

Communication Skills Rubric

The Communication Skills rubric articulates what Syracuse University students should know and be able to demonstrate by the time they graduate through four learning outcomes, specific indicators, performance levels, and performance descriptors. The Communication Skills rubric was created by a community of practice with faculty, staff, and students from across the University. This rubric is intended for institutional-level use in assessing and reflecting on undergraduate student learning. Faculty teaching courses with a Communication Skills course tag may refer to the learning outcomes when developing course learning objectives, signature assignments, and other learning experiences for students. This rubric will continue to evolve as Syracuse University collects feedback from faculty who utilize it to reflect on student learning.

Communication Skills Framing Language

Communication Skills Framing Language: Effective individual, interpersonal, and collaborative presentation and development of ideas through oral, written, and other forms of expression to inform, persuade, or inspire.

Preamble and Guidance

This rubric is meant to provide faculty and students with specific learning outcomes for Communication Skills. Based on the framing language, this rubric uses the term “communications” broadly to encompass oral, written, and other forms of expression used in diverse disciplines and situations. The indicators associated with each learning outcome are broadly worded so each discipline has the flexibility to apply them in their own context. This rubric can be applied to a single assignment or multiple assignments in formative or summative learning experiences. Communication is a foundational skill to human interaction; ethics are essential to all parts of communication, and the rubric below assumes that all outcomes can only be achieved by adhering to the ethical standards of a given discipline, profession, etc. The term “inclusion” is used in the rubric to emphasize the knowledge students must develop to use responsible communication; inclusion may mean but is not limited to power dynamics, attention to bias, attention to audience identities, accessibility, etc. Accuracy is noted throughout the rubric and should be interpreted within the context of the discipline’s best practices.

Learning Outcomes	Indicators	Exemplary	Developing	Emergent	Not Evident
1. CONTEXT: Employ communication strategies across various situations.	1.1 Identifies the communication's purpose in context.	Accurately identifies the communication's purpose in context.	Identifies the communication's purpose in context with minor inaccuracies.	Identifies the communication's purpose in context with major inaccuracies.	Does not identify the communication's purpose in context.
	1.2 Addresses the specific audience in context.	Accurately addresses the specific elements needed to communicate with a specific audience.	Addresses the elements needed to communicate with a specific audience, with minor inaccuracies.	Partially addresses the elements needed to communicate with a specific audience, with major inaccuracies.	Does not address the specific audience in context .
	1.3 Demonstrates characteristics and practices of effective communications in various situations.	Accurately demonstrates the characteristics and practices of effective communication.	Demonstrates the characteristics and practices of effective communication with minor inaccuracies.	Demonstrates characteristics and practices of effective communicators with major inaccuracies.	Does not demonstrate characteristics and practices of effective communications in various situations.
2. RESPONSIBLE COMMUNICATION: Apply inclusive concepts and practices.	2.1 Exemplifies best practices for inclusive and responsible communications in context.	Effectively attends to tone, diverse images/audio/tactile mediums, and/or inclusive language appropriate and accessible in context.	Inconsistently attends to tone, diverse images/audio/tactile mediums, and/or inclusive language that is appropriate and accessible in context.	Demonstrates awareness of the need for contextual inclusive communication practices.	Does not exemplify best practices for inclusive and responsible communications in context.
	2.2 Incorporates accurate, credible, and reliable sources.	Effectively demonstrates the use of relevant, accurate, credible, and reliable sources that are appropriate for the assignment.	Inconsistently uses relevant, accurate, credible, and reliable sources that are appropriate for the assignment.	Demonstrates an attempt to use relevant, accurate, credible, and reliable sources that are appropriate for the assignment.	Does not incorporate accurate, credible, and reliable sources.
	2.3 Credits information providers according to relevant guidelines.	Accurately credits all information providers according to relevant guidelines.	Accurately credits information providers according to relevant guidelines with minor inaccuracies in formatting.	Credits information providers but does not follow relevant guidelines and contains several inaccuracies in formatting.	Does not credit information providers according to relevant guidelines.

Learning Outcomes	Indicators	Exemplary	Developing	Emergent	Not Evident
3. PRACTICE: Apply communication tools to a given medium, context, and audience.	3.1 Develops active listening and/or information gathering skills appropriate to given communication situations.	Effectively uses active listening and/or information gathering skills appropriate to given communication situations.	Inconsistently uses active listening and/or information gathering skills appropriate to given communication situations.	Attempts to use active listening and/or information gathering skills to address given communication situations.	Does not develop active listening and/or information gathering skills appropriate to given communication situations.
	3.2 Uses communication tools, styles, and approaches appropriate for specific audiences and situations.	Integrates tools, styles, and approaches effectively and appropriately for the specific audience and situations.	Uses communication tools, styles, and approaches that are mostly suitable for a specific audience and situations.	Attempts to use different tools, styles and approaches but may not be suitable for specific audiences and situations.	Does not use communication tools, styles, and approaches appropriate for specific audiences and situations.
	3.3 Crafts forms of communication that are effective for specific audiences and situations.	Crafts clear, compelling, and creative forms of communication for specific audiences and situations.	Crafts clear forms of communication that may not be particularly compelling or creative but are appropriate for the specific audience and situations.	Crafts unclear forms of communication that are not compelling or creative and are not appropriate for the specific audience and situations.	Does not craft forms of communication that are effective for specific audiences and situations.
4. RESPONSIVE COMMUNICATION: Evaluate and use feedback to achieve effective communication.	4.1 Evaluates the communication's reception, effectiveness, and/or impact.	Synthesizes and interprets available data to evaluate the communication's reception, effectiveness, and/or impact.	Analyzes data but may not be able to fully interpret the communication's reception, effectiveness, and/or impact.	Identifies that the communication was received, effective, and/or made an impact without the use of data.	Does not evaluate the communication's reception, effectiveness, and/or impact.
	4.2 Discerns the value and intention of self-assessment and feedback from others.	Justifies feedback from self-assessment and feedback from others to improve forms of communications.	Critically evaluates one's own work and demonstrates the ability to take constructive feedback in a professional way.	Discerns the value of feedback but inaccurately interprets the feedback's meaning and/or intention.	Does not discern the value and intention of self-assessment and feedback from others.
	4.3 Revises the communication to achieve the intended purpose based on feedback.	Accurately incorporates all relevant feedback to achieve the intended communication purpose.	Encompasses some feedback but does not accurately achieve the intended communication purpose.	Inaccurately encompasses parts of feedback.	Does not revise the communication to achieve the intended purpose based on feedback.