

## Creating Rubrics- A Quick Guide

Applying rubrics to student assignments, papers, or projects allows us to pinpoint both strengths and weakness in student performance; something that a grade alone could not identify.

For example:

Let us say that there is a program that has eight student learning outcomes (SLOs), and of these eight, three are:

**SLO 1: Effective Written Communication-**

Students will demonstrate an ability to communicate effectively in written form.

**SLO 2: Knowledge of Subject Area-**

Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of knowledge related to the subject area.

**SLO 3: Scholarly Methods of Research and Inquiry-**

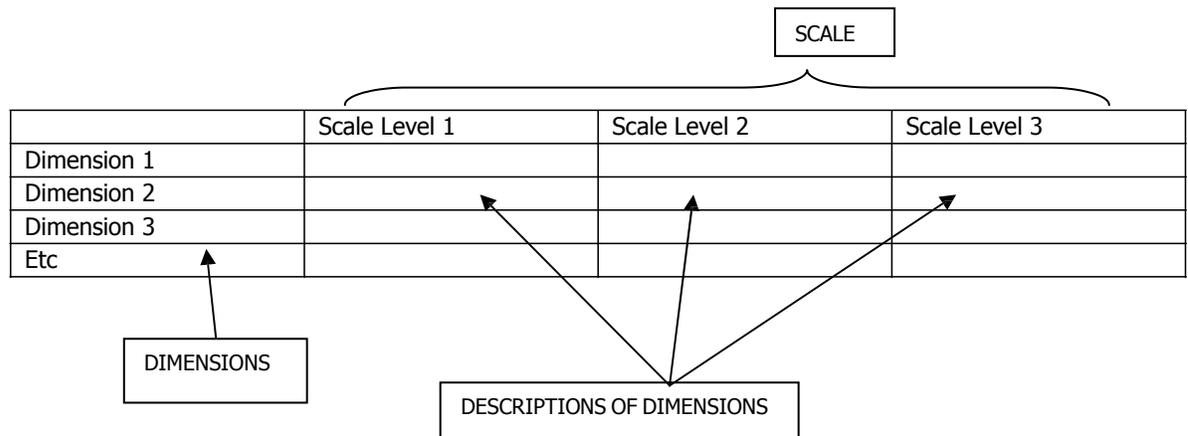
Students will demonstrate proficiency in scholarly methods of research and inquiry.

Each of these SLOs can be seen as components of a term paper that is assigned in a required class for all majors.

Due to the numerous components that make up the term paper, the grade that a student earns on it cannot alone tell us how well a student performed in each of the SLOs.

Therefore, by applying a rubric to the term paper, strengths and weakness of these three SLOs could be identified and analyzed.

Constructing such a rubric will soon follow, but first let us look at the format that most rubrics follow:



(Adapted from University of Connecticut's How to Create Rubrics)

Viewing the rubric template above, one can see that it is made up of three main components:

1: *Scale*

- Rates student performance for each dimension
- If scales are not simply numerical, then they should try to avoid overly negative or competitive labels (UConn, p. 41).
- Positive terms which may be used: "Mastery", "Satisfactory", "Developing".
- Commonly used labels:
  - Exemplary, proficient, marginal, unacceptable
  - Advanced, intermediate high, intermediate, novice
  - Distinguished, proficient, intermediate, novice
- For the purposes of scoring assignments with the rubric, a 4-point scale is encouraged.

For the term paper example, let us use a simple 4-point Likert scale

	4	3	2	1
Dimension 1				
Dimension 2				
Dimension 3				

## 2: Dimensions

- Dimensions lay out the components of the task (in the example's case, the term paper) simply and completely
- Rating by dimension allows for a kind of task analysis with the components of the task clearly identified
- For the term paper example, the dimensions of the applied rubric would be: Written Communication, Knowledge of Subject Area, and Proficiency in Scholarly Methods of Research and Inquiry.

For our example, the three skills/areas of knowledge are the dimensions.

	4	3	2	1
Written Communication				
Knowledge of Subject Area				
Scholarly Methods of Research and Inquiry				

## 3: Description of the Dimensions

- A dimension description should be provided for each scale level (as seen below)
- Providing a dimension description for each scale level helps those who apply the rubric give a more accurate rating.

Descriptions have now been provided for the two scale levels of the Written Communication dimension of our example rubric.

	4	3
Written Communication	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task. Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work. Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline or writing task including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices. Uses language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.	Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus on the assigned task. Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work. Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices. Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language used has few errors.

(Adapted from the AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric)

The look of that type of rubric may appear overwhelming for some, but there is a way to clean up the descriptions while also allowing for the even more accurate pinpointing of strengths and weaknesses: checkboxes.

	4	3
Written Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task.</li> <li>❑ Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject, conveying the writer's understanding, and shaping the whole work.</li> <li>❑ Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline or writing task including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.</li> <li>❑ Uses language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❑ Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and clear focus on the assigned task.</li> <li>❑ Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work.</li> <li>❑ Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.</li> <li>❑ Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language has few errors</li> </ul>

**Still have questions about rubrics?  
 Require assistance in developing your rubric(s)?  
 We can help!**

**Contact the Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Compliance at  
 extension 2723.**