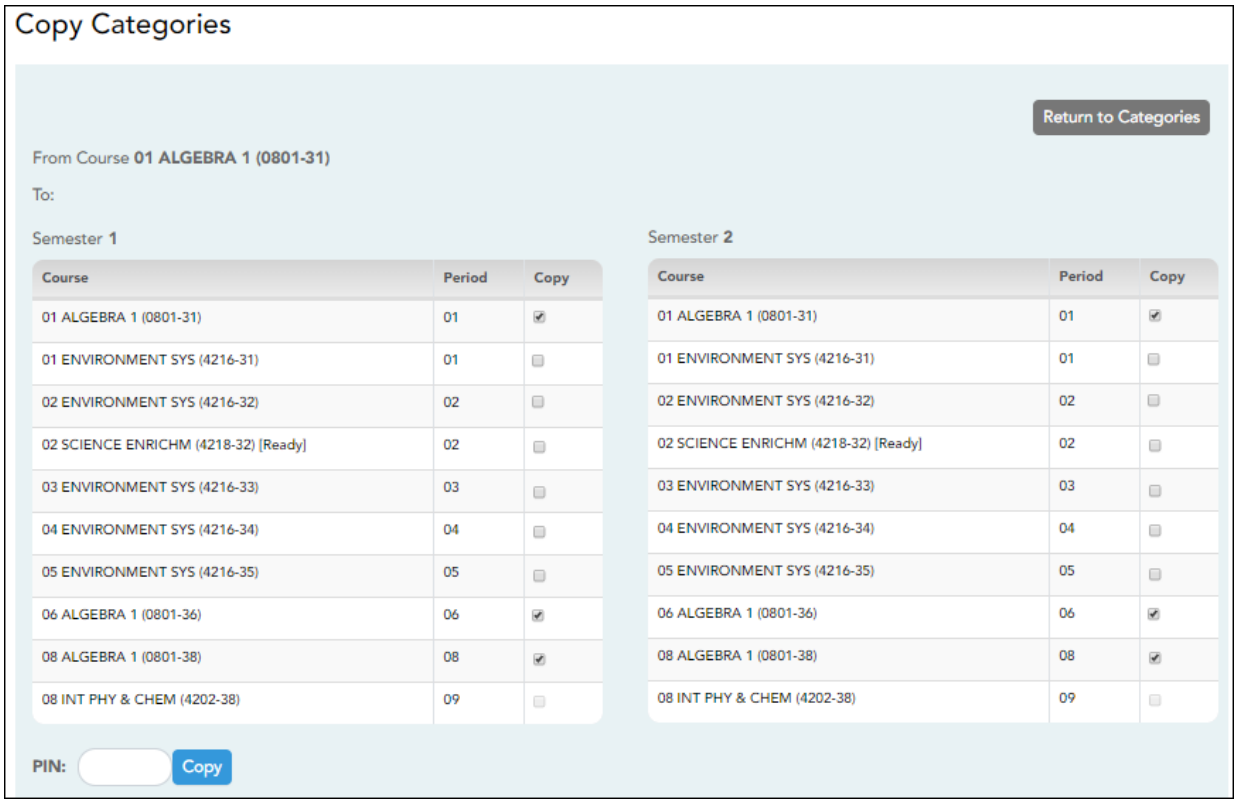
Once you save the categories for a course, you can copy the categories to another course-section.

❑ From the Manage Categories page, use the **Semester** and **Course-Section** fields to select the course-section *from* which to copy categories.



❑ Click **Copy categories to other course-sections**.

The Copy Categories page opens.



Your active courses are listed.

