

Evaluating Rubrics

Criteria	1 Unacceptable	2 Acceptable	3 Good/Solid	4 Exemplary
Clarity of criteria	Criteria being assessed are unclear, inappropriate and/or have significant overlap	Criteria being assessed can be identified, but are not clearly differentiated or are inappropriate	Criteria being assessed are clear, appropriate and distinct	Each criteria is distinct, clearly delineated and fully appropriate for the assignment(s)/course
Distinction between Levels	Little/no distinction can be made between levels of achievement	Some distinction between levels is made, but is not totally clear how well	Distinction between levels is apparent	Each level is distinct and progresses in a clear and logical order
Reliability of Scoring	Cross-scoring among faculty and/or students often results in significant differences	Cross-scoring by faculty and/or students occasionally produces inconsistent results	There is general agreement between different scorers when using the rubric (e.g. differs by less than 5-10% or less than ½ level)	Cross-scoring of assignments using rubric results in consistent agreement among scorers
Clarity of Expectations / Guidance to Learners	Rubric is not shared with learners	Rubric is shared and provides some idea of the assignment/ expectations	Rubric is referenced - used to introduce an assignment/guide learners	Rubric serves as primary reference point for discussion and guidance for assignments as well as evaluation of assignment(s),
Support of Metacognition (Awareness of Learning)	Rubric is not shared with learners	Rubric is shared but not discussed/ referenced with respect to what is being learned through the assignment(s)/course	Rubric is shared and identified as a tool for helping learners to understand what they are learning through the assignment/ in the course	Rubric is regularly referenced and used to help learners identify the skills and knowledge they are developing throughout the course/ assignment(s)
Engagement of Learners in Rubric Development / Use*	Learners are not engaged in either development or use of the rubrics	Learners offered the rubric and may choose to use it for self assessment	Learners discuss the design of the rubric and offer feedback/input and are responsible for use of rubrics in peer and/or self-evaluation	Faculty and learners are jointly responsible for design of rubrics and learners use them in peer and/or self-evaluation

**Considered optional by some educators and a critical component by others*

Scoring: 0 - 10 = needs improvement 11 - 15 = workable 16 – 20 = solid/good 21 – 24 = exemplary

Evaluating Rubrics

There is no single best rubric for all purposes and many different rubrics could be applied to the same task. The following criteria for evaluating scoring rubrics are adapted from Herman, Aschbacher and Winters (1992), Arter (1990) and ISBE (1994).

Does the rubric relate to the outcome(s) being measured? The rubric should address all aspects of the outcome(s) being measured and it should *not* address anything extraneous. For example, spelling and grammar might be considered extraneous on a science assessment, unless it is measuring an outcome that deals specifically with communication. If the assessment is to address critical thinking skills, does the rubric reflect that?

Does it cover important dimensions of student performance? Do the criteria reflect current conceptions of excellence in the field? Does the rubric reflect what you emphasize in your teaching? Does the highest scale point represent a truly exemplary performance or product? When you evaluate rubrics, you need not be concerned about having a certain number of students score at every point on the scale. It may be that no student will attain the highest scale point. Nonetheless, it still may be worthwhile to have that point on the scale as a standard of excellence for which students should strive.

Are the dimensions or scales well-defined? Is it clear to everyone what each scale measures?

Is there a clear basis for assigning scores at each scale point? Is it clear exactly what a student needs to do to get a score at each scale point? Can you easily differentiate between scale points? An easily understood rubric with clear definitions of each score point is the ideal. Conversely, it is usually best to avoid scales that are labeled only at the highest and lowest points.

Can the rubric be applied consistently by different scorers? Inter-rater reliability depends on how well the scales and scale points are defined and the extent to which you and your colleagues can arrive at consensus about how performance should be measured and what constitutes good performance.

Options for Selecting Rubrics

1. Adopt

- Use an existing rubric "as is."

2. Adapt

- Modify or combine existing rubrics.

- Re-word parts of the rubric.
- Drop or change one or more scales of an analytical rubric.
- Omit criteria that are not relevant to the outcome you are measuring.
- "Mix and match" scales from different rubrics.
- Change the rubric for use at a different grade.
- Add a "no-response" category at the bottom of the scale.
- Divide a holistic rubric into several scales.

3. Do it yourself

- Build your own rubric from scratch and read more about [how to create your own rubric](#).

Can the rubric be understood by students? Can it be explained without technical jargon and in terms that even students can understand?

Is the rubric developmentally appropriate? Does the rubric specify some score points appropriate for the age of the student?

Can the rubric be applied to a variety of tasks? The most useful rubrics can be applied to more than one task.

Is the rubric fair and free from bias? Does it reflect teachable skills or does it address variables over which students and educators have no control, such as the student's culture, gender or home resources? Does the rubric reward or penalize students based on skills unrelated to the outcome being measured? Have all students had an equal opportunity to learn the content and skills addressed in the rubric? Is the rubric appropriate for the conditions under which the task was completed?

Is the rubric useful, feasible, manageable and practical? Does the rubric make sense to you? Will it provide the kind of information you need and can use effectively? Does the rubric have a reasonable number of scales and score points? It is difficult to rate student work on many scales at once and it may be hard for students to assimilate data from many score scales. Using long scales is often more time-consuming than using shorter ones.