

Creating Rubrics Using Blackboard

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One strategy for improving student outcomes in a course is using rubrics for assessment. Rubrics, a "...coherent set of criteria for students' work that includes descriptions of levels of performance quality on the criteria" (Brookhart, 2013), can range from simple to complex. Rubrics are directly connected with learning outcomes shared with students early during the learning and assessment process. In addition to criteria and levels of achievement, rubrics are explicit and descriptive and contain no "value" judgments.

Fortunately, Blackboard Ultra makes [creating rubrics](#) easy. Whether using an existing rubric you want to modify or beginning from scratch, you can customize the Blackboard rubric by adjusting the number of columns, rows, performance scale, and score. Using the built-in AI tool, Blackboard can generate a suggested rubric based on your assignment or course content. You can then adjust this suggested rubric to fit your needs. These rubrics then provide a guideline for students to achieve the grade they wish, increasing the quality of student work and equity of experience.

Once created, you can [associate rubrics with many types of gradable content](#), including assignments, tests with no questions, and discussions. You can also reuse rubrics, associating them with multiple pieces of gradable content. Using the same or similar scoring methodology across a course provides consistency to students, enabling them to improve over time from one assessment to the next. It allows for increased pedagogical scaffolding or spiraling difficulty, resulting in progressively higher levels of achievement.

Creating rubrics in Blackboard reduces faculty time investment while streamlining and



standardizing expectations and scores. When you [grade an item](#) from the Student Submission page, you can view the rubric by expanding the grading and feedback panel. To score an assignment using the rubric, you only need to click the rating scale box for each criterion. The score will automatically be applied to the student's grade. There is also an option to add comments with subjective feedback.

After using a rubric, it is important to be self-reflective and ask for student feedback on the rubric and assessment itself. Research shows that "...informal analysis of student responses can often play a large role in shaping and revising a... rubric, because student answers may hold conceptions and misconceptions that the instructor has not anticipated" (Allen & Tanner, 2006).

CETL has multiple resources on the Knowledge Base to assist you in their implementation. <https://cetl.udmercy.edu/knowledge/support/assessment-tools/rubrics>.

References

Brookhart, Susan. (2013). *How to create and use rubrics for formative assessment and grading*. ASCD.

Allen, D., & Tanner, K. (2006). Rubrics: Tools for making learning goals and evaluation criteria explicit for both teachers and learners. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 5(3), 197-203. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.06-06-0168>