

Grading Calibrations At California Lutheran University

Note: The purpose here is mainly to assure that faculty members collaborate with others about how and why they arrive at their evaluations of student work. The purpose is NOT to correct or judge faculty grading. The end-result might be that some faculty will gain insights about their assignments and their grading. Faculty members might individually elect to make changes in their evaluative methods. Participation in collaborative grading calibration deserve honor and recognition for the scholarship of teaching and for the service to the university.

Common Steps Used in Grading Calibration Processes

1. **Select a sample of raters** who are typical of those who assign grades on the student work for the assignment. Complete impartiality from the actual student work is probably not possible or wise, but there must be good reason to think the raters can control and report their biases while doing the ratings.
2. Have the raters **review the assignment** descriptions for consistency and explanation about both the process and product of the assignment. Review the existing rubric(s) for evaluation of the works. If the assignment descriptions or rubrics are not homomorphic, revise the assignment descriptions and rubrics before collecting exemplars of the student work. Assure a common grading rubric and collective understanding of the rubric before moving on to the next step.
3. Gather a small but **representative sample of exemplars of student work**. (NOTE: avoid gathering the sample before knowing the raters and the parameters about the assignments, the rubrics, and the rater's understandings of the assignments and rubrics. Raters should privately recuse themselves from reviewing works they have previously evaluated.) The emphasis should be on finding works that represent the range of the possible qualities of the work (some unacceptable; some at moderate levels and some thought to be excellent work on the assignments). Ideally, base the selections only on previous grades. Endeavor to remove or record potential biases in the ratings and the raters. Remove any existing grades or formative feedback on the work. Maintain both student and faculty confidentiality. Individuals independent of the calibration process should be responsible for the sample selection and preparation process.
4. Have raters **independently score the works**. Have the raters record explanations, reactions and frustrations while conducting the ratings. Consider the use of audio recording "talk aloud" protocols to gather notes and comments to minimize the disruption of the rating process. Leaders may need to provide funding to convert audio recordings into transcripts.
5. **Examine the rater's explanations** notes and frustrations for obvious patterns of concerns or disruptions to the rating process. Identify any 'moments' in the rating process where raters tended to stray from the consistent application of the grading rubric (e.g., slipping into holistic or comparative judgments instead of applying rubric standards).
6. **Identify major deviations** in either extremes or in the rationales for the ratings.

7. Bring raters together and **have raters share their ratings** of each work, one work at a time, without allowing explanations, comments, or reactions of any form.
8. Have the raters **discuss the works as evidence of student accomplishment** (or the lack thereof) and faculty grading. Would the exemplars qualify to showcase to others as evidence of grading standards and student achievement? When discussing scores the primary focus should be on clarifying terms in the assignment description and the grading rubric(s).
9. **Produce a final set of minutes** that record
 - a. How the assignment description can be improved
 - b. What changes are needed in the grading rubric
 - c. How the faculty can increase the level of formative feedback to help student understand how to improve on future work
 - d. Which steps are needed to avoid future misuse of the grading rubric
 - e. What are acceptable alternative forms of the assignment

Place the minutes on file in the department and with the Cal Lutheran office of Educational Effectiveness and Institutional Research. Be sure to reference the minutes in the next set of program review documents.

Based on

Thompson, J., Center for Assessment (2013). [Quality performance assessment: A guide for schools and districts](#).