

How to Effectively Review a Teaching Portfolio

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Erin Allard and Elliot Storm

Originally developed by Rebecca Taylor

Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation, and
Excellence in Teaching



Intended Learning Outcomes

- Describe the current landscape of teaching evaluation at McMaster University
- Articulate the goal(s) of teaching portfolio reviews in the Faculty of Engineering
- Consider how you may approach completing a portfolio review
- Practice reviewing a teaching portfolio

Context: Evaluation of Teaching at McMaster



Evaluation of Teaching at McMaster

- Practices around evaluation of teaching tended to emphasize measuring teaching effectiveness/excellence
- MUFA Report by Grignon et al. 2019 recommended suspending use of end-of-term SETs
- McMaster changed end-of-term approach to student experience surveys and provided new advice on approaching teaching portfolios in SPS B2
- McMaster emphasizes fostering continuous improvement in teaching through teaching evaluation
- Questions around processes, types of evidence, and more led to various evaluation initiatives/pilots around campus, including IDEC

Faculty of Engineering's Instructor Development & Evaluation Committee

- Process: 1) instructor self-reflection activity; 2) **peer observation and feedback activity**; 3) chair/director activity
- IDEC seeks to foster a transparent and meaningful teaching observation and portfolio development process
- Peer reviews can make teaching evaluations a scholarly practice
 - Provides support for pre-tenure/permanence faculty wishing to develop a portfolio
 - Focuses on reflection and development
 - Opportunity for context-specific dialogue
 - Creates consistent information for department chairs
 - Identifies 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)

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 feedbackLittle 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 studentsArticulates 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 semestersExamines student performance following adjustmentsReports improved student achievement of learning goals and/or improved equity in outcomes based on past course modifications
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 (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)
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 evidence of positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institutionLittle 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 institutionSome 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 audiencesScholarly 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.

Portfolio Comment (From Review)	Reflection Points (Instructor Responses)	Resolved?
<p><i>Teaching philosophy should be referenced in the section ____ to align with teaching practice.</i></p>	<p><i>Added references to specific teaching philosophy statements in section ____ and section ____.</i></p>	<p>[Y/N]</p>

Additional Evaluation of Teaching Resources

Your work as an IDEC reviewer is also informed by various McMaster resources, required or otherwise

SPS B2: Teaching Portfolios



Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Complete Policy Title

Teaching Portfolios

Approved by

**Senate /
Board of Governors**

Date of Original Approval(s)

Responsible Executive

Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Policy Number (if applicable):

SPS B2

Date of Most Recent Approval

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

Supersedes/Amends Policy dated

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

Policy Specific Enquiries

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

- Provides a structure
- Prohibits student comments

McMaster's Partnered in T&L Strategy (2021-2026)

"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**

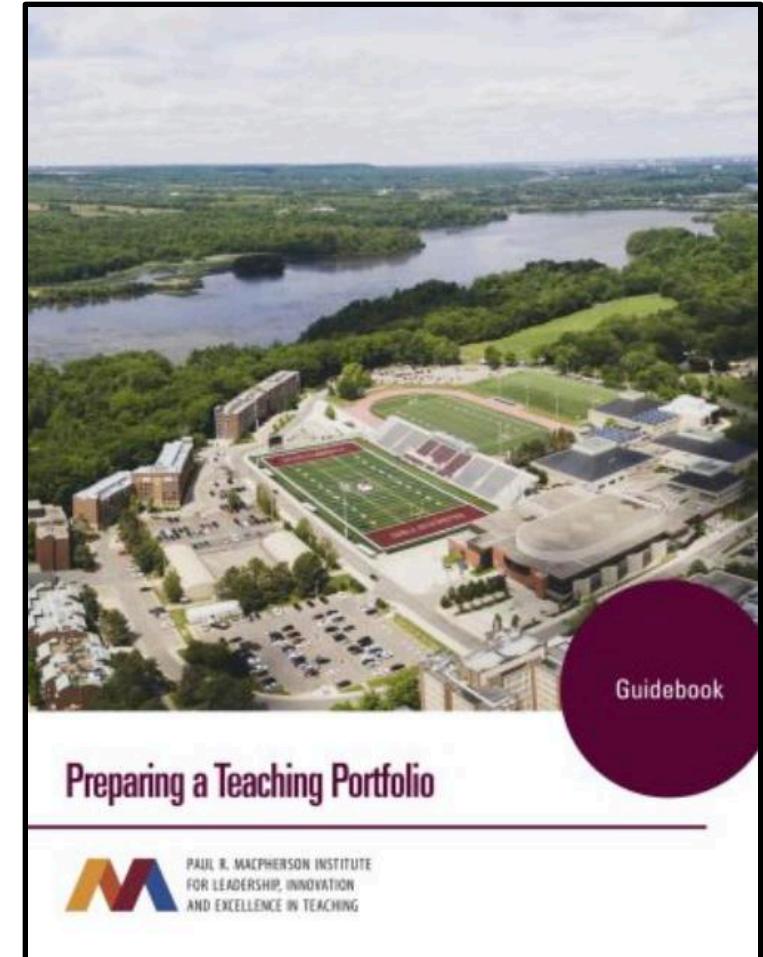
**DEVELOPING ACTIVE AND FLEXIBLE
LEARNING SPACES**

Preparing a Teaching Portfolio Guidebook

<https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/teachingportfolioguide/>

Chapters Include:

- The Portfolio Process
- Writing a Compelling Portfolio
- Fulfilling McMaster's SPS B2 Requirements
- Selecting Evidence for your Portfolio
- Refining your Portfolio: Feedback, Resources, and Policy
- Teaching Portfolio Assessment (for Chairs, Peers, and Reviewers)



Evaluating Teaching Portfolios



Approach to Teaching Portfolio reviews in FofE

Need to do:

- Follow the IDEC processes
- Confirm alignment with SPS B2

Smart to do:

- Enhance alignment with strategic documents

Best practice:

- Promote a reflective, scholarly and developmental approach, look for authenticity (and consistency), evidence, impact, and leadership

What staff at MI look for
when evaluating an SPS
B2 TP for faculty...



