

Written Communication Rubric

Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies

Iowa State University

Levels of Achievement				
Criteria	4 Exemplary	3 Proficient	2 Marginal	1 Unacceptable
<u>Content</u>	Even, balanced information clearly and effectively supports a central purpose or thesis and displays a thoughtful, in-depth analysis of a sufficiently limited topic. Reader gains insights.	Information provides firm support for thesis and displays evidence of a basic analysis of a sufficiently limited topic. Reader gains some insights.	Information supports thesis at times. Analysis is basic or general. Reader gains few insights.	Paper does not successfully identify thesis. Analysis is vague or not evident. Reader is confused or may be misinformed.
<u>Organization</u>	The ideas are arranged logically to support the thesis. They flow smoothly from one to another and are clearly linked to each other. Reader can follow line of reasoning.	The ideas are arranged logically to support the thesis. They are usually clearly linked to each other. For the most part, reader can follow line of reasoning.	The writing is not arranged logically. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense together. Reader can figure out what writer probably intends but may not be motivated to do so.	The writing lacks any semblance of logical organization. The reader cannot identify a line of reasoning and loses interest.
<u>Purpose</u>	The writer's purpose is readily apparent to the reader.	The writing has a firm purpose, but may occasionally digress from the purpose.	The purpose is not always clear.	The purpose is generally unclear.
<u>Voice</u>	The writing is compelling. It hooks the reader and sustains interest throughout.	The writing is generally engaging, but occasionally pedantic. The communication is generally focused and interesting.	The writing is dull and perfunctory. Though the paper may have some interesting parts, readers find it difficult to	The writing has little personality. The audience quickly loses interest and stops reading.

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			maintain interest.	
<u>Tone</u>	The tone is consistently professional and appropriate for the audience and for the purpose (e.g., letter, memo, proposal, application, research summary, report, scholarly communication).	The tone is generally professional. In general, it is appropriate for the audience and purpose.	The tone is not consistently professional or appropriate for the audience and purpose.	The tone is not professional. It is inappropriate for the audience and purpose.
<u>Sentence Structure</u>	Sentences are varied in length and structure. They flow smoothly from one to another.	Sentences demonstrate some variety in length and structure. The flow from sentence to sentence is generally smooth.	There are some errors in sentence structure. There is little variety in length and structure. The flow is not consistently smooth.	Errors in sentence structure are frequent enough to represent a major distraction to the reader.
<u>Word Choice</u>	Word choice is unique and uniformly excellent.	Word choice is generally good. The writer goes beyond the generic word to find one more precise and effective.	The word choice is merely adequate, but the range of words is limited, tending toward general, abstract terms.	Words are very ordinary. The writer uses clichés and colloquial language.
<u>Grammar, Spelling, Mechanics (i.e., Punctuation, Italics, Capitalization, etc.)</u>	The writing is free of errors.	The writing is free of errors, except for a few extremely technical rules.	The writing has some errors. The reader notes them but is not distracted by them.	Errors distract the reader and may even obscure the meaning.

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In addition, for scholarly communications:				
<u>Use of References</u>	Compelling evidence is given to support claims and attribution is clear and fairly represented.	References to support claims are generally present.	Although occasional references are provided, the writer overrelies on unsubstantiated statements. The reader is confused about the source of the ideas.	References are not cited to support claims.
<u>Use of Most Recent Edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)</u>	APA format is used accurately and consistently.	APA format is used with minor violations.	Format of document reflects incomplete knowledge of APA format.	Format of document is not recognizable as APA.