First and foremost, meta-architecture establishes the architecture strategy. This includes the architecture objectives, which should be clearly tied to business strategy or business imperatives. Meta-architecture formulates the high-level choices that are made to achieve the architecture objectives

and hence the business strategy. Thus, meta-architecture forms the critical bridge between business strategy and technical strategy, and provides the means to communicate this strategic connection to senior management.

The meta-architecture is a set of high-level decisions that will strongly influence the structure of the system, but is not itself the structure of the system. The meta-architecture, through style, {patterns of} composition or interaction, principles and guidelines, rules certain structural choices out, and guides selection decisions and tradeoffs among others. It is intended to shape the architecture, guiding the architecture team, but also guiding technical decisions throughout the life of the architecture.

This rubric is used to assess the quality of a particular Meta-Architecture document. A better score generally indicates a higher grade, though grades are not computed on a strict percentage. For example, someone who scores an average of ¾ may receive a B rather than a C.

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|  | **Capstone (4)** | **Milestone (3)** | **Milestone (2)** | **Benchmark (1)** |
| **Architectural Vision Statement** | The vision statement states clearly what the architecture is, how it benefits the development team and the organization. It compellingly sells the architecture to the team. | What the architecture is is clear, benefits are given, but it is not stated compellingly. | What the architecture is is not clear, or the benefits are missing, incomplete or unclear. | Minimal attention is given to describing the architecture and its benefits. |
| **Architectural Principles** | Includes at least 3 principles, at least one of which is a principle that was considered, but rejected. Principles have compelling names, and are completely described. | Includes at least 3 principles, but descriptions are incomplete, or confusing. | Includes only 2 principles; descriptions are incomplete, or contradictory but some attempt is made to provide the required information. | Minimal attention is given to describing the principles, if at all. |
| **Architectural Styles** | Includes at least 3 alternate styles, completely described. One overall system architecture is chosen from the 3, with rationale for the choice. | Includes 3 alternate styles, but descriptions are unclear. Rationale is present, but unclear or confusing. | Includes less than 3 styles, or descriptions contain significant omissions or inconsistencies. | Minimal attempts to describe styles is given, if at all. |
| **Architectural Patterns and Interconnect Mechanisms** | Includes at least 3 alternate patterns, completely described, chosen to solve a particular problem, with one chosen, and a rationale for the choice.  Includes at least 2 connectors considered for a particular interaction, with one chosen and a rationale for the choice. | Descriptions for patterns and connections are present and nearly complete, but descriptions rationale may be unclear. | One or more descriptions for patterns and connections are missing, incomplete, or contradictory, or a rationale is not given. | Minimal attention is given to describing and discussing patterns or connectors. |
| **Philosophies and Preferences** | Includes at least 3 statements of team philosophy or preferences. It is easy to see team character, or to understand how to apply the idea, from the statement. | Includes at least 3 statements of team philosophy or preferences. What they mean or how to apply them may not be clear. | Includes less than 3 statements of team philosophy or preferences. How to apply them may be confusing or contradictory. | Minimal thought is given to writing down philosophies and preferences, if any. |
| **Guidelines and Policies** | Includes at least 2 statements. Statements are clear, concise, and it is easy to see how to apply these statements. | Includes at least 2 statements of policy or guidelines. What they mean or how to apply them may not be clear. | Includes less than 2statements of team philosophy or preferences. How to apply them may be confusing or contradictory. | Minimal thought is given to writing down policies and guidelines. |
| **Additional Information** | These statements are clear and concise, if needed. They are statements that do not easily fit in any other category. This section may be empty, but may also include references or outside reading, if needed. | If included, statements are not clear. | If included, statements are irrelevant or contradictory. | Additional information or sources are needed, but not provided. Minimal attention is given to considering additional useful information, if needed. |
| **Context and Purpose** | The document as a whole provides a complete record of early decisions and their rationale, to guide the architects during the remainder of the architecting process. This record includes technical implications of the architecture strategy and high-level architecture decisions including architectural style, metaphors, early decisions around architectural  mechanisms, together with the rationale for these decisions. It includes alternatives that  were considered, and why they were ruled out. | Considering the document as a whole: early decisions and alternatives are shown, but are not completely described; alternatives are not fully considered; some rationale is given, but is incomplete, or inconsistent. | Key sections of the document are missing or incomplete. Some information is included, but not enough to provide a guide for the team and the architects in making future decisions. | Minimal attention is given to writing a document that guides future architects’ decisions. Alternatives and rationale are minimally included, if at all. |
| **Style and Mechanics** | Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free. | Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language in the portfolio has few errors. | Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors. | Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage. |