

Rubrics in the Block

Why use rubrics?

In the Block Mode, rubrics are used to assess students' work against criteria and standards for all assessments. Online rubrics make it possible to efficiently address the assignment criteria, assess these separately and calculate the aggregated grade. This helps markers make fair, transparent and reliable judgements, give very specific feedback and make marking consistent and objective. Rubrics help students to understand assessment requirements and how different levels of performance earn different grades.

Developing rubric criteria

To write a rubric, firstly develop the criteria which specify ***what must be done*** for the assessment. Assessment criteria inform students about the key aspects of the assessment task and indicate what is needed to achieve the unit learning outcomes. Criteria are weighted to indicate their relative importance.

A well-written criterion should provide content and context and guide students about what to include/do to meet expectations. Effective criteria should:

- Begin with a verb to indicate the level of cognition and/or skill required
- Be clear, with minimum overlap
- Align with the unit learning outcomes and requirements of the assessment

Focus criteria on the important aspects of the task and resist the temptation to have too many. This will help students to focus on what is expected from them and will make marking more efficient.

Writing effective descriptors and performance levels

Next, write the descriptors to explain what would be required to *demonstrate achievement of each criterion* at different levels of performance.

To do this, revisit the unit learning outcomes that are being measured by the assessment task, then write descriptions of what students need to do to meet that criterion to sufficiently demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome.

The descriptors used for each performance level should:

- Specify the performance level, rather than a relative standard (e.g. avoid ambiguous descriptors such as '*demonstrate an understanding of*' and consider the evidence required to demonstrate that understanding such as *outline, review, critique*, etc.)
- Ensure that each feature/aspect of criterion is consistently mentioned at all levels
- Provide actionable feedback on key areas of the assessment
- Use student-friendly language that is easy to understand, and
- Use positive language (e.g. *incomplete* vs *not done*).

How to use official VU grades in your rubric

The unit learning outcomes describe the minimum level of performance required to pass. It is therefore important to be aware of the influence of AQF levels on setting the P grade.

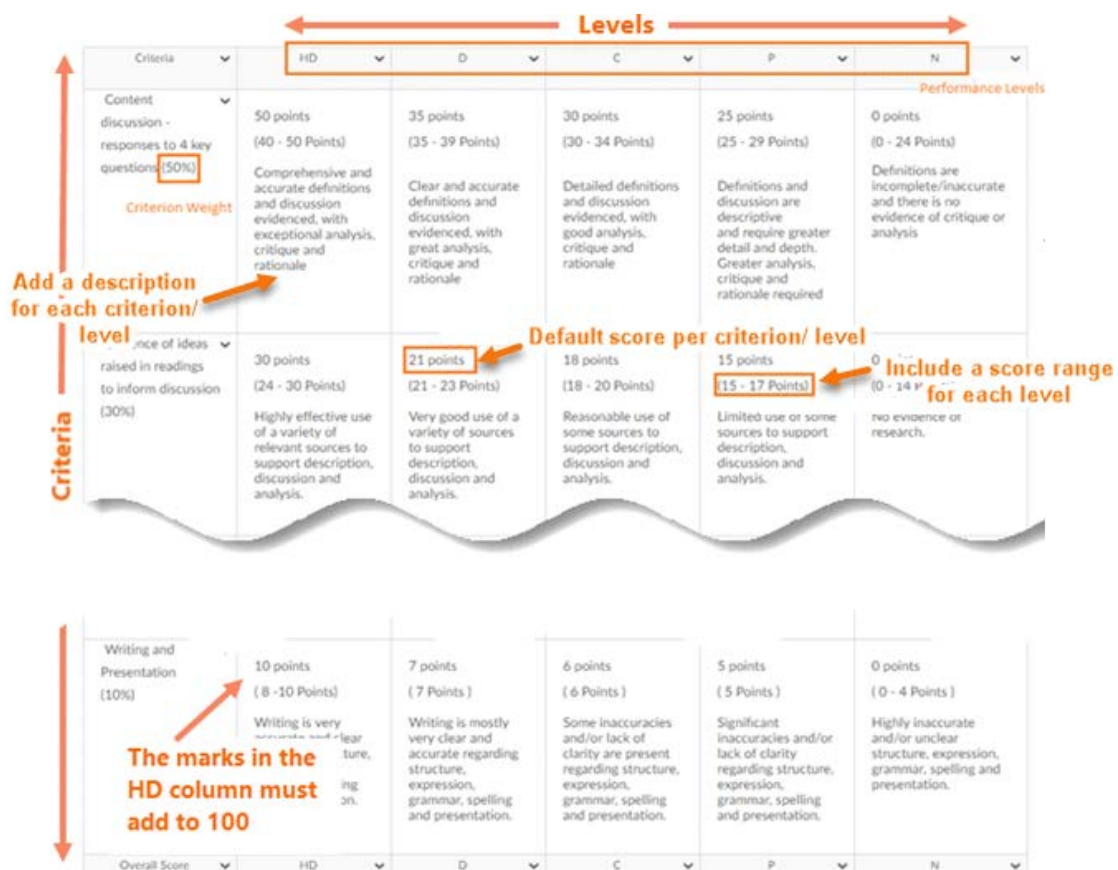
The figure below shows descriptors for the criterion *Key Arguments* for an AQF level 5 submission.

