

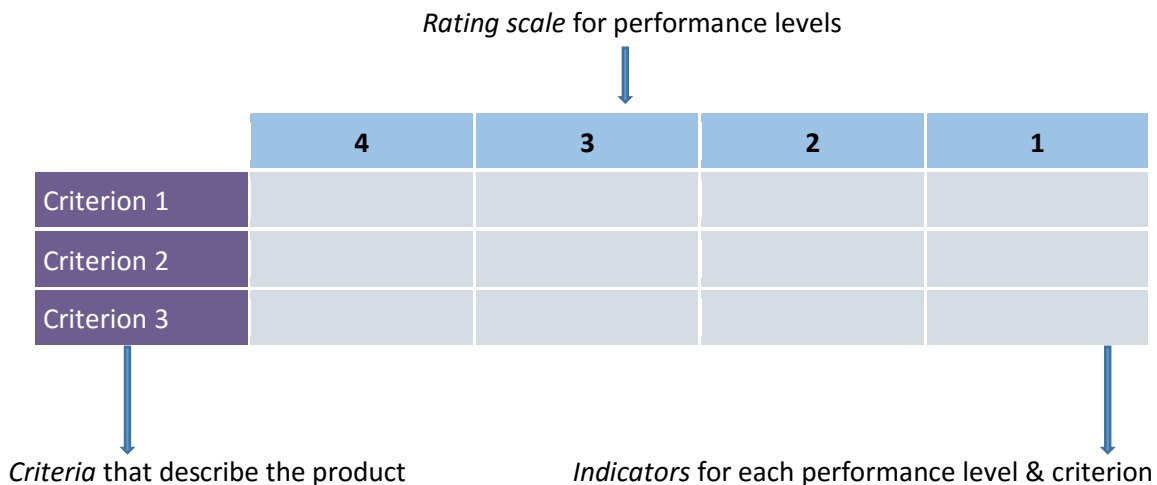
What is a rubric?

A rubric is a scoring guide used to evaluate performance, a product, or a project. It has three parts: 1) performance criteria; 2) rating scale; and 3) indicators.

For you and your students, the rubric defines what is expected and what will be assessed. Whether for online or face-to-face courses, it indicates that you will evaluate according to specified criteria, making grading and ranking simpler, more transparent, and fairer.

What does a rubric look like?

On the left side, the *criteria* describe the key elements of a student work or product. At the top, the *rating scale* identifies levels of performance. Under each section of the rating scale, the *indicators* provide examples or concrete descriptors for each level of performance.



Where do I start the process of creating a rubric?

Start by consulting professional literature and online resources to find rubrics that others have done or created. There's no need to reinvent the wheel—just revise it to meet your needs! Once you find a model, you can adapt the criteria, rating scale, and indicators to your needs. Sample sites for rubric models can be found in Additional Resources

How can I design a rubric?

Whether you have found a rubric to adapt or are designing a rubric from scratch and whether it's for an online or face-to-face assignment, the process begins with identifying basic rubric components: the performance criteria, the rating scale, and the indicators of performance.

Determine the criteria to assess student work.

Figure out what areas really matter to the quality of the work that’s being produced. Whether it’s an essay, a project, a digital story or essay, or a presentation, what do you want evidence of in the final product?

- List all the possible criteria you might want students to demonstrate in the assignment. Include criteria for the process of creating the product and the quality of the product.
- Decide which of those criteria are “non-negotiable.” Ideally, your rubric will have three to five performance criteria. If you’re having a hard time deciding, prioritize the criteria by asking:
 - a. What are the learning outcomes of this unit?
 - b. Which learning outcomes will be listed in the rubric?
 - c. Which skills are essential at competent or proficiency levels for the task or assignment to be complete?
 - d. How important is the overall completion of the task or project?

Develop a rating scale.

Rating scales can include either numerical or descriptive labels. Usually, a rating scale consists of an even number of performance levels. If an odd number is used, the middle level tends to become a catch-all category.

1. Show your rating scale beginning on the left with the highest. On the chart below, the highest level of performance is described on the left. A few possible labels for a four-point scale include:

4	3	2	1
5 points	3 points	1 point	0 points
Exemplary	Excellent	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Exceeds expectations	Meets expectations	Progressing	Not there yet
Superior	Good	Fair	Needs work
Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable
Sophisticated	Highly Competent	Fairly Competent	Not Yet Competent

Develop indicators of quality.

