Developing a Rubric

“A rubric is a scoring tool that lays out the specific expectations for an assignment. Rubrics divide an assignment into its component parts and provide a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance for each of those parts.” —Stevens and Levi (2005)

1. **Identify the purpose of using a rubric for the assignment**
   Instructors should review the learning outcomes associated with the assignment, and reflect on the goals that need to be accomplished by the use of a rubric. This helps determine the type of rubric to use.

2. **Gather samples of rubrics to adapt**
   Most likely, instructors will find rubrics developed by others for similar learning outcomes. Good examples include the AAC&U’s VALUE rubrics for 16 essential learning outcomes.

3. **Define major elements of your assignments**
   Identify important elements for your assignment that defines the quality of a complete student work. Order them from most important to the least and use the top ones as the dimensions for your rubric. Assign weights to the dimensions accordingly if you like to show different priorities of the elements.

4. **Determine levels of performance**
   Define the rating scale to measure levels of performance. Use words, numbers or letter grades to help distinguish different levels clearly. Examples include “excellent”, “competent”, “needs improvement”. Typically, rubrics include 3-5 levels in the rating scale.

5. **Describe each level of a given dimension**
   Write a descriptive paragraph to outline characteristics of each level of a given dimension. Start at the lowest and highest levels. If the assignment has been given before, use the best and the weakest student works to help you define the characteristics of an exemplary or an unacceptable product.

6. **Involve your students in the rubric design**
   Involving students in the design process helps increase students’ understanding and awareness of the expectations for the assignment.

7. **Review and revise**
   Share the rubric with students as early as possible, discussing expectations and collecting student feedback on the rubric’s clarity and effectiveness. Revise the rubric accordingly based on areas of confusion. Instructors should also consider further revising the rubric after implementing the rubric for grading.