



# CTL GUIDE TO TEACHING DOSSIERS

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## INTRODUCTION

Faculty members at the University of Alberta are responsible as scholars “active in teaching, in research, and in service” and are evaluated in terms of their performance in these three categories. In view of the University’s multifaceted teaching evaluation policy (GFC Policy 111), a Teaching Dossier may provide the basis to compile input from self, students, and peers. This Guide, in conjunction with resources on the CTL website, is designed to help instructors document their growth and achievements in teaching and to present evidence of these in the form of a Teaching Dossier.

## WHAT IS A TEACHING DOSSIER?

A Teaching Dossier is a document intended to facilitate the presentation of a faculty member’s teaching growth, strengths, and achievements for self-assessment and interpretation by others. The process of developing the Dossier contributes to good teaching by stimulating self-reflection, self-analysis, and self-development. The Teaching Dossier is a yearly record and a cumulative record of teaching activities and results. The yearly record is a key document designed to help faculty members review their teaching philosophy, goals, and strategies and organize material for inclusion in the Annual Report under the “teaching” section. Ultimately, yearly records become a cumulative record helpful for the preparation of documents requiring historical information (nominations for teaching awards, applications for research leaves, teaching development grants, positions, tenure, promotion, etc.).

The Dossier, a three to eight page document with appendices, reflects a number of related areas of inquiry. These may vary according to the specific needs of individual teaching units, though because the accent of the Dossier is placed on a compilation of materials that make the case for the instructor’s effectiveness, the following categories play a significant role:

- a statement regarding the faculty member’s teaching philosophy, goals, and strategies;
- a description of teaching contributions (planning, preparing, and teaching courses; assessing student learning; and giving feedback);
- an evaluation of teaching accomplishments;
- suggestions regarding possible changes for future teaching, and
- supporting documentation.



## HOW TO PROCEED

The following offer a wide range of options for documenting your teaching and may be included in your Dossier. In making a selection appropriate to your own case, consider the unique elements of your teaching style, the subject matter you teach, and other concerns (such as the type, level, and number of students in your courses). If a particular activity has not been listed but is relevant to your teaching responsibilities, include it.

**1.** Ideally, you should begin gathering and retaining information which pertains to your teaching from the first day of your first teaching assignment. When making decisions about what to retain and what to discard, remember that it is better to err on the side of saving too much than destroying material that may later prove useful.

Keep copies of all items referred to in your teaching documentation such as examination outlines, original copies of course evaluations (unless they are kept by your unit), letters from chairpersons and students, samples of students' work, etc. These materials will not necessarily be included in your Teaching Dossier but should be retained in case original evidence is required. There should be a reference in your Teaching Dossier informing the reader that such materials are available.

You may wish to include as an appendix a few representative samples of materials that illustrate accomplishments referred to in your Teaching Dossier (e.g., an exemplary course outline, unsolicited letters from students, or an outline of a particularly innovative assignment). A one-page reflection on the included samples enhances their value.

**2.** Consult your department's mission statement, the University's mission statement, the University's Academic Plan, the sections on teaching in the Faculty Agreement, the GFC Policy Manual, and other relevant documents, to identify the goals, priorities, and expectations of the University concerning excellence in teaching.

**3.** Examine the Teaching Contributions in section 2 and select those areas and items which are most applicable to your teaching; list accomplishments in each area.

**4.** Summarize your teaching contributions. Include graduate and undergraduate teaching and your contributions to curriculum and course developments. Highlight your teaching strengths.

**5.** If you have an item that cuts across teaching and another category (e.g., service), select the one where it fits the best and cross reference it in the other category.

*Review the CTL website for more information and examples, or attend a variety of CTL workshops which include time and feedback for reflecting on your Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRIs), writing and revising your teaching philosophy, and compiling your teaching dossier.*

[ctl.ualberta.ca](http://ctl.ualberta.ca)

# SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Provide a table of contents of the documentation which you have selected to support your accomplishments. Possible sections for organizing the supporting documentation are as follows:

## Appendix A

### *Teaching Goals, Strategies, and Evaluation Methods*

- Course materials, special notes, handouts, problem sets, laboratory books, computer manuals, portfolio of student work, etc. relevant to your teaching methods.
- Teaching methods (e.g., lecture, small group discussion, problem-solving, collaborative inquiry, critical thinking pedagogy, problem-based learning, case studies, project-based, student presentations).
- Procedures used to assess or evaluate student learning.
- Mid-semester feedback solicited and acted upon.
- Arrangements made to accommodate the special needs of students.
- Teaching developments undertaken (course design, curricular changes to include gender issues, student diversity, subject matter, methods of presentation, evaluation procedures, specially designed assignments, teaching methods geared to developing critical skills, as well as developments involving teaching resources such as films, computer materials, and other audio-visual material), and, where possible, evidence of the effectiveness and impact of the teaching developments you have undertaken.
- Research activities related to teaching and student learning.