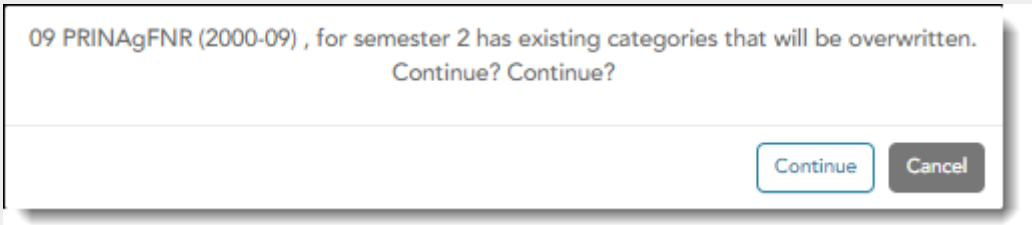
From	The course, period, and section from which you are copying categories is displayed.
Course	Click a course title to view the existing categories for the course. A window opens which displays the categories for the course.  Click **OK** to close the window.

Copy	Select one or more courses to copy the categories *to*. **NOTE:** You cannot copy to courses that have categories with assignments; the check box for the course is disabled.

PIN	Type your four-digit personal identification number (PIN).

❑ Click **Copy**.

NOTE: If you attempt to copy categories to a course that already has categories (but no assignments), a warning message is displayed stating that you will override any categories that exist for the other course(s).



Click **Continue** if appropriate.

❑ Click **Return to Categories** to return to the Manage Categories page.

Student Activation/First Day Counts

Activating students using this process allows you to identify No Show students and correctly enroll students who begin school after the first day of school. It also ensures that students who do show up for school have the proper enrollment dates for the district, campus, special programs, and first semester courses.

The primary way students are activated is by teachers recording attendance in TeacherPortal. Once teachers have marked and posted attendance, the campus staff can address the individual students who could not be activated by teachers.

All students are marked inactive before school starts. As you take attendance, the students are activated as they show up in class. After a period of time (determined by each campus), any student who has not been activated is considered a No Show.

The TeacherPortal Post/View Attendance displays differently during the activation window: Teachers mark present students as Activated rather than Present.

REMINDER: On the first day of school, a student cannot be marked as absent.

From this page, you can print the attendance list for each period-course (or the campus can supply a class roster). If a student shows up in a period who is not on the attendance list, you must write the student's name and ID either in the blank rows provided at the bottom of the list, or on the form provided by the district/campus, and submit to the campus office.

Last day for mass activation	During the activation window, this field is displayed above the attendance grid, which indicates the final date of the activation window. If there are students from multiple attendance tracks enrolled in the course, and the tracks have different ending dates for mass activation, all dates are displayed with the track number in parentheses.
Attendance	On the first day of school, in the **Attendance** column, the **Activate** and **Inactive** fields are displayed for all students instead of the **Absent** and **Present** fields. All students are set to **Inactive** by default.
	Activate: Select on the first day-period the student is present. Activation is a one-time process. Once a student has been activated in any period by any teacher, the student is active for all remaining periods for the day, and subsequent teachers will mark attendance using the **Absent** and **Present** fields. The next period you have the student (either later in the day or the next class date), the **Absent**, **Tardy**, and **Present** fields will be displayed for the student. **NOTE:** Activated students are considered present and are included in the total number of students displayed in the **# Students** field at the bottom of the grid.
	Inactive: If the student is not present, leave that student set to **Inactive** until they attend class. As long as the student is marked as **Inactive**, he is considered a No Show. You cannot mark attendance for an inactive student. Inactive students are not included in the total number of students displayed in the **# Students** field at the bottom of the grid. **NOTE:** If there are students from multiple attendance tracks enrolled in the course, and the tracks have different ending dates for mass activation, the track number is displayed in parentheses in the **Attendance** column.

❑ Click **Post**.

If you activate a student *after* the first day of school, but during the activation window, the following occurs:

- A No Show record is created for the student on the first day of school.
- An enrollment record is created with the entry date set to the student's activation date.
- The student's enrollment date in all courses on the campus for the semester is set to the activation date.
- The student's special program enrollment date(s) are set to the activation date, if applicable.
- If the student's original entry date has a current year date (i.e., the first day of school), the student's original entry date is changed to the activation date.

