ETHICAL REASONING VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Association of American Colleges and Universities *

The 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 core expectations articulated in all 15 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can by shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success.

Definition

Ethical Reasoning involves thinking, talking, and writing about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

Framing Language

This rubric is intended to help faculty evaluate work samples and collections of work that demonstrate student learning about ethics. Although the goal of a liberal education should be to help students turn what they've learned in the classroom into action, pragmatically it would be difficult, if not impossible, to judge whether or not students would act ethically when faced with real ethical situations. What can be evaluated using a rubric is whether students have the intellectual tools to make ethical choices.

The rubric focuses on five elements: Ethical Self Awareness, Ethical Issue Recognition, Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts, Application of Ethical Principles, and Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts. Students' Ethical Self Identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues. Presumably, they will choose ethical actions when faced with ethical issues.

Glossary

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

- Core Beliefs: Those fundamental principles that consciously or unconsciously influence one's ethical conduct and ethical thinking. Even when unacknowledged, core beliefs shape one's responses. Core beliefs can reflect one's environment, religion, culture or training. A person may or may not choose to act on their core beliefs.
- Ethical Perspectives/concepts: The different theoretical means through which ethical issues are analyzed, such as ethical theories (e.g., utilitarian, natural law, virtue) or ethical concepts (e.g., rights, justice, duty).
- Complex, multi-layered (gray) context: The sub-parts or situational conditions of a scenario that bring two or more ethical dilemmas (issues) into the mix/problem/context/for student's identification.
- Cross-relationships among the issues: Obvious or subtle connections between/among the sub-parts or situational conditions of the issues present in a scenario (e.g., relationship of production of corn as part of climate change issue).

Reprinted [or Excerpted] with permission from *Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and tools for Using Rubrics*, edited by Terrel L. Rhodes.
Copyright 2010 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

*This rubric has been modified by faculty at The University of Tulsa for use in the institutional assessment project.

ETHICAL REASONING VALUE RUBRIC

for more information, please contact value@aacu.org

Association of American Colleges and Universities *

Definition

Ethical Reasoning involves thinking, talking, and writing about right and wrong human conduct. It requires students to be able to assess their own ethical values and the social context of problems, recognize ethical issues in a variety of settings, think about how different ethical perspectives might be applied to ethical dilemmas, and consider the ramifications of alternative actions. Students' ethical self-identity evolves as they practice ethical decision-making skills and learn how to describe and analyze positions on ethical issues.

Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance. Evaluators my indicate «not applicable» when a performance descriptor is not relevant to the entire sample.

		Levels of Competence				
		4 (Capstone)	3 (Milestone)	2 (Milestone)	1 (Benchmark)	0
Performance Descriptors	**Ethical Self-Awareness**	Student discusses in detail/analyzes both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs and discussion has imagination, depth, and clarity.	Student discusses in detail/analyzes both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs.	Student states both core beliefs and the origins of the core beliefs.	Student states either their core beliefs or articulates the origins of the core beliefs but not both.	Student did not meet cell one level performance.
	Understanding Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	Student names, presents the gist, and explains multiple details of the concepts or theories used.	Student names concepts or theories she/he uses, presents the gist of said theory or theories, and explains some details of the theory or theories used.	Student names the theory she/he uses, and is only able to present the gist of the named theory.	Student only names the theory she/he uses.	Student did not meet cell one level performance.
	Ethical Issue Recognition	Student recognizes the complexity of ethical issues identifying the , multilayered (gray) context AND discusses the cross-relationships among the issues.	Student recognizes ethical issues within a complex context OR discusses cross-relationships among the issues.	Student recognizes simple ethical issues and begins a discussion of competing points of view	Student presents own ethical values or opinions with minimal reflection or elaboration.	Student did not meet cell one level performance.
	Application of Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	Student applies ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, extends them to creative new examples, and considers several implications of the application.	Student independently applies ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question, extends them to new examples, but considers only one implication of the application.	Student applies ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question and extends them to known examples (in a class, in a group, or a fixed-choice setting).	Student applies ethical perspectives/concepts to an ethical question without support.	Student did not meet cell one level performance.
	Evaluation of Different Ethical Perspectives/Concepts	Student states a position and states the objections to, assumptions behind, and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts; student's defense against objections is effective and convincing..	Student states a position and states the objections to, assumptions behind and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts; and student's response to the objections is adequate.	Student states a position and states the objections to, assumptions and implications of different ethical perspectives/concepts but does not respond to them (and ultimately objections, assumptions, and implications are compartmentalized by student and do not affect student's position.)	Student states a position but does not state the objections to and assumptions and limitations of the different perspectives/concepts.	Student did not meet cell one level performance.

Reprinted [or Excerpted] with permission from *Assessing Outcomes and Improving Achievement: Tips and tools for Using Rubrics*, edited by Terrel L. Rhodes.
Copyright 2010 by the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

*This rubric has been modified by faculty at The University of Tulsa for use in the institutional assessment project.