

ASSESSMENT, GRADING, & RUBRICS

*2023 Teaching Assistant
Orientation Program*



- 01. STUDENT ASSESSMENT
- 02. DESIGNING ASSESSMENT
- 03. GRADING
- 04. GRADING WITH OTHER TAS
AND PROFESSORS
- 05. ADDITIONAL FORMS OF
ASSESSMENT
- 06. ACTIVITY

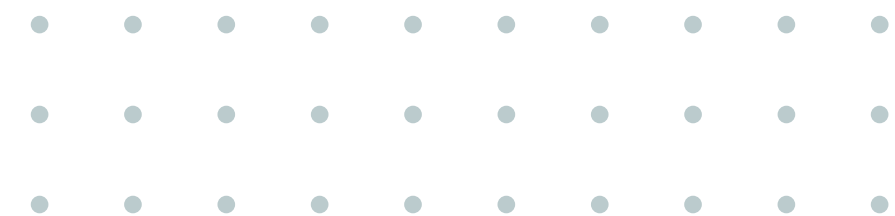
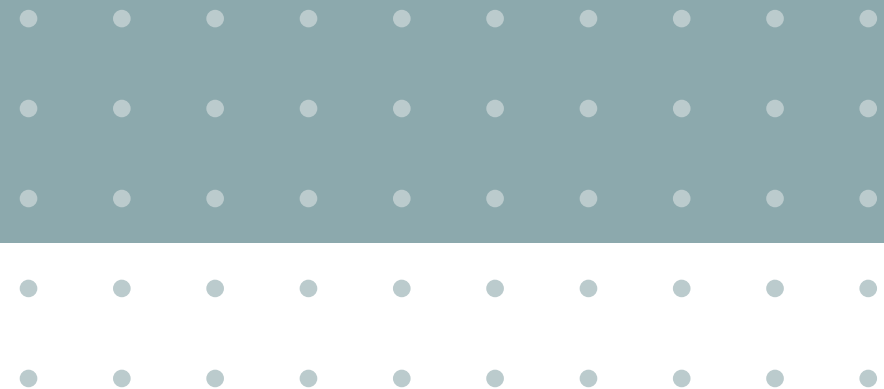


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01.

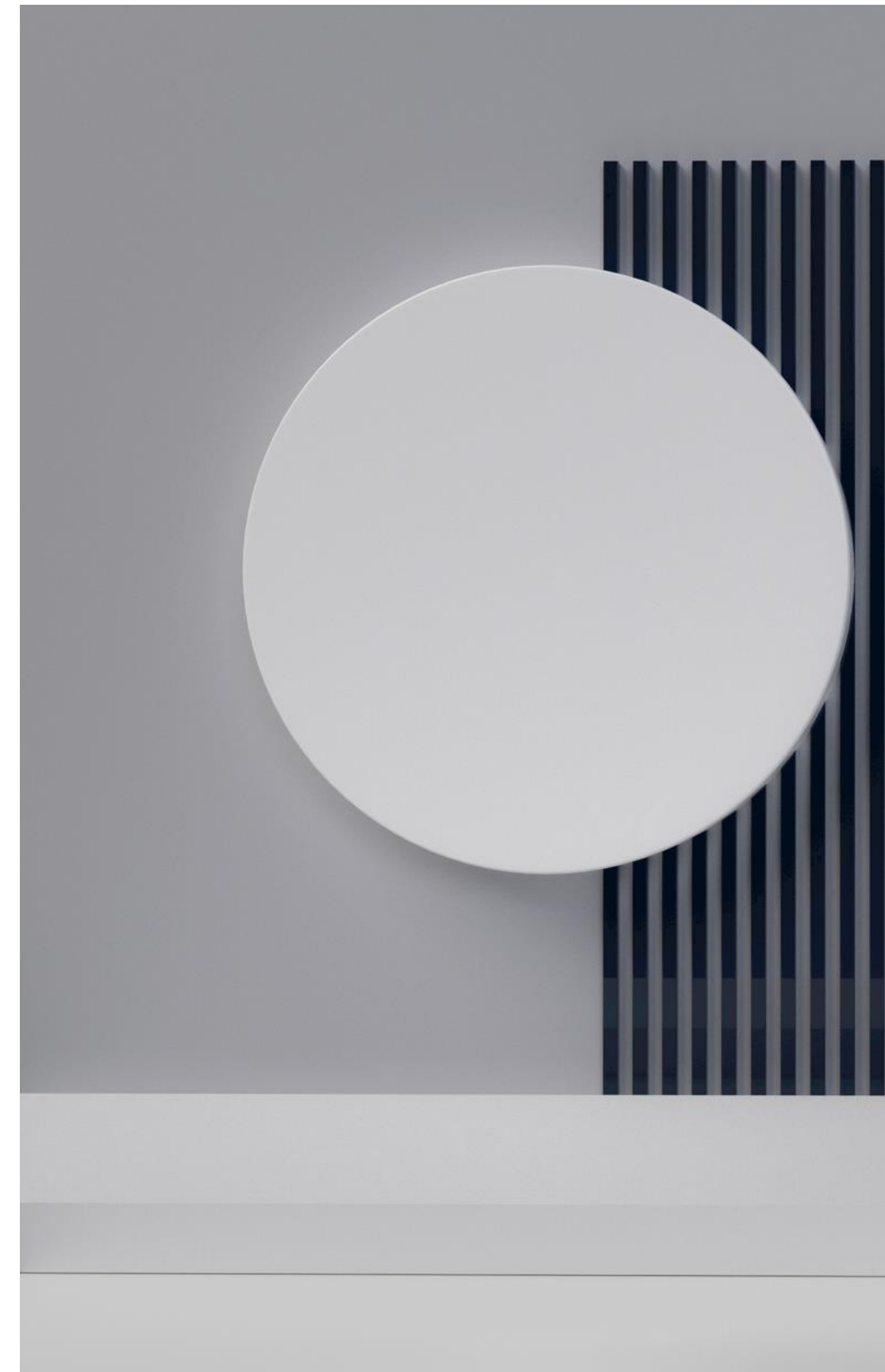
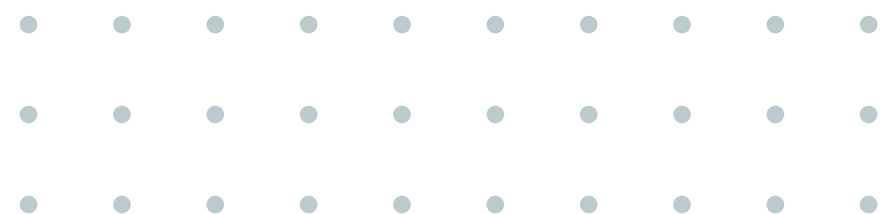
STUDENT ASSESSMENT



WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENTS?

We want to answer the following:

- Do students understand the content?
- Are students prepared for the next piece of information?
- Am I doing an effective job as an instructor?
- How can I more effectively communicate information to all students?



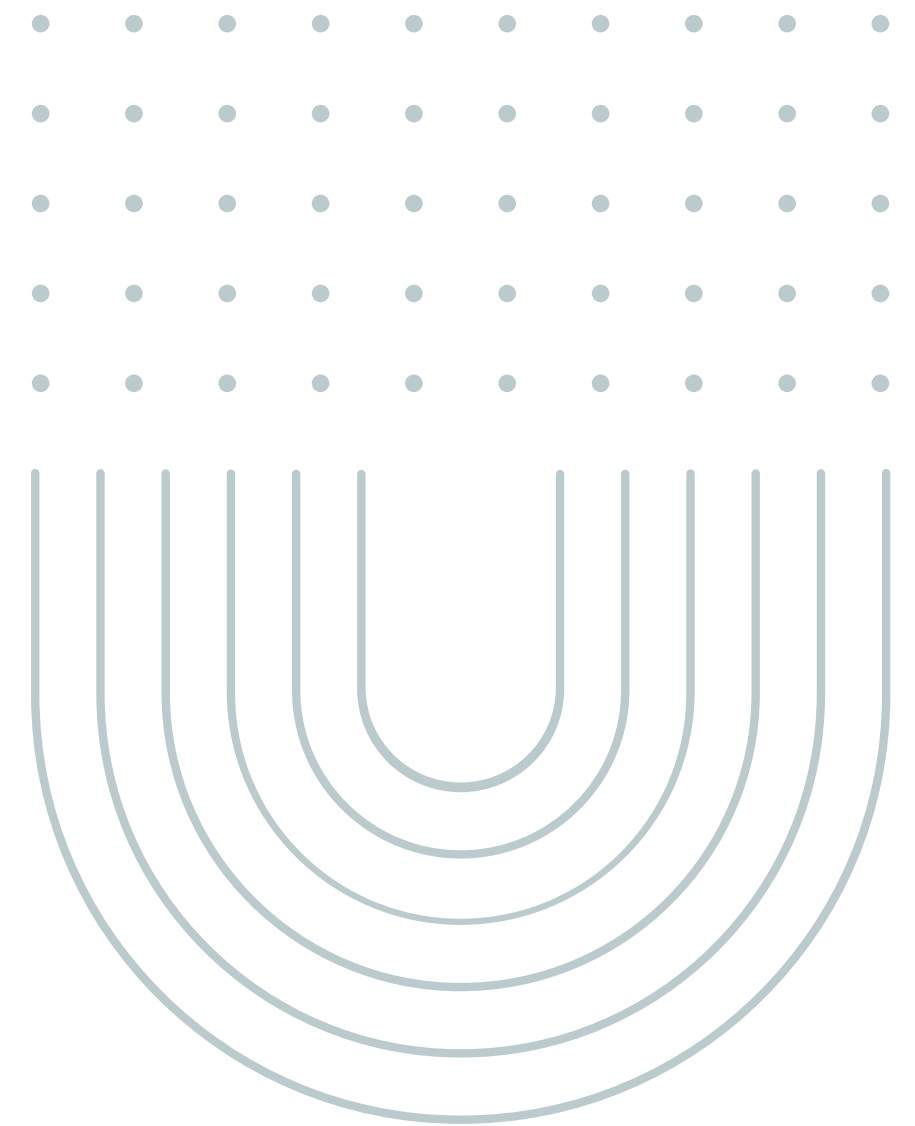
ASSESSMENT TYPES

Objective

Requires students to select a response from several alternatives or to fill in a word/short phrase to complete a statement.

