CREATING RUBRICS

Numerous resources exist for creating and modifying rubrics for distance education courses. Many websites, such as **RubiStar**, have rubrics which can be modified to meet individual course needs. Most learning management systems like **Blackboard** or **Canvas** also have interactive rubric tools or examples to guide you in the process.

There are also a variety of rubric types. Some rubrics can be as simple as a list of the skills you want to assess with a point value assigned, such as **this basic writing rubric**. Other rubrics can be based on learning objectives for an assignment, with more comprehensive descriptions of the quality of work you expect from your students. The steps listed below will help you create this more detailed type of **analytic rubric.**

As with any materials you create for your students, it is important to keep in mind your audience. For example, when teaching general education courses, you may want to stick to the basics -- keep the wording on your rubric straightforward yet comprehensive enough so that it is not only easy to use for your purposes but is also clear for your students to understand. For upper division courses, you may want create rubrics with more detailed information.
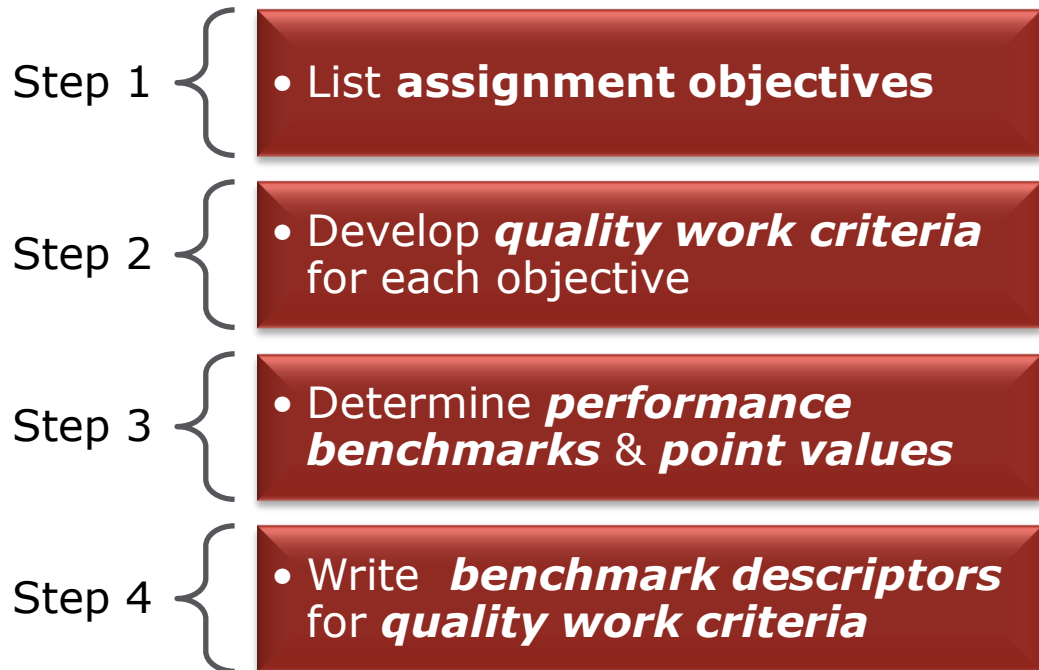
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STEPS FOR CREATING A RUBRIC — OVERVIEW

The following diagram shows the basic steps for creating an analytic rubric.

Step 1 — • List **assignment objectives**

Step 2 — • Develop *quality work criteria* for each objective

Step 3 — • Determine *performance benchmarks* & *point values*

Step 4 — • Write *benchmark descriptors* for *quality work criteria*

STEP 1 — LIST ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVES

BREAK DOWN THE LEARNING OBJECTIVE(S) OF THE ASSIGNMENT/ ASSESSMENT INTO EITHER THE SKILLS OR ACTIONS YOU WISH TO ASSESS.

DISCUSSION RUBRIC EXAMPLE (ACTIONS BEING ASSESSED):

1. Students **post** reactions about unit content to the discussion board
2. Students **respond** thoughtfully to 2 other students' posts.

