

Templates for Assessing Student Participation

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# Purpose & Overview

The purpose of this document is to assist DLSPH Instructors with creating rubrics for assessing student participation. Instructors can adopt and adapt this content however makes sense for the context of their courses and grading practices.

There are two rubric templates included in this document. The first is for assessing student participation in synchronous discussions either in person or virtual. The second is for assessing student participation in asynchronous online discussion forums.

These templates use a basic 4-level grading system; 1 being the “highest” and 4 the “lowest”. Instructors can adapt this system and replace the numbers with grading appropriate terminology as needed. In addition, the top two levels could be considered a Credit (CR) assessment vs No Credit (NCR) for the bottom two levels.

For additional assessment rubrics examples and information visit the U of T Centre for Teach Support & Innovation (CTSI) assessment resources here: <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/teaching-support/strategies/continuity-planning/online-remotely-pnt/assessing-learning/>

The Association of American Colleges and University’s also hosts a repository of rubrics for assessing areas related to student participation such as teamwork and oral communication:  <https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>

Additionally, see:

University of Toronto Centre for Teaching Solutions and Innovation:

* Tutorial Participation: <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/LCT-Rubric-On-Tutorial-Participation.pdf>
* Student SELF-assessment 5 point poll for own participation: <https://teaching.utoronto.ca/evaluating-participation/>

Carnegie Mellon: <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/examples/courselevel-bycollege/cfa/tools/participationrubric-cfa.pdf>

University of Waterloo:  [https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/assessing-student-work/grading-and-feedback/rubrics-useful-assessment-tools](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fuwaterloo.ca%2Fcentre-for-teaching-excellence%2Fteaching-resources%2Fteaching-tips%2Fassessing-student-work%2Fgrading-and-feedback%2Frubrics-useful-assessment-tools&data=04%7C01%7Cdionne.gesink%40utoronto.ca%7Cdf23176d24b741efdd7e08d9789254e9%7C78aac2262f034b4d9037b46d56c55210%7C0%7C0%7C637673392141241216%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=cPZ04x%2FBniCdSkcQtjT7%2FXJ270dvd98orrijcSUIIFU%3D&reserved=0)

# Synchronous Participation[[1]](#footnote-1)

This rubric can be adopted and adapted to assess student participation on synchronous in-person or virtual discussions.

| **Component** | **Credit (CR)** | **No Credit (NCR)** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A****(highest)** | **B** | **C** | **D****(Lowest)** |
| *Conduct* | Student shows respect for members of the class, both in speech and manner, and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Does not dominate discussion. Student challenges ideas respectfully, encourages and supports others to do the same.  | Student shows respect for members of the class and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Participates regularly in the discussion but occasionally has difficulty accepting challenges to his/her ideas or maintaining respectful attitude when challenging others’ ideas.  | Student shows little respect for the class or the process as evidenced by speech and manner. Sometimes resorts to ad hominem attacks when in disagreement with others.  | Student shows a lack of respect for members of the group and the discussion process. Often dominates the discussion or disengages from the process. When contributing, can be argumentative or dismissive of others’ ideas, or resorts to ad hominem attacks.  |
| *Ownership/Leadership* | Takes responsibility for maintaining the flow and quality of the discussion whenever needed. Helps to redirect or refocus discussion when it becomes sidetracked or unproductive. Makes efforts to engage reluctant participants. Provides constructive feedback and support to others.  | Will take on responsibility for maintaining flow and quality of discussion, and encouraging others to participate but either is not always effective or is effective but does not regularly take on the responsibility.  | Rarely takes an active role in maintaining the flow or direction of the discussion. When put in a leadership role, often acts as a guard rather than a facilitator: constrains or biases the content and flow of the discussion. | Does not play an active role in maintaining the flow of discussion or undermines the efforts of others who are trying to facilitate discussion.  |
| *Contributing* | Contributes arguments or positions that are reasonable and supported with evidence from the readings, relevant experience, and understanding to reinforce concepts with peers. Often deepens the conversation by going beyond the text, recognizing implications and extensions of the text. Provides analysis of complex ideas that help deepen the inquiry and further the conversation. | Contributes arguments or positions are reasonable and mostly supported by evidence from the readings, relevant experience, and understanding to reinforce concepts with peers. In general, the comments and ideas contribute to the group’s understanding of the material and concepts. | Contributions to the discussion are more often based on opinion or unclear views than on reasoned arguments or positions based on the readings, relevant experience, or understanding to reinforce concepts with peers. Comments or questions suggest a difficulty in following complex lines of argument or student’s arguments are convoluted and difficult to follow.  | Comments are frequently so illogical or without substantiation that others are unable to critique or even follow them. Rather than critique the text the student may resort to ad hominem attacks on the author instead.  |
| *Listening* | Always actively attends to what others say as evidenced by regularly building on, clarifying, or responding to their comments. Often reminds group of comments made by someone earlier that are pertinent.  | Usually listens well and takes steps to check comprehension by asking clarifying and probing questions, and making connections to earlier comments. Responds to ideas and questions offered by other participants. | Does not regularly listen well as indicated by the repetition of comments or questions presented earlier, or frequent non sequiturs.  | Behavior frequently reflects a failure to listen or attend to the discussion as indicated by repetition of comments and questions, non sequiturs, off-task activities. |
| *Reading* | Student has carefully read and understood the readings as evidenced by oral contributions; familiarity with main ideas, supporting evidence and secondary points. Comes to class prepared with questions and critiques of the readings. | Student has read and understood the readings as evidenced by oral contributions. The work demonstrates a grasp of the main ideas and evidence but sometimes interpretations are questionable. Comes prepared with questions. | Student has read the material, but comments often indicate that he/she didn’t read or think carefully about it, or misunderstood or forgot many points. Class conduct suggests inconsistent commitment to preparation.  | Student either is unable to adequately understand and interpret the material or has frequently come to class unprepared, as indicated by serious errors or an inability to answer basic questions or contribute to discussion. |

