

# **Development, Standards, and Grading**

## **Development**

CSUMB's ULO rubrics were derived from the [AAC&U VALUE Rubrics](#) and similarly describe expectations for work produced by undergraduate students over a four-year undergraduate program.

The assignment guides, rubrics, and rubric guides were developed by the CSUMB ULO Coordinators, Assessment Scholars, and the Director of [Communication Across the Disciplines](#) in response to institution-level assessments projects. (For a more detailed description and FAQs, see [CSUMB Assessment Philosophy and Practice](#).)

A significant finding of the initial assessments was that assignment prompts for the student work were not always aligned to the rubrics. Consequently, for student work that did not meet expectations, it was difficult to know whether that was because students had not yet achieved proficiency or because they were not prompted to demonstrate proficiency. This is a common finding among institutions that have engaged in this kind of assessment work, and a finding highlighted in the AAC&U report, "[On Solid Ground: VALUE Report 2017](#)."

## **Standards (ULO1 only)**

The CSUMB Assessment Committee has approved the level 3 rubric descriptors as the expectations for students graduating from CSUMB, as indicated on the [Academic Affairs Website](#). This standard was developed and justified as follows.

The rubrics for each of the CSUMB Intellectual Skills were derived from the corresponding [AAC&U VALUE Rubric](#), all of which have been validated and describe the development of core competencies over a 4-year undergraduate degree program (AAC&U, 2017; Rhodes & Finley, 2013). AAC&U is explicit in that they make "no attempt to set a specific threshold or target scores for achievement at two- and four-

year institutions” (AAC&U, 2017, p. 35), but they do suggest the following standard:

*scores moving from Milestone (3) to Capstone (4) are appropriate for those on the cusp of completing a baccalaureate degree. Indeed, some users have indicated that the Capstone level may be viewed as aspirational for many students, but necessary as a goal to encourage students’ and faculty’s best work.*

Further, the *WSCUC 2013 Accreditation Handbook, Revised* states, “Standards of performance are best set through internal discussion among faculty and other campus educators” (WSCUC, 2015, p. 31). Consequently, when collaboratively designing the rubrics the Assessment Coordinators and Assessment Scholars wrote level 3 (proficient) descriptors to match work they expected students to be able to produce at graduation, level 1 (beginning) to match work they expected students to be able to produce when they entered the university, and level 2 (developing) to match work that represents an intermediate milestone “that indicates students are moving toward more complex and sophisticated demonstrations of learning” (Rhodes & Finley, 2013 p. 6).

## **Adapting the rubrics for grading**

Although rubric levels are developmental, they can be adapted for course-level grading. Adapting the rubrics for course-level grading requires instructors explicitly and clearly communicate to students how rubric scores translate to grades. For example, in a sophomore-level course, for an assignment explicitly aligned the rubric, student work that meets level 2 in all rubric categories might receive a B; student work that meets level 2 in half of the rubric categories and meets level 3 in the remaining might receive a B+; student work that meets level 3 in all rubric categories might receive an A. For a senior-level course, expectations would be higher (e.g. work that meets level 3 in all rubric categories might receive a B, as opposed to an A for a sophomore-level course). Instructors may also wish to add additional performance levels and criteria and/or modify the rubric language (including the level descriptors) for working with student and grading purposes.

## References

Rhodes, T.L. & Finley, A. (2013). *Using the VALUE Rubrics for Improvement of Learning and Authentic Assessment*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.

AAC&U. (2017). *On Solid Ground, VALUE Report 2017*. Washington D.C.: Association of American Colleges & Universities. Available at <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/FINALFORPUBLICATIONRELEASEONSOLIDGROUND.pdf>

CSUMB Intellectual Skills Assignment Guides and Integrated Rubrics. Available at <https://csumb.edu/tla/intellectual-skills-assignment-guides-and-integrated-rubrics>

WSCUC. (2015). *Handbook of Accreditation 2013 Revised*. Available at <https://www.wscuc.org/content/2013-handbook-accreditation>