

Guidelines for Constructing Effective Rubrics

1. **Talk with colleagues** about characteristics of quality vs. mediocre student work. Then define for yourself what is a “quality” performance or product.
2. **Gather samples of rubrics** that you can adapt, including those focused on the different communication modes, skills, and proficiency levels.
3. **Think about the criteria** that are important for a given performance or product by examining samples of student work at the novice, intermediate, and advanced proficiency levels and considering the characteristics of each level.
4. **Limit the number of criteria** so that the rubric is no longer than one page and includes what is most important. Then develop quality descriptions for each criterion and its levels, keeping in mind the proficiency level of the student work.
5. **Focus descriptions of quality on the positive** (e.g., what is *present* in the performance, what students *show that they know and are able to do*) rather than on the negative (e.g., what is *missing*, what students *inaccurately do*).
6. **Use professional language** that clearly communicates the quality required for success at each level for each criterion, rather than clever or “cutesy” phrasing.
7. **Use clear language** rather than vague language (many-some-few). Then share your rubric with students and colleagues to get their feedback on its wording.
8. **Revise and refine** your rubric. Developing rubrics involves an iterative process of writing, revising, and rewriting. Each time you use a rubric, you will find *something* you want to change. That’s as it should be!