

## **Grading guidelines**

The module we apply is the one combining a group and an individual mark, but we put much higher value on the individual part.

Vast majority of work occurs within discussion forum and that is why individual contributions during discussions are the most important for student's marks.

Marking process requires concentration, time and diligence, where we apply multiple dimensions in measuring student's grades.

In the process of awarding marks we assess both the product and the process:

- Firstly, a member should participate throughout the project, not only on the last day or so.
- Team attitude and helpfulness, being a team member and not just an isolated student, is greatly valued too. Remember that we grade Project Management knowledge, but also a social and emotional side of project environment and individual involvement;
- Answers on discussion board should be delivered in accordance with a schedule released by a PM at the beginning of a project.
- Discussing all questions is prerequisite, otherwise participation is only partial.
- Comments on organisation, agreement with someone without further input, congratulations to others, helping with report layout and spelling and similar,

although valuable to a team spirit, is not something that could be marked.

- “Agree” comments or posts for the sake of postings are not regarded well and students should be warned about it, etc.

***Only valuable, knowledgeable, meaningful and timely input can be marked.***

During the marking process we read every single post made by each of our students so that we gradually apply points/checkmarks/percentages.

After reading complete discussion and awarding marks for it we then read a group report submitted at the end of discussion.

A report is where group marks are generated but this grade can only slightly influence individual marks in both directions.

At the end of a grading process every group will receive a feedback at the place where they submitted their report.

All groups should get their feedback no later than 14 days after completion of a project. Individual marks are then entered in the grade-book.

Please note that project managers for each project are required to include peer marking at the back of their report. However, please note that peer marks do not influence our marks. We only use this as an exercise to teach students objectivity and group managing skills. If PM's marks are all the same, or too high and not objective then they will get some deduction in grades.

Some of the criteria students should focus on during discussion is:

- identification of the issues at stake in the debate
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- clear expression of ideas
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- coherent structure of discussion and/or report
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- ability to take a detached position with respect to the case/theme/problem, and to state why they agree or disagree with particular points of view
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- ability to raise questions or issues that warrant further debate or thought, etc.

It would also be helpful to review “Issue Analyses” guidance attached on Moodle resources.

Even though it would be hard to place an exact weighting on marking aspects, we could try to roughly show distribution of our grading:

Project plan and final report (+10%) PMs only	On time delivery - following schedule (15-20%)	Discussion (55-60%)	Bonus points - research / leadership / Insightful new views/ communication (10-15%)
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From the distribution above it is obvious that due to individual nature of grades the most important part is concerning discussion.

Every time a student makes an observation that clearly supports the topic and that is following issue analyses academically, we give it a full checkmark, which could be worth 5-10%, depending on a number of questions asked and duration of a project.

If the idea has potential, but is not fully supported, we give it a 1/2 mark.

This means students do not get any marks for irrelevant ideas, nor do they get marks for ideas that are discussed not following the schedule.

In this way we can reinforce the importance of project management and on time delivery.

Furthermore, students would get a higher grade if they resist the temptation to pad their posts by writing unnecessarily long sentences or by repeating ideas, because they can only get one point for the same idea, even if it is expressed in different words.

In order to get full marks, students must also express their ideas clearly. We cannot give them a point (range of percentages) for an observation if we cannot understand it or if it is irrelevant.

The checkmark total allows us to assign a grade based on the content and structure of student's posts, and then we adjust the grade based on the extent to which students have followed the guidelines, timeframe and other project management techniques. Their interaction in discussion, also plays a part in the adjustment.

Overall, this marking scheme should greatly encourage students to realise that it is the quality of their work that will raise their grade.

When we mark discussion, we go through the set once, quickly assigning checkmarks and giving each student a rough total. We then use this number to sort the individual marks and develop a scale for the project.

As we read through the discussion a second time, we are able to fine-tune the checkmarks, noticing ideas that we missed the first time or giving extra credit to insightful ideas that only a few students have expressed.

When marking projects where many groups have all written about the same topic, we like to highlight the importance of their ability to think for themselves by making the most successful discussion opened to all other groups. This offers students who delivered an average discussion, concrete proof that other students are functioning at a higher level than they are. This is called benchmarking and it is a great tool for self-assessment. More importantly, it encourages students to want to express ideas that are good enough to be shared and allows the strong thinkers in the class to feel proud of their work.

We hope we have cleared some unknowns about the marking process and that you are to some degree familiar with the requirements. We want to make the whole process open, so there is no room for uncertainty.

We remain at your disposal for any further information or help.