

## Understanding the Discussion Grading Rubrics

### Slide 1 –

Hello everyone! In this presentation, you will be trained on how to use the grading rubrics and do well in the discussion forums. If you want visuals, please watch the PowerPoint presentation. In the following, you will see the text that went with each slide.

*Text Version:*

### Slide 2

Instructors often hear from students that they don't know what we expect of them. And yet, for the instructors, this is clear because we have been explicitly asked to use grading rubrics provided by Ashford University.

### Slide 3

Have you read the discussion grading rubrics? In this presentation, we will try to convince you that you should!

### Slide 4

In the discussion grading rubric, it lists the following categories: **General Content/Subject Knowledge, Critical Thinking, Engagement/Participation, and Written Communication.**

### Slide 5

Here, you can see that participation, knowledge, and critical thinking are equally weighed. Let's explore how to do well in each area.

### Slide 6

The first two categories alone are worth 60% of your overall grade. If you look carefully at these segments, you will see that each clearly states what is expected of you. Notice that content and subject knowledge is about doing everything that is required and demonstrating "in-depth" understanding of course themes. And, critical thinking uses the terms "evidence" and "information resources." These are both about your use of course material to help you. So be sure to do this to maximize your score.

### Slide 7

First, carefully cover all areas of the prompt. For general content/subject knowledge, we are looking for how well you responded to each element of the prompt. So, if you are asked to "define culture" be sure to define culture! Avoid simply copying and pasting content. Show us what you've learned in your words. Next, be sure to demonstrate your knowledge. To earn full credit, mastery of course material is illustrated through multiple uses of experts to support all key claims.

### Slide 8

One key way "knowledge" is illustrated is by making connections between content covered in different weeks and really showing you can apply what you are learning to daily life. And in most discussions, this application of course material is required. The better you do that, the more points you can earn.

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To summarize, be sure to cover everything that is required of you, apply course material, show the relevance of what we are discussing, and demonstrate mastery of course concepts.

#### Slide 10

Notice that when someone scores distinguished, we use the word “comprehensive.” So, this means you really dig into the information. You want to use experts, with full APA citations, to back you up in making your points. And, beyond a quoting, please paraphrase.

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It is easy to lose points here by simply not covering everything that was required of you. Don't lose points unnecessarily. Be sure to respond to every element of the prompt. Make a checklist if you have to.

#### Slide 12

To give you an example, let's say you are writing about emotional intelligence. You might begin with a paraphrased definition of this term, saying: Emotional intelligence involves one's ability to monitor their own feelings and the feelings of those around them and use this knowledge of these feelings as the basis of a reaction (Bevan & Sole, 2014). Notice how the student here is using her own words and giving credit to Bevan and Sole.

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The student goes on to write “In addition to being aware of what people say, we pay attention to the emotions they are conveying through word choices and nonverbal cues. For instance, if one's voice cracks and they are on the verge of tears, we know we need to tread lightly!” Here, the student elaborates on what is involved in being emotionally intelligent and even points to clear nonverbal cues one can analyze. Notice how specific examples are offered to illustrate the point.

#### Slide 14

Finishing it out, the student might say “Those who are emotionally intelligent are able to maintain self-control even during challenging situations and this can lead to them handling conflict in more productive ways.” By discussing this, the student not only describes emotional intelligence. He or she also explains its value and relevance.

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Here, Bevan and Sole are cited and therefore the source of this information is clearly listed. Then, the value of emotional intelligence is clearly stated. Deeper understanding of the topic is therefore conveyed.

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The author of that paragraph “applied” emotional intelligence to a scenario.

#### Slide 17

Another category to be aware of is your ability to show signs of critical thinking. While this can sometimes be a vague notion, the rubric states that when a student is exceptional in their critical thinking, he or she “Comprehensively explores the ideas, thoughts, and elements of the topic and provides relevant evidence and information that demonstrates all of the following as applicable to the discussion prompt: clarity, relevance, depth, breadth, use of information resources, and logic.”

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In the previous example, the student illustrates critical thinking by making connections between multiple points from the class. It also squarely focuses on the relevance of emotional intelligence because it shows how it can directly benefit those who embrace it. Therefore, you see a high level of thought on the topic.

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To recap, for relevance, we want to know “why does this matter?” We want to see clear reflection. It is required that you cite sources and sincerely engage with course material. And finally, we need to see you clearly demonstrate what you’ve learned.

#### Slide 20

And remember, the grading rubric also explains that “participation” is 30% of your grade. Your initial post is simply your requirement to earn any points.

#### Slide 21

Participation is about your replies to others. Therefore, if you don’t reply to other students, you will lose 30% of the overall value of that discussion.

#### Slide 22

So, if the overall potential value of a discussion is 5 points, you will automatically lose 1.5 points if you do not reply to two of your classmates. This means the most you can earn is 3.5 points. Please be sure to do the required number of posts to maximize your points.

#### Slide 23

To earn full credit for participation, you must acknowledge something another student said, reflect on that point by elaborating more on their ideas or clarifying a definition. It is also wise to ask a question. But more than anything, please show what you’ve learned in this class!

#### Slide 24

Finally, 10% of your grade is based on your writing. If you know you have writing issues and/or if your instructor tells you he or she notices issues with your writing, start working with a writing tutor to address these issues. It’s free!

#### Slide 25

And chances are if you do have these writing issues, it will be difficult for you to earn points in other areas as well. If the instructor can't understand your narrative, they won't be able to give you credit for what you are trying to say. It stifles your voice!

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Based on this information, we strongly suggest that you assess yourself after you've created your initial discussion post and carefully look at your work to ensure you've written something insightful and deep (critical thinking), that you've incorporated what you've learned in this class into your post (application of course material) and that you cover all bases.

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Okay. Good luck! And don't hesitate to contact your instructor with additional questions.