

LLU INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING OUTCOME: WRITTEN COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

DEVELOPED FOR USE IN PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

Based on the AAC&U Written Communication VALUE Rubric, value@aacu.org, assessment@llu.edu, or see sites below¹.

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, **not for grading**. The core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all academic levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialogue and understanding of student success.

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. Professional writing in a skills-based environment includes a vocabulary specific to the discipline.

Framing Language

This writing rubric is designed for use in a wide variety of educational programs. The most clear finding to emerge from decades of research on writing assessment is that the best writing assessments are locally determined and sensitive to local context and mission. Users of this rubric should, in the end, consider making adaptations and additions that clearly link the language of the rubric to individual campus contexts.

This rubric focuses assessment on how specific written work samples or collections of work respond to specific contexts. The central question guiding the rubric is “How well does writing respond to the needs of audience(s) for the work?” Evaluators using this rubric must have a clear understanding of the assignment and the writer’s interpretation. **It is important for faculty and institutions to include directions for writers about how they should represent the contexts and purposes of their work.**

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

- **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.
- **Communication effectiveness:** Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within the discipline, 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.
- **Genres and 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 and Evidence:** Source material that is used to extend, in purposeful ways, writers’ ideas in a text such as the use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence, support arguments, and 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 will develop an ability to differentiate between their own ideas and the ideas of others, to be mindful of academic integrity, to credit and build upon work already accomplished in the field or issue they are addressing, and to provide meaningful examples to readers.
- **Syntax and mechanics:** The ability to effectively use language in written form for a variety of purposes—to extend, argue with, develop, define, or shape their ideas.

¹ AAC&U - <http://www.aacu.org/value/metarubrics.cfm>; LLU Office of Educational Effectiveness - <http://www.llu.edu/central/assessment/index.page>

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Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet level-one performance.

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Context of and purpose for writing	Demonstrates thorough knowledge of context, audience, and purpose that clearly focuses to the assigned task(s) and communicates meaning effectively.	Demonstrates adequate knowledge of context, audience, and purpose on the assigned task(s). The task aligns with audience, purpose, and context.	Demonstrates limited knowledge of context, audience, and purpose of the assigned task(s). The task partially aligns with audience, purpose, and context.	Demonstrates minimal knowledge to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned task(s).
Communication effectiveness	Uses accurate, relevant, and compelling content to explore ideas within the context of the discipline that shapes the whole work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content that clearly expresses ideas through most of the work.	Uses appropriate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through some of the work.	Uses minimal appropriate and relevant content to develop simple ideas in minimal parts of the work.
Genres and conventions	Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices.	Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices.	Follows expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation.	Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation.
Sources and evidence	Demonstrates skillful use of high quality, credible, relevant sources to develop ideas that are appropriate for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates consistent use of credible, and relevant sources to support ideas that are appropriate within the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates an attempt to use credible and/or relevant sources to support ideas for the discipline and genre of the writing.	Demonstrates a minimal attempt to use credible sources to support ideas in the writing.
Syntax and mechanics	Uses appropriate language and mechanics that skillfully communicate meaning to readers with clarity, fluency and is virtually error-free.	Uses language and mechanics that generally convey meaning to readers with clarity and has minimal errors.	Uses language and mechanics that generally convey meaning to readers although writing includes many errors.	Uses language and mechanics that sometimes impede meaning because of errors in usage.

² AAC&U - <http://www.aacu.org/value/metarubrics.cfm>; LLU Office of Educational Effectiveness - <http://www.llu.edu/central/assessment/index.page>