



# ORAL COMMUNICATION RUBRIC

Based upon the AAC&U Oral Communication VALUE rubric: <http://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics/OralCommunication.cfm>



## About the VALUE Rubrics

The AAC&U VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that the evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

In developing an assessment plan for the Core, the THECB strongly encouraged institutions to use "externally informed benchmarks"<sup>1</sup> in the assessment of the Core. As such, UHD has committed to using the VALUE rubrics as part of its assessment plan for the Core.

## Definition

The THECB defines communication as the effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through oral and visual communication. UHD has elected to concentrate on oral communication as a separate communication element and has adopted the AAC&U interpretation of oral communication as an expanded definition: Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, foster understanding, or promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors.

## Framing Language

Oral communication takes many forms. This rubric is specifically designed to evaluate the oral presentations of a single speaker at a time and is best applied to live or video-recorded presentations. It is recommended that each speaker be evaluated separately for panel or group presentations. This rubric best applies to presentations of sufficient length such that a central message is conveyed, supported by one or more forms of supporting materials, and includes a purposeful organization. An oral answer to a single question not designed to be structured into a presentation does not readily apply to this rubric.

## Glossary

*The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.*

- Central message: The main point/thesis/"bottom line"/"take-away" of a presentation. A clear central message is easy to identify; a compelling central message is also vivid and memorable.
- Delivery techniques: Posture, gestures, eye contact, and use of the voice. Delivery techniques enhance the effectiveness of the presentation when the speaker stands and moves with authority, looks more often at the audience than at their speaking materials/notes, uses the voice expressively, and uses few vocal fillers ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc.).
- Language: Vocabulary, terminology, and sentence structure. Language that supports the effectiveness of a presentation is appropriate to the topic and audience, grammatical, clear, and free from bias. Language that enhances the effectiveness of a presentation is also vivid, imaginative, and expressive.
- Organization: The grouping and sequencing of ideas and supporting material in a presentation. An organizational pattern that typically supports the effectiveness of a presentation includes an introduction, one or more identifiable sections in the body of the speech, and a conclusion. An organizational pattern that enhances the effectiveness of the presentation reflects a purposeful choice among possible alternatives, such as a chronological pattern, a problem-solution pattern, an analysis-of-parts pattern, etc., that makes the presentation's content easier to follow and more likely to accomplish its purpose.
- Supporting material: Explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities, and other kinds of information or analysis that support the principal ideas of the presentation. Supporting material is generally credible when it is relevant and derived from reliable and appropriate sources. Supporting material is highly credible when it is also vivid and varied across the types listed above (e.g., a mix of examples, statistics, and references to authorities). Supporting material may also serve the purpose of establishing the speaker's credibility. For example, in presenting a creative work such as a dramatic reading of Shakespeare, supporting evidence may not advance the ideas of Shakespeare but rather serve to establish the speaker as a credible Shakespearean actor.

<sup>1</sup> THECB Assessment of the Core Guidelines: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=417252EA-B240-62F7-9F6A1A125C83BE08> (Retrieved 10/6/2014).



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Definition: Oral communication skills include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through oral communication. Courses in this category focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. Courses involve the command of oral communication skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

Foundation Component Areas Where Communication is Taught: All Foundational Component Areas except Social and Behavior Sciences

	<i>Mastery (Senior Level) Point-value: 4</i>	<i>Proficient (Junior Level) Point-value: 3</i>	<i>Developing (Sophomore Level) Point-value: 2</i>	<i>Basic (Freshman Level) Point-value: 1</i>	<i>Skill is evident, but performance falls below Freshman Level<sup>2</sup> Point-value: 0</i>	<i>No Evidence: Assignment may not elicit the skill or student failed to articulate.</i>
<b>Organization</b>	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable, is skillful, and makes the presentation's content cohesive.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is clearly and consistently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is intermittently observable within the presentation.	Organizational pattern (specific introduction and conclusion, sequenced material within the body, and transitions) is not observable within the presentation.		
<b>Language</b>	Language choices are imaginative, memorable, compelling, and enhance the effectiveness of the presentation. The presentation's language is appropriate for the audience.	Language choices are thoughtful and generally support the effectiveness of the presentation. The presentation's language is appropriate for the audience.	Language choices are mundane and commonplace and partially support the effectiveness of the presentation. The presentation's language is appropriate for the audience.	Language choices are unclear and minimally support the effectiveness of the presentation. The presentation's language is not appropriate for the audience.		
<b>Delivery</b>	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation compelling, and the speaker appears polished and confident.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation interesting, and the speaker appears comfortable.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) make the presentation understandable, and the speaker appears tentative.	Delivery techniques (posture, gesture, eye contact, and vocal expressiveness) detract from the understandability of the presentation, and the speaker appears uncomfortable.		
<b>Supporting Material</b>	A variety of types of supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that significantly supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that generally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make appropriate reference to information or analysis that partially supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Insufficient supporting materials (explanations, examples, illustrations, statistics, analogies, quotations from relevant authorities) make reference to information or analysis that minimally supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority on the topic.	Provides confusing materials/information or no materials/information that supports the presentation or establishes the presenter's credibility/authority.	
<b>Central Message</b>	Central message is compelling (precisely stated, appropriately repeated, memorable, and strongly supported.)	Central message is clear and consistent with the supporting material.	Central message is basically understandable but is not often repeated and is not memorable.	Central message can be deduced but is not explicitly stated in the presentation.	Central message cannot be deduced.	

<sup>2</sup> Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample that does not meet Basic (Freshman Level) performance. Evaluators are encouraged to check the "No Evidence" if the rubric dimension is not evident in the work. For example, a student who uses supporting materials that confuse the message or are offensive or unrelated would receive a zero on Supporting Material. By contrast, there are no supporting materials; the "No Evidence" category would be selected. There is simply no evidence of whether or not the student knows how to use supporting materials.