STEP 2 — DESCRIBE QUALITY WORK CRITERIA FOR EACH

1. FOR EACH LEARNING OBJECTIVE, DESCRIBE IN GENERAL TERMS THE CRITERIA FOR QUALITY WORK.

DISCUSSION RUBRIC EXAMPLE:

- **Discussion post**: Content is **thorough** & **well-written**.
- **Response**: Content is **thoughtful** & **well-written**.

2. *FOR EACH QUALITY WORK CRITERION, DEVELOP YOUR IDEAS FURTHER BY ASKING THE QUESTION, "WHAT IS … ?"*

DISCUSSION RUBRIC EXAMPLE:

- WHAT IS A **THOROUGH** DISCUSSION POST?
  A thorough discussion post is one in which the student not only responds to the question prompt, but where s/he also demonstrates an understanding of the course materials by using examples and describing how this applies to his/her life.

- WHAT IS A **WELL-WRITTEN** DISCUSSION POST OR RESPONSE?
  A well-written discussion post is one written in full-sentences with few if any grammatical or spelling errors.

- WHAT IS A **THOUGHTFUL** RESPONSE?
  A thoughtful response is one where the student responds directly to something that is in the original post and adds his/her perspective.

3. *HIGHLIGHT THE KEY COMPONENTS OF EACH QUALITY WORK CRITERION.*

DISCUSSION POST EXAMPLE:

- WHAT IS A **THOROUGH** DISCUSSION POST?
  A thorough discussion post is one in which the student not only responds to the question prompt, but where s/he also demonstrates an understanding of the course materials by using examples and describing how this applies to his/her life.

- WHAT IS A **WELL-WRITTEN** DISCUSSION POST OR RESPONSE?
  A well-written discussion post is one written in full-sentences with few if any grammatical or spelling errors.

4. *EDIT YOUR CRITERIA FOR CLARITY.*

DISCUSSION POST:

- Reflects UNDERSTANDING OF COURSE MATERIALS through EXAMPLES and PERSONAL EXPERIENCES.
- Is written in FULL SENTENCES with FEW GRAMMATICAL or SPELLING ERRORS.

RESPONSE:

- REFERS BACK TO THE ORIGINAL POST and ADDS A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE.
- Is written in FULL SENTENCES with FEW GRAMMATICAL or SPELLING ERRORS.

STEP 3   DETERMINE PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS & POINT

DECIDE WHAT BENCHMARKS FOR SUCCESS/IMPROVEMENT YOU WANT TO USE AND ASSIGN A POINT VALUE FOR EACH.

SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR BENCHMARK DESCRIPTORS

BENCHMARK LEVEL	DESCRIPTORS
HIGH	Excellent, Exemplary, Above Average, High Pass, Very Good
AVERAGE	Satisfactory, Pass, Acceptable, Sufficient, Good
LOW	Unsatisfactory, Poor, Improvement Needed/Needs Improvement, Low Pass, No Pass, Unacceptable,

DISCUSSION POST:

- Excellent (15 points)
- Satisfactory (10 points)
- Needs Improvement (5 points)

RESPONSE:

- Excellent (5 points)
- Satisfactory (3 points)
- Needs Improvement (1 point)

STEP 4   WRITE BENCHMARK DESCRIPTORS FOR QUALITY WORK CRITERIA

1. *DESCRIBE BENCHMARKS, KEEPING THESE DESCRIPTIONS AS POSITIVE AS POSSIBLE. FOCUS ON WHAT STUDENTS <u>DO</u> INSTEAD OF WHAT IS LACKING.*

METHOD 1: MISSING CRITERIA

SATISFACTORY BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:

Discussion post is MISSING ONE OF THE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS.

METHOD 2: REWORDED CRITERIA

SATISFACTORY BENCHMARK EXAMPLE:

[Discussion Post] Includes a BASIC understanding of material but MORE SUPPORT or PERSONAL EXPERIENCE COULD BE PROVIDED. Contains GRAMMATICAL AND SPELLING ERRORS that affect overall comprehension.

