

INTRODUCTION TO RUBRICS

What is a rubric?

A rubric is a scoring guide that describes the specific criteria that will be used to evaluate student assignments. The most useful type contain performance levels that indicate the quality of work done with each level described in a manner to contrast it with the performance at other levels. The AAC&U Value rubrics are examples of this type of “descriptive rubric.”

Parts of a Rubric:

1. Assignment Description – included on the syllabus or in Blackboard
2. Criteria – A list of standards by which the assignment will be evaluated
3. Levels (scale) – terms used describe various levels of performance
4. Descriptors – describe the levels of performance related to each criterion.

Benefits of Rubrics:

- **Accuracy and consistency** - provide a consistent, objective approach to grading assignments. Rubrics help to ensure that each assignment is evaluated using the same criteria.
- **Help to clarify vague goals** – measuring a goal such as “Demonstrate effective writing skills” becomes much easier when the criteria and performance levels are described in a rubric.
- **Assessment of student learning** – help assess student strengths and weaknesses which can be used to refine teaching strategies. Grades alone do not provide a nuanced analysis of student performance that will lead to improved learning.
- **Increase opportunities for clear communication** - students will better understand expectations and feedback rather than trying to decipher your notes
- **Make scoring easier and faster** - help provide timely and detailed feedback
- **Encourages critical thinking** – instructors can create an assignment that integrate all the course work over the term. The rubric can clearly explain the different parts and expectations easily and clearly.
- **Identifies gaps in learning** - see trends in learning gaps, and remind students what they have learned
- **Help plan the assignment** – referencing a rubric or developing a new one before the assignment is written will help to ensure that the appropriate learning outcomes are being assessed

When to Use a Rubric?

Rubrics can be used to evaluate various types of assignments. They are most widely used for subjective evaluations wherein a student’s response does not lead to a correct or incorrect answer (e.g., multiple choice tests). These types of assignments include writing assignments, research papers, lab assignments, oral presentations, artworks, and performances.

Key Questions to Ask When Developing/Using a Rubric?

1. What type of skill, knowledge or ability do I want students to learn?
2. How does the assignment relate to the learning outcomes being assessed?
3. Does the assignment provide enough evidence that the learning outcome is being met?
4. What are the highest expectations of student performance on this assignment?
5. Does the rubric provide enough variation between performance levels?