



How to Effectively Review a Teaching Portfolio

IDEC Training

September 21, 2023

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Intended Learning Outcomes



- Appreciate the current landscape of teaching evaluation at McMaster University
- Articulate the goal(s) of teaching portfolio reviews in the FofE context
- Compare/contrast review of teaching portfolios to other familiar academic contexts
- Consider how you may approach completing a portfolio review
- Practice reviewing a teaching portfolio

Evaluation of Teaching at McMaster

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- McMaster's policies on evaluation of teaching emphasize measuring teaching effectiveness/excellence
 - MUFA Report by Grignon et al. 2019 recommended suspending use of end-of-term SETs >>> changes to student experience surveys, summative question, and new advice on approaching teaching portfolios Part A-IV
 - Questions around processes, types of evidence, and more lead to various evaluation initiatives/pilots around campus, including IDEC
 - McMaster begins to emphasize fostering continuous improvement in teaching through teaching evaluation
 - Tensions between practice and policy in evaluating teaching > VET Hub

Evaluation of Teaching at McMaster

McMaster University

Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Complete Policy Title
Procedures for the Assessment of Teaching

Policy Number (if applicable)
 SPS B1

Date of Most Recent Review
 March 11, 2020 / April 16, 2020

Supersedes
 December 8, 2018

Approved by
 Senate / Board of Governors

Date of Original Approval(s)
 November 10, 1993

Responsible Executive
 Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

General Policy Enquiries
 Policy (University Secretariat)

DISCLAIMER
 If there is a Discrepancy between this electronic copy and the policy owner, the written copy prevails.

Reflection and iterative growth How has the Instructor's teaching changed over time? How has this been informed by student learning evidence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no indication of having reflected upon or learned from prior teaching, evidence of student learning, or peer or student feedback Little or no indication of efforts to develop as a teacher despite evidence of need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued competent teaching possibly with minor reflection based on input from peers or students Articulates some lessons learned changes informed by prior teaching, student learning, or feedback
Mentoring & advising How effectively has the Instructor worked individually with UG or grad students?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No indication of effective advising or mentoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some evidence of effective advising and mentoring (define as appropriate for discipline)
Involvement in teaching service, scholarship, or community How has the Instructor contributed to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no indication of involvement in teaching service, scholarship, or community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articulates some lessons learned changes informed by prior teaching, student learning, or feedback



Preparing a Teaching Portfolio

A companion to McMaster's Supplementary Policy Statement B2: Teaching Portfolios

MacPherson Institute Guidebook

BRIGHTER WORLD

ENCOURAGING PARTNERED AND INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING

SUPPORTING A HOLISTIC AND PERSONALIZED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

FOSTERING INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AND SCHOLARLY TEACHING

DEVELOPING ACTIVE AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING SPACES

SPS B2: Teaching Portfolios



Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Complete Policy Title

Teaching Portfolios

Policy Number (if applicable):

SPS B2

Approved by

**Senate /
Board of Governors**

Date of Most Recent Approval

**March 11, 2020 /
April 16, 2020**

Date of Original Approval(s)

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated

**December 14, 2011 / December 15, 2011
April 8, 2009 (SPS 10)**

Responsible Executive

Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Policy Specific Enquiries

[Provost and Vice-President \(Academic\)](#)

- Provides a structure
- Prohibits student comments

Faculty of Engineering's Instructor Development & Evaluation Committee

- IDEC seeks to foster a transparent, meaningful teaching development and observation process focused on development rather than evaluation
- Peer reviews can make teaching evaluations a scholarly practice
 - Focus on improvement
 - Result in a dialogue
 - Allowance for context
- Benefits to such a strategy
 - Support for pre-tenure/permanence faculty wishing to develop a portfolio
 - Focusing on the development of teaching practices in a positive way
 - Consistent information for department chairs
 - Identify opportunities for further support and development

