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Grading Advice

Consistency. Exam and lab report grading policies are designed to increase consistency and fairness in grading.

When grading exams, it is important that only one person grades a particular question. Although groups work together to grade an exam, each person is assigned one or two questions and is in charge of grading each student's answer. Often multiple people do not agree on the most important details within an answer and thus they will grade quite differently. This method is used to eliminate this variation in grading.

It is advised that a similar technique be taken when grading lab reports by grading only one question at a time. For example, grade only Question 1 of all the students before moving on to the next question. In this way you maintain the same grading parameters for the question for all students.

Although you will usually be given a general point value for a question, it is often useful to determine point values for smaller ideas within an answer, creating a mini-rubric for each question. This can be done with both lab report and exam questions, and it acts as a reminder of your grading criteria when you're grading the answer for the 100th time.

Throughout a grading session (exams or lab reports) it is important to go back and review your grading of the first few answers. This also helps remind you of your criteria and keeps you from becoming more lenient or harsh when you're getting tired.

Lab reports are generally rotated among TAs for grading. In this manner, all students are graded by "strict" and "easy" TAs throughout the course of the semester. It is important remain consistent in your style of grading throughout the semester so that this rotation style works most effectively.

Finally, it is important to offer constructive comments while grading. An answer full of "-1's" does not show the student what they are missing from an answer, nor does this show him how to improve for the next report. (This is also beneficial for the student's TA when she is asked "But why did I miss this?")