ACADEMY OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

11 Scoring Guidelines

VALUE Calibration Training

This document provides essential scoring guidelines for AAC&U's VALUE Calibration Training participants to ensure consistent and accurate application of VALUE rubrics when evaluating student artifacts.

1 Scoring vs. Grading.

This is not grading. This is scoring. Grading and scoring have different purposes and different procedures. Please endeavor to set aside your "typical grading habits" as you score.

- The student artifact you are scoring has already been graded. When you score, you are not concerned with whether the student did the assignment or not. You are only concerned with the student's performance on the performance descriptors of the rubric. When you find yourself considering whether or not the student did the assignment, remember to refocus your evaluation on the performance descriptors of the rubric.

2 Assignment Instructions Unavailable.

Assignment instructions that prompted the creation of the student artifact you are scoring are not available to scorers.

- AAC&U has found that when scorers have access to the assignment instructions for the student artifacts being scored, it is more difficult to focus on evaluating the artifact against the performance descriptors of the rubric.

3 Scores Are Whole Numbers.

Performance level scores are whole numbers only (i.e., either 4, 3, 2, 1, or 0).

- Pick one whole number score for each of the rubric's dimensions. Scores that are not whole numbers (e.g., "2.5") are not allowed.
- Score each rubric dimension separately such that a single score is selected for each of the rubric's dimensions. Depending on the rubric, there will be five or six dimension scores for each student artifact.

4 Zero Is a Score.

Zero is an option as a performance level score but requires a narrative explanation.

- A 0 is an appropriate score to assign for a dimension when the student artifact does not contain evidence relevant to any performance level (4-1) based on the performance descriptors. In other words, a zero is only an appropriate score for a dimension if an artifact does not meet a minimum of level 1 performance on at least one behavior listed in the performance descriptor.
- When assigning a score of 0, a narrative explanation of the reason behind a score of 0 is required.

5 No Rubric Revision Today.

Use the rubric as it is written. Revision will happen at a later date.

- You are using the rubric as it is written when scoring.
- AAC&U will begin a revision process of the VALUE rubrics at a later time. If you have ideas for revisions as you score, please email suggested rubric revisions to value@aacu.org.

6 Focus On the Learning Outcome and Performance Descriptors.

When scoring, avoid focusing on whether or not the content of the student artifact is correct. Instead, focus on the learning outcome of the rubric by paying close attention to the performance descriptors for each rubric dimension.

- The correctness of the content has already been evaluated by the instructor who required and graded the assignment. You are evaluating the student artifact based on the learning outcome of focus by using the performance descriptors only.
- You may not be an expert in the discipline of the student artifact you are scoring. However, you are well-equipped to evaluate the artifact against the learning outcome.
- Unless scoring an artifact for the Written Communication learning outcome, scorers should disregard issues with grammar and mechanics. In general, grammatical and mechanical concerns should not influence the scores selected. For example, if the student artifact demonstrates behaviors consistent with a performance level score of 4 (Capstone) on a given dimension, that score must be assigned even if the scorer may be inclined to assign a lower score because the artifact is poorly written. Conversely, if the student artifact demonstrates behaviors consistent with a performance level score of 1 (Benchmark) on a given dimension, that score must be assigned even if the scorer may be inclined to assign a higher score because the artifact is well-written. If, however, mechanical errors impede the scorer's ability to discern evidence in a performance descriptor, the scorer should not make assumptions about what the student is intending to communicate.

7 Match Student Artifact Section to Performance Descriptor.

When scoring, connect specific evidence in the artifact with the appropriate performance descriptors in the rubric.

- Be sure to notice the specific places in each student artifact where evidence matches the performance descriptors in the rubric. Clear evidence should support the performance level you select for each rubric dimension.
- Especially during training, we recommend that you make notes in the margin of the rubric when evidence of a performance descriptor is found in the student artifact. Then, use your notes to determine the appropriate performance level.

8 Each Performance Descriptor Reflects a Level of Developmental Achievement.

It is important to remember that the VALUE rubrics emphasize students' developmental progression in achievement or mastery. Movement from one performance level to another reflects a student's progression from one developmental level to another for each learning outcome dimension. Please note that performance levels do not necessarily align with years in college. In other words, you are not assessing if students are performing at a freshman/first-year, sophomore, junior, or senior level. Instead, you are assessing evidence in the student's work that aligns with one of four developmental levels—Capstone (4), Milestone (3), Milestone (2), or Benchmark (1)—as described in the performance descriptors for each performance level and dimension.

- Each performance descriptor assumes mastery of behaviors from all performance descriptors in the lower performance levels. For instance, in one rubric, the level 3 performance descriptor reads "Identifies own and others' assumptions" and the level 2 performance descriptor reads "Questions some assumptions. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa)." Thus, an artifact score of level 3 implies the student has demonstrated the behaviors in level 2 as well as level 3. For a level 3 score in this example, the student's work must both identify and question assumptions.

9 All Behaviors in the Performance Descriptor Must Be Present in the Student Artifact to Assign a Performance Level Score.

All behaviors in a performance descriptor must be present in the artifact to select that performance level as a score for that dimension of the rubric.

- Many VALUE rubrics ask scorers to evaluate multiple behaviors in each performance descriptor. When that happens, all behaviors in the performance descriptor must be present in the student artifact to select the performance level score for that rubric dimension.
    - For instance, if a performance descriptor reads, "Questions some assumptions. Identifies several relevant contexts when presenting a position. May be more aware of others' assumptions than one's own (or vice versa)," then the student artifact must include evidence of all three behaviors at the performance level described.
    - If all three behaviors are not present in the artifact at the performance level described, it is not an appropriate score for the dimension, and the scorer should examine the performance descriptors for the next level down.
- As stated in section 4, the only exception to this is when assigning a score of zero. Because a zero represents a complete absence of evidence, a performance level 1 is appropriate for a dimension even if only a single behavior listed in the level 1 performance descriptor is evident in the student artifact.

10 Score Multiple Behaviors Listed in a Performance Descriptor Separately.

If a performance descriptor in the rubric describes more than one behavior, please determine the score for each behavior separately before determining the final score for that dimension.

- Many VALUE Rubrics require evaluation of multiple behaviors in a single performance descriptor. When that happens, please follow this procedure for scoring:
  1. Score the first behavior listed in the performance descriptor on its own.
  2. Score the second behavior listed in the performance descriptor on its own.
  3. Score the third behavior listed in the performance descriptor on its own.
- Scoring each behavior separately helps to ensure that all behaviors in a performance descriptor are present in the artifact and are demonstrated at least at the performance level you assign to that dimension. For example, if one behavior is demonstrated at a performance level of 2, then even if the other two behaviors are demonstrated at a level 3, the learning outcome dimension must be given a score of performance level 2.

11 Avoid Inferring Performance Into Written Text.

Do not infer student performance into a student artifact. When reading student artifacts, please assign scores for performance levels based only on the behaviors the student has clearly demonstrated in the text of the artifact.

- It is easy to read into what a student has written. For instance, if a student has gone to the trouble of learning a foreign language, it is easy to read into a student artifact that the student is curious about the country where the language is spoken. However, unless the student specifically describes feeling curious in the text of the artifact, a scorer should not infer curiosity.

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