Peer Observation in Faculty of Engineering

Formative Observation

- Focused on observing the candidate's teaching in a pre-defined context
- Allows for constructive feedback passed along to candidate
- Contains short pre- and post-observation interviews with observers
- *Meant to keep faculty on-track*

x2-3

Summative Review

- Same activities as formative observation
- Includes a review of candidate's teaching portfolio, with comments
- Includes reflection and revisions on behalf of the candidate
- *Meant to assist pre-tenure/permanence faculty with the drafting of a portfolio*

x1

IDEC Portfolio Rubric (summative process)

<p>Reflection and iterative growth</p> <p>How has the Instructor's teaching changed over time? How has this been informed by student learning evidence?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no indication of having reflected upon or learned from prior teaching, evidence of student learning, or peer or student feedback • Little or no indication of efforts to develop as a teacher despite evidence of need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued competent teaching, possibly with minor reflection based on input from peers and/or students • Articulates some lessons learned or changes informed by prior teaching, student learning, or feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly adjusts teaching based on reflection on student learning, within or across semesters • Examines student performance following adjustments • Reports improved student achievement of learning goals and/or improved equity in outcomes based on past course modifications
<p>Mentoring & advising</p> <p>How effectively has the Instructor worked individually with UG or grad students?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No indication of effective advising or mentoring (but expected in department) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of effective advising and mentoring (define as appropriate for discipline) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of exceptional quality and time commitment to advising and mentoring (define as appropriate for discipline)
<p>Involvement in teaching service, scholarship, or community</p> <p>How has the Instructor contributed to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no evidence of positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution • Little or no interaction with teaching community Practices and results of teaching are not shared with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution • Some engagement with peers on teaching Has shared teaching practices or results with others (e.g., presentation, workshop, essay) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistently positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution (e.g., curriculum committees, program assessment, co-curricular activities) • Regular engagement with peers on teaching (e.g., teaching-related presentations or workshops, peer reviews of teaching) • Presentations or publications to share practices or results of teaching with multiple audiences • Scholarly publications or grant applications related to teaching

IDEC Portfolio feedback form (summative process)

Teaching Portfolio Constructive Comments Form

Suggested time: 60-120 minutes.

Complete after receiving the instructor's draft teaching portfolio.

Reviewers complete the left column together; the instructor completes the right column as needed.

[illegible]

McMaster's PTL Strategy

"Inspire and support excellence in teaching and learning"

Themes include:

- Diverse and expansive ways of knowing
- Experience-based learning
- Whole student experience
- Student belonging and inclusion
- Teaching as a professional and innovative practice
- Assessment and evaluation of student learning
- Digital learning

ENCOURAGING PARTNERED AND
INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING

SUPPORTING A HOLISTIC AND
PERSONALIZED STUDENT EXPERIENCE

FOSTERING INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE
AND SCHOLARLY TEACHING

DEVELOPING ACTIVE AND FLEXIBLE
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Lund University example of reflection on failure & growth

"...the CEQ results from this year (2018/2019) were significantly lower than previous years, and even though it can be expected that a course does not work perfectly the first year after substantial changes have been made, I experienced this year's course as somewhat of a failure in my pedagogical practice. On the positive side, this also constituted a very steep learning curve, which is a good reason for including it in this reflection!

During the course, I became aware of problems at a rather early stage, as I could see that the engagement among students was rather low, and there were also signs of problems related to the group work. These problems were confirmed and articulated in the two formative evaluations that were carried out during the course. First, an oral evaluation session was undertaken by the program manager for the DRM&CCA program, and secondly, I collected both written feedback by distributing a mid-course evaluation form and oral feedback through discussions with students in smaller groups.

Based on this feedback, I summarised what I interpreted as the main problems of the course, and communicated this back to the students as feedback on their mid-course evaluation. These points, which will be further elaborated on later in this section, included: 1) A desire among the students to include more course elements where different student groups were separated to allow for contents that was more specifically adapted to their respective future professional roles, 2) A desire among DRM&CCA students for more advanced level assignments, preferably with a focus on an international context, 3) A desire among FPE students for more specific Swedish contents and Swedish vocabulary, 4) More opportunities to work together on the group assignment, as many students emphasized the difficulties of finding time to do this due to different schedules.

