

## Clearly State Discussion Expectations

At the beginning of a course, students need to understand how often to log on and when to participate in an online discussion. They also need to know the period for an online discussion, how you plan to quantify student participation, and what constitutes a substantive post.

### Examples of Discussion Expectations

#### What?

In your syllabus and/or in a topic overview, clearly state discussion expectations.

#### How?

1. Define the differences between attendance versus participation.
2. Define what constitutes a substantive response.
3. Define the period for a discussion.
4. Define how many times a student has to post in the discussion area to earn full participation points.
5. Provide an online discussion rubric that emphatically describes how you will grade online discussion participation.

#### Helpful Tips

Sample discussion rubrics are posted on the e-Learning Center website. You can also search the internet and find many "**Sample Online Discussion Rubrics**" to give you some ideas when putting together your own.

#### HINT!

**Attendance:** Students must post at least three times per weekly session (anywhere in the course). If after the 21-day period a student has not show up to class, then you will drop them.

**Participation:** Students must post at least three substantive posts on four separate days of the week.

**Period:** Discussions start on Day 1 of the week and end on Day 7. Day 1 is always on Wednesday.

**Substantive Responses:** Discussion responses should be on-topic, at least 75 words, grammatically correct, and build on other student posts.

Collison, G., Elbaum, B., Haavind, S. & Tinker, R. (2000).  
Facilitating Online Learning Effective Strategies for Moderators.  
Madison, WE: Atwood Publishing.