

## What, when, and why use rubrics?

### What is a rubric?

According to the glossary of education reform<sup>1</sup>, a rubric is an assessment tool used to measure the achievement of learning outcomes against a set of criteria. Rubrics help improve the consistency and objectivity of judging the quality of student work.

Rubrics take various forms and vary in detail. For example, a rubric can be holistic, analytic, or single point. This external online resource from Cult of Pedagogy<sup>2</sup> explains what these types are and what advantages and disadvantages each type has.

### When to use a rubric?

Rubrics are typically used to assess complex learning and performance, that is, they are used to assess procedural knowledge (application, creation, and evaluation of knowledge) rather than declarative knowledge (foundational and factual knowledge about a topic). The table below shows some example assessment tasks when rubrics could be used and when not required.

Rubrics needed	Rubrics not required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essays, reports, case analyses</li> <li>• Short/long answers in exams/tests</li> <li>• Presentations, discussions, team engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple choice questions</li> <li>• Fill in the blank questions</li> <li>• Pure calculations when not assessing the process</li> </ul>

### Why use a rubric?

- It is a timesaver! It reduces time needed for marking and serves as a feedback and feedforward tool
- The use of rubrics addresses many requirements of the new assessment policy
- It clearly and effectively communicates to students how their work will be assessed
- It shapes student behaviour
- It improves marking reliability when there are several markers

If you would like to discuss the use of rubrics for your course assessment, please contact us at [ilt@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ilt@auckland.ac.nz)

1. <https://www.edglossary.org/rubric/>

2. <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/holistic-analytic-single-point-rubrics/>