

Examples of Class Participation

The Graduate Council guideline is that attendance only is not sufficient for earning credit. If participation is part of the assessment, the course syllabus must include the criteria used to evaluate participation. At an interval or intervals determined by the instructor, the grade for participation should be shared with the student. This provides a mechanism of evaluation and documentation of the work that is subsequently linked to the earned course mark.

There are many variations on how participation may be evaluated depending on the nature of the course. Several examples that may be adapted are below.

EXAMPLE 1:

This is an example of the participation component of an overall course assessment used in the School of Nursing. Adapted from Bean, J. C. & Peterson, D. (1998). Grading classroom participation. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 74, 33-40.

Participation is evaluated using the following scale:

10 points

Student comes to class prepared; contributes readily to the conversation but doesn't dominate it; makes thoughtful contributions based on the literature that advance the conversation; shows an interest in and respect for others' contributions; participates actively in all groups.

7 points

Comes to class prepared and makes thoughtful comments when called upon; contributes occasionally without prompting; shows interest in and respect for other's views; participates actively in small groups.

5 points

Student participates in discussion, but in problematic way: talks too much, rambles, interrupts instructor and others, or does not acknowledge cues of annoyance from others.

3 points

Comes to class prepared but only minimally contributes.

0 points

Has not prepared for class or does not contribute to discussion. Displays disrespect to students and/or faculty.

Grades from feedback provided to the student during the semester will be averaged to indicate the final participation grade.

EXAMPLE 2:

In this example, student participation is linked to written responses in a Writing Journal maintained by the student throughout the semester. The journal is graded at intervals throughout the semester and points earned are related to the overall course grade.

Assessment:

Midterm examination 25%	100 points
Final exam 30%	120 points
Comparative book review 20%	80 points
Participation and Writing Journal, 25%.	100 points

The writing journal consists of short (usually, 1-3) paragraph compositions, done in class or at home, in response to a question-type writing prompt.

EXAMPLE 3

In this example, class participation is graded on a scale from 0 (lowest) through 4 (highest), using the criteria below. The criteria focuses on what the student demonstrates and does not presume to guess at what the student knows but does not demonstrate. Interim feedback concerning credit earned is important to students, and can be provided in various forms. For example, feedback may be provided about half-way through the semester in memo or email form, re-articulating the criteria and giving each student an interim grade on the 4-point scale. In some cases, conferences with students (at the student's request) may be conducted to discuss ways to improve the student's participation, and to develop strategies to help the student overcome shyness or other difficulties.

Adapted From: *Grading Class Participation*. Martha L. Maznevski, Assistant Professor, McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia

http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching_Concerns/Spring_1996/TC_Spring_1996_Maznevski.htm

Grade	Criteria
0	Does not participate
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present, not disruptive.• Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much.• Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic case or reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them.• Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class).• Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on.• Demonstrates sporadic involvement.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates good preparation: knows case or reading facts well, has thought through implications of them.• Offers interpretations and analysis of case material (more than just facts) to class.• Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion.• Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed case exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material (e.g., readings, course material, discussions, experiences, etc.).• Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of case material, e.g., puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further.• Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.• Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.

EXAMPLE 4:

In this example, student participation is linked to an 'on line' discussion board in response to the Instructors prompts. The students are informed of the instructor's expectations and assessments are provided to students at interval(s) throughout the semester. Points earned are related to the overall course grade.