During the activation window, you may have a mix of activated and inactivated students in your classes.

- Activated students will have the **Present/Absent/Tardy** options displayed.
- Inactive students will have the **Activate/Inactive** options displayed.

The Attendance Roster report will display the **Activate** and **Inactive** fields for students who have not yet been activated.

Once the activation window has ended:

Any students who remained inactive will have the message “Attendance Exempt” displayed in the **Attendance** column. Attendance cannot be marked for these students.

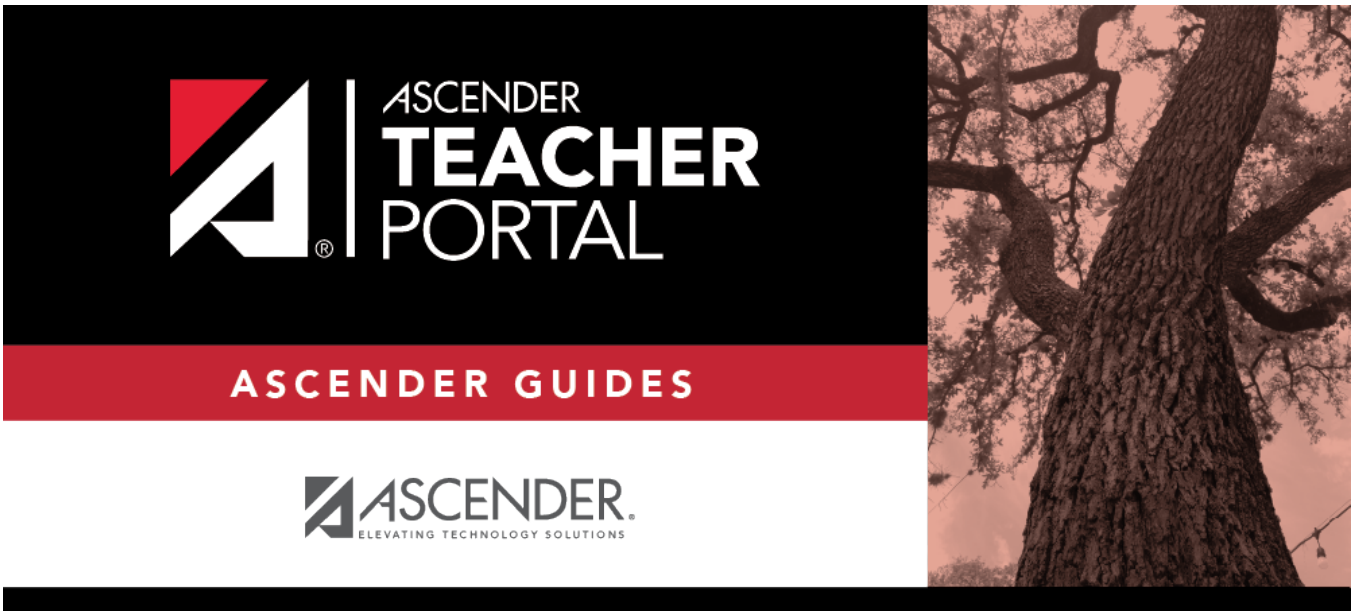
These students will no longer be displayed on the rosters once the campus has created the No Show records.

About the first day of school

For campuses NOT using Student Activation/First Day Counts:

On the first day of school, teachers cannot use TeacherPortal to record or post attendance during the ADA period. You can only view and print data, and you must record attendance manually on the printed sheets.

1. Click **Print** to print the attendance list for each period-course. The Attendance Roster Report Selection page opens allowing you to make selections for printing the Attendance Roster report.
2. Mark attendance on the list manually.
3. If you have students in a period who are not on the attendance list, print their names and student IDs in the rows provided at the bottom of the list.
4. Sign and date the list on the lines provided.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