

Evaluating Discussion

In the Discussion Board, an instructor and students in the course share their thoughts and ideas with each other and essentially engage in "conversation." This is an important aspect of fully online courses. Usually, the more interaction between and among the students, instructor, and course content, the more successful the distance course.

That said, you will want to let students know you expect participation in the Discussion Board and, in fact, give a grade for the quality of posts. The following is a **sample** you may use or adapt for your courses to help students understand expectations and make it easier for you to grade.

Course Participation Guidelines

Active participation for this course means posting your response to the discussion questions asked, reading other posted responses, and responding back to your classmates' work in a way that furthers the discussion and/or provides additional resources relating directly to the topic under discussion.

Forum questions, worth 15 points each, will invite you to put your learning into practice – sharing what you gleaned from the reading, reporting how you fared with a course activity, or weighing implications.

Responses should be submitted to the appropriate forum in the Discussion Board (located in the Communication area of the course site) within the time frame assigned. You may receive partial credit for responses posted up to one week late. No credit will be given for responses posted beyond seven days after the discussion assignment is due. Please remember to be courteous in replies to your classmates.

Discussion Participation Rubric

Criteria and Points Possible	Excellent	Good	Fair
Nature of post(s) Up to 3 pts	Student wrote an original response to instructor's question AND a reply to at least two classmates where encouraged.	Student wrote only an original response; only one reply or no replies even though encouraged.	Student wrote only one or more replies; no original response.
Timeliness Up to 3 pts	Student wrote original post by the deadline.	Student wrote original post (or reply only) within 24 hours of the deadline.	Student wrote original post (or reply only) within 72 hours of the deadline.
Evidence of understanding and/or activity completion Up to 5 pts	Comments/questions provided evidence that the student synthesized the assigned material and/or completed the appropriate activity associated with the forum.	Comments/questions provided evidence that the student generally understood the assigned material and/or completed the appropriate activity associated with the forum.	Comments/questions suggested the student did not understand the assigned material and/or did not appear to complete the appropriate activity associated with the forum.
Contribution to discussion Up to 4 pts	Comments/questions significantly enhanced the quality of discussion (e.g. illustrated a point with examples, suggested new perspectives on an issue, asked questions that helped further discussion, etc.)	Comments/questions more or less enhanced the quality of discussion (e.g. asked questions that helped further discussion, etc.)	Comments/questions did not contribute much to the quality of discussion.