

New Grading Rubrics for Signature Assignments

“Tropical Agriculture and the Environment”

Departments: Tropical Plant and Soil Sciences + Plant and Environmental Protection Sciences
 Author: Scot C. Nelson (TPSS)

Department/Program Facts

Number of faculty: TPSS (20-25) | PEPS (20-25)
 Number of students: TPSS (30-35) | PEPS (10-25)
 Number of graduates every year: TPSS (<10) | PEPS (<10)
 Is a new program: Yes. The academic programs of the two departments merged in Fall 2016.

Introduction

The goals of this project was to develop grading rubrics for the signature assignments for a new undergraduate program, Tropical Agriculture and the Environment (TAE).

There are 5 tracks in the new program, 4 of which lead students to areas that were previously associated with the TPSS program. The signature assignment for these tracks is an internship.

The 5th track leads students to an area that was previously associated with the PEPS program. The signature assignment for this track consists of two parts: an internship and a capstone course (PEPS 495).

The grading rubric designed for the internship is applied to all 5 tracks. The grading rubric designed for PEPS 495 applies to the track which requires this course.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate understanding of the science of agriculture and its interaction with the environment from molecules to ecosystems.
2. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate scientific evidence, knowledge and issues associated with agriculture in a dynamic world.
3. Demonstrate the ability to identify problems associated with agroecosystems and apply the scientific method to develop solutions.
4. Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication for both professional and lay audiences.

Grading Rubrics

| Criteria | Insufficient (1) | Emerging (2) | Acceptable (3) | Proficient (4) | Exemplary (5) | Score 1-5 or N/A |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|---------------------|
| Prompt and Regular Attendance | Is late or absent four or more times during the internship | Is late or absent no more than three times during the internship | Is late or absent no more than twice during the internship | Is late or absent no more than once during the internship | Exhibits perfect attendance | |
| Positive Interaction with Others | Does not display positive interactions with people in this setting | Displays positive interactions with some people in this setting | Displays positive interactions with others | Displays positive interactions with others | Inspires positive interactions among others in the workplace | |
| Open / Responsive to Suggestions, Directions, and/or Constructive Criticism | Is not responsive | Sometimes responsive | Consistently responsive | Consistently responsive | Always responsive | |
| Professional Attitude, Appearance, and Action | Does not conduct self in an acceptable manner | Conducts self in acceptable manner some of the time | Conducts self in expected professional manner | Conducts self in a professional manner that brings praise from other employees | Conducts self in a professional manner that brings praise to the organization | |
| Organization Skills & Practice | Does not keep workspace and projects organized | Takes steps to keep workspace and projects organized | Keeps workspace and projects well-organized to meet personal workflow needs | Keeps workspace and projects well-organized to meet personal and organizational workflow needs | Keeps workspace and projects well-organized and anticipates personal and organizational workflow needs | |
| Oral Communication | Does not speak adequately | Speaks adequately in a limited number of settings | Speaks adequately in a variety of settings | Speaks proficiently in a variety of settings | Speaks powerfully in a variety of settings | |
| Written Communication | Word choice is repetitive, vague or simplistic | Most word choice is repetitive or simplistic | Word choice is effective | Word choice is effective and varied | Word choice is effective, vivid, and leaves a strong impression on the reader | |
| Reliability & Responsibility | Cannot be relied on to perform job tasks | Can be relied on to perform job tasks some of the time | Can be relied on to perform job tasks most of the time | Can be relied on to perform job tasks nearly all times | Can be relied on to perform job tasks at all times | |
| Demonstrates Initiative | Does not display motivation in interactions | Displays motivation in some interactions | Displays motivation in most interactions | Displays motivation in nearly all interactions | Displays motivation in all interactions | |
| Communicates with Supervisor Regularly | Fails to respond to supervisor communication | Typically responds to supervisor initiated communication | Always responds to supervisor communication | Often initiates communication | Always responds to supervisor communication | |
| Fulfills Expectations of Supervisor & Organization | Does not meet expectations and goals set by supervisor and organization | Meets some expectations and goals set by supervisor and organization | Meets expectations and goals set by supervisor and organization | Sometimes exceeds expectations and goals set by supervisor and organization | Consistently exceeds expectations and goals set by supervisor and organization | |
| Student: | | Course: | Supervisor: | Faculty: | Date: | Total Score: |
| Comments: | | | | | | |

Findings/Successful Strategies

Findings:

1. The grading rubric developed for the internships is completed by the internship supervisor, which may or may not be an employee of the University of Hawaii.

- Previously, there was no grading rubric associated with the internships.
- Students now have a clear understanding of what the program expects of them during their internships.

1. The grading rubric developed for the capstone course articulates the requirements and grading for the paper required for completion of the signature assignment.

- Previously, there was no grading rubric associated with the capstone course.
- Students now have a clear understanding of how the paper should be structured and how it will be graded.

Successful strategies: Use a top-down approach

1. Engage the PEPS department chair (the instructor of PEPS 495)
2. Engagement of the TAE curriculum committee (suggested revisions, approval of the grading rubrics)

Action Plans/Next Steps

Next steps:

Compare papers written in previous years to papers written using the new grading rubric.

Discuss with students their performance during the internships by using the grading rubric to frame the discussion.

Department: PEPS (Plant and Environmental Protection Sciences)
 Program: Tropical Agriculture and the Environment
 Written Paper Evaluation Rubric (PEPS 495, Capstone Course)

| Performance Scale | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Elements of the Capstone Experience Project is clearly described (length, location, agency, project, supervisor, activities) | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Identification of professional skills and knowledge acquired during capstone | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Description and evaluation of the PEPS curriculum as preparation of the capstone | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student's evaluation of the capstone in relation to the PEPS program student learning outcomes | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Evaluation of capstone as preparation to chosen profession (i.e., relationship to and shaping of career goals) | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Paper structure and Organization Introduction provides a clear purpose and outline for the paper | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Body well-developed and addresses the objectives of the paper (see above) | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Conclusion provides closure to paper | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Mechanics Spelling | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grammar | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Punctuation | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sentence structure | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Format Tables/diagrams, if applicable | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| References/citations | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Appendix | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Writing Style Academic tone (i.e. absence of contractions, appropriate vocabulary, written in third person) | --- | --- | --- | --- |

| | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Maintain reader's interest | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Substance Highly informative/sufficiently detailed | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sufficient number of sources cited | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Each bit of factual information clearly cited | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Appropriate supporting materials | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Logic All sentences clearly written | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All sentences cohesive with one another | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PEPS 495 PEPS Capstone (All integration and application of academic knowledge and critical skills emphasizing professional development, Critical Research, field studies, employment with cooperating business, government or schools are all options. All only, no internet.) | | | | |
| Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) | | | | |
| 1. Demonstrate understanding of the science of agriculture and its interaction with the environment from molecules to ecosystems. | | | | |
| 2. Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate scientific evidence, knowledge and issues associated with agriculture in a dynamic world. | | | | |
| 3. Demonstrate the ability to identify problems associated with agroecosystems and apply the scientific method to develop solutions. | | | | |
| 4. Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication for both professional and lay audiences. | | | | |