Subjective

Requires students to organize and formulate their own original answer for submission.



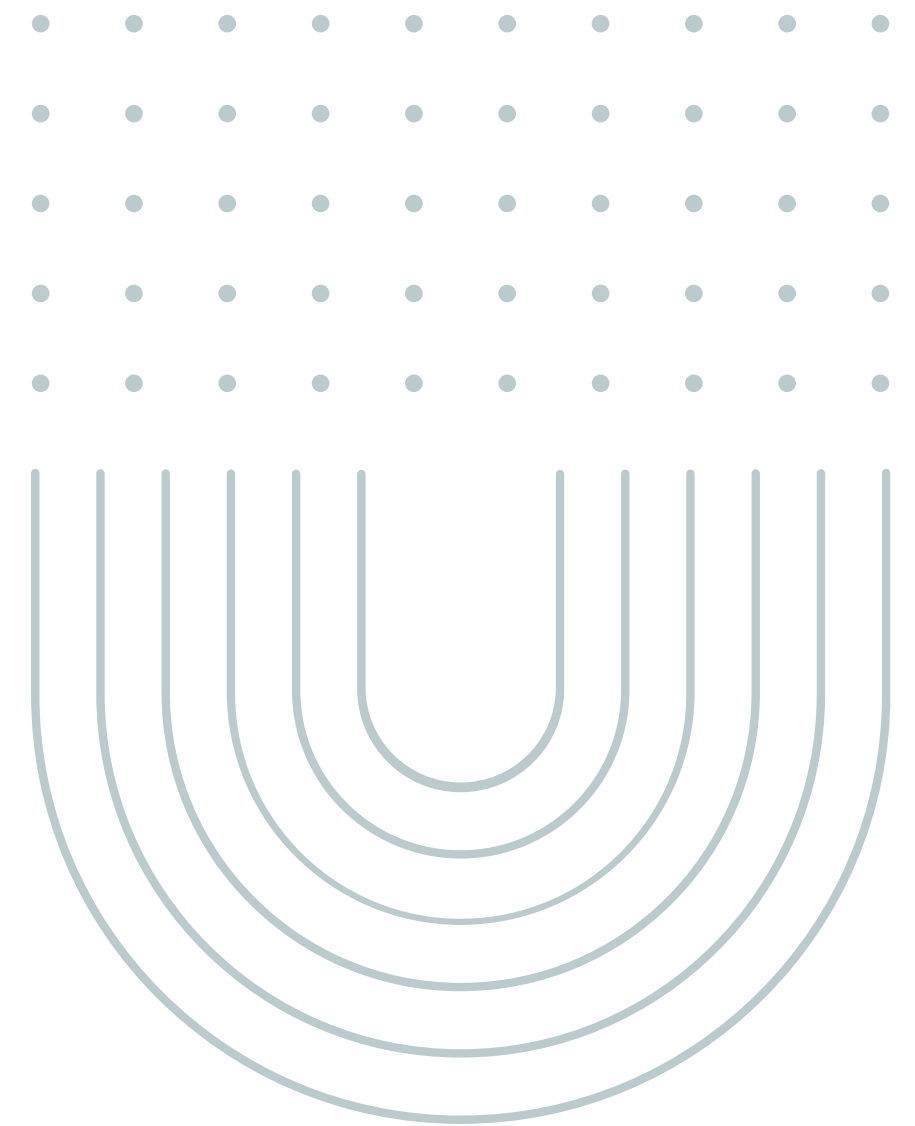
INFORMAL VS. FORMAL

What is informal assessment?

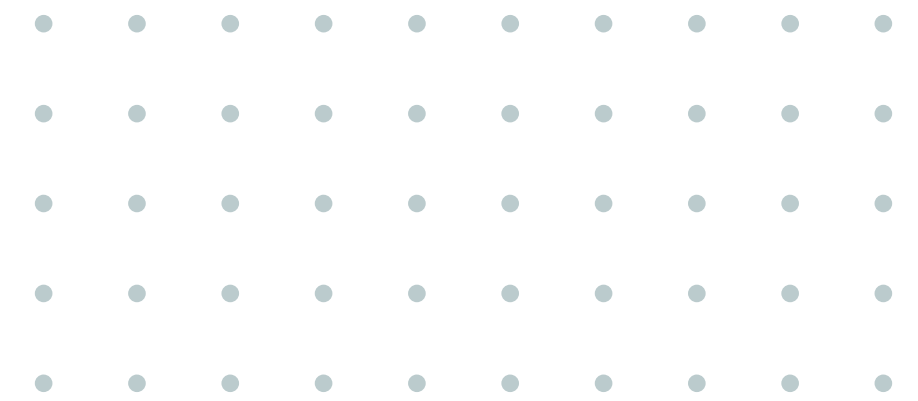
- Typically ungraded
- Low stakes
- Quick feedback
- Allows students to self-evaluate

What is formal assessment?

- Traditional formats
- Generally graded
- More comprehensive
- Higher stakes



INFORMAL ASSESSMENT



Simple

- Verbal questioning
 - Apply knowledge to the problem at hand
- Voting on multiple choices
 - Thumbs up/down
 - Raising hands
- Anonymous online response



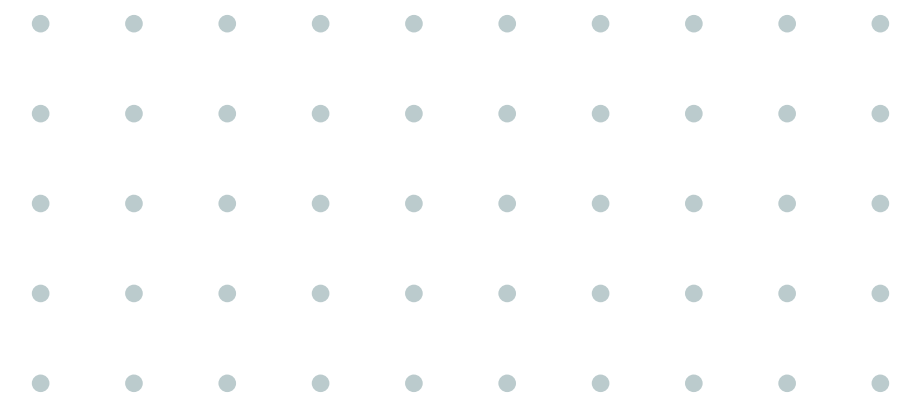
Quizlet

Complex

- Worksheets
 - Offer assistance during individual/group work
- 5-minute ungraded quiz
 - Collect anonymously for monitoring
 - Ask if anyone would like to share their answer

Kahoot!

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT



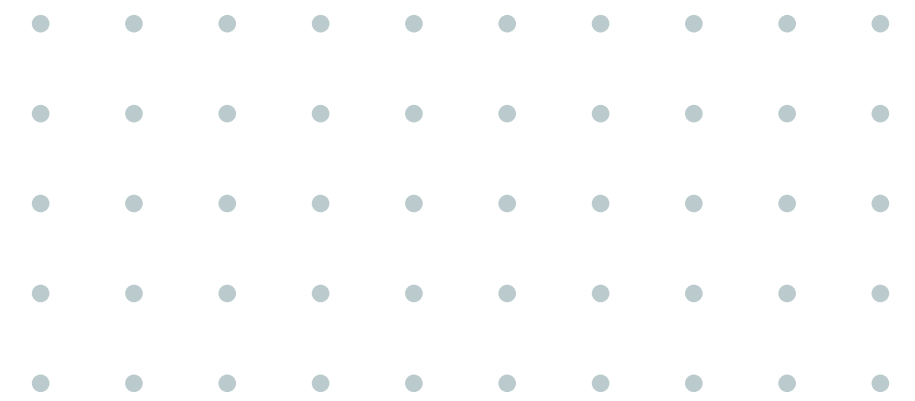
Why implement informal assessment?

- Dynamic and flexible
- Engages and challenges students
- Allows measuring of progress before graded assignments

How to implement informal assessment?

- Provide structure for participation/questions during class
- Allow time for students to think about the question and formulate a response
- Emphasize a growth mindset
- Take a moment to think about students' responses and why they missed a concept

FORMAL ASSESSMENT



Types

- Exams/quizzes
- Papers
- Homework
- Projects

Implementing formal assessment

- Use multiple types so students have a variety of ways to demonstrate their depth of knowledge
- Evaluate growth over time
- Foster an understanding of underlying concepts and the connections between them
- Opportunity for in-depth feedback

02.

DESIGNING ASSESSMENTS



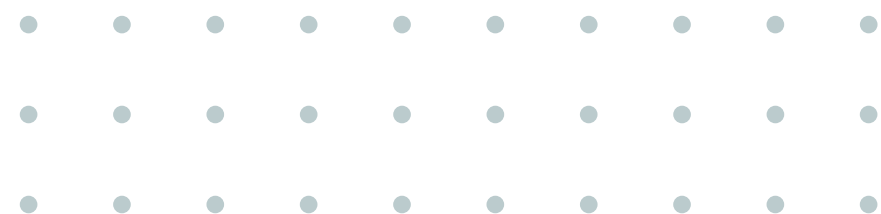
WRITING QUESTIONS

Writing good questions is difficult!

Begin by asking yourself the following:

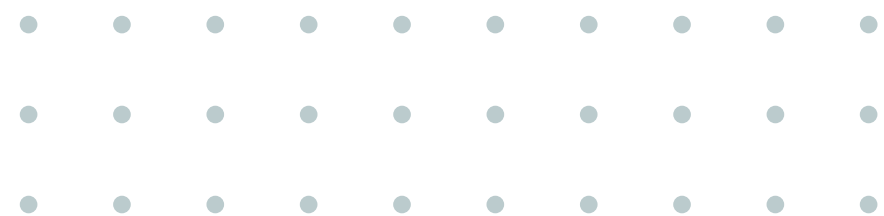
- A. What knowledge do I want the students to demonstrate?
- B. How do I anticipate students will answer the question?
- C. How much information do I need to give?
- D. How do I plan on grading this?

These questions can apply to all assessment types.



