

Introduction to Brightspace Rubrics

Introduction

Rubrics enable you to grade more efficiently, clearly, and objectively. In addition, rubrics permit your students to see in advance exactly how their work will be evaluated.

This guide will introduce you to some essential terms, skills, and concepts for creating and using rubrics in Brightspace by D2L.

Rubric Types and Scoring

There are two general types of rubrics you can create in Brightspace – analytic and holistic.

Analytic rubrics – allow you to evaluate student work based on multiple, distinct criteria. Scoring options include:

- **No score** = No scores are pre-assigned to the levels and criteria. It permits you to leave standardized text feedback for students, but it does not calculate a score.
- **Points** = Points are assigned to each level. “Needs work” might be assigned 2 points, while “Meets requirements” might be assigned 5 points, and so on.
- **Custom points** = Points can be customized for levels as well as criteria. For example, you could assign 20 points to the “Content” criterion but only 10 to the “Spelling and Grammar” criterion.

Holistic rubrics – allow you to give an overall grade and comments, but do not allow you to break the rubric down into separate criteria. Scoring options include:

- **No score** = No scores are pre-assigned to the levels. It permits you to leave standardized text feedback for students, but it does not calculate a score.
- **Percentage** = Percentage values are assigned to each level; for example, an “Effective” level could be worth 85%.

Levels and Criteria

Think of a rubric in Brightspace as a grid or a table. Running vertically down the left side are the **criteria**. These tend to be things such as Content, Grammar, Clarity, Organization, and so on.

Running horizontally across the top are the **levels**. Levels are often named things such as Outstanding, Good, Fair, and Poor – but, you may think of more effective and precise ways to name your levels.

Within each cell in the rubric, you can enter your own **description** and **feedback**.

The description field is visible to students both before and after they complete the activity associated with the rubric, so that they can see what the expectations are. The text in the feedback field(s) won't be visible to students until after their work has been assessed.

While you can create, save, publish, and use a rubric that has nothing supplied in the description and feedback fields, you can make use of these fields to ensure that students have clear expectations and clear, meaningful feedback.

Here's an example of an analytic rubric for a discussion, using custom points as its scoring method. Running horizontally down the left are the criteria, and running horizontally along the top are the levels.

Criteria	Exemplary	Good	Developing	Unacceptable	
Content & originality	4 points Demonstrates close attention to the discussion instructions. Engages directly with the assigned text(s) or topic.	3 points Engages directly with the assigned text(s) or topic and responds sufficiently to the discussion instructions, but there's room for improvement.	1.5 points Responds to the discussion instructions, but does not engage closely enough with the text(s) or topics. Content may be vague or overly general.	0 points Does not respond closely enough to the discussion instructions.	/ 4
Development of ideas	3 points Ideas are explored in depth and in detail, and the overall development of the post is thorough and effective.	2 points Most ideas are sufficiently explored and the post meets the minimum required length, but the post could have been more effectively detailed and developed.	1 point Significant room for improvement exists -- the post might not quite meet the minimum required length, and/or might not have explored ideas in sufficient detail.	0 points Very poorly developed.	/ 3
Diction, grammar, & mechanics	3 points Contains no more than 1 issue or error in word choice, grammar, and mechanics.	2 points Contains no more than 3 issues or errors in word choice, grammar, and mechanics.	1 point Contains more than 3 issues or errors in word choice, grammar, and mechanics.	0 points Demonstrates little to no evidence of proofreading -- many errors are present.	/ 3
Total					/ 10

Overall Score

90% or higher
9 points minimum

80% or higher
8 points minimum

70% or higher
7 points minimum

60% or higher
6 points minimum

Less than 60%
0 points minimum

[Close](#)

Creating a Rubric

To create a new rubric, follow these steps:

1. Inside a course, click on **Other Resources > Rubrics**.
2. Click the **New Rubric** button.
3. Type a title for the rubric in the **Name** field.
4. Choose a rubric type. Analytic allows you to have levels **and** criteria, whereas Holistic rubrics only have levels.
5. Choose a scoring method. Custom Points (available only to Analytic rubrics) gives you the greatest flexibility.
6. Set up your levels. Add/delete levels as needed, then rename them as desired.
7. Set up your criteria. Add/delete criteria and criteria groups as needed and rename them as desired.

- For rubrics using **points** or **percentage** as the scoring method, enter the desired values for each level.

For rubrics using **custom points** as the scoring method, enter the maximum possible points for each criterion in each row total, press **<Enter>**, and the rubric will automatically divide that amount across the levels. In the example below, the number 10 was entered into the row total, and the rubric did the math and supplied numbers in each cell. (Note that you can manually change the numbers as needed.)

