ACUE Student Success Through Exceptional Teaching

Create an Analytic, Holistic, or Single-Point Rubric with Measurable Criteria

This guide will first take you through the process of creating an analytic rubric. You can use a similar process to create either a holistic or single-point rubric.

Let's begin with clarifying the language used in this guide. A rubric consists of:

- **Criteria:** the aspects of performance (thesis, introduction, evidence, clarity of thought) that will be assessed
- **Performance levels:** A rating scale that identifies students' level of mastery within each criterion
- **Descriptors:** The characteristics associated with each criterion at each performance level

Step One: Identify the Criteria or Aspects of Performance for the Assignment or Task

Begin by identifying the learning objectives the assignment is designed to assess. Next, brainstorm a list of the knowledge and skills associated with these learning objectives and that students will be asked to demonstrate when completing the assignment.

By the end of this step, you will have a list of what constitutes the best performance, similar to the list below for an assignment on giving a speech created by a communications instructor.

Learning objective	Highest level of performance
Align information sources to the interests of the audience	Student effectively uses at least three methods to learn about their audience
Create a presentation that connects to the interests of the audience	For each informative item addressed in the presentation, there is a clear statement in the speech that states how it is relevant to the target audience

Next, brainstorm a list of the knowledge and skills associated with these learning objectives and that students will be asked to demonstrate when completing the assignment.

Knowledge and Skill Requirements for Speech Assignment

- Cites at least three sources relevant to the target audience
- Provides clear reasons for the relevancy of each item
- Maintains good eye contact throughout the presentation
- Handles the presentation technology with ease
- Provides handouts that are clear and highlight key issues
- Uses expressive and appropriate body language
- Presents concise PowerPoint slides

Group these skills according to similarities and remove anything that is not critical. A rubric with too many criteria can be challenging for both you and your students. A rubric with four to seven specific criteria typically works best. Keep in mind that you will want to be able to identify the criteria quickly while scoring (Roell, 2020).

The communications instructor created two criteria, *presentation* and *content*, for the rubric they are creating.

Presentation	Content
Maintains good eye contact throughout.	Provides handouts that are clear and highlight key issues.
Uses expressive and appropriate body language.	Cites at least three sources of information that are relevant to the target audience.
Handles technology with ease.	Presents concise PowerPoint slides.
Provides clear reasons why information is relevant.	Effectively responds to questions from the audience.

Step Two: Create the Performance Levels

If you are creating an analytic or holistic rubric, you will want to determine the number and terms describing the performance levels you will include in your rubric. Most performance rating scales include between three and five levels. Some faculty use a combination of numbers and descriptive labels such as 4: Exceeds Expectations, 3: Meets Expectations, etc., while others simply assign numbers, percentages, letter grades, or any combination of the three for each level. Consider using terms such as "beginning," "developing," "competent," or "advanced," which stress the process-based nature of writing rather than the product alone and encourage a growth mindset (Balester, 2012).

Step Three: Write Descriptions of the Performance at Each Level of the Rating Scale (Analytic & Holistic Rubrics)

Finally, describe the evidence you will look for at each performance level for each of the assignment criteria. In other words, how would you describe work that meets or even exceeds expectations? It can be helpful to look at examples of student work at different levels of proficiency and describe the criteria at each level. It can be particularly helpful to begin with the descriptors for the "meets" category and then add descriptors for an assignment that exceeds those expectations.

Note: A single-point rubric includes just three performance levels: meets, exceeds, and not yet, with descriptors for just the "meets" level.

This is likely the most difficult and most rewarding step in creating a rubric. The descriptions need to be specific and measurable so both you and your students are very clear about what is required and what

Copyright © 2024 Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). All rights reserved. No part of this document may be disclosed to a third party without the prior written consent of ACUE.

meets each level of performance. You can use the following suggestions when writing your descriptors to ensure clarity for students:

- Look at each criterion separately.
- Write the description for meeting the expectations first.
- Next, write the description for the lowest and highest levels of your performance scale.
    - If you have additional performance levels, complete the descriptors that would bridge the low, medium, and high levels. You may find that there are not clear differences and decide to limit the number of performance levels.
- Be sure the differences between the levels are clear so the reason for the score is evident to the student.
- Use numbers where appropriate to determine differences between levels.
- Use consistent leveling throughout; do not make big jumps between each box for one criterion, and then do incremental steps between others.
- Use descriptive adjectives to differentiate each level (see Helpful Adjectives for Rubric Construction at the end of this document).
- Include what the assignment is missing when it does not meet expectations.