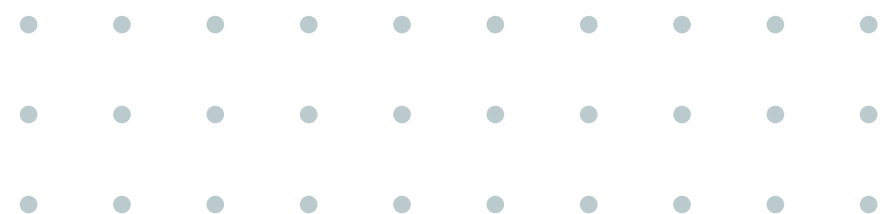
A. WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO I WANT THE STUDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE?

- What do the students need to know?
 - Consider course objectives
 - Why is the class important?
- Is this course a precursor to more advanced classes in the degree program?
 - What key concepts will carry over from this class to the next?



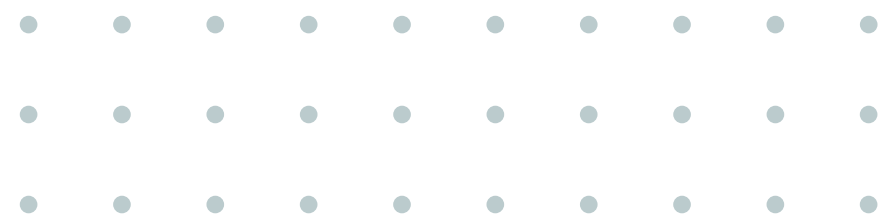
B. HOW WILL STUDENTS ANSWER?

- What answer do you want the students to give?
 - Are there any common issues that may prevent students from answering the question?
 - If so, it may be best to address the issues right away or correct the questions before assigning it to students.
- Is there a reason for asking that particular question?
- Is there a better way to ask the question?
- Students' life experiences may influence their answers



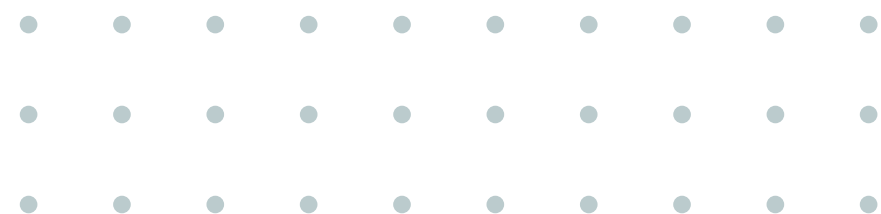
C. HAVE I GIVEN ENOUGH INFORMATION?

- Is the question too open-ended?
 - Questions that are not well defined may lead students in the wrong direction, even if they do know the content.
- Have I adequately described the scenario?
- For example:
 - Have I defined the fluid as oil?
 - Did I specify to research current events in the USA or Internationally?



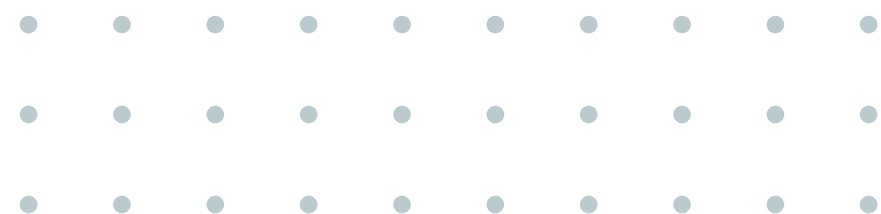
D. HOW DO I PLAN ON GRADING THIS?

- How much is this question worth?
- Is it a fair assessment of the student's ability?
- Same point values for all questions, or greater emphasis on the more important concepts?
 - Smaller concepts could be written as fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice questions.
- How will feedback be given?
 - Individual comments are very helpful for students, but are also very time-consuming.
 - An alternative is going over commonly missed questions during class or in office hours.



GENERAL TIPS FOR ASSESSMENTS AND WRITING QUESTIONS

- Be as specific as possible (wording matters!)
 - Avoid using and/or in survey questions
- Check that pre-written questions are accurate
- Ask questions on a variety of concepts
 - Allows students to perform well even when they may have weaknesses in some concepts
- Test early so students become familiar with your test style
- Encourage students to move onto the next problem to avoid wasting time when taking time-limited exams
 - Make sure the exam is doable in the allowed time



03.

GRADING



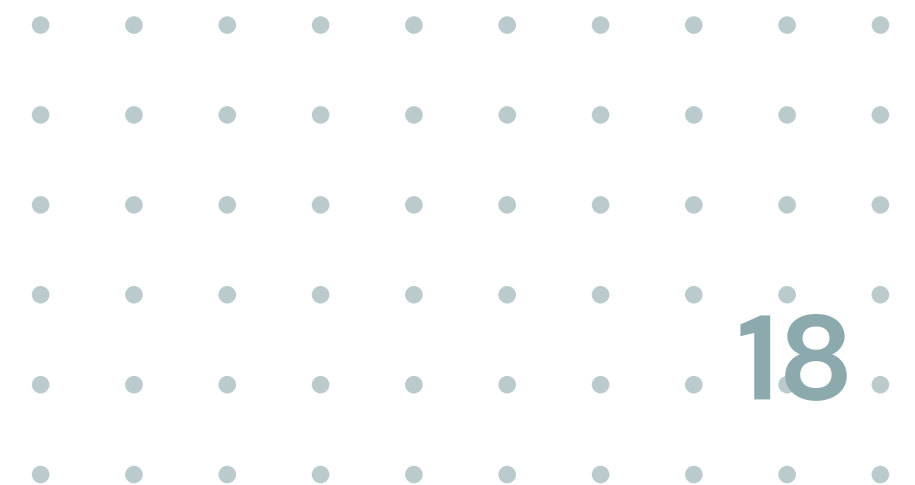


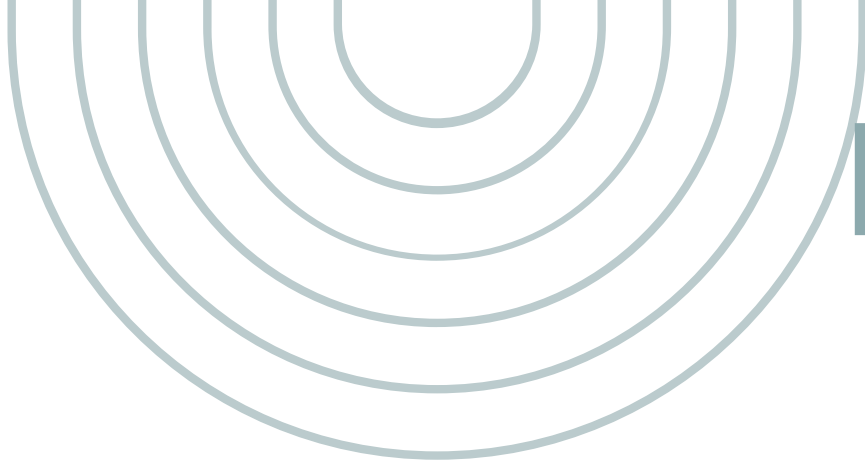
GRADING ASSESSMENT

As a TA more often grading is one of the most important responsibilities.

Transparency and alignment with course outcomes are essential when grading assessments.

This allows students to have a clear understanding of their progress and areas for improvement. It also promotes a sense of fairness and helps them develop essential skills and knowledge required to succeed in their academic journey.



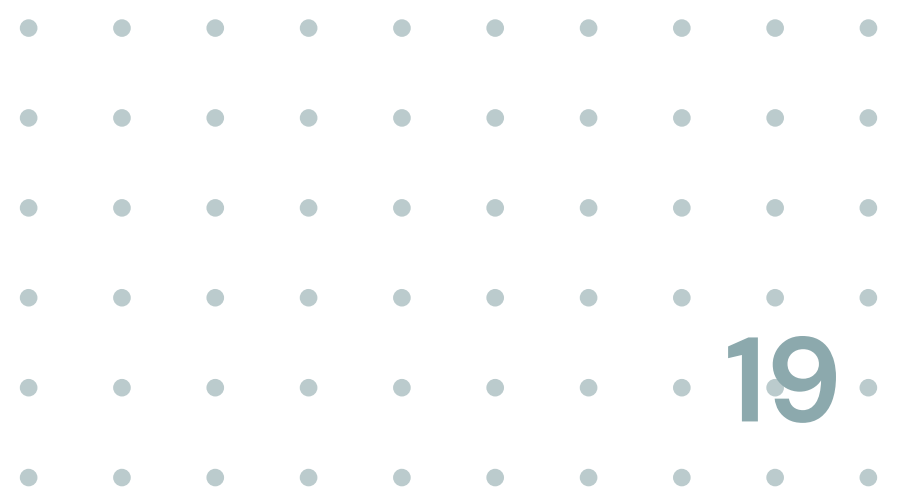


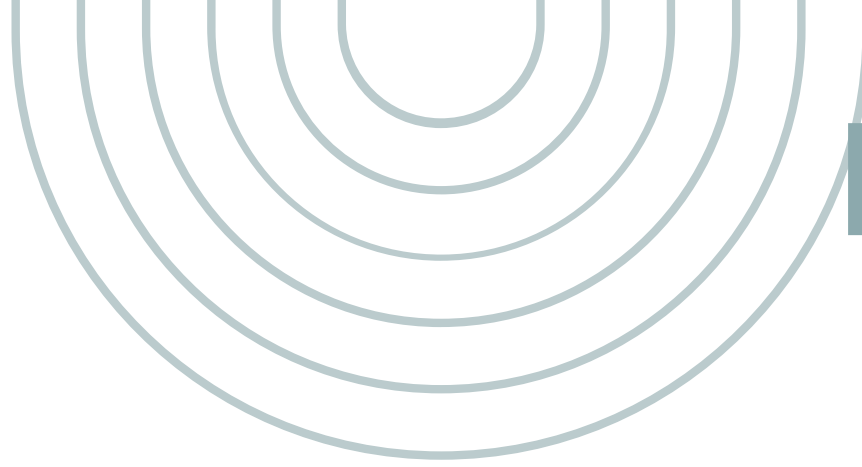
DEVELOPING GRADING STRATEGIES

Grading strategies refer to the methods and approaches used to assess and evaluate student performance, ensuring fairness, consistency, and meaningful feedback. Some common grading strategies include:

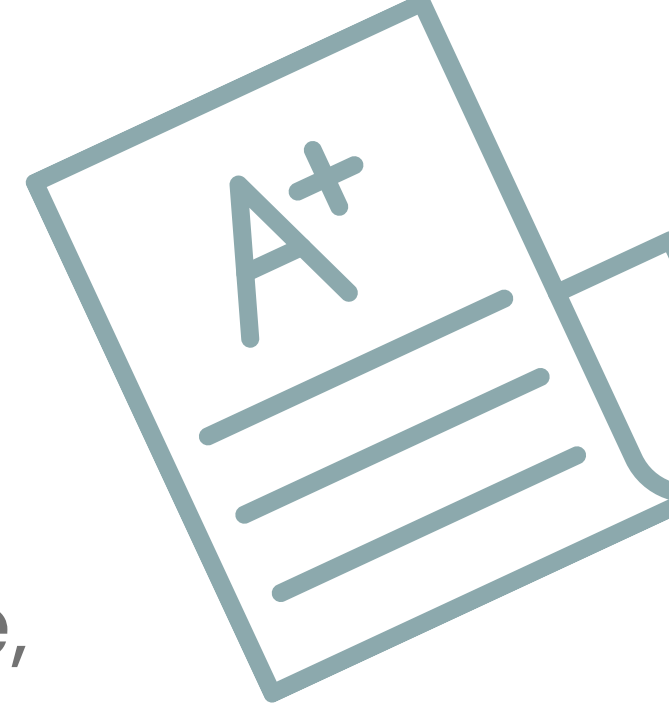
1. Rubrics: Using a predetermined set of criteria to assess different aspects of student work, such as content, organization, and presentation.

