

Sacramento State University Written Communication Program and Classroom Assessment Rubrics

The Sacramento State University written communication program and classroom assessment rubrics are adopted from the AAC&U VALUE rubrics. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The program assessment rubric is intended for program, department, and institutional-level use and the classroom rubric is intended for grading. The rubrics reflect university-wide standards for written communication for program assessment. However, since disciplinary writing expectations and values vary the rubrics can be modified for each discipline and instructor.

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

Framing Language

Evaluators using these rubrics must have information about the assignments or purposes for writing guiding writers' work. Also recommended is information about students' writing intentions and processes through evidence from reflective work such as cover letters or reflective portfolio essays. Best practices in writing assessment recommend assessing students' writing abilities in a variety of genres and for a variety of purposes and audiences. Best practices in writing assessment also recommend assessing students' abilities to write multiple drafts and revise and edit based on feedback from peers and instructors. According to the research, assessment of impromptu timed writing does not provide an accurate measure of students' ability to write at the college level.

Sacramento State University has a diverse student body, and many of our students are multilingual. The writing of multilingual students should be held to native speaker standards for content and addressing the assignment. However, because certain types of errors persist in multilingual writing even at an advanced level, multilingual students should be given adequate time to revise and edit, and some accommodation for multilingual features is appropriate when assessing final drafts.

Faculty interested in the research on writing assessment can consult the National Council of Teachers of English/Council of Writing Program Administrators' White Paper on Writing Assessment (2008; <http://www.wpacouncil.org/whitepaper>) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication's Writing Assessment: A Position Statement (2008; <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/123784.htm>).

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in these rubrics.

- **Content Development:** The ways in which the text explores and represents its topic in relation to its audience and purpose.
- **Context of and purpose for writing:** The context of writing is the situation surrounding a text: Who is reading it? Who is writing it? Under what circumstances will the text be shared or circulated? What social or political factors might affect how the text is composed or interpreted? The purpose for writing is the writer's intended effect on an audience. Writers might want to persuade or inform; they might want to report or summarize information; they might want to work through complexity or confusion; they might want to argue with other writers, or connect with other writers; they might want to convey urgency or amuse; they might write for themselves or for an assignment or to remember.
- **Disciplinary conventions:** Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g. introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to disciplinary and genre conventions, according to the writer's purpose for the text. Through increasingly sophisticated use of sources, writers develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and provide meaningful examples to readers.
- **Evidence:** Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers' ideas in a text.
- **Genre conventions:** Formal and informal rules for particular kinds of texts and/or media that guide formatting, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g. lab reports, academic papers, poetry, webpages, or personal essays.
- **Sources:** Texts (written, oral, behavioral, visual, or other) that writers draw on as they work for a variety of purposes -- to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas, for example.
- **Revision:** The act of changing global features of the text (purpose, content, genre, sources and evidence) during writing processes. Since writing is a social process, successful writers will seek out feedback from peers and the instructor during the revising process. To accurately assess students' ability to revise, students should be given time to engage in an extensive revision process with multiple drafts and feedback from peers and/or the instructor.
- **Editing:** The act of changing lower-order concerns of syntax and mechanics during writing processes—typically during the final stage. Whereas revision is focused on content, editing is focused on sentence-level matters. As with revision, to assess students' ability to edit, students should be given time to engage in an extensive editing process.

Sacramento State University Written Communication Rubric for Program Assessment

The following rubric is adopted from the AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric and is intended for use in program assessment.

Definition

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

The following rubric reflects university-wide standards for written communication for program assessment. However, since disciplinary writing expectations and values vary the rubric can be modified for each discipline and instructor.

	Capstone 4	3	Milestones 2	Benchmark 1
Context of and purpose for writing	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the context, audience, and purpose of the assigned task(s).	Demonstrates adequate understanding of the context, audience, and purpose of the assigned task(s).	Begins to demonstrate understanding of the context, audience, purpose, and of the assigned task(s).	Demonstrates minimal understanding of the context, audience, and purpose of the assigned task(s).
Content Development	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject throughout the work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content throughout the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Genre and disciplinary conventions	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s).	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s).	Follows basic expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s).	Attempts to follow basic expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s).
Sources and evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high quality, credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Revision	Demonstrates a need for minimal revision of global features (purpose, content, genre, sources and evidence). The writer has composed multiple drafts and made significant revision based on feedback from peers and/or the instructor.	Demonstrates a need for some further revision of global features (purpose, content, genre, sources and evidence). The writer has composed multiple drafts and made substantial revision based on feedback from peers and/or the instructor.	Demonstrates a need for further revision of global features (purpose, content, genre, sources and evidence). The writer has composed more than a single draft and made some revision based on feedback from peers and/or the instructor.	Demonstrates a need for significant revision of global features (purpose, content, genre, sources and evidence). The writer has composed one draft or has composed more than one draft but made minimal revision based on feedback from peers and/or the instructor.
Editing	Demonstrates careful editing that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with superior control of syntax and mechanics appropriate to the task(s).	Demonstrates careful editing that generally conveys meaning to readers with consistent control of syntax and mechanics appropriate to the task(s).	Demonstrates editing that generally conveys meaning to readers. Problems with syntax and mechanics do not impede understanding.	Demonstrates a need for significant editing. Problems with syntax and mechanics impede meaning.

Sacramento State University Written Communication Rubric for Classroom Assessment

The following rubric is adopted from the AAC & U Written Communication VALUE Rubric and is intended for use in classroom assessment.

Definition

Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies, and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.

The following rubric reflects university-wide standards for written communication for classroom assessment. However, since disciplinary writing expectations and values vary the rubric can be modified for each discipline and instructor.

	Superior	Exceeds Expectations	Meets expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Purpose	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the context, audience, and purpose of the assignment.	Demonstrates solid understanding of the context, audience, and purpose of the assigned task(s).	Demonstrates adequate understanding of the context, audience, purpose of the assignment.	Demonstrates minimal understanding of the context, audience, and purpose of the assignment.
Content	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate mastery of the subject throughout the work.	Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content throughout the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in some parts of the work.
Conventions	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of the conventions of the assignment.	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s).	Follows basic expectations of the conventions of the assignment.	Does not follow basic expectations of the conventions of the assignment.
Evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high quality, credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the assignment.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are situated within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates adequate use of credible, relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate for the assignment.	Demonstrates an attempt to use sources to support ideas in the writing.
Revision	Demonstrates a need for minimal revision of global features (purpose, content, genre, sources and evidence). The writer has composed multiple drafts and made significant revision based on feedback from peers and/or the instructor.	Demonstrates a need for minimal revision of global features (purpose, content, genre, sources and evidence). The writer has composed multiple drafts and made substantial revision based on feedback from peers and/or the instructor.	Demonstrates a need for some further revision of global features (purpose, content, genre, sources and evidence). The writer has composed more than a single draft and made some revision based on feedback from peers and/or the instructor.	Demonstrates a need for significant revision of global features (purpose, content, genre, sources and evidence). The writer has composed one draft or has composed more than one draft but made minimal revision based on feedback from peers and/or the instructor.
Editing	Demonstrates careful editing that skillfully communicates meaning to readers.	Demonstrates careful editing that generally conveys meaning to readers with consistent control of syntax and mechanics appropriate to the task(s).	Demonstrates editing that generally conveys meaning to readers. Problems with syntax and mechanics do not impede understanding.	Demonstrates a need for significant editing. Problems with syntax and mechanics impede meaning.