



RUBRIC CHECKLIST

Evaluation rubrics are an evidence-based tool for creating more equitable review processes. Like all tools, however, their design and implementation matter much.

Check your rubric against these standards:



PERFORMANCE LEVELS

3-5 levels are clearly defined to accommodate cognitive demands of evaluation and so applicant chances do not depend on which reviewer reads their file.



CLEAR CRITERIA

Aim for diverse criteria and provide a shared definition of each criterion or dimension of admissibility. Criteria may vary by disciplinary norms & program goals.



INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

Include criteria that are related to individual performance as well as competencies and knowledge that contribute to healthy, inclusive working and learning environments.



OBSERVABLE & MEASURABLE

Each definition should be clear, distinct, and meaningful. Refer reviewers to specific information that is observable in applications for consistent review.



SCORING STRATEGY

Each applicant should be rated on a scale of 1-3 or 1-5 for each criterion, with room for notes to explain evaluations. Set any weights in advance of distributing files.



ALIGNED TO APPLICATION

The ideal is to link your application materials and prompts to the rubric so you have information about key qualities on all applicants.



SYSTEMIC AWARENESS

Keep in mind how your quality definitions may reinforce inequalities or privilege some groups. Consider applicants in the context of their opportunities and challenges.



RACISM CONSCIOUS

Be mindful of how your definitions of excellence may be racialized by avoiding 1) criteria and definitions that lend themselves to biases and stereotypes and 2) criteria and definitions that institutionalize inequalities.



NORMED TO USERS

Provide training & practice with the rubric before reviewing files. Committee members may independently rate the same 2 applications, then discuss scores, focusing on differences.

Architecture of EVALUATION RUBRICS



Checklists, rating scales, & rubrics all delineate criteria, but they have different approaches to scoring (Brookhart, 2018).

“Reliable scoring of performance assessments can be enhanced by the use of rubrics, especially if they are *analytic*, *topic-specific*, and complemented with exemplars and/or rater training” (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007).



RECALL THE

AIMS OF A RUBRIC

WHEN DESIGNING & REVIEWING YOUR OWN:



Transparency

is enhanced when evaluation criteria and operationalizations are specified.



Fairness

Current law requires that all applicants be evaluated on the same criteria.



Reliability

across reviewers is more likely when they use protocols for evaluation.



Specificity

about evaluation criteria reduces risks of implicit bias relative to unstructured judgment.



EQUITY IN
GRADUATE EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM

MISSION: We are a learning community that builds capacity for systemic change toward equity in graduate education via

- Training and resources on evidence-based, equity-minded practices;
- Coaching for change-ready organizations & leaders;
- Building infrastructure for faculty development;
- Conducting and translating research.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & RESEARCH:

Quinn, D. (2021). How to reduce racial bias in grading. *Education Next*, 2(1)

Jonsson, A., & Svingby, G. (2007). The use of scoring rubrics: Reliability, validity and educational consequences. *Educational Research Review*, 2(2), 130-144.

Brookhart, S. M., & Chen, F. (2015). The quality and effectiveness of descriptive rubrics. *Educational Review*, 67(3), 343-368.

Young, N. T., Verboncoeur, N., Lam, D. C., & Caballero, M. D. (2023). Rubric-based holistic review represents a change from traditional graduate admissions approaches in physics. *Physical Review Physics Education Research*, 19(1), 010134.

Blair-Loy, M., Mayorova, O. V., Cosman, P. C., & Fraley, S. I. (2022). Can rubrics combat gender bias in faculty hiring? *Science*, 377(6601), 35-37.

Culpepper, D., White-Lewis, D., O'Meara, K., Templeton, L., & Anderson, J. (2023). Do Rubrics Live up to Their Promise? Examining How Rubrics Mitigate Bias in Faculty Hiring. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 1-28.