

## Why use rubrics?

### Rubrics help instructors:

- Assess assignments consistently from student-to-student.
- Save time in grading, both short-term and long-term.
- Give timely, effective feedback and promote student learning in a sustainable way.
- Clarify expectations and components of an assignment for both students and course TAs.
- Refine teaching skills by evaluating rubric results.

### Rubrics help students:

- Understand expectations and components of an assignment.
- Become more aware of their learning process and progress.
- Improve work through timely and detailed feedback.

## How can you develop a rubric?

### Getting Started

- Start small by creating one rubric for one assignment in a semester.
- Ask colleagues if they have developed rubrics for similar assignments.
- Although it takes time to build a rubric, time will be saved in the long run as grading and providing feedback on student work will become more streamlined.

### Rubric Development Guidelines

- Examine an assignment for your course.
- Outline the elements or critical attributes to be evaluated (these attributes must be objectively measurable).
- Create an evaluative range for performance quality under each element; for instance, “excellent,” “good,” “unsatisfactory.”
- You can reinforce a developmental approach by students by using a developmental scale in your rubric, like “Beginning”, “Emerging” and “Exemplary.”
- Add descriptors that qualify each level of performance:
- Avoid using subjective or vague criteria such as “interesting” or “creative”; instead, outline objective indicators that would fall under these categories.
- The criteria must clearly differentiate one performance level from another.
- Assign a numerical scale to each level.
- Give a draft of the rubric to your colleagues and/or TAs for feedback.
- Train students to use your rubric and solicit feedback; this will help you judge whether the rubric is clear to them and will identify any weaknesses.
- Rework the rubric based on the feedback.

### When developing rubrics consider the following:

- A rubric can be a fillable pdf that can easily be e-mailed to students.
- How much class time is required for teaching and re-teaching the rubric.

## How can you incorporate rubrics in a course?

Rubrics are most often used to grade written assignments, but they have many other uses.

- They can be used for oral presentations.
- They are a great tool to evaluate teamwork and individual contribution to group tasks.
- Rubrics facilitate peer-review by setting evaluation standards.
- Students can use them for self-assessment to improve personal performance and learning.
- For larger assignments, have students use the rubric to provide peer assessment on various drafts.
- Encourage students to use the rubrics to assess their own work.
- Motivate students to improve their work by using rubric feedback to resubmit their work incorporating the feedback.

Here is a sample strategy for introducing rubrics to students:

1. Provide samples, or smaller sections of samples, of a complete assignment (consider asking previous students for permission to use their assignments as samples, provided that you remove their names).
2. Have students evaluate the assignments individually using the rubric.
3. Have students share their results with a partner and justify their evaluation by explaining how they used the rubric.
4. Ask a few pairs to share their responses with the class. (Paying attention to students' reactions/interpretations of the rubric is useful and may inform rubric adjustments).
5. Provide your own evaluation of the sample assignments and explain how you used the rubric to assess the work.