The most immediate changes I made to the ongoing course was to devote one of the upcoming seminars to the group assignment, with teachers available to answer questions, as a way of addressing point 4. I also added one lecture in Swedish to the FPE students to address points 1 and 3, and one seminar covering an international case designed for the DRM&CCA students to address points 1 and 2. This helped, and the last part of the course worked slightly better, but several students kept a rather negative view. On a personal level, I found this negative attitude among some students quite challenging, and this made me aware of the difficulties of changing the students' opinions about a course once they have got a negative view of it, despite efforts of making improvements.

...After the course, I made a more thorough and careful analysis of the need for changes, based on the CEQ evaluation as well as my mid-course evaluation and my overall observations. The process of re-designing the course was carried out with a lot of input from several of my colleagues and went on during the entire year up to the next time the course was given. As part of this, I organised two lunch meetings to which I invited four colleagues. In these meetings, I presented my thoughts about how to revise the course and I asked for their feedback and input (see Appendix C). These lunch meetings were very valuable as a way of testing my ideas, and also getting critical questions and constructive comments from my colleagues. Once I had developed an almost complete updated version of the course, I invited the two student representatives from the DRM&CCA program and two students from the FPE program (in separate meetings) and asked for their views on whether the suggested changes would lead to improvements. Both meetings led to minor adjustments of my plans. In the following paragraphs, my analysis of the needs for changes of the course are outlined, together with a description of how I addressed each of these points."

tl;dr:

- Situation
- Acknowledgement of challenge/failure (with self)
- Evidencing the challenge
- Acknowledging the challenge with students
- Immediate changes
- Reflection on progress
- Long-term changes
- Seeking input from colleagues & students (later, not included in excerpt because...space): evidence of impact of changes on student learning

Approach to Teaching Portfolio reviews in FofE



Need to do:

- Follow the IDEC processes & look for rubric criteria: reflection & iterative growth; mentoring & advising; involvement in teaching, service, scholarship, or community
- Confirm alignment with SPS B2

Smart to do:

- Enhance alignment with strategic documents

Best practice:

- Promote a scholarly and developmental approach, look for authenticity, evidence, impact, and leadership

I'm going to refer to these elements as I go through my portfolio review strategy

What academic skills or activities does a teaching portfolio review emulate?

What I look for...

The following slides are an excerpt from workshops delivered by the MacPherson Institute on how to prepare an effective McMaster teaching portfolio



How to structure your McMaster Teaching Portfolio

First things first...

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Each section starts on a new page

Then...

SPS B2 specifies 2 major structural pieces:

- Part A – Executive Summary
- Part B – Supporting Documentation

Focus on:

Part A i. Responsibilities

- Straightforward reiteration of what's described in your appointment letter - ex. 40% research, 40% teaching, 20% service.
- If applicable, include any formal updates made to your appointment
- Typically less than a page in length

Focus on:

Part A ii. Teaching Philosophy

- The teaching philosophy is a personal statement that formulates the foundation on which you will build the rest of your portfolio.
- It documents your teaching:
 - Beliefs (What do you think?)
 - Strategies (What do you do?)
 - Impact (What is the effect on learners, self, colleagues?)
 - Goals (How do you plan to improve?)
- The rest of your portfolio should provide evidence to back the statements you have made in your philosophy.

Alignment
throughout
portfolio starts
here!

The Philosophy
provides insight
into what you're
looking for.

