

## USING CANVAS TO ASSESS COLLEGE DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS

Allegheny has eight college Distribution Requirements (DRs), each with different expected student learning outcomes (SLOs). As a college, it is important to determine how well the DR student learning outcomes are being met. The procedures described here allow the college to assess the SLOs using tools available in Canvas. This process is intended to assess SLOs across the curriculum. It is not intended to assess or evaluate individual instructors.

The DR Rubric project has released two rubrics to use for assessment in 2023-24: [Civic Learning \(CL\)](#) and [Modes of Expression \(ME\)](#). Faculty members teaching a course tagged with either CL or ME in the 2023-2024 academic year are **REQUIRED** to assess the DR using the rubrics and Canvas. This does NOT mean that you must use Canvas for other aspects of your course or to have student submissions of work via Canvas.

### **Key elements for effective DR assessment**

- The DRs exist across multiple levels of courses. We **should not and do not** assume that all tagged courses will bring students to the highest levels described in the rubrics.
- The rubrics have several rows. In a given semester, you will select **ONE** row to assess from a pre-assigned set of options.
- The rubrics have four columns: Proficient (4), Refining (3), Developing (2), and Introducing (1). **Read the rubric from left to right** when assigning a value. A value of 0 should only be assigned if the student does not meet any of the standards.
- A grade of A, in either a course or an assignment, **does not** necessarily correspond to a rubric rating of 4. **Grades are separate and distinct from assessment.** Assign a rubric rating on the basis of the criteria listed, not a student's grade.

### **Quick definitions and overview**

*Outcome:* The specific DR outcome we are trying to measure

*Rubric:* The scale we use for measuring

*Assignment:* The student work to which we apply our scale. This work can be *any* artifact, performance, quiz, essay, or piece generated by the student. It does NOT need to be submitted via Canvas for this process to work.

In this process, you will create an Assignment, add a Rubric to the assignment, and then attach the Outcome to the Rubric. In doing so, the Assignment becomes a tool for collecting data on how well we are meeting the goals of the DR.

### **Practical Considerations**

- You should use this Canvas procedure to assess the DR *just once*, using a capstone-like assignment towards the end of the course.
- You should use an assignment you already have planned for your course. This assignment should address one of the rubric rows. **DO NOT** devise a novel assignment for this assessment—use an existing assignment.

Please direct any questions to Associate Provost Peter Bradley <[pbradley@allegheny.edu](mailto:pbradley@allegheny.edu)>.

## Attaching DR Outcome(s) to your Assignment to assess student work

1. In your Canvas course, create a new Assignment that is separate from your graded Assignment. You will use this new Assignment for the sole purpose of collecting DR data and will NOT be visible to students. It will not be how you collect or grade your student work. In naming your Assignment, choose a name related to the original Assignment (e.g., “Essay 3 DR” if the original is “Essay 3”). If you need additional help creating an Assignment in Canvas, [please see this link](#). Assign the Assignment a value of 0 points. Click on the checkbox that says “Do not count this assignment towards the final grade.”

2. Choose the **“On Paper”** submission type. “No Submission” will not allow data capture, so do not use this option even though students will be submitting their work separately from the Canvas Assignment. Save the Assignment, but do not publish it yet.

Submission Type

3. To **add the DR Rubric** to the Assignment, view your Assignment after saving and click on the “+ Rubric” button at the bottom left. The Rubric will be used here for the sole purpose of attaching the DR Outcome.

Points 10  
Submitting on paper

Due For  
- Everyone

+ Rubric

4. The default rubric will look like the image below. Use the trash can icon to remove the default criterion.

Criteria	Ratings	Pts
Description of criterion Range <input type="checkbox"/>	5 pts Full Marks 0 pts No Marks	5 pts
+ Criterion <a href="#">Find Outcome</a>		Total Points: 5

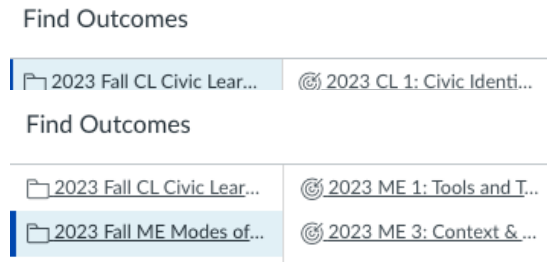
5. Click “Find Outcome” and then click on the “DR Outcomes” folder and then the **“2024 Spring DR Outcomes”** folder.

Find Outcomes

2023 Fall DR Outcomes

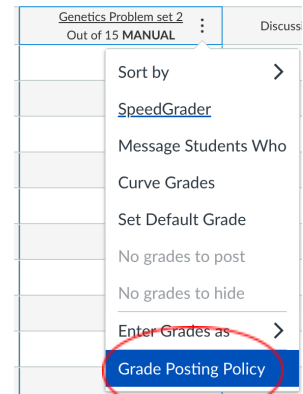
DR Outcomes

- The DR Outcomes have been pre-loaded into your courses and are ready to use. You should not modify or reorganize these Outcomes. Select the single Outcome you will assess (CL1: Civic Identities; CL3: Civic Ethics; ME1: Tools and Techniques; ME3: Context and Audience).



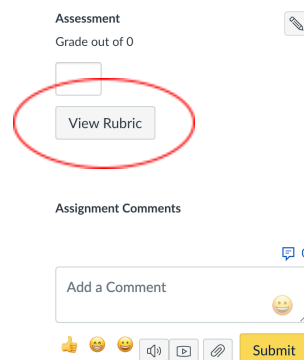
- Once you have chosen the outcome:
  - Scroll down to the bottom of the screen and *uncheck* the box labeled “Use this criterion for scoring.”
  - Click the yellow “Import” button to attach it to your Assignment Rubric.
  - IMPORTANT:** Click the yellow “Create Rubric” button. (If you skip this step, your Rubric will not be saved!)
  - Save and Publish your Assignment.**

- Next, we will make sure that students cannot see (and are not unnecessarily alarmed by) the assessment values you assign. Go to the Grades tool for your Canvas course. Find the column for your new Assignment. Click on the three dots to open the drop down menu. Select “Grade Posting Policy” from the menu.



- Select the option to Post Grades Manually. Students will not be able to see any values entered for this Assignment unless you release them. However, ITS will be able to collect the DR Outcome values you assign.

- Grade the assignment however you normally would do so, separately and independently from this newly-created Assignment.



- To assess the DR, you will need to assign a Rubric value using Speedgrader. In the Speedgrader individual grading view, click on View Rubric.

12. Click on the rectangle in the Rubric that matches your assessment of the student work (the 0-4 point rating scale), click on Save. Repeat for each student.

Criteria	Ratings				
<p>© 2023 CL 1: Civic Identities  <a href="#">view longer description</a>                      threshold: 3</p>	<p>4 pts                      Proficient:                      Expresses a sophisticated awareness of historically laden patterns of inequities across communities and cultures and offers ways to overcome or challenge those inequities.</p>	<p>3 pts                      Refining:                      Analyzes the systemic dynamics that generate patterns of difference, over time and in different contexts, across diverse individuals and groups.</p>	<p>2 pts                      Developing:                      Recognizes the consequences of imbalances of power on the lived experience of individuals and groups.</p>	<p>1 pts                      Introducing:                      Identifies imbalances in the civic power of different groups in society.</p>	<p>0 pts                      No Evidence</p>