

# Using and Contextualizing Student Learning Outcome Rubrics

Loma Linda University

The challenge of implementing campus-wide student learning outcomes (SLOs) at Loma Linda University is to develop an assessment strategy that first of all gives meaningful data to the programs but also to the schools and university as well. To address this challenge the Student Learning Outcome Committee has developed a method to contextualize rubrics.

**Contextualized Rubric:** A standard rubric that has been modified to more accurately meet a specific program's discipline and level.

There are three ways the LLU SLO rubrics can be modified to fit a program's unique discipline and level:

1. Add text with or without bullet points that specifically show what each numbered level looks like for the program.

	4	3	2	1
<b>Delivery</b>	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and speaker appears polished and confident. Does not use stalls and fillers. Does not rely on notes.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and speaker appears comfortable. Minimal use of stalls and fillers. Minimal reliance on reading.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and speaker appears tentative. Use of stalls and fillers is a mild distraction. Often refers to notes.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and speaker appears uncomfortable. Use of stalls and fillers distracts the listener. Reads from notes.

2. Add additional criteria elements (left column); however, only the original criteria elements will be reported to the University.

	4	3	2	1
<b>Central Message</b>	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported).	Central message is clear and consistent with supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Uses vocabulary appropriate for the audience. Extends audience vocabulary by defining words that might be new to most of the audience.	Uses vocabulary appropriate for the audience. Includes 1-2 words that might be new to most of the audience, but does not define them.	Uses vocabulary appropriate for the audience. Does not include any vocabulary that might be new to the audience.	Uses several (5 or more) words or phrases that are not understood by the audience.

3. Add your own 'level category labels,' but keep the rubric numbers the same—LLU rubrics only have numbers for level categories. One example of 'level category labels': 1 – Initial; 2 – Emerging; 3 – Developed; and 4 – Highly Developed.

	Highly Developed 4	Developed 3	Emerging 2	Initial 1
<b>Central Message</b>	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported).	Central message is clear and consistent with supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced, but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.

### Contextualizing Rubric Tips

- You can add to or extend the rubrics, but you cannot take away from the foundational rubrics. This will ensure a common assessment base for all programs.
- Program faculty should work together to contextualize rubrics.

### Additional Information for Assessing University SLOs

**The Ideal Assessment Cycle:** There are three key assessment points in the ideal assessment cycle:

1. *Baseline:* assessment at the beginning of the program; recommended but not required. Programs would track this for their own information.
2. *Formative:* assessment at the middle of the program; highly recommended but not required. Programs would track this for their own information.
3. *Summative:* assessment at the end of the program; required. Programs will track the results and report them to the University.

**Curriculum Map:** Update the program's curriculum map<sup>1</sup> annually. It shows the courses where instruction for each SLO takes place; however, it also needs to map where the tracking assessments will be done for each SLO. *Note:*

- Each learning outcome will have only *one* (1) summative assessment.
- Only *one* (1) course per program will have the summative tracking assessment per SLO.

**Assessment Matrix:** Assessment matrices need to be updated and submitted annually in the Online Program Self-review. Use the LLU SLO rubrics to assess the collected data from the assessment measurement tools identified in the program's assessment matrix.

**Track Learning:** Use the rubrics to assess student learning and growth over time. SLO assessment results must be tracked at the program level and reported to the University according to the SLO schedule.

**Grading:** Because these rubrics are designed to assess and track student learning *over the entire program*, it would be reasonable for students in a baseline assessment to receive a 1 or 2 on most of the criteria elements. However, if the rubric results were used with standard grading scales (4=A, 3=B, 2=C, and 1=D), they could negatively impact the students' grades. Ways to address this issue include the following:

- Use the rubrics to assess and track student progress in the programs over time, and continue to use the existing grading strategies for each of the assessment assignments as usual.
- Use the rubrics for grading but consider using a grade conversion scale for the baseline and formative assessments that make it appropriate for students to receive 1's and 2's on the baseline assessment and 2's and 3's on the formative assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> The LLU Curriculum Map and the Assessment Matrix templates have been updated and can be found at: <http://www.llu.edu/central/assessment/assessment.page>