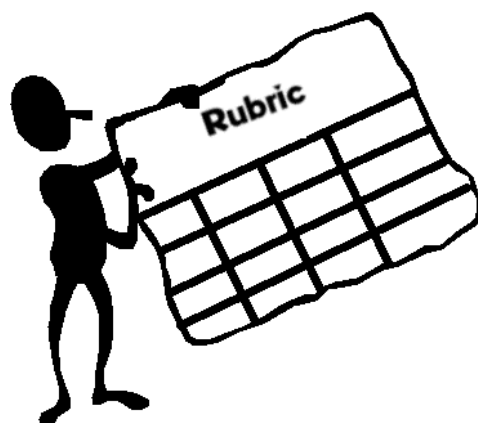


## USING RUBRICS



Final grades give students some information about how well they did in a course, but they do not help the students pinpoint where they fell short and how they could improve. Like law firm associates, law students learn more when they receive more feedback. Grading rubrics help provide some of that information, but in a format that does not overwhelm the person doing the grading.

For assignments during the semester, providing students with the rubric that will be used to grade student performance also helps define your expectations and can improve the quality of the work that you get from the students. (Sometimes expectations that we take for granted are not so obvious to students, who lack our familiarity with law and law practice).

Rubrics generally contain two components. One is a list of the various elements of the grade. For a writing project, for example, these might include both points of substantive law and requirements of good writing. The other component is a range (usually 3 - 5 variables) describing varying quality of the student's work. It may use adjectives ranging from Unacceptable to Excellent, and it will describe in more detail what increasingly good work looks like. One of the advantages of rubrics is that creating them encourages us, as the teachers, to think more precisely about what we hope the students will do. Even rubrics that the students receive only when we return a graded assignment help them understand ways in which their work could have been stronger.

The following links provide general information about how and why rubrics can be used in the law school setting, as well as some examples and a blank template.