2. Criterion-Referenced Assessment: Evaluating student performance against predetermined standards or learning objectives rather than comparing them to their peers.





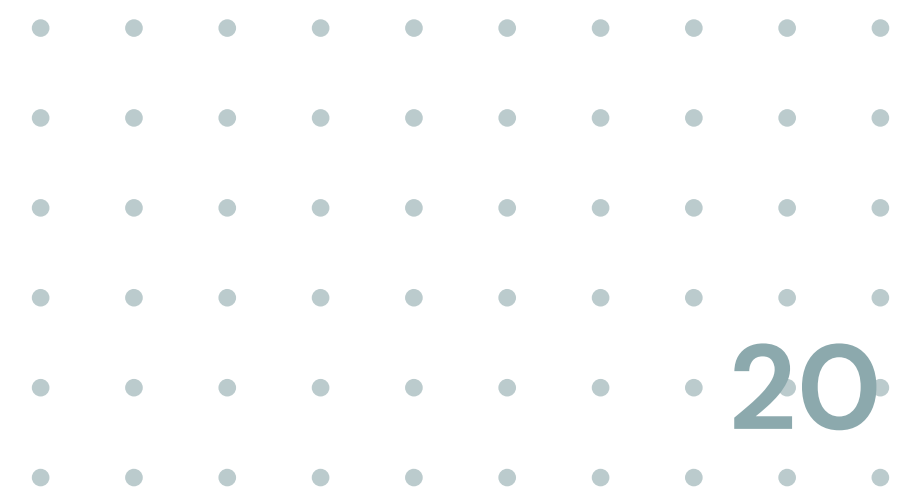
DEVELOPING GRADING STRATEGIES



3. Holistic Scoring: Assessing overall performance as a whole, considering the overall quality of work rather than specific criteria.

4. Formative Assessment: Gathering ongoing feedback during the learning process to inform instructional decisions and provide students with opportunities to improve.

5. Summative Assessment: Evaluating student performance at the end of a unit, course, or project to determine the overall achievement or proficiency level.





DEVELOPING GRADING STRATEGIES



6. Peer Review: Involving students in the evaluation process by having them provide feedback and assess their peers' work according to specific criteria.

7. Self-Assessment: Encouraging students to reflect on their own learning, evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, and set goals for improvement.

8. Standards-Based Grading: Assessing student performance based on a set of predetermined learning standards or competencies, providing a clear picture of their proficiency in each area.





DEVELOPING GRADING STRATEGIES



9. Providing Constructive Feedback: Offering specific and actionable feedback to students, highlighting areas of improvement, and providing guidance for future growth.

A.

RUBRICS



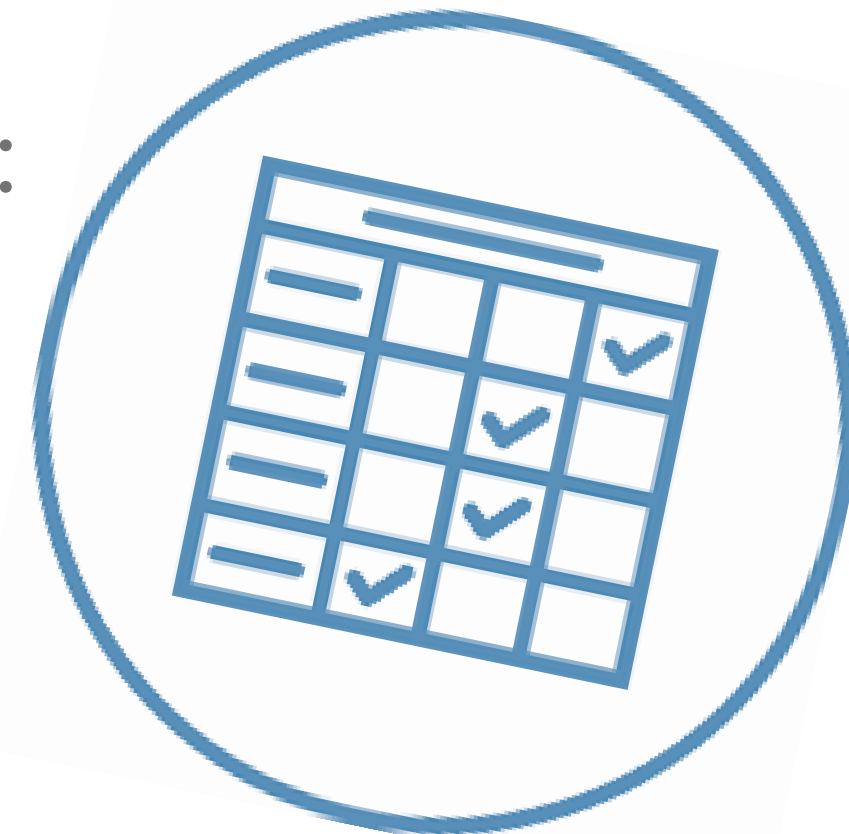
WHAT IS A RUBRIC?

A rubric is a commonly used assessment tool that takes the form of a matrix, providing descriptions of different levels of achievement in a particular area of performance, understanding, or behavior.

TYPES OF RUBRICS

Rubrics can be broadly categorized into two main types:

- Analytic Rubric
- Holistic Rubric



ANALYTIC RUBRIC

An analytic rubric is designed to assess multiple characteristics or dimensions of student performance by assigning separate scores for each characteristic at each performance level.

Pros: provides detailed feedback on student performance and promotes consistent scoring across students and graders.

Cons: using an analytic rubric can be more time-consuming compared to applying a holistic rubric.

Use: best suited for situations where you want to identify strengths and weaknesses in student work and provide detailed feedback on their performance.

HOLISTIC RUBRIC

A holistic rubric yields a single score that reflects an overall impression of a student's performance on a task, without assessing specific criteria individually.

Pros: provides quick scoring, giving an overview of student achievement, and efficiency in large group scoring.

Cons: holistic rubrics do not provide detailed information about specific aspects of performance and may pose challenges for scorers in deciding on a single overall score.

Use: best utilized when a quick snapshot of achievement is desired and when a single dimension is sufficient to define quality.

1

Clarity of
Expectations

2

Consistency in
Grading

**WHY USE
A RUBRIC**

Meaningful
Feedback

Student Engagement
and Self-Assessment

3

4



1

Specific Criteria

2

Levels of Performance



5 PARTS OF A RUBRIC

Grading Scale

3

Descriptions or
Expectations

4

Overall Score

5

28



01.

STEP 1

Determine the specific criteria you want to assess in the assignment.

02.

STEP 2

Define the characteristics (rows) that will be rated. These characteristics represent the essential skills, knowledge, and behaviors you will be evaluating. Focus on the most significant aspects relevant to the assessment.

**STEPS TO
DEVELOPING A
RUBRIC**





03.

STEP 3

Establish the levels of proficiency (columns). Determine the different levels or degrees of proficiency that will be used to assess each characteristic. Choose clear and appropriate labels to describe the levels of mastery or achievement.

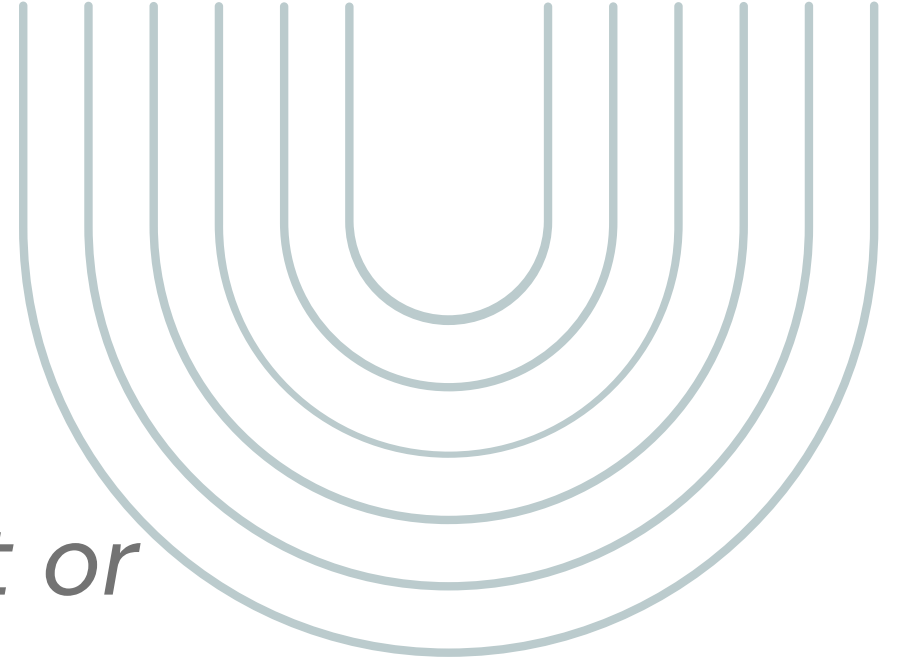
04.

STEP 4

Detail the description for each level of proficiency within each characteristic (cells).

**STEPS TO
DEVELOPING A
RUBRIC**





05.