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Rubric' interface. At the top, it says 'Edit Rubric' with a dropdown arrow. Below that, there's a 'Name*' field containing 'Assignment rubric'. To the right, it says 'Saving...' and 'Status: Published' with a dropdown arrow. Below the name field, there are three dropdown menus: 'Type: Analytic', 'Scoring: Custom Points', and a 'Reverse Level Order' toggle. The main part of the interface is a table with five columns and two rows. The columns are labeled 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Fair', and 'Developing'. The first row has input fields for each level, each with a trash icon below it. The second row has input fields for points: '10 pt', '7.5 pt', '5 pt', and '2.5 pt'. To the right of these is a total field containing '/ 10'. Below the table is an 'Initial Feedback' section with a text input field.

- Enter descriptions and feedback as desired.
- Set up your **Overall Score** levels and values. Your levels could correspond to letter grades (A, B, C, and so on) or could be any other levels of achievement that you wish. Note that the Overall Score is not auto-totalling numbers from your levels and criteria; it is entirely separate. You can enter any breaking points that you wish for the different overall scores. Shown below is a standard example of a letter grade overall scoring system.

The screenshot shows the 'Overall Score' interface. At the top, it says 'Overall Score'. Below that, it says 'Each submission is assigned a level of achievement based on overall rubric score.' The main part of the interface is a table with five columns and two rows. The columns are labeled 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D', and 'F'. The first row has input fields for each level, each with a trash icon below it. The second row has input fields for point values: '100 or more', '90 or more', '80 or more', '70 or more', and '0 or more'. To the right of these is a total field containing '/ 100'.

- The rubric auto-saves as you work on it, so when you've finished building it, click **Close** at the bottom of the screen.

Rubric Visibility

Even if a rubric is in draft status and isn't being used to grade student work, it might still be visible to students. To change the visibility of a rubric, edit the rubric and scroll all the way to the bottom of the screen, until you see the word **Options**.

The screenshot shows the 'Overall Score' section of a rubric editor. It features a table with five columns representing different achievement levels: '90% or higher', '80% or higher', '70% or higher', '60% or higher', and 'Less than 60%'. Below each percentage is a text input field containing a score (9, 8, 7, 6, 0) and the text 'or more', followed by a trash icon. Below the table is the 'Options' section, which is expanded to show three radio button options under 'Rubric Visibility': 'Rubric is visible to students', 'Rubric is hidden from students' (which is selected), and 'Rubric is hidden from students until feedback is published'. There is also a checkbox option under 'Score Visibility' labeled 'Hide scores from students'.

Click to expand the options, and there you will see three visibility choices:

- **Rubric is visible to students:** Students can see the rubric regardless of whether it is connected to a course activity, provided that its status is either Draft or Published. (Students cannot view Archived rubrics.)
- **Rubric is hidden from students:** Students will not see the rubric, even if it is attached to a course activity, and even if you have used it to assess their work.
- **Rubric is hidden from students until feedback is published:** Students cannot see the rubric until after you have graded their work and published the feedback.

There's one other visibility option, too, that controls whether students can see the specific score values within the rubric levels and criteria (**Hide scores from students**). You could, for example, have an analytic rubric using points or custom points, yet choose to hide the scores from students.

Rubric Statuses

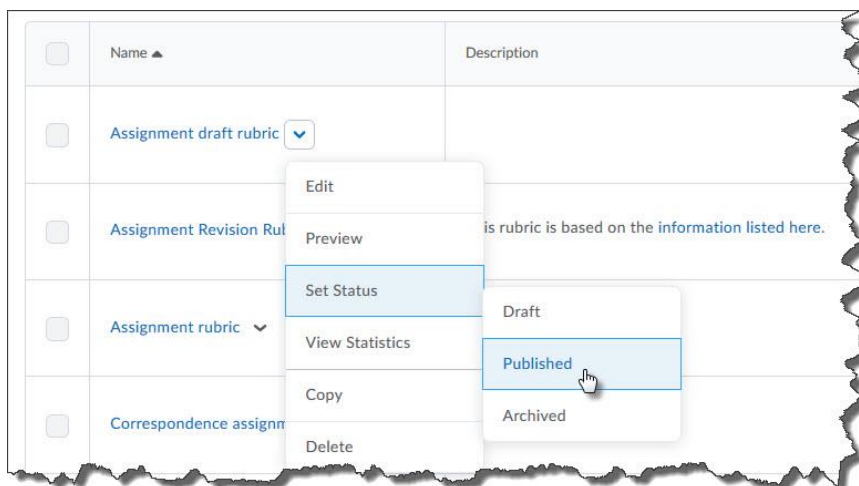
There are three rubric statuses in Brightspace – Draft, Published, and Archived.

