



## Using Rubrics in Assessment

Rubrics are a great tool to measure learning or provide feedback in situations where you are observing something or gathering an “artifact” (e.g., essay, application, portfolio, reflection, resume, incident report). Rubrics are especially helpful in situations where one can describe what quality is, but find it difficult to quantify that quality in a traditional survey, quiz or other method. This is why in classroom settings rubrics are commonly found in areas like writing, performing and visual arts, oral presentations and fieldwork. Similarly, rubrics can be helpful in out-of-classroom experiences such as service learning, career preparation, student employee/paraprofessional training and health/wellness.

Developing a rubric often takes some time and discussion, but can lead to collecting multi-dimensional data that is very effective in telling your story. Follow the steps below to design an assessment projects using rubrics.

### Steps to Designing Assessment Using Rubrics

#### 1. Articulate the outcome(s) being assessed.

- Begin with a clearly defined learning outcome so that the rubric can be focused solely on one outcome

#### 2. Determine where/when rubric will be used

- A rubric has to be used with an experience, usually one that includes an opportunity to observe performance (e.g., presentation, mock interview, role playing) or through collecting a piece of information (e.g., resume, reflection paper, application, incident report, reflection journal)
- Which experience makes sense in your context? When will this occur?

#### 3. List the dimensions students should demonstrate to achieve the outcome(s)

- List the skills a student should demonstrate in order to be successful at the outcome. These skills are referred to as dimensions and usually are inserted on the left side of a rubric (see template).

#### 4. Search for a pre-written rubric

- Save time and energy by first doing a search for a rubric that already exists, the internet is a good place to start or ask over a professional listserv. A great place to start is the Texas A&M student affairs assessment site (<http://silo.tamu.edu/rubrics>)
- If you find a rubric, see if it aligns with the dimensions set forth in Step 3
- Find something? Use the steps below to adjust or adapt as needed
- Didn't find something? Continue with the next steps to develop your own

#### 5. Choose a rubric model (Suskie, 2009)

- **Structured Observation Guide:** Also known as a checklist, a rubric that identifies dimensions without providing a rating scale
- **Holistic Rubric:** a rubric used to make a single, more global judgment about a student's achievement, performance, or mastery
- **Rating Scale Rubric:** A rubric that identifies expected dimensions of an activity and the levels of achievement, performance, or mastery along those dimensions but does not include a description for each level (see template)



- **Analytic Rubric:** A rubric that includes a brief description of the skill you want a student to demonstrate at each level for each dimension (see template)
6. <<If using holistic, rating scale or analytic rubrics>>: **Define the levels of achievement, performance, or mastery. Common scales include (Stevens and Levi, 2005):**
- Sophisticated, competent, partly competent, not yet competent
  - Exemplary, proficient, marginal, unacceptable
  - Advanced, intermediate high, intermediate low, novice
  - Distinguished, proficient, intermediate, novice
  - Accomplished, average, developing, beginning
  - Advanced, intermediate, beginning
  - Exceeds expectations, Meeting expectations, Does not fully meet expectations, Does not meet expectations
  - A great deal, Moderately, Slightly, Not at all (extent scale, to what extent does a student...)
7. **If using holistic or analytic rubric: Develop descriptors for each level within each dimension**
- Picture what the highest success would look like for each dimension and describe it, write it down or have someone else write it down as you are describing it
  - Picture what the lowest quality would look like, write it down
  - Fill in the middle categories
8. **Pilot the rubric**
- All rubrics need to be tested and revised, if you have a sample artifact use one or more to test the rubric with multiple people. If you plan on observing an experience, ask someone to role play in order to test
  - No time to pilot? Use the rubric as a learning and assessment tool the first time around, knowing revisions may need to happen in order to use the rubric again
9. **Revise the rubric**
- Based on what you learned, revise the rubric as needed to ensure clarity and consistency



## Rubric Template

	Beginner 1	Developing 2	Accomplished 3	Advanced 4