STEP 5

Test the rubric.

Apply the rubric to an actual assignment or task to assess its effectiveness in evaluating student work. Use the rubric to evaluate the performance of students and gather data on its practicality and reliability.

06.

STEP 6

Review and revise based on other the TA and the professor's feedback.

**STEPS TO
DEVELOPING A
RUBRIC**



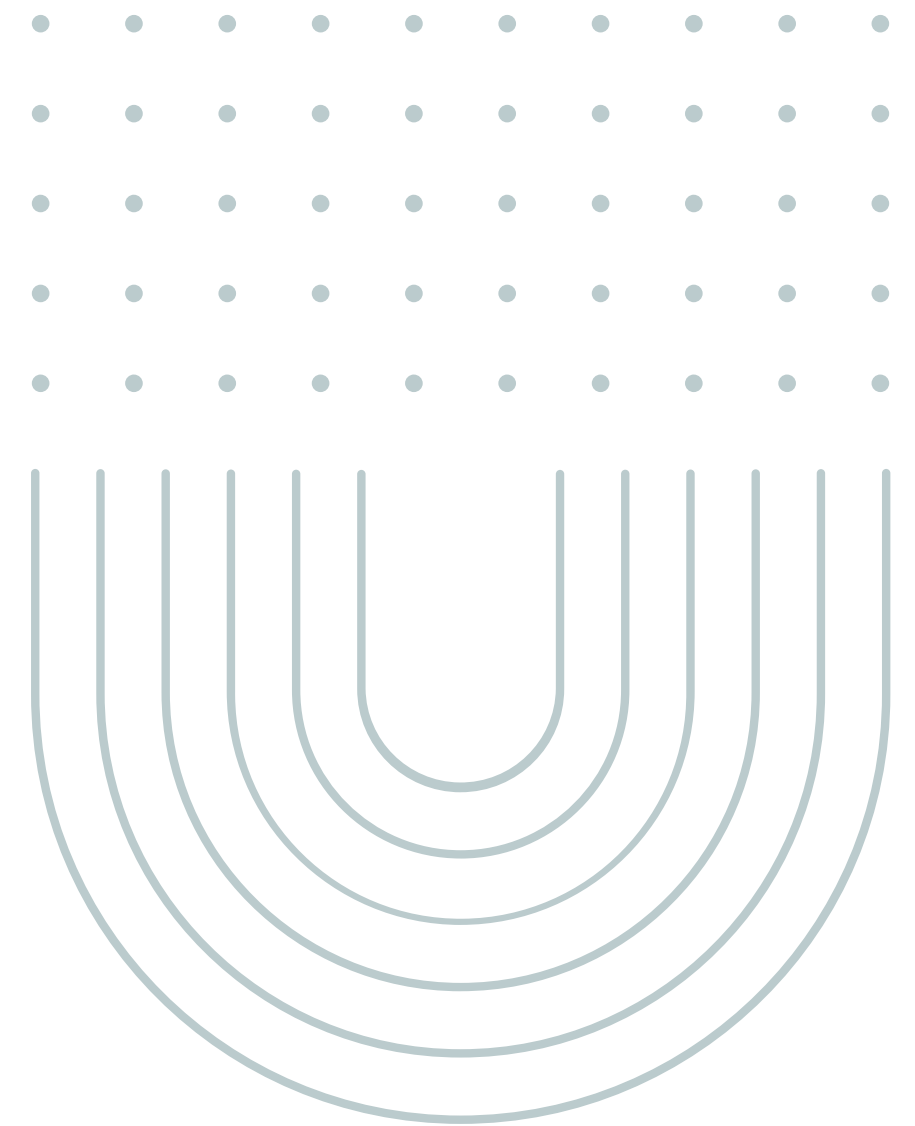
B.

USING BLACKBOARD FOR RUBRICS






when creating a new assignment use the grading section to add a custom rubric



GRADING

* Points Possible

Associated Rubrics

Add Rubric 

Name	Type	Date Last Edited	Show Rubric to Students
------	------	------------------	-------------------------

[Submission Details](#)

[Grading Options](#)

[Display of Grades](#)



Create Rubric

Rubrics are made up of rows and columns. The rows correspond to the various criteria of an assignment. The columns correspond to the level of achievement expressed for each criterion. A description and point value for each cell in the rubric define the evaluation and score of an assignment. You can create as many rubrics as needed. [More Help](#)

* Indicates a required field.

RUBRIC INFORMATION

* Name

Description

For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).

ABC

P

RUBRIC DETAIL

The Rubric Grid lists **Criteria** (rows) for measuring **Levels of Achievement** (columns)

Add Row Add Column Rubric Type: Percent Show Criteria Weight

Levels of Achievement

Criteria	Novice	Competent	Proficient
Formatting Weight: 33.00 %	Percent 0.00 <input type="text"/> abc	Percent 50.00 <input type="text"/> abc	Percent 100.00 <input type="text"/> abc
Organization Weight: 34.00 %	Percent 0.00 <input type="text"/> abc	Percent 50.00 <input type="text"/> abc	Percent 100.00 <input type="text"/> abc
Grammar Weight: 33.00 %	Percent 0.00 <input type="text"/> abc	Percent 50.00 <input type="text"/> abc	Percent 100.00 <input type="text"/> abc

Total Weight: 100.00%

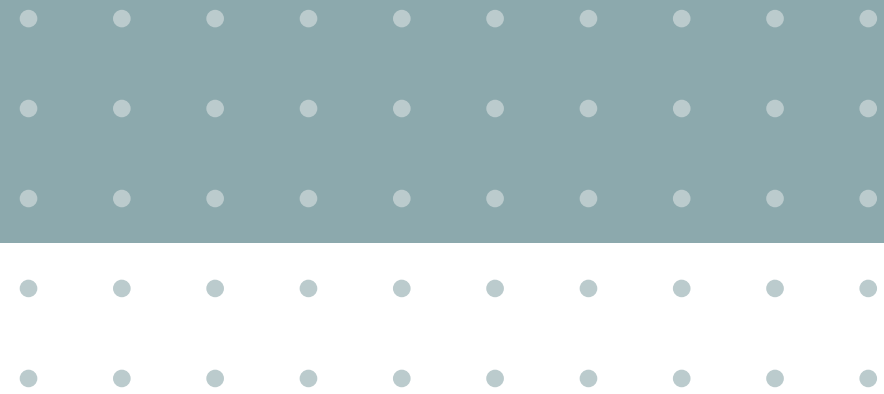
For more details visit the Blackboard section under Syracuse IT answers:

<https://answers.syr.edu/display/blackboard01/Using+Rubrics+in+Blackboard>

C.

DISCUSSION

How would you interpret this rubric if you were a student?



Category	1 – poor	2 – below average	3 – average	4 – above average	5 - excellent
Effort	Student's work shows little preparation, creativity or effort. Lots of errors and sloppy handwriting.	Student put for minimal effort. Has a few errors and could have added more to the presentation.	Student gave effort to the project. Met all the expectations. Didn't go above and beyond.	Student spent a lot of time working to make sure the presentation was well done. Got help and asked for feedback.	Student went above and beyond the assignment. Did extra research and work.
Understanding of concepts	Didn't incorporate concepts into project. Misunderstood the ideas and principles.	Understood a few of the concepts, but still left out pieces and parts of the assignment.	Student understood concepts and completed all the tasks in the assignment.	Student understood the concepts and did more than what was expected of him/her.	Student mastered the concepts and even added more to the principles.
Correct answers to problems	Most or all of the answers to each problem were incorrect.	Half of the problems were incorrect.	Student got most of the problems correct with only a few errors.	Student got every problem correct.	Student got every problem correct, including the bonus work.
Presentation	Presentation was rushed, sloppy, and too short. Lacked effort and/or visual tools.	Presentation was short and lacking creativity. Some visuals were used.	Presentation was correct length. Student used visuals.	Presentation was well done, with visuals, interaction with the class, and comprehensive.	Presentation was creative, excellently done, using visuals and props.

D.

GRADING AND DISABILITY



Here are some considerations related to grading and disabilities:

- ***Accessibility***
- ***Individualized Accommodations***
- ***Flexibility***
- ***Clear Communication***
- ***Individualized Support***
- ***Confidentiality and Respect***
- ***Training and Professional Development***



CDR: Centre for Disability Resources



- Students may require specific accommodations during exams/quizzes, such as extended time or flexibility with class attendance.
- While some students may provide a letter with their accommodations, not all students will proactively seek them out.
- It is important to remind students to pursue formal accommodations if needed.
- Whenever possible, make efforts to accommodate students' needs.


For further information on disability resources, please refer to the universal design session.




E.

TIPS



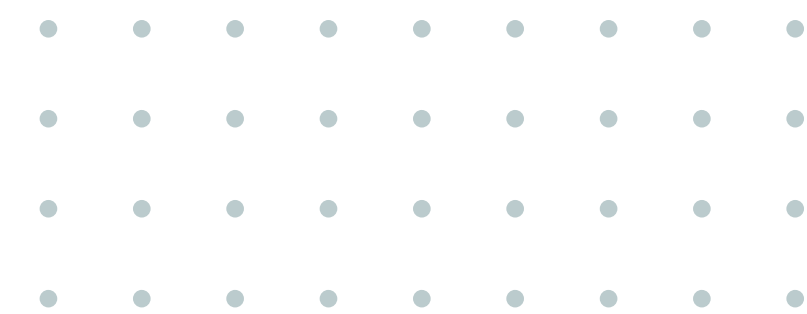
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- **Be lenient with minor mistakes made by students,** especially if they demonstrate a good understanding of the problem and have correct answers with only small errors.
 - **Avoid giving points purely based on the weight of the response;** if a student's answer mostly consists of incorrect or irrelevant information, do not award points solely based on the length or quantity of their response.
 - **Avoid using generic or standardized comments when providing feedback on student assignments.** Instead, strive to offer personalized and specific feedback that addresses the individual strengths and areas for improvement in each student's work.

- 
- **Do not overly concern yourself with minor inconsistencies in your grading scheme.** Striving for a perfect grading scheme that yields the same grade for the same homework twice can be time-consuming and of limited practical value.
 - **Do not hesitate to deduct points for lack of clarity** if it has been established that students should learn to express themselves clearly.
 - **Do not be afraid to reevaluate and make changes to grades if errors or oversights occur.** However, be cautious when considering requests for extra credit or grade adjustments from students. Implement a system where complaints about grading are referred to the professor or require written complaints for further review.

