

Using Rubrics to Create Fair Assessment Processes

What is a rubric?

A rubric is a descriptive scoring tool that can be used to assess qualifications or performance against a standard set of criteria. A rubric includes:

- **Criteria:** The aspects of performance or qualifications that will be assessed
- **Descriptors:** The characteristics associated with each criterion
- **Performance Level:** A rating scale, with associated definitions, to evaluate qualifications or performance relative to each criterion

Why use a rubric?

Using a rubric is a way to make your criteria and standards clear to both the people doing the evaluation and those being evaluated. Rubrics will make evaluations more consistent and fair by ensuring that evaluations are done using a common set of criteria and scale. This can reduce implicit bias in assessments.

When should you use a rubric?

A rubric can be used any time you want to evaluate performance or assess qualifications, and they are particularly useful when there is complexity or several factors to be considered. Some examples of cases where you might want to employ a rubric include:

- Selecting individuals to fill open positions in a committee or unit.
- Evaluating nominations for an award or honor.
- Comparing candidates for volunteer roles.

How do you create a rubric?

- List the criteria or qualifications that should serve as the basis for assessment.
- Identify a scale on which criteria should be rated (small, even numbers are preferable – e.g., 1-4)
- Define the levels within the scale to clarify what experience or characteristics are associated with each level
- Determine whether any criteria should be weighted more or less heavily and assign weights.
- Design a format that will allow evaluators to use the rubric to easily assess qualifications (e.g., if using a spreadsheet program, the scale and weights can be pre-populated and automatic calculations built in)

How do you use a rubric?

- Each evaluator should assess each candidate independently using the rubric.
- When you have a team of people participating in the evaluations, the completed rubrics of all evaluators should be made available to the whole team to ensure transparency and facilitate discussion in cases where evaluators may have come to different conclusions.
- Rubrics should not be interpreted as strict quantitative measures. Rather, they can serve as a guide when comparing qualifications and provide a framework for further discussion.



Sample Rubric for an Achievement Award

Criteria: List the criteria against which the candidate will be measured. In the case of an award, these should start with the criteria that the award recognizes, but could also include other considerations, such as letters of support.

Sample Scale: 1 = Very Weak, 2 = Somewhat Weak, 3 = Somewhat Strong, 4= Very Strong

Sample Scale Definitions:

- Very Weak: Little or no experience or qualifications relative to the criterion; Weak letter of recommendation
- Somewhat Weak: Limited experience or qualifications relative to the criterion; Neutral letter of recommendation
- Somewhat Strong: Has experience or qualifications relative to the criterion; Strong letter of recommendation
- Very Strong: Very experienced or qualified relative to the criterion; Very strong letter of recommendation

Candidate	Criterion 1: Description	Criterion 2: Description	Criterion 3: Description	Criterion 4: Description	Total
Nominee 1	(Rating) x (Weight)	(Rating) x (Weight)	(Rating) x (Weight)	(Rating) x (Weight)	= Total Score
Nominee 2	(Rating) x (Weight)	(Rating) x (Weight)	(Rating) x (Weight)	(Rating) x (Weight)	= Total Score
Nominee 3	(Rating) x (Weight)	(Rating) x (Weight)	(Rating) x (Weight)	(Rating) x (Weight)	= Total Score