

Peer Assessment – Professor Overview

The ability to work in a team is an important quality to possess. Like most skills, this one can be improved and developed through practice, experience, and reflection. Through the web-based Peer Assessment system, your students will have the opportunity to both work in a team and learn about their teamwork skills.

For the purpose of the assessment, a student's effectiveness is defined as whether or not they have met the expectations of their team-mates. To standardize these expectations, this evaluation provides broad dimensions to guide the assessment process.

These four dimensions are:

1. COOPERATION

- Actively participating in meetings
- Communicating within the group
- Cooperating within the group
- Assisting team-mates when needed
- Volunteering for tasks

2. CONCEPTUAL CONTRIBUTION

- Researching and gathering information
- Quality of individual contribution
- Suggesting ideas
- Tying ideas together
- Identifying difficulties
- Identifying effective approaches

3. PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION

- Writing of the report(s)
- Reviewing others' report(s) or section(s)
- Providing constructive feedback on the report(s) or the presentation
- Contributing to the organization of the work
- Contributing to the preparation of presentation(s) (if appropriate)

4. WORK ETHIC

- Displaying a positive attitude
- Respecting team-mates
- Respecting commitments
- Respecting deadlines
- Respecting team-mates' ideas

What will the student ratings look like?

Your students' performance, and that of their team-mates, will be evaluated using a web-based system.

Using this system, they will be required to:

- Rate their team-mates numerically
- Write constructive comments about their team-mates

1) Rate their team-mates numerically

Your students will be asked to assess their peers' performance along the four dimensions listed above (i.e., cooperation, conceptual contribution, practical contribution, and work ethic). For each dimension, they will rate their peers on a scale of 1-7, with a 7 representing their belief that their peer exuded the qualities listed.

2) Write constructive comments about their team-mates

They will also be asked to provide narrative comments about each of their team-mates. Remind your students to keep the following in mind when writing comments:

- a) Focus on behaviour(s). Write about what their team-mate did. Be specific; this helps the person receiving feedback understand what s/he did.
- b) Explain the result of the behaviour(s). Describe, in detail, the outcome(s) of action(s) taken by their team-mate(s). This will help the person understand the implications of their action(s).
- c) Be respectful and constructive. Their comments should help their team-mates understand how they are perceived by others and should not be used to settle scores. Disrespectful comments will not be tolerated, and they should be removed from their team-mate's assessment by you – their professor.

For the best results, here are examples of Poor and Good Comments:

Poor comment	Good comment
Robert does not work hard!	For our second meeting, we all agreed that Robert was supposed to provide us with a report of market trends in the automobile industry. He forgot to do it, and we had to postpone the meeting. He failed to do what he was supposed to do again for the presentation. We felt that we could not count on him.
Lisa is a good team-mate.	Whenever there was a disagreement, Lisa took the time to address the issue. The day before the report was due, we fought about how to write the bibliography. Lisa stepped in, calmed everybody down, and helped us decide what to do. She really helped us 'gel' as a team.

As the professor, what will my responsibilities be for the Peer Assessment?

1) Setting expectations - At the beginning of the semester, explain the system and distribute the student Peer Assessment handouts. You should implement a policy for:

- **How the peer assessments will be transformed into a class mark.** These can be transformed into a percentage grade (i.e., 5% of the course), or they can be used to weight the group project (i.e., represent a factor that is multiplied by the student's grade in the group project).
- **Non-participation in the peer assessments.** Participation can be mandatory (i.e., penalty if a student does not participate), or not. You will know who participated or not.
- **Appropriateness of written comments.** Make sure that students know what the boundaries are when writing comments. You should have an idea of what will happen if a student crosses the line with his/her comments.

2) Once the groups have been created and you are ready to set up the evaluation for your class in the system, follow the instructions in the document "*Peer Assessment Professor Instructions*".

3) After the specified end date, you will have access to the class assessments. Before the students can have access to their assessments, you have to review the written comments. You will have the possibility to delete any comments judged offensive or hurtful. Once you have reviewed the comments, you can release the assessments (with the release option). At this stage, the students will be able to view how they were evaluated by others.