**Creating and Using Rubrics**

**A rubric is a scoring tool that explicitly describes the instructor’s performance expectations for an assignment or piece of work.** A rubric identifies:

* criteria: the aspects of performance (e.g., argument, evidence, clarity) that will be assessed
* descriptors: the characteristics associated with each dimension (e.g., argument is demonstrable and original, evidence is diverse and compelling)
* performance levels: a rating scale that identifies students’ level of mastery within each criterion

Rubrics can be used to provide feedback to students on diverse types of assignments, from papers, projects, and oral presentations to artistic performances and group projects.

Benefitting from Rubrics

A carefully designed rubric can offer a number of benefits to instructors. Rubrics help instructors to:

* reduce the time spent grading by allowing instructors to refer to a substantive description without writing long comments
* help instructors more clearly identify strengths and weaknesses across an entire class and adjust their instruction appropriately
* help to ensure consistency across time and across graders
* reduce the uncertainty which can accompany grading
* discourage complaints about grades

An effective rubric can also offer several important benefits to students. Rubrics help students to:

* understand instructors’ expectations and standards
* use instructor feedback to improve their performance
* monitor and assess their progress as they work towards clearly indicated goals
* recognize their strengths and weaknesses and direct their efforts accordingly