Dimension	Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Needs additional practice
Presentation	Commands the attention of the audience. Uses expressive and appropriate body language. Uses technology without issue.	Establishes rapport with the audience Body language does not distract from the presentation. Uses technology without issue.	Audience appears disconnected from the presentation. Body language communicates discomfort. Experiences issues with technology.
Content	Provides handouts that are clear and show key issues. Cites more than three relevant pieces of	Handouts are clear and relevant to the presentation. Cites two to three relevant pieces of	Does not provide handouts or handouts are not clearly connected to the presentation.

Copyright © 2024 Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). All rights reserved. No part of this document may be disclosed to a third party without the prior written consent of ACUE.

	information related to the target audience. PowerPoint slides are clear and concise. Provides clear and relevant responses to almost all questions from the audience.	information related to the target audience. PowerPoint slides are clear. Provides clear responses to the majority of questions from the audience.	Information presented is not clearly cited or is not relevant to the target audience. PowerPoint slides are unclear and contain too many words. Provides unclear or incomplete responses to most questions from the audience.

Holistic Rubric

To create a holistic rubric, you would combine the descriptions for each level of each criteria in a single box.

Performance level	Descriptions
Exceeds expectations	Commands the attention of the audience, uses expressive and appropriate body language, and uses technology without issue. Provides handouts that are clear and show key issues, cites at least three sources related to the target audience, PowerPoint slides are concise, and provides clear reasons why information is relevant to the audience.
Meets expectations	Establishes rapport with the audience, body language does not distract from the presentation, uses technology without issue. Handouts are clear and relevant to the presentation, cites three relevant pieces of information related to the target audience, PowerPoint slides are clear, and provides clear responses to the majority of questions from the audience.
Needs additional practice	Audience appears disconnected from the presentation, body language communicates discomfort, experiences issues with technology. Does not provide handouts or handouts are not clearly connected to the presentation, information presented is not clearly cited or is not relevant to the target audience, provides unclear or incomplete responses to most questions from the audience.

Copyright © 2024 Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). All rights reserved. No part of this document may be disclosed to a third party without the prior written consent of ACUE.

Single-Point Rubric

A single-point rubric includes only the descriptors for the performance level you have designated as meeting expectations. This information goes in the middle column and the columns on either side are left blank for the grader to add comments. The column to the left is labeled to indicate the work exceeds the expectations and the column to the right indicates that the work is not yet meeting expectations.

Criteria	Wow!	Descriptors for meeting expectations	Not yet
Presentation		Establishes rapport with the audience. Body language does not distract from the presentation. Uses technology without issue.	
Content		Handouts are clear and relevant to the presentation. Cites three relevant pieces of information related to the target audience. PowerPoint slides are clear. Provides clear responses to the majority of questions from the audience.	

Revising Your Rubric

All rubrics go through multiple revisions. After using a rubric for the first time, review the grades earned on the rubric to see if they represent the level of work expected. In other words, does the work that received "meets expectations" on the rubric represent work that does meet your expectations? If not, make the adjustments so that the next time you use the rubric it will be more representative of your expectations.

Helpful Adjectives for Rubric Construction

Copyright © 2024 Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). All rights reserved. No part of this document may be disclosed to a third party without the prior written consent of ACUE.

Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Approaches expectations	Not yet meeting expectations
Accurate All Always Clear Complete Maximum Superior . . . to the highest level Includes all elements	Adequate Essential Includes all requirements Meets the criteria Often Satisfactory Understandable Usually	Fewer than Less than complete Limited Minimal Seldom or rarely Somewhat . . . to a minimal level Vague	Does not include Inappropriate Incomplete Lacks enough None Unclear

Suggested Resources

For more information on developing a rubric with clear criteria and well-defined levels of performance, consider reviewing the Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown University's resource on creating performance levels for rubrics at the Sheridan Teaching and Learning Center, the Poorvu Center at Yale University's content on creating and using rubrics, and the Eberly Center at Carnegie Mellon University's site for assignment-specific examples of rubrics.

Additional Resources

Balester, V. (2012). How writing rubrics fail: Toward a multicultural model. In A. B. Inoue & M. Poe (Eds.), *Race and Writing Assessment* (63–77). Peter Lang.

Feldman, J. (2020, January 27). *Improved grading makes classrooms more equitable*. Inside Higher Ed. https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/01/27/advice-how-make-grading-more-equitable-opinion

Panadero, E., & Jonsson, A. (2020). A critical review of the arguments against the use of rubrics. *Educational Research Review, 30,* Article 100329.

Roell, K. (2020, August 26). *How to create a rubric in 6 steps.* ThoughtCo. thoughtco.com/how-to-create-a-rubric-4061367

Uhlmann, E. L., & Cohen, G. L. (2005). Constructed criteria: Redefining merit to justify discrimination. *Psychological Science, 16*(6), 474–480.

Copyright © 2024 Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). All rights reserved. No part of this document may be disclosed to a third party without the prior written consent of ACUE.