SAMPLE BREAKDOWN OF COURSE MARKS (OUT OF 100%)

“Assessment should have a positive effect on students’ motivation and self-efficacy.”

Attendance and Participation: 20%
- **Attendance (10%)**: The syllabus might say, “If you came to class **on time** 75% of the time, your attendance mark will be 7.5%. If you know you are going to be absent for a legitimate reason, let me know beforehand. If you are sick, provide a doctor’s note.”
- When you calculate the attendance mark, don’t count excused absences in the equation. For example: if a class met 25 times and a student has 1 excused absence, his mark should be out of 24. If he was late twice and had 1 excused absence, he should get 22/24 = .91 → 9.0%. (Round to the nearest .0 or .5)
- **Participation (10%)**: Based not on instructor opinion but on a student self-evaluation in the last week of the semester. Students should see the form for the self-evaluation in the first week because it suggests expectations. Here is what it might look like:

1. **Day-to-day homework**: How consistently did you do day-to-day homework assignments such as readings? (2 marks)
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Often/Always

2. **Graded assignments**: How much effort did you put into graded assignments? (2 marks)
   - Careless work
   - Sufficient effort
   - Beyond expectations

3. **Being on task**: How often did you pay attention and stay on task during class? (2 marks)
   - Rarely
   - Some of the time
   - Most of the time

4. **Teamwork**: How did you do on group projects? (2 marks)
   - I let others do most of the work
   - I did my part
   - I did my part and coached others

5. **Actively seeking to understand**: If you didn’t understand something, how often did you email the instructor, make an appointment with the instructor, ask a classmate for help, organize a study session, or get help in any other way? (2 marks)
   - Rarely
   - Sometimes
   - Often/Always
Day-to-day homework (36%)
In my “ELI 082: Advanced Reading” class, I designed 2 kinds of day-to-day homework, vocabulary quizzes and chapter/article summaries.

- Each vocab quiz was a Pass/Fail. (You need to get at least 8/10 on the quiz to pass.)
- Pass = 1%; Fail = 0%. There were 16 quizzes, worth 16% of the term mark.
- They also had to summarize readings (20% of the term mark). Each 1-2 page summary was rated satisfactory (2%), unsatisfactory (1%), or not turned in (0%). There were 10 summaries over the course of the semester, for a maximum of 20%.
- Whatever you choose to do in terms of day-to-day homework assignments, let this section be worth a lot of marks. Split it into 1% and 2% pieces, and make students do a lot of work/study for every little piece, but make every piece a relatively easy Pass as long as the student does work that is of OK quality. One or two misses will hardly have an effect, but missing assignments again and again will result in a bad grade or fail.
- This should be the formative assessment from the student’s point of view, allowing him/her to assess whether his/her learning or homework strategies are working.
- Let these day-to-day tasks reflect day-to-day practices in the discipline. For academic reading, that’s note-taking on course readings and studying vocabulary.

Small assignments (24%)

- Small assignments let students develop discipline-specific skills that are not required from day-to-day, but are very important skills nevertheless.
- In “ELI 082: Advanced Reading”, students can practice writing a 1-pager in response to a reading or multiple readings. I had them practice this 6 times over the semester:
  - Three times in pairs (with both partners getting the same mark);
  - Three times individually.
  - That is: (1) pair response to one reading; (2) individual response to one reading; (3) pair response to three or more readings; (4) pair response to three or more readings; (5) individual response to three or more readings; (6) individual response to three or more readings. This is called “scaffolding”. You start easy and work up to hard. What makes things easy? Work in pairs first; also, do easier task first. Give students multiple tries on the harder task (in this case, the “synthesis” of multiple readings) since they are unlikely to get it right the first time and will need feedback.
- You can make each thing worth more and more, e.g. 3 + 3 + 4 + 4 + 5 + 5 = 24%
- 60% of the course grade depends on day-to-day work (36%) and small assignments (24%). Students must work hard for every percentage point, but points are attainable.

Final (20%) – Paper, exam, presentation, etc.
- The final is the only instance when the quality of the output is rewarded more than the effort. Make instructions for the final clear and check that students understand.
- The day-to-day practices and small assignments should prepare students for the final. E.g., In an EAP reading course involving article summaries (in point form) and responses to readings, the final can be an individual 5-page paper requiring synthesis of sources.