

CONNECT WITH US



[linkedin.com/company/capcsd](https://www.linkedin.com/company/capcsd)



[@capcsd_official](https://www.instagram.com/capcsd_official)



[facebook.com/capcsd](https://www.facebook.com/capcsd)

Rubric Tips and Tools

Danielle Brimo-Picanes

CAPCSD Admissions Committee Member

Graduate speech-language pathology and audiology programs are increasingly using holistic approaches to evaluate applicants (e.g., Jernigan & Carbonneau, 2025). This shift illustrates that our field recognizes the need for a workforce that reflects the diverse populations we serve. Change is hard, though. Numbers, like GRE and GPA, are clean and easy to analyze. How do we quantify to capture skills like integrity, goal mindedness, accountability, and collaboration? The answer lies in the use of RUBRICS (Scheer-Choen, Heisler, & Moineau, 2022). A rubric is a scoring guide that includes pre-selected criteria, and those criteria are pre-defined with descriptions, examples of skills, and/or quantities. The key here is *pre-defined*. The pre-defined criteria in a rubric reduces implicit bias because it creates transparent and data-driven decisions that are used consistently to review each applicant. Using rubrics, an evaluator makes it clear how the applicant was reviewed.

Shifting to a rubric-based system for evaluation is not without effort. Consider faculty buy-in, time to review applicants, rubric trainings and revisions. As long as the goal is to find the best future clinicians, then the creation, evaluation, and use of rubrics is worth the effort. See below for some resources to get you started!

- [College Board: Holistic Review in Admissions](#): A comprehensive guide that breaks down how to align your rubric with your school's mission. It's excellent for understanding how to weight "contextual factors" (like overcoming adversity).
- [AAMC \(Medical School\) Holistic Review Toolkit](#): While designed for medical schools, their framework—E-A-M (Experiences, Attributes, and Metrics)—is the industry standard for high-stakes admission rubrics.
- [Colorado State University Graduate School](#) provides a downloadable rubric template specifically for comprehensive graduate review, including sections for "Scholarly Potential" and "Leadership."
- [Holistic Admissions Review Toolkit](#) provides descriptions and downloadable rubric templates.

Expert Tips for Admission Rubrics

- Use a 1-3 or 1-5 Scale: Avoid "Pass/Fail." Admissions need "spread" in the data to distinguish between many qualified candidates.
- Define the "Middle": Most people naturally grade toward the middle. Make sure your "3" (in a 1-5 scale) has a very specific, boring description so reviewers are forced to justify a "4" or "5."

If you need help with the admissions processes for your MA/MS and/or AuD graduate education programs, or you need help with WebAdMIT or CSDCAS, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Admissions Committee and CAPCSD's Director of Centralized Admissions.