# Asynchronous Participation (Online Discussions)[[2]](#footnote-2)

This rubric can be adopted and adapted to assess student participation on asynchronous online discussion forums.

| **Component** | **Pass** | **Fail** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A****(Highest)** | **B** | C | **D****(Lowest)** |
| *Relevance of Post*  | Posting thoroughly answers the discussion prompts and demonstrates understanding of material with well-developed ideas. Posting integrates assigned content and makes strong connections to practice.  | Posting addresses most of the prompt(s) and demonstrates mild understanding of material with well-developed ideas. Posting references assigned content and may not make connections to practice | Posting fails to address all components of the prompt. Makes short or irrelevant remarks. Posting lacks connection to practice. | No posting. |
| *Quality of Post*  | Appropriate comments: thoughtful, reflective, and respectful of other’s postings. | Appropriate comments and responds respectfully to other's postings.  | Responds, but with minimum effort. (e.g. "I agree with Bill") | No posting. |
| *Contribution to the Learning Community*  | Posts meaningful questions to the community; attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic; shares relevant experience or understanding to reinforce concepts with peers. | Attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely; shares relevant experience or understanding to reinforce concepts with peers. | Minimum effort is made to participate in learning community as it develops. | No feedback provided to fellow student(s). |
| *Mechanics* | Writing is free of grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. | Writing includes less than 5 grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. | Writing includes 4-5 grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. | Writing contains more than 5 grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. |

**Example of a Holistic Participation Rubric**

A

* Always prepared
* Attends nearly every class
* Participates constructively in class, models leadership for others and on teams
* Exhibits preparedness and punctuality in class/class work
* Demonstrates initiative and improvement without prompting
* Seeks to understand and acknowledge others’ thoughts
* Often reaches full potential by challenging self
* Exceptional content knowledge readily integrated into new problems or settings
* Challenges his/her own thoughts and ideas

B

* Usually prepared
* Attends most classes
* Participates constructively in class, works well with others, and is a team player
* Excellent content knowledge
* Completes all class assignments; occasionally adds something extra
* Demonstrates initiative and improvement with some prompting
* Seeks to understand and acknowledge others’ thoughts
* Stretches to reach full potential when prompted
* Open to challenges to thoughts and ideas from others

C

* Sometimes prepared
* Attends many classes
* Average content knowledge
* Occasionally or only challenges thought when encouraged by others
* Assignments reflect average work
* Sometimes an active participant in class; works fairly well with others
* Occasionally accepts and attends to challenges and feedback

D

* Rarely prepared
* Attends some classes
* Rarely participates constructively in class
* Assignments are late, incomplete, or not turned in at all
* Low level of content knowledge
* Inactive participant; works reluctantly with others
* Sometimes shows a close-minded disposition with regard to feedback and challenge

F

* Clearly unprepared
* Nearly always absent
* No participation or harmful participation
* No assignments turned in
* No assignments available to assess content knowledge
* Not present enough to judge participation and interaction, or undermining others
* Close-minded disposition with regard to feedback, challenge, and course content
1. Adapted from Relearning by Design, Inc., 2000 and accessed April 8, 2021 <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/assesslearning/rubrics.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Adapted from University of Iowa Sample Online Discussions Rubric Accessed April 8, 2021 <https://teach.uiowa.edu/sites/teach.uiowa.edu/files/wysiwyg_uploads/sample_online_discussions_rubric.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)