

Basic Steps for Developing and Using a Rubric for Assessment

Preliminary Steps

1. Identify the outcome (Student Learning Outcome).
2. Determine how you will assess students' achievement of that outcome:
What kind of assignment? Look at existing ways that you use to assess students in order to determine grades.
 - Objective exam? An objective test receives a score or percentage, so you don't need a rubric unless the exam is part of a larger assessment.
 - Project?
 - Presentation?
 - Skill(s) demonstration?
 - Performance?
 - Written report, essay, research paper, etc.?

If you don't have a single assignment or set of assignments that assesses that outcome, you probably need to create one.

3. Consider how you already grade this assignment. A rubric can translate the professional judgment (e.g., paper gets a B- with some comments) into quantifiable terms, which can be illuminating for both students and instructors.
4. If you want to develop a rubric, look at examples to determine the degree of detail, the actual form of scoring (e.g., range of numbers), and format that would be appropriate for the assessment tool, student feedback, and data collection.

Developing the Rubric

5. List main traits, criteria, or areas that you consider when assessing a student. Example for a writing assignment: content, style, mechanics, critical thinking. Example for a skills demonstration: knowledge/understanding; technique; style; attitude, etc.
5. Describe specifically action, product, or behavior that would represent fully successful achievement of the SLO (the highest score). That is, what do you expect of a top student? Use wording that states what achievement looks like. It's often helpful to have an example of outstanding student work to remind you of what to expect for the highest level of success.
6. Consider ways of using a grid or list and the scoring mechanism. Examples:
 - Simple yes/no checklist that leads to points.
 - Numeric scores to represent levels of specific criteria (e.g., score of 0-3 or 1-6)
7. Decide how to score. Consider what fits the purpose of the assignment, what provides the most effective feedback for students, and what would best lend itself to data analysis for useful conclusions.

- Holistic? One overall score summing up multiple criteria (example: writing assessments)
- Sum? Designate score in each area and add up scores for final score or grade

7. If using a scoring grid, write descriptors of the rest of the levels (again, referring to examples of student work can be helpful).

Using the Rubric

9. Share with students before giving them the assignment.

10. Use for grading.

11. Use to collect numeric data for assessment of course SLO.

12. Use to provide useful information for you, your colleagues, and your students.

Drafting a Basic Rubric

Use these guidelines to create a basic rubric for a course that you teach. You may want to start with the Rubric Template available on the Project LEARN website at www.santarosa.edu.

1. State the Student Learning Outcome for a course you teach.
2. Write the method of assessment you will use to determine the degree to which students achieve this outcome.
3. In the first column to the left, list the main areas or the set of criteria you will use when assessing or grading a student. Add rows if needed.
4. Determine your range of scores. Add columns if needed (1-4 or 0-3 are typical ranges, but certainly not appropriate for everything). List numbers and, if desired, brief descriptors (e.g., “no evidence, inadequate, satisfactory, excellent”).
5. In the final column on the right, list descriptive words and phrases to represent the highest level of student work, demonstration, or performance.
6. List description for the other levels until all your boxes are filled.
7. Review, refine, and try it out!