04.

GRADING WITH OTHER TAS AND PROFESSORS





Teaching assistants possess diverse teaching skill sets and life experiences, ranging from seasoned and effective educators to those preparing for their first teaching experience.

As grading responsibilities often fall on teaching assistants, particularly in large classes, it becomes evident that they hold varying perspectives on what constitutes effective grading and how to efficiently accomplish it within a reasonable timeframe.

To ensure a cohesive approach, it is **important for professors and TAs to establish a shared understanding and alignment in their roles and responsibilities**. Open communication, clear expectations, and regular coordination among the teaching team are essential to maintain consistency and efficiency in their collective efforts.



A.

WORKING WITH PROFESSORS





Clear Communication



Establish Consistency



Regular Meetings



Authority



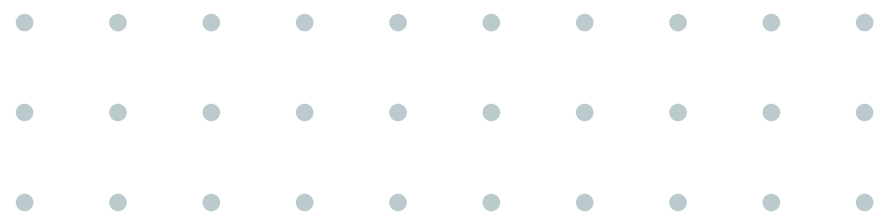
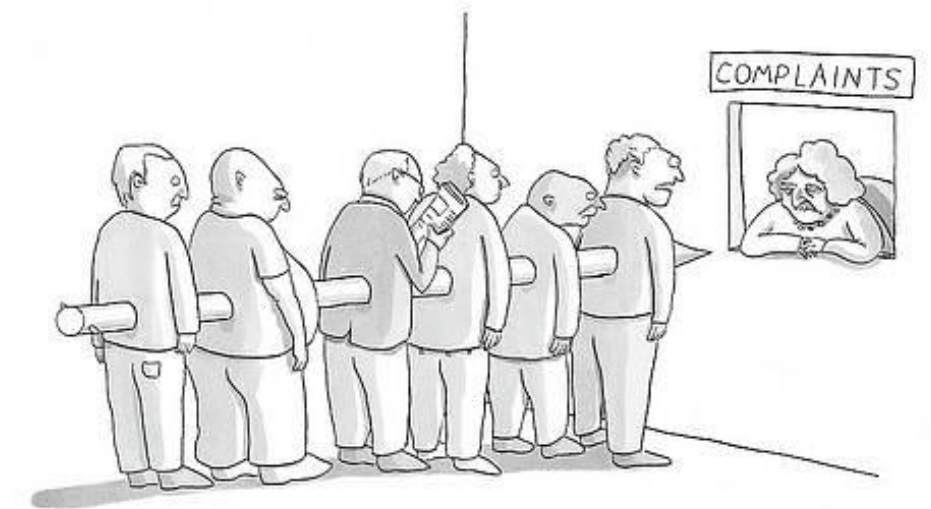
B.

WORKING WITH MULTIPLE TAS

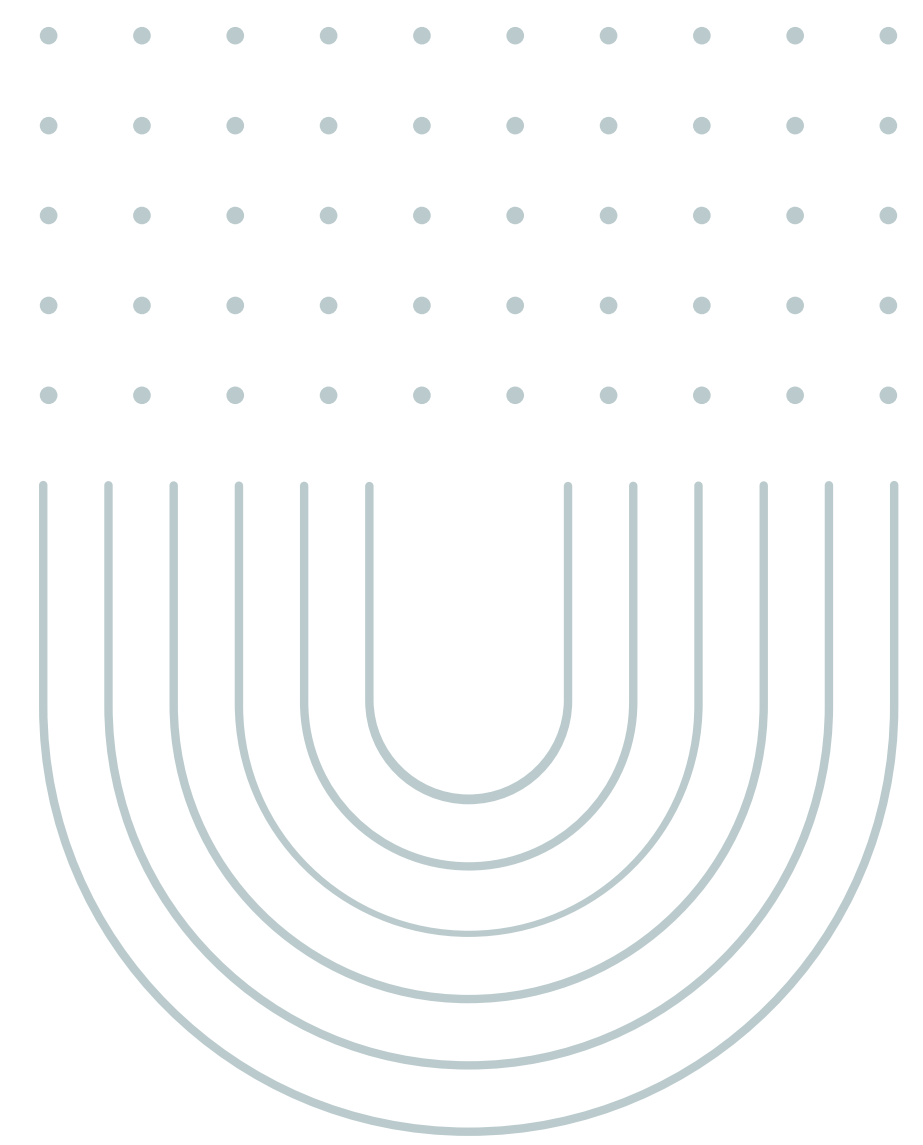


A common complain: **"My TA is an unfair grader! Can I switch sections?"** can be disheartening for students who feel they are being treated unfairly and receiving lower grades compared to their peers, despite submitting similar quality work.

To address this issue and foster fairness, an efficient grading system and communication between TAs must be established.



"I think I speak for all of us."

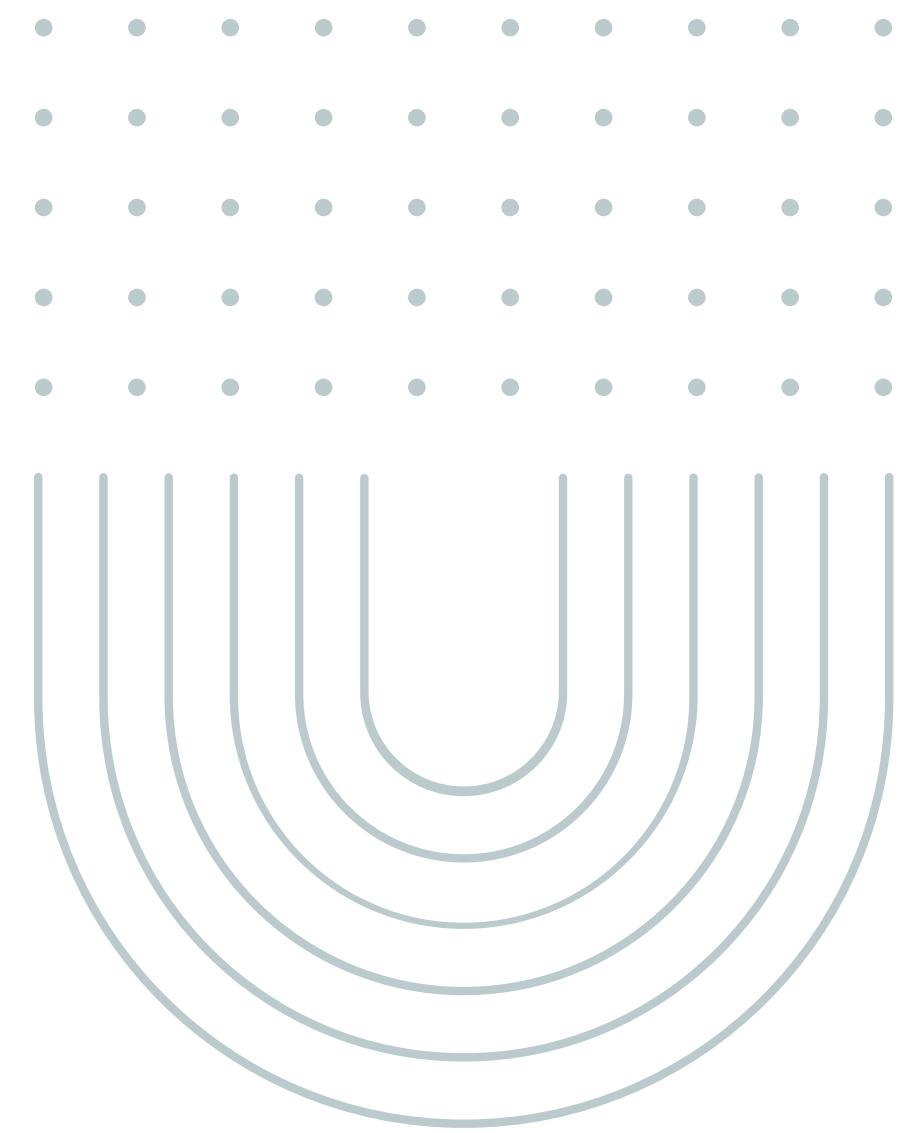


- **Regular Grading Meetings**

Setup regular weekly grading meetings with your other TAs (this might even involve the Professor); identify standard submissions in each grade range as points of reference; discuss strategies of grading and previous student feedback if any.