Scholarly
approach

Authenticity

Maybe:
Mentoring, nods
to strategy docs

Focus on:

Part A iii. Description of Practice

- Whereas your Philosophy is about your *beliefs* and contains few examples in little depth, in contrast, **your Description of Practice is about what you actually *do* and contains in-depth examples**
- Ultimately, it describes how your philosophy is realized and documents your growth
- One to two pages, single-spaced

Reflection &
iterative growth;
mentoring

Scholarly &
developmental
approach

Evidence/Impact

Focus on:

Part A **iii. Description of Practice**

Your Description of Practice should showcase:

- How you teach (characterize your key approaches) and why you do it that way
- Your assessment strategies and how they align with your teaching approach
- How you ensure your teaching is accessible and inclusive
- How you adapt your teaching in different situations
- What your greatest teaching successes and failures been, and what you learned from them

Focus on:

Part A **iv. Contributions to Teaching**

- Practices beyond your course-based teaching that fosters growth in curriculum, students, colleagues, etc:
 - Contributions to curriculum and other design initiatives
 - Significant challenges and how you addressed them
 - Presentations or professional development sessions you facilitated related to teaching and learning
 - Pedagogical research/SoTL, presentations and reports
 - Examples of teaching and learning leadership
- About 1 page, single-spaced

Involvement in
teaching, service,
scholarship, or
community

Scholarly &
developmental
approach

Evidence/Impact

Leadership

Focus on:

Part A **iv. Contributions to Teaching**

What this doesn't mean:

- A list of courses you've taught
- Attendance at workshops & development efforts. However, you could briefly say at the end of this section "I have also done a lot to develop myself, please see Appendix ___".
- Your CV

Focus on:

Part A v. Evidence of Effectiveness

- For each course taught over the last 5 years, provide:
 - Course title
 - Course code
 - Term
 - Number of students enrolled
 - Number of responses to the course evaluation
 - *Complete details of responses to the summative question in the student feedback on all courses taught over the past five years, set in the context of all teaching done in the Department (data to be provided by the Chair)*

Iterative growth

Developmental
approach

Focus on:

Part A v. Evidence of Effectiveness

- 3+ years ago the question was about rating instruction – now it is about rating the learning experience
- The context and practice around what to include for evidence of teaching effectiveness continues to evolve at McMaster
- While you might be provided with numerical data for the updated question, it is advised that you do the following:
 - Reflect upon and consider what the data means to you and your teaching
 - Talk to your Chair about how to include the data, how to acknowledge the change in question, and how to best provide your reflection

Focus on:

Part B Supporting Documentation

Appendices to Consider including:

- Professional Development such as workshops and courses
- Copies of teaching certificates earned
- Sample course materials: syllabi, assessments, evaluation frameworks
- Letters of support
- SoTL publications
- If applicable, address aberrations

Alignment: ideally everything in Part B was referred to somewhere in Part A

Evidence/Impact

Reflection & iterative growth

Leadership

Common feedback I provide...

- **Align**, align align:
 - How is this example aligned with your teaching philosophy?
 - Conversely: where are examples of that belief in your teaching philosophy?
- What **scholarship** has informed your teaching beliefs?
- How do you know this is true/was successful? Describe (and include in Part B) your **evidence**.
- **So what?** I.e. What does this section of your appendix demonstrate to the reader?
- Take out tentative language*
- Check with your Chair!

- As for delivery, I use “Consider...”, pose questions, explain how I interpreted particular statements, point out what I still want to know about the instructor



Questions?

Time to Practice!
Review a Portfolio



Time to Practice: Review a Portfolio



You will have 30 minutes to review a teaching portfolio.

Consider trying out the proposed approach:

- Need to do:
 - Follow the IDEC processes & look for rubric criteria: reflection & iterative growth; mentoring & advising; involvement in teaching, service, scholarship, or community
 - Confirm alignment with SPS B2
- Smart to do:
 - Enhance alignment with strategic documents
- Best practice:
 - Promote a scholarly and developmental approach, look for authenticity, evidence, impact, and leadership

When we reconvene, we'll chat about what feedback you would give to the author about their portfolio, challenges you ran into while reviewing, questions you have, etc.

Debrief: Portfolio Review

- What did you notice?
- What key pieces of advice are you planning to give?
- What challenges did you face?
- What did you learn from the reviewee's approaches that could inform your own teaching practice?
- What from this portfolio would be good to keep in mind if you were also doing a teaching observation of this reviewee?
- What questions do you have?