Define the performance quality of the ideal assessment for each criteria, one at a time. Begin with the highest level of the scale to define top quality performance. Remember, this is the level that you want all students to achieve and it should be challenging.

1. Create indicators that are present at all performance levels.
2. Make certain there is continuity in the difference between the criteria for exceeds vs. meets, and meets vs. does not meet expectations. The difference between a 2 and a 3 performance should not be more than the difference between a 3 and a 4 performance.
3. Edit the indicators to ensure that the levels reflect variance in quality and not a shift in importance of the criteria.
4. Make certain that the indicators reflect equal steps along the scale. The difference between 4 and 3 should be equivalent to the difference between 3 - 2 and 2 - 1. "Yes, and more," "Yes," "Yes, but," and "No" are ways for the rubric developer to think about how to describe performance at each scale point.

Some common descriptive terms to indicate that progression are listed below.

	4	3	2	1
Task requirements	All	Most	Some	Very few or none
Frequency	Always	Usually	Some of the time	Rarely or not at all
Accuracy	No errors	Few errors	Some errors	Frequent errors
Comprehensibility	Always comprehensible	Almost always comprehensible	Gist and main ideas are comprehensible	Isolated bits are comprehensible
Content coverage	Fully developed, fully supported	Adequately developed, adequately supported	Partially developed, partially supported	Minimally developed, minimally supported
Vocabulary Range Variety	Broad Highly varied; non-repetitive	Adequate Varied; occasionally repetitive	Limited Lacks variety; repetitive	Very limited Basic, memorized; highly repetitive

What can I consider as I review a rubric?

The following questions can help determine if the rubric is effective:

1. Are the characteristics of each performance level clear? Will students be able to self-assess by having the descriptors? Will the descriptors give students enough information to know what they need to improve?

2. Does the rubric adequately reflect the range of levels at which students may actually perform given tasks?
3. Are the criteria at each level defined clear to ensure that scoring is accurate, unbiased, and consistent? Could several instructors use the rubric and score a student's performance within the same range?
4. Does the rubric reflect both process and product?
5. Are all criteria equally important, or is one variable stronger than the others?
6. Is the language used descriptive for students to determine what is being measured in both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Additional considerations related to rubrics are listed below:

1. Rubrics need to be piloted, or field tested, to ensure they are measuring the variable intended by the designer.
2. Rubrics can be discussed with students to create an understanding of expectations.
3. Rubrics ensure that scoring is accurate, unbiased, and consistent.
4. Rubrics list expectations of student performance that are aligned with the conceptual lesson or unit delivered. Students shouldn't be expected to do what they haven't been previously taught or shown.

Where can I learn more?

The following list presents possible (but by no means complete) resources for further learning:

The Association of American Colleges and Universities developed VALUE rubrics (Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education). These rubrics are based on Essential Learning Outcomes and focus on critical thinking. Two AACU websites contain possible rubric models in discipline-specific and general education:

http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/index_p.cfm?CFID=41975853&CFTOKEN=20824482

<http://leap.aacu.org/toolkit/learning-outcomes-assessment/2010/value-rubrics-for-assessing-learning>

The University of Minnesota has created a rich variety of materials on rubrics from creation to application. They have included samples of multidisciplinary rubrics as well.

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http://www.carla.umn.edu/assessment/VAC/Evaluation/p_7.html

This link presents diverse rubrics designed by Carnegie Mellon and other faculty for essays, projects, presentations, and classroom discussions. Although a particular field of study and assessment type may not be represented, viewing a rubric for a similar activity may provide ideas on how to divide your task into criteria and how to describe the varying performance level indicators.

<http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/rubrics.html>

Many LMS, including Canvas, have tools for creating rubrics online to share with students. More information can be found on these sites.

CANVAS

- <http://guides.instructure.com/s/2204/m/4152/l/39716-what-is-a-rubric>
- <http://guides.instructure.com/s/2204/m/4152/l/39717-how-do-i-edit-rubric-details>
- <http://guides.instructure.com/s/2204/m/4152/l/40069-how-do-i-add-a-rubric-to-a-discussion>
- <http://guides.instructure.com/s/2204/m/4152/l/40072-how-do-i-add-a-rubric-to-an-assignment>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lw4naSjm2BY>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__nD_IyUM5A