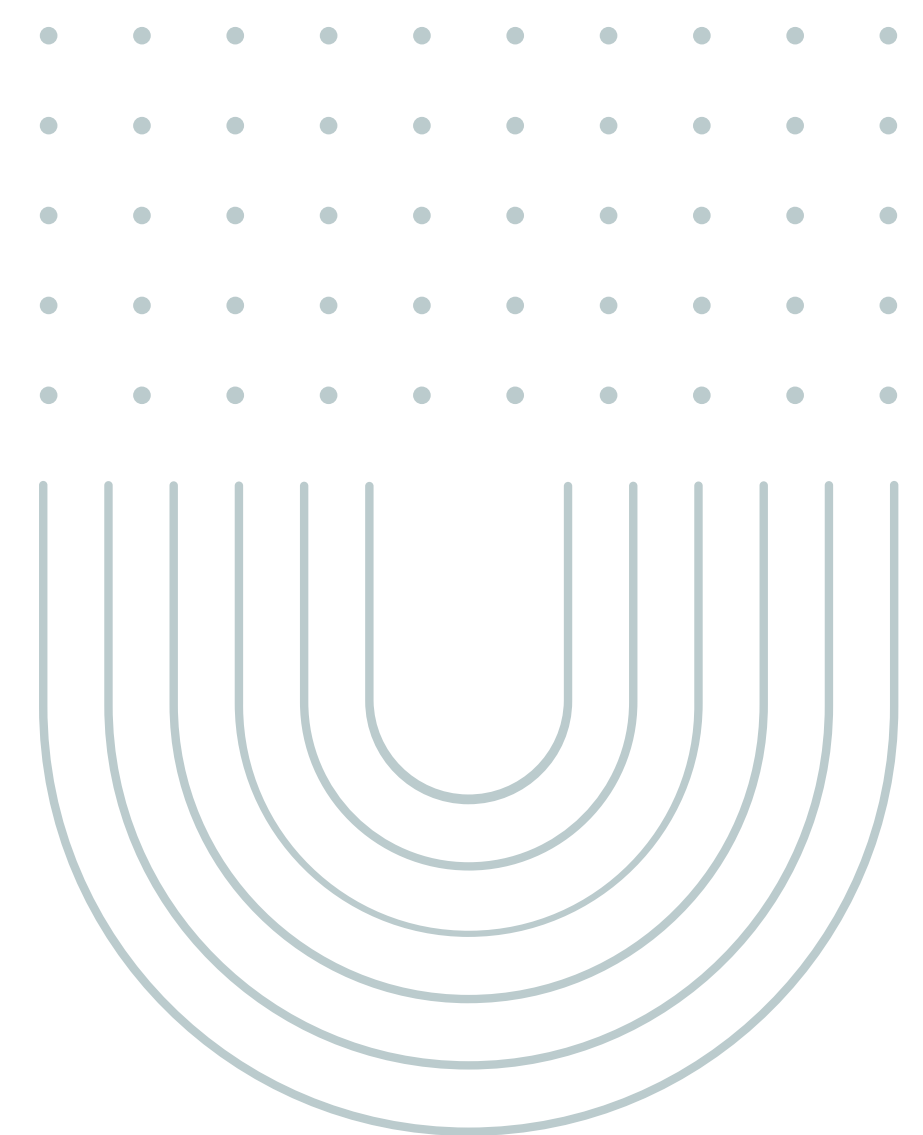
- **Use Grading Rubrics**

As discussed under the rubrics section identifying and using effective rubrics solves basic inconsistencies in grading when multiple graders are involved. Utilizing a well-designed grading rubric can address two important aspects in large classes: reducing grading time and establishing a shared standard among TAs.



- **Divide the Grading Sections**

To enhance consistency in grading, a practical approach is to assign different grading sections to different TAs. While this approach may be more challenging to implement for essays, it is commonly used for grading exams and assignments where there are multiple numericals/questions. The specific implementation will depend on the structure of your exam/assignment.



- **Grade Together**

Grading together, especially for exams, can be very beneficial as it allows for the discussion and resolution of any issues that may arise in exam answers. Moreover, for grading papers and written assignments, grading together can help identify common issues and if disagreement arises among the TAs, it can be taken up with the professor for a final verdict. This joint effort allows TAs to learn from one another's perspectives, reduces time and improves consistency.

C.

HANDLING GRADING COMPLAINTS

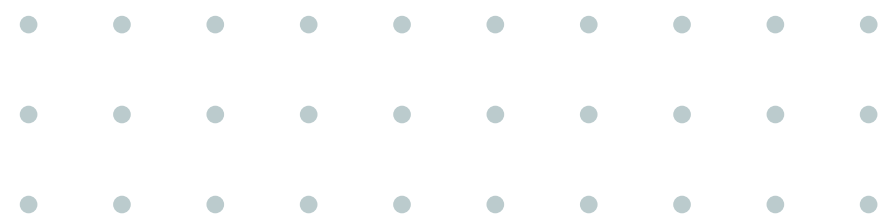




01. ESTABLISH A FORMAL PROCEDURE

02. ASK FOR WRITTEN COMPLAINT SUBMISSIONS

03. SETUP A 24 HOUR RULE



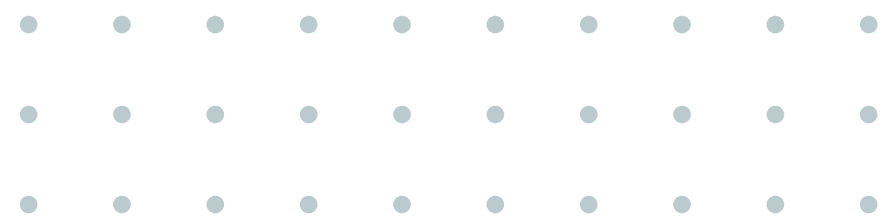
D.

KEEPING TRACK OF GRADING HOURS





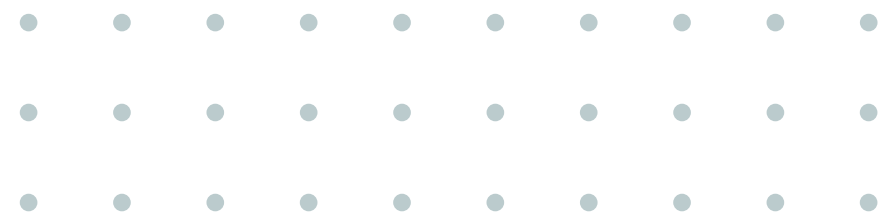
When grading with several graders, it's important to think about everyone's time, including your own. Each TA in a course might have different hours for grading. For instance, one TA may have 20 hours, and another may have only 10 hours. To be fair, divide the workload based on the assigned time, so everyone has a balanced amount of grading to do.





Some suggested tips:

- **Allocate the number of questions based on the time available to each TA.** Example: a TA allocated with **20 hours**, could **grade 2/3 of the questions**, while the **10-hour TA** could **grade 1/3 of the questions**.
- An alternative approach: assign the **workload on a weekly basis**. Example: the **20-hour TA** does **all the grading for 2 consecutive weeks**, while the **10-hour TA** does **all the grading** for the following **1 week**.



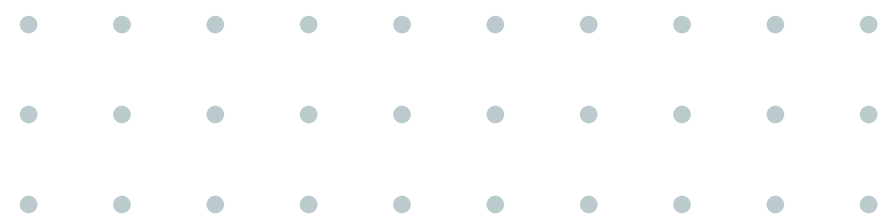
A few more tips to manage your own time while grading:



01. *Setup specific time blocks for grading.*

02. *Break it down into manageable chunks.*

03. *Utilize rubrics effectively and employ other helpful technology.*



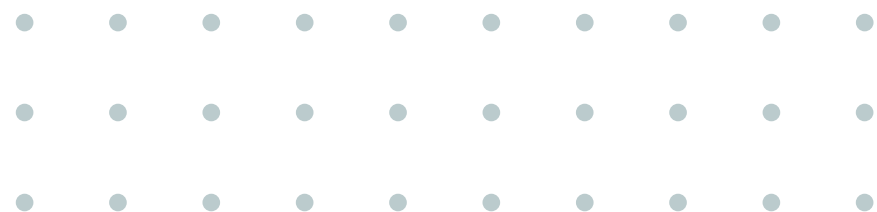
05.

ADDITIONAL FORMS OF ASSESSMENT



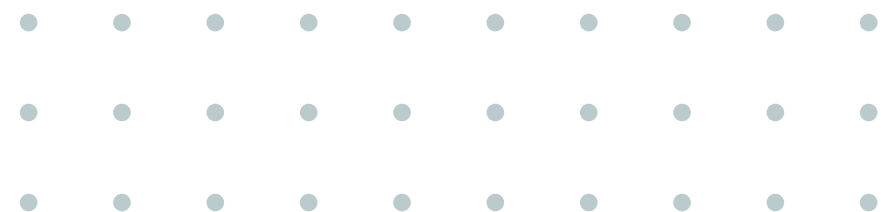
CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

- Student engagement
- Classroom environment
- Attitude
- Gaps in Knowledge
- Mental health



MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

- Students appreciate honesty and tolerance for mental health issues
- Be mindful and empathetic in your interactions
 - Offer to help them after class or in office hours
- TA's may be seen as an outlet for discussing mental health
- **Remember, most TA's are not trained therapists and cannot diagnose or directly assist with mental health issues**
 - We should instead gently direct students to the appropriate resources (counseling center)



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Counseling Center – Barnes Center at the Arch

24-hour support

Phone: 315.443.8000

<https://experience.syracuse.edu/bewell/mental-health/counseling/>

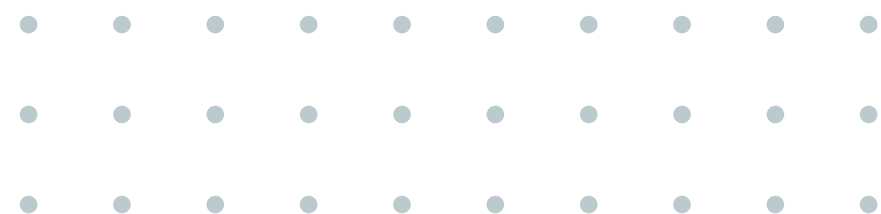
Student Outreach and Support

Help identifying and remove academic and non-academic barriers to help students meet their goals.

