**Starting Point Rubric for Written Communication[[1]](#footnote-1)**

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|  | **Exceeds Expectations**  **4** | **Meets Expectations**  **3** | **Below Expectations**  **2** | **Well Below Expectations**  **1** |
| ***Context and Purpose for Writing***  *Includes considerations of audience, purpose, and the circumstances surrounding the writing task(s)* |  |  |  |  |
| ***Content Development***  *Uses appropriate, relevant, and compelling content to illustrate an excellent grasp of the subject, conveying the writer’s understanding, and shaping the whole work.* |  |  |  |  |
| ***Genre and Discipline-Specific Conventions***  *Uses formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields.* |  |  |  |  |
| ***Claims***  *Puts forth a claim, thesis or argument.* |  |  |  |  |
| ***Credible Evidence***  *Supports claims.* |  |  |  |  |
| ***Analysis***  *Organizes and synthesizes evidence to reveal insightful patterns, differences, or similarities related to focus.* |  |  |  |  |
| ***Control of Syntax and Mechanics***  *Follows the conventions of standard edited English or other language suitable to the assignment.* |  |  |  |  |
| ***Overall Impact***  *A holistic judgment of the piece’s impact or quality.* |  |  |  |  |
| ***Other Criterion added by Department*** |  |  |  |  |

**Instructions**—(1)Departments try to use as many of the established criteria as are relevant to the student artifact they are assessing, subtract the rest, and add criteria as needed. (2) Departments work with Tom Zane to write levels-of-performance descriptors for each row of the rubric. (3) All departments agree that “expectations” refers to faculty expectations pertaining to the assignment to which students are responding, regardless of each student’s credit standing, and not expectations of a hypothetical graduating student on that assignment.

**Assessment Rubric for Political Science Essays**

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|  | **Exceeds Expectations**  **4** | **Meets Expectations**  **3** | **Below Expectations**  **2** | **Well Below Expect.**  **1** |
| ***Content Development*** | Writer correctly employs nearly all of the major political concepts, personalities, or events needed to give a complete answer to the essay prompt. | The writer correctly employs most of the major political concepts, personalities, or events needed to give a complete answer to the essay prompt, or employs them, but with some errors in their application to the topic. | The writer omits some major political concepts, personalities or events needed to give a complete answer to the essay prompt, and/or makes significant errors in their application to the topic. | The writer hardly uses major political concepts, personalities, or events at all in the essay, and/or makes significant errors in their application to the topic. |
| ***Claims*** | Easily identifiable thesis that is plausible, compelling and on topic. | Promising thesis, but may be slightly unclear or off topic, or lacking in insight or originality. | Unclear or largely off-topic thesis (possibly unoriginal or uninteresting) that provides little around which to structure the essay. | Thesis is difficult to identify at all or may be entirely off topic, and may be a bland restatement of an obvious point. |
| ***Credible Evidence*** | Thesis and subordinate claims are usually supported by credible evidence. | Thesis and subordinate claims are generally supported by credible evidence. | Thesis and subordinate claims are sometimes supported by evidence. | Thesis and subordinate claims are often unsupported. |
| ***Analysis*** | Analysis is original, fresh and convincing—indicating the author has thought carefully about his/her approach. | Analysis is usually original, fresh, and compelling. | Analysis is not original, fresh and compelling, because it is limited to the cited evidence. | Original analysis is not evident. |
| ***Control of Syntax and Mechanics*** | The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, paragraphing, word meaning) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few that just minor revisions would get this piece ready to publish. | The writer usually demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be relatively few. | The writer shows limited control over standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability. | Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage, grammar and paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. |

**Assessment Rubric for Political Science Group Poster Presentations**

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|  | **Exceeds Expectations**  **4** | **Meets Expectations**  **3** | **Below Expectations**  **2** | **Well Below Expect.**  **1** |
| ***Context and Purpose***  *(Hypothetical audience at professional conference)* | Poster clearly meets audience expectations at a professional conference. | Poster nearly matches audience expectations at a professional conference. | Poster does not meet audience expectations at a professional conference. | Poster would be noticeably out of place at a professional conference. |
| ***Content Development*** | The poster correctly employs all the major political concepts, personalities, and events needed to effectively respond to the assignment prompt. | The poster correctly employs most of the major political concepts, personalities, and events needed to effectively respond to the assignment prompt, or employs them all, but with some errors in their application to the topic. | The poster omits some major political concepts, personalities and events needed to effectively respond to the assignment prompt, and/or makes significant errors in their application to the topic. | The poster hardly uses major political concepts, personalities, and events at all, and/or makes significant errors in their application to the topic. |
| ***Claims***  *(Use only if the assignment asks students to make a claim with the poster, rather than if the poster is strictly informational)* | Easily identifiable thesis that is plausible, compelling and on topic. | Promising thesis, but may be slightly unclear or off topic, or lacking in insight or originality. | Unclear or largely off-topic thesis (possibly unoriginal or uninteresting) that provides little around which to structure the poster. | Thesis is difficult to identify at all or may be entirely off topic, and may be a bland restatement of an obvious point. |
| ***Credible Evidence*** | The poster almost always employs credible evidence. | The poster generally employs credible evidence. | The poster sometimes employs credible evidence. | The poster does not employ credible evidence. |
| ***Genre and Discipline-Specific Conventions***  *(For a professional poster presentation)* | The poster deftly balances textual and graphical elements. | The poster does a good job balancing textual and graphical elements. | The poster does not effectively balance textual and graphical elements. | The poster fails to balance textual and graphical elements |
| ***Control of Syntax and Mechanics*** | The poster reflects a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g., spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, usage, word meaning paragraphing) and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be very few. | The poster usually reflects a good grasp of standard writing conventions and uses conventions effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be relatively few. | The poster reflects limited control over standard writing conventions. Conventions are sometimes handled well and enhance readability; at other times, errors are distracting and impair readability. | Errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage, grammar and paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the poster difficult to read. |
| ***Organization*** | The poster is very well organized. | The poster is generally well organized. | The poster is not well organized. | The poster is poorly organized. |

1. This is a modified outline of the VALUE Rubric for Written Communication, published by the Association of American Colleges and Universities. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)