

## Grading at DCE

**Purpose:** Grading helps students understand expectations, stay engaged, and reflect on their learning. Clear and consistent grading practices also support transparency, timely feedback, and workload management for instructors. The resource provides instructors with practical and manageable strategies for grading student work. grading schedule from the Harvard DCE Faculty Handbook.

[Harvard DCE's Grading System](#): Final course grades are submitted securely by faculty at the end of each term, reflecting the quality and quantity of student work according to Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) grading policies, with no assumed equivalency between numerical scores and letter grades unless stated by the instructor. Refer to the [grading schedule in the Harvard DCE Faculty Handbook](#) for deadlines.

It is important to be thoughtful about grading in foundation courses where people are trying to gain admission into a degree program at the Harvard Extension School.

### Strategies and Steps for Implementation

#### 1. Establish Clear Grading Criteria

- a. Ask your program director about grading benchmarks for your program.
- b. Create rubrics or grading guides that clarify expectations for assignments, exams, and participation. Outline what strong work looks like in terms of organization, accuracy, use of evidence, originality, or effort.
- c. Share grading criteria in the syllabus and assignment instructions so students understand how their work will be assessed. Refer to [Harvard DCE Simple Syllabus Guidelines](#).

#### 2. Set Assignment Group Weights in Canvas

- a. Define percentage breakdown for major grading components. Example:
  - i. Participation: 20%
  - ii. Assignments and Projects: 35%
  - iii. Quizzes and Exams: 35%
  - iv. Reflections or Discussion Posts: 10%

- b. Input weights in Canvas under Assignments > Assignment Groups and confirm correct categorization of each assignment for accurate grade calculation. [Click here to schedule a consultation for Canvas support](#).

### 3. Integrate Structured Reflection

- a. Include short reflection prompts with major assignments.
  - i. What was most challenging?
  - ii. What are you proud of?
  - iii. What feedback would be helpful?
- b. Use responses to guide feedback and deepen engagement.

### 4. Incorporate Student-Selected Work

- a. Ask students to submit 2–3 pieces of their best work midterm or towards the end of term and include a brief rationale for each selection. Evaluate using course rubrics.

### 5. Hire a Grader (if applicable; refer to the [Harvard DCE Faculty Handbook](#))

- a. Courses with 25+ credit students may hire a grader. Graders must assess at least two substantial assignments. Pay: \$40 per credit student.
- b. Contact the Office of Faculty Engagement and Academic Affairs ([DCE\\_AcademicAffairs@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:DCE_AcademicAffairs@fas.harvard.edu)) to initiate the process.

### 6. Protect Student Grade Confidentiality

- a. Never post grades by name or ID.
- b. Do not leave graded work in accessible areas to others.
- c. FERPA protects grade data; never share without written consent.
- d. Contact Academic Services ([academicservices@extension.harvard.edu](mailto:academicservices@extension.harvard.edu)) or refer to [Harvard's data security policies](#) as needed.

## Instructor Planning Guide

1. **Course Goals:** What do I want students to learn and demonstrate?
2. **Grading Breakdown:** How will I weigh different components of the course grade?
3. **Rubrics:** What criteria define high-quality work in this course?
4. **Timing:** When will I provide feedback and grades?
5. **Student Involvement:** Will students reflect on or select work for evaluation?
6. **Canvas Setup:** Have I entered assignment weights and categories in Canvas?
7. **Support:** Will I need a grader or additional instructional support?
8. **Policies:** Am I familiar with the [Harvard DCE grading system](#)?

## Instructor Checklist

- I have defined clear goals for grading in my course.
- I have created rubrics or grading guides for assignments.
- I have set grade weights in Canvas and assigned all items to correct groups.
- I have planned reflection or self-assessment activities.
- I have included an optional portfolio or student-selected work.
- I have reviewed grader eligibility and policies.
- I have noted key grading deadlines in the Harvard DCE Faculty Handbook.
- I understand Extension School policies on EXT, grade changes, and confidentiality.

**Resource:** [Evaluations Institute](#) (Harvard DCE)