111 Waverly Ave., Suite 220, Syracuse, NY 13244

Phone: 315-443-4357

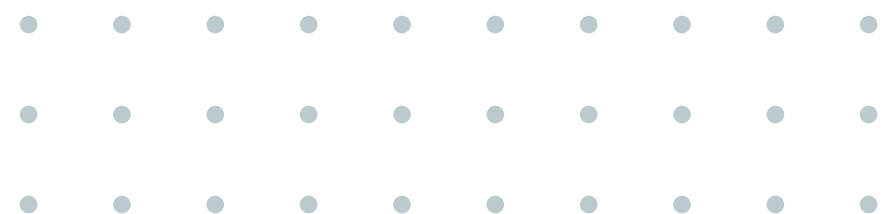
<https://experience.syracuse.edu/student-outreach>



TITLE IX

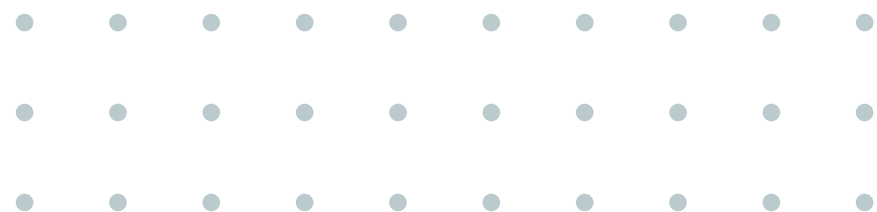
- Every TA is a mandatory reporter!
- This means that we must report harassment and sexual misconduct to the University's Title IX Officer:
Sheila Johnson-Willis
005 Steele Hall, Syracuse University
Email: sjohnson@syr.edu
Phone: 315-443-1520
- Always keep an account of events and maintain confidentiality

<https://inclusion.syr.edu/>



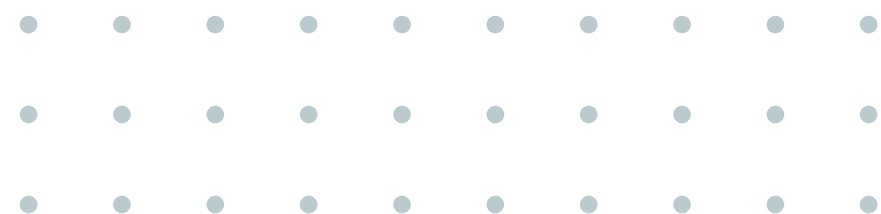
SELF-ASSESSMENT

- Mid- and end-of-semester surveys
 - End-of-semester does not benefit current students
 - Not every department has TA-specific surveys
 - Ask the instructor to add TA questions on survey
 - Evaluations may be influenced by factors unrelated to instructor quality, such as measurement bias and equity bias
- Comment cards
 - You control the questions and receive quick feedback
- Anonymous online surveys/polling
 - May be easier to analyze data



SELF-ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

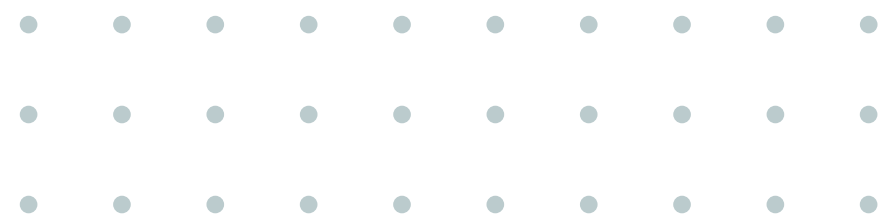
- Faculty evaluation
 - Ask the department if a faculty member not affiliated with the course can evaluate your classroom
- Peer evaluation by another TA
- Evaluation by the lead-instructor of the course
- Keep a checklist of things to complete or improve
- Be honest with yourself and reflect on your own teaching
- Save your evaluations!! They can be used for applications



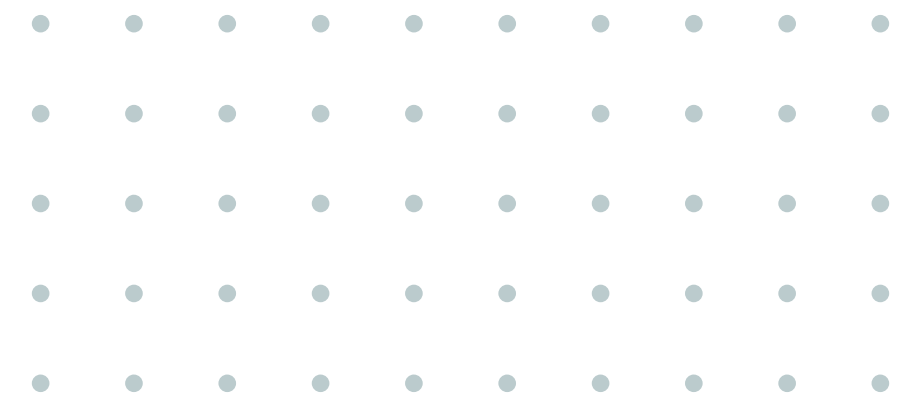
GRADUATE SCHOOL – FUTURE PROFESSORIATE PROGRAM

- Structured professional development experience for aspiring faculty
- Receive a Certificate in University Teaching
- Independent mentored teaching experiences
- Small stipends available

<https://graduateschool.syr.edu/current-students/future-professariate-program/>

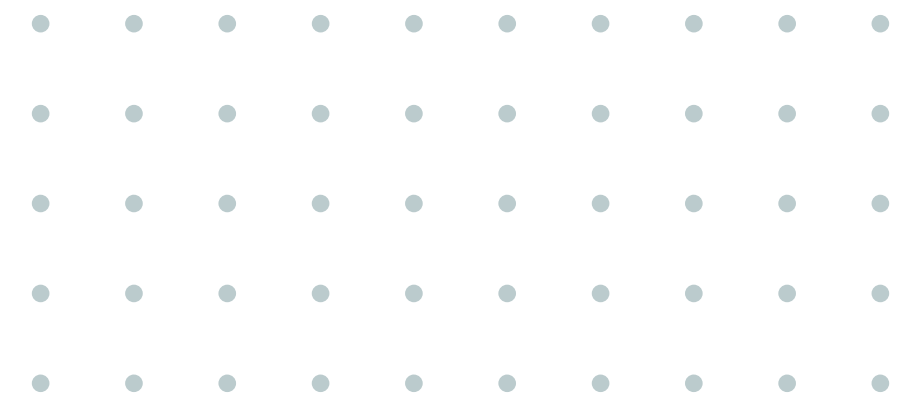


EVALUATING PREPARATION



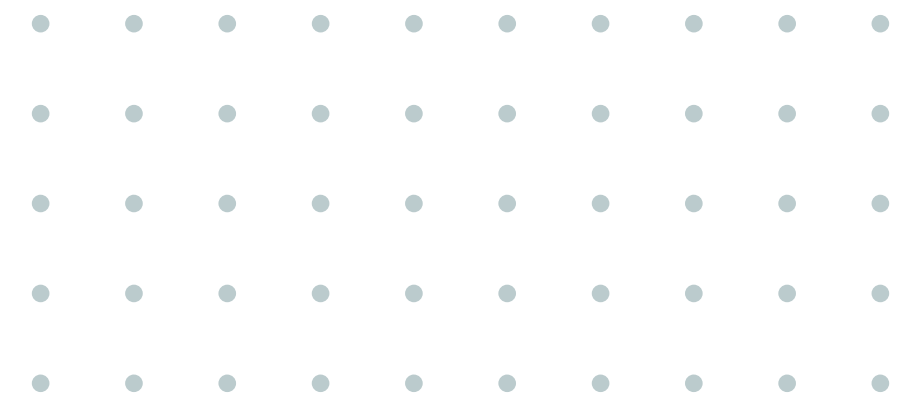
- Time spent preparing for class: _____
 - Was this adequate: y/n
 - If no, what needed more time: _____
- Were slides used to make a consistent narrative: y/n
- Did I include useful examples/questions: y/n
- Am I prepared to answer common questions: y/n
- Do I feel prepared and comfortable in my ability to present: y/n

EVALUATING CLASSROOM



- Was time used effectively: y/n
 - If no, what was the issue: _____
- Were questions well answered: y/n
 - If no, what was the issue: _____
- Did I speak loudly and clearly: y/n
- Did I effectively use the board/slides: y/n
 - If no, what was the issue: _____
- Were the students engaged: y/n
 - If no, what was the issue: _____
- Did I receive feedback: y/n
 - What feedback was obtained: _____

EVALUATING GRADING



- Was the assignment fair: y/n
- Did I leave adequate feedback for the students: y/n
- Were the correct number of point assigned to concepts: y/n
 - What adjustments should be made for next time: _____
- Did I give the correct examples to practice questions: y/n
- Were grades returned to students promptly: y/n
- How was the performance of the class as a whole: _____
- What could be changed to make the assignment:
 - More fair: _____
 - More representative of core concepts: _____

06.

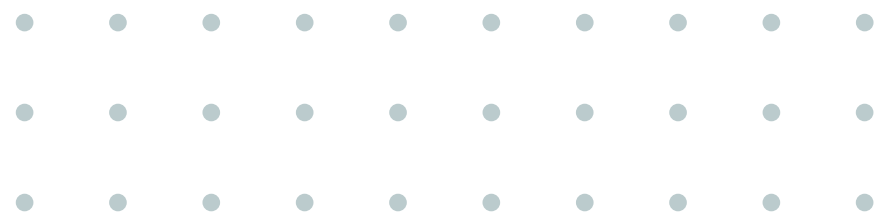
ACTIVITY



CREATE A RUBRIC

Take a few minutes to develop a rubric for the assessment of a TA's performance.

- In groups, discuss some responsibilities you expect to have as a TA.
- Create a rating scale to evaluate a few of these responsibilities.
- Give a brief description of the performance that would fit into each category of the rating scale.





THANK YOU

Good luck and enjoy your
role as a new TA!

Feel free to reach out with
questions in the future.

Cole Wilhelm: cwilhelm@syr.edu
Gargi De: gde100@syr.edu