How to structure your McMaster Teaching Portfolio

First things first...

- Title page
- Table of contents

Each section starts on a
new page, numbered

Then...

SPS B2 specifies 2 major structural pieces:

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

Part A: Executive Summary

- “The elements of Part A constitute... an “executive” summary of a potentially much larger portfolio. The intent of this summary is to provide a means to manage the larger portfolio rather than to require that all such portfolios have a distinct length and uniformity.”

Part A: Executive Summary - Components

- i. Description of responsibilities and mechanism of evaluation as per appointment letter, or updates thereto
- ii. Description of teaching philosophy
- iii. Description of teaching practice
- iv. Description of contributions to teaching
- v. Complete details of responses to the summative question in the student feedback on all courses taught over the past five years, set in context of all teaching done in the department

Evidence of teaching effectiveness

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, single-spaced

Many faculty write a whole lot more. It could be repurposed for other Part A subsections, or moved to Part B

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
- About one page, single-spaced

Beliefs are of primary focus, though strategies, impacts, and goals are also briefly mentioned

Authenticity (alignment throughout the portfolio starts here)

Disciplinary teaching context

Scholarly approach

Maybe: Nods to strategy docs

Focus on:

Part A iii. Description of Practice

Strategies (what they do) is the primary focus

- Whereas your Philosophy is about your *beliefs* and contains few examples in little depth, your Description of Practice contains a few in-depth examples of how the Philosophy has been realized, or how teaching has been adapted to unusual conditions
- Ultimately, **it describes how your philosophy has been realized and documents your growth**
- One to two pages, single-spaced

Reflective practice

Examples
(disciplinary
teaching context)

Scholarly /
evidence based

Developmental /
growth oriented

Focus on:

Part A iv. Contributions to Teaching

- Practices beyond your course-based teaching that fosters growth in curriculum, students, colleagues, etc. (not your own growth!)
 - 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 or peer mentorship
- About one page, single-spaced

...

Strategies, impact, and possibly goals are primary foci

Involvement in teaching, service, scholarship, or community

Leadership, peer mentorship

Maybe: Scholarly and developmental approach

Focus on:

Part A iv. Contributions to Teaching

What this doesn't mean:

- A list of courses you've taught
- A list of your own professional development in teaching (e.g., workshops you've attended on teaching and learning)
 - However, you could briefly say at the end of this section "I have also done a lot to develop myself as an educator. Please see Appendix __ for details".

Focus on:

Part A v. Evidence of Effectiveness

- For each course taught over the last 5 years, provide:

- Course title and 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)*

Impact is the focus

Reflective practice (yes, reflective practice!)

Developmental approach

...

Focus on:

Part A v. Evidence of Effectiveness

- Prior to 2020, 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

Part B Supporting Documentation

- Part B “is optional and may contain additional material compiled by the faculty member in support of Part A”
 - Part B is all about evidence – do encourage faculty to include a Part B!
- The documentation is provided as Appendices
- Every item included as an appendix in Part B must be referenced in Part A

Focus on: Part B Supporting Documentation

Appendices to Consider including:

- Your own Professional Development in Teaching (e.g., teaching and learning workshops, modules, courses, conferences)
- Copies of teaching and learning certificates earned, awards
- Sample course materials: syllabus, lesson plan, assessment, evaluation framework
- Letters of support
- SoTL publications
- If applicable, address aberrations

Evidence!

Alignment

Everything in Part B
was referred in Part A

Curated - less is more
(don't need multiple
examples of the
same thing)

Reflection
and iterative growth

Common feedback MI provides...

- **Align**, align, align!
 - How is this example aligned with your teaching philosophy?
 - [Conversely] Why is this belief not reflected in your teaching philosophy?
- What **scholarship** has informed your teaching beliefs and / or practice? "How do you know that this practice is effective? Consider including an in-text citation for a scholarly piece of literature that demonstrates that this is an effective practice."
- How do you know this is true/was successful? Describe your **impact** (in Part A) and include your **evidence** (in Part B).
 - "What does this section of your appendix demonstrate to the reader?"
 - "Where is this Appendix referred to in Part A?"
 - "Here are a few other pieces of evidence that you may wish to include in Part B..."



Common feedback delivery approaches...

- Use soft language like "Consider...", "Perhaps...", and "It may benefit the reader if you..." with more direct "I recommend that you..." and "As per the SPS B2, you should ..." type comments mixed in for necessary changes pertaining to SPS B2 formatting
- Pose questions - some for clarity ("What do you mean by x? Please explain."), and some that are admittedly more leading to fill in important gaps I see ("Do you consider accessibility when you design your teaching materials and engage with students?", "What do you do to continue to grow and develop as an educator?")
- Explain how I interpreted a particular statement
- Point out what I still want to know about regarding the instructor's teaching
- Point out any typos / grammatical errors I see (not checking it all intentionally for this)



Questions?



Time to Practice!
Review a Portfolio



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 questions do you have?



Thank you!



Erin Allard allarde@mcmaster.ca

Elliot Storm storme@mcmaster.ca

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