2. *COMBINE QUALITY WORK CRITERION & BENCHMARK DESCRIPTORS INTO YOUR TABLE/MATRIX.*

RUBRIC EXAMPLES

DISCUSSION RUBRIC EXAMPLE (MISSING CRITERIA):

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	SATISFACTORY	EXCELLENT
DISCUSSION POST: 1. Reflects understanding of course materials through examples and personal experiences. 2. Is written in full sentences with few grammatical or spelling errors. 3. Is completed on time.	**DISCUSSION POST** is missing **TWO OR MORE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS.** **(5 POINTS)**	**DISCUSSION POST** is missing **ONE OF THE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS.** **(10 POINTS)**	**DISCUSSION POST** includes **ALL CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS.** **(15 POINTS)**
RESPONSE: 1. Refers back to the original post and adds a personal perspective. 2. Is written in full sentences with few grammatical or spelling errors. 3. Is completed on time.	**RESPONSE** is missing **TWO OR MORE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS.** **(1 POINT)**	**RESPONSE** is missing **ONE OF THE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS.** **(3 POINTS)**	**RESPONSE** includes **ALL CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS.** **(5 POINTS)**

DISCUSSION RUBRIC EXAMPLE (REWORDED CRITERIA):

	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	SATISFACTORY	EXCELLENT
DISCUSSION POST (15 POINTS) **Content**	Demonstrates a limited understanding of the topic with little support or personal experience provided. **(4 POINTS)**	Includes a basic understanding of material but more support or personal experience could be provided. **(8 POINTS)**	Reflects understanding of course materials through examples and personal experiences. **(12 POINTS)**
Language	Contains grammatical or spelling errors that make overall comprehension difficult. **(1 POINT)**	Contains some grammatical or spelling errors that affect overall comprehension. **(1 POINT)**	Is written in full sentences with few grammatical or spelling errors. **(1.5 POINTS)**
Timeliness	Is more than a day late. **(0 POINTS)**	Is one day late. **(1 POINT)**	Is completed on time. **(1.5 POINTS)**
RESPONSE (5 POINTS) **Content**	Limited reference back to the original post and/or little or no personal perspective provided. **(.5 POINTS)**	Could either refer back to the original post more or add a more detailed personal perspective. **(1 POINT)**	Refers back to the original post and adds a personal perspective. **(2 POINTS)**
Language	Contains grammatical or spelling errors that make overall comprehension difficult. **(.5 POINTS)**	Contains some grammatical or spelling errors that affect overall comprehension. **(1 POINTS)**	Is written in full sentences with few grammatical or spelling errors. **(1.5 POINTS)**
Timeliness	Is more than a day late. **(O POINTS)**	Is one day late. **(1 POINT)**	Is completed on time. **(1.5 POINTS)**

SKILLS-BASED RUBRIC EXAMPLE:

The following is an example of a writing rubric based on the skill sets to be assessed. Each skill is directly linked to the assessment learning objectives, yet is worded so as to be easy to understand -- extremely beneficial for those students who are new to the higher education setting.

POINTS	CATEGORY	COMMENTS
	CONTENT & IDEAS (4 POINTS) ❐ There is a clear main idea/argument ❐ Main argument is discussed throughout paper ❐ Adequate support is given & discussed ❐ The writer does not generalize/repeat the same information in paper	
	ORGANIZATION (4 POINTS) ❐ There is a clear beginning, middle & end ❐ The thesis statement is clear ❐ Each topic is related to each other & is connected/logical ❐ The conclusion does not introduce a new idea	
	WRITING/GRAMMAR (4 POINTS) ❐ There are few grammatical & mechanical errors ❐ Sentences vary in length and type ❐ The writer's 'voice' is consistent ❐ There are few word choice problems	
	FORMATTING (2 POINTS) ❐ Paragraphs are indented ❐ Margins are no more than 1 inch wide ❐ Paper is typed & double-spaced ❐ Paper includes name, class, date & title	
	TIMELINESS & COMPLETION (2 POINTS) ❐ All drafts and peer review are included in final product ❐ Paper has been turned in on time	