New rubrics default to **Draft** status. They cannot be associated with course activities and cannot be used to grade.

Before you can begin using a rubric, you'll need to change its status to **Published**. Only a Published rubric can be associated with a discussion topic, dropbox folder, or grade item.

If you are done using a rubric and won't need it again, you can change its status to **Archived**, and it will no longer display in your list of rubrics. You can, however, expand the search options on the Rubrics screen and choose to search for archived rubrics, which can then be returned to Draft or Published status.

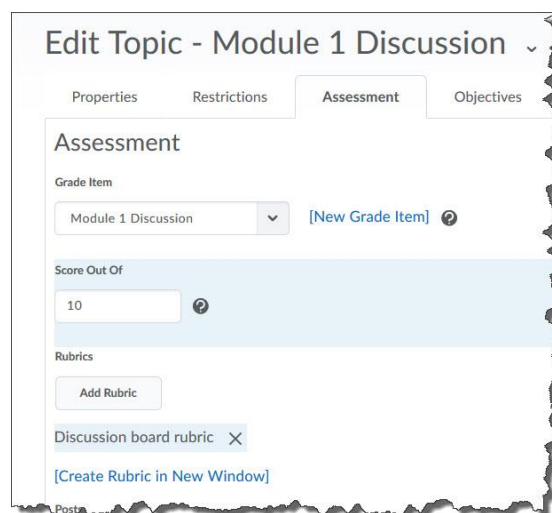
To change a rubric's status, first go to the Rubrics screen in the course (**Other Resources > Rubrics**), click the drop-down arrow by the name of the rubric, click **Set Status**, then select one of the options (as shown below).



Associating rubrics with discussions and dropbox folders

To associate a rubric with a discussion topic:

1. Edit the discussion topic and click on its **Assessment** tab.
2. Click the **Add Rubric** button. The “Select Rubric” dialog box appears.
3. Click the check box next to the rubric you want to use, then click **Add Selected**.
4. Click **Save and Close** to save the changes to the discussion topic.



Associating a rubric with a dropbox folder is similar – the only difference is that you’ll find the **Add Rubric** button on the Properties tab.

To associate a rubric with a dropbox folder:

1. Edit the folder and scroll down to the bottom half of the **Properties** tab.
2. Click the **Add Rubric** button. The “Select Rubric” dialog box appears.
3. Click the check box next to the rubric you want to use, then click **Add Selected**.
4. Click **Save and Close** to save the changes to the dropbox folder.

Associating rubrics with grade items

Rubrics can only be associated with grade items that are not connected to any other course activities. For example, you might associate a rubric with a grade item in order to assess an in-class activity that students were not submitting online. To associate a rubric with a grade item:

1. Click on **Grades > Manage Grades** and locate the grade item in the list.
2. Click the drop-down arrow next to the grade item, and choose **Edit Grade Item**.
3. Scroll down to the middle of the Properties tab until you see the “Grading” information and settings.
4. Click the **Add Rubric** button. The “Select Rubric” dialog box appears.
5. Click the check box next to the rubric you want to use, then click **Add Selected**.
6. Click **Save and Close** to save the changes to the grade item.

Tips to remember:

- If you are attempting to associate a rubric with a course activity but don't see the rubric listed, go back to the Rubrics tool and check its status. Rubrics in Draft status cannot be associated with course items – they must be **Published** first.
- If a rubric is currently in use, you cannot edit it. However, you can make a copy of the original, then edit the copy.
- Be cautious when changing a rubric's type and/or scoring method. Switching between different options can result in loss of information.
- Rubrics provide structure, but they don't box you in – you can override scores as needed.

Rubric resources

Looking for more rubrics information and inspiration? Here are some useful resources:

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>

RubiStar is a free rubric creator with easy to use templates that you might use as a basis from which to start building your own rubrics in Brightspace.

<http://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/rubrics.html>

Rubric information and examples from the Eberly Center at Carnegie Mellon University.

<https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching-guides/feedback-grading/rubrics/Pages/default.aspx>

Lots of helpful rubric information from the DePaul University Teaching Commons, plus links to examples and resources.

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Center for Teaching & Learning

<https://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Faculty/Feedback/Grading-Commenting/Model-Rubrics-Descriptors>

Examples of writing rubrics from the University Writing Center at Texas A&M University.

<https://ctal.udel.edu/resources-2/rubrics/>

Rubric information, templates, and other resources from the Center for Teaching & Assessment of Learning at the University of Delaware.

<http://tinyurl.com/pqgkqnm>

Rationale behind using rubrics, and an excellent breakdown of types of rubrics and their advantages/disadvantages from the ASCD.