NOTE:

- P (pass) describes the minimum level required to meet the unit learning outcome.
- HD (high distinction) describes exceptional performance at this AQF level.

Criteria	Levels of performance relate to VU grades				
	HD	D	C	P	N
Key Arguments	Succinct, coherent argument established. Justification of argument is appropriate.	Coherent argument established. Justification of argument evident.	Argument established. Justification of argument occasionally difficult to follow.	Attempts to establish argument. Reasoning behind argument occasionally weak.	Limited attempt at establishing argument. Reasoning behind argument un-clear and/or incomplete.

Example: Sample rubric in VU Collaborate



Criteria	Levels				
	HD	D	C	P	N
Content discussion - responses to 4 key questions (50%) <i>Criterion Weight</i>	50 points (40 - 50 Points) Comprehensive and accurate definitions and discussion evidenced, with exceptional analysis, critique and rationale	35 points (35 - 39 Points) Clear and accurate definitions and discussion evidenced, with great analysis, critique and rationale	30 points (30 - 34 Points) Detailed definitions and discussion evidenced, with good analysis, critique and rationale	25 points (25 - 29 Points) Definitions and discussion are descriptive and require greater detail and depth. Greater analysis, critique and rationale required	0 points (0 - 24 Points) Definitions are incomplete/inaccurate and there is no evidence of critique or analysis
Use of Ideas raised in readings to inform discussion (30%)	30 points (24 - 30 Points) Highly effective use of a variety of relevant sources to support description, discussion and analysis.	21 points (21 - 23 Points) Very good use of a variety of sources to support description, discussion and analysis.	18 points (18 - 20 Points) Reasonable use of some sources to support description, discussion and analysis.	15 points (15 - 17 Points) Limited use or some sources to support description, discussion and analysis.	0 points (0 - 14 Points) no evidence or research.
Writing and Presentation (10%)	10 points (8 - 10 Points) Writing is very clear and accurate regarding structure, expression, grammar, spelling and presentation.	7 points (7 Points) Writing is mostly very clear and accurate regarding structure, expression, grammar, spelling and presentation.	6 points (6 Points) Some inaccuracies and/or lack of clarity are present regarding structure, expression, grammar, spelling and presentation.	5 points (5 Points) Significant inaccuracies and/or lack of clarity regarding structure, expression, grammar, spelling and presentation.	0 points (0 - 4 Points) Highly inaccurate and/or unclear structure, expression, grammar, spelling and presentation.
Overall Score	HD	D	C	P	N

Tips

- 1 Write the rubric as part of the assessment design process.
- 2 Design a rubric out of 100% for assessments worth more than 20%. Assessments worth less than 20% should be marked out of the value of the assessment and have fewer criteria.
- 3 The marks in the left-hand column must add to the value of the assessment, e.g. 100 for a 100% rubric. If you are using mid-points for the default score at each level, add a full-marks column.

What you need to provide

In the Block Model Master Space for your unit, you will find a few pre-prepared rubrics which you can use as examples. There is also a [compilation of sample rubrics](#) available on the Sharepoint site. You can edit them yourself or request support from the Design Team.

Want to know more?

Block Model Development Guidelines

- [Using the AQF to guide student learning and assessment in the block](#)

VU Collaborate Help Guides

- [VU Collaborate Help | Assessment | Rubrics](https://vucollaboratehelp.vu.edu.au/help-guides/assessment/rubrics) (<https://vucollaboratehelp.vu.edu.au/help-guides/assessment/rubrics>)
- [Creating an Analytic Rubric](https://vucollaboratehelp.vu.edu.au/help-guides/assessment/rubrics/576-creating-an-analytic-rubric) (<https://vucollaboratehelp.vu.edu.au/help-guides/assessment/rubrics/576-creating-an-analytic-rubric>)

Related articles

- [5 Ways to Create Great Rubrics](https://connected.vu.edu.au/5-ways-to-create-great-rubrics/), *ConnectEd blog* (<https://connected.vu.edu.au/5-ways-to-create-great-rubrics/>)
- [Using Assessment Rubrics](https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-rubrics), from the *UNSW Assessment as Learning Toolkit* website, (<https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/assessment-rubrics>)
- [Writing Standards Descriptors \(for rubrics\)](http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/assessment/writing-assessment-criteria/writing-standards-descriptors-for-rubrics), University of Tasmania <http://www.teaching-learning.utas.edu.au/assessment/writing-assessment-criteria/writing-standards-descriptors-for-rubrics>