## Appendix B

### *Teaching Responsibilities*

- Titles and numbers of courses taught, including graduate, undergraduate, and reading courses. Indicate with an asterisk courses you have developed or substantially revised.
- Number of students in each course. Describe your workload including, where appropriate, the number of teaching assistants assigned to assist you in the course and the nature of their involvement.
- Details of other teaching activities such as seminars, advising students, supervision of a teaching or research practicum, athletic coaching, field placement supervision, and coaching in the performing arts.
- Teaching which has contributed to the achievement of awards, honours, and employment for students.

## Appendix C

### *Supervising and Advising Students*

- Documentation of supervision activity includes names of those supervised and the nature and the extent of the supervisory activity. It is also useful to indicate the outcome of the supervision (e.g., the thesis title and acceptance date, the citation information of a student publication, or the date and venue of a public performance).
- PhD thesis supervision (indicate whether supervisor or committee member).
- Master's thesis supervision (indicate whether supervisor or committee member).
- Honour's thesis supervision (indicate whether supervisor or committee member).
- Supervision of graduate and undergraduate independent study or directed readings.
- Advisement on program of study, courses, or career and professional advice.
- Supervision which has contributed to publications, exhibitions, performances, and conference presentations by students.



## Appendix D

### *Activities Undertaken to Improve Teaching and Learning*

- Steps taken to assess and respond to general problems arising in a course, which may necessitate redesign or refocus of course content.
- Results of student ratings or questionnaires designed by you to solicit assessments of your teaching effectiveness.
- Description of efforts made to improve the classroom climate or your teaching methods. You may wish to consider items such as steps taken to ensure free and open participation and the comfort of all learners regardless of gender, ethnic origin, class, age, sexual orientation, or ability.
- Seminars, lectures, workshops, and conferences on teaching and learning approaches and techniques (internal and external) attended.

## Appendix E

### *Committee Service regarding Teaching and Learning*

It may be useful to include details such as names of committees, dates, and the nature of your contribution.

- All activities concerned with teaching that you have undertaken as a member of a faculty, department, or cross disciplinary committee, sub-committee, ad hoc committee, or task force. Consider membership on General Faculties Council and its sub-committees; Senate; Board of Governors; AASUA; Library committees; University service units; Teaching and Scholarship committees; Presidential committees; Advisory boards (examples: Academic Planning Committee, Council on Student Life, Committee for the Improvement of Teaching and Learning, Special Sessions Committee, Undergraduate Awards and Scholarship Committee, Undergraduate Teaching Awards Committee, University of Alberta Preview Days, and other committees working on academic policy, curriculum, review, planning, and implementation topics).
- Professional training, orientation, or development for teaching assistants.
- Professional training, orientation, or development sessions for faculty, such as orientation sessions for new faculty, and sessions that introduce or raise consciousness about teaching techniques or technological developments.
- CTL's Peer Consultation Program.
- Teaching awards committees for full and part-time instructors and teaching assistants.
- Involvement in establishing, adjudicating, or administering awards or honours recognizing and celebrating student achievement.
- Observing others teach as part of formal or informal evaluation and feedback regarding teaching effectiveness.
- Accreditation committees.
- Curriculum planning / review committees or task forces.
- Program revision committees.
- Organization of retreats and strategic planning sessions.
- Development of department teaching resources such as a computer instruction project, a teaching materials resource centre, a reference map collection, and a visiting scholar program.
- Coordination of multi-section, sequenced, or inter-related courses.
- Other cross-University committees, standing or ad hoc, which examine teaching and learning matters.
- Use of your teaching materials by instructors in other departments, faculties, colleges, or universities.
- Involvement in program review of other teaching units.
- Workshops, seminars, or invited presentations within and outside of the University.
- Involvement in providing consultation or review to instructors in other units in improving teaching effectiveness.
- Development of widely-used student ratings of instruction or other assessment instruments.
- Teaching involvement outside your unit.



## Appendix F

### *Publications and Professional Contributions*

It is helpful to include information about the nature of your audience and your contribution.

- Curriculum materials.
- Details of published and unpublished curriculum materials, textbooks, workbooks, case studies, class notes, lab manuals, and other classroom materials which you have developed.
- Research and professional contributions related to teaching.
- Open educational resources which you have developed or modified.
- Books (including chapters in books, edited books, and special issues of journals); articles (indicate whether refereed, solicited, or non-refereed); papers in conference proceedings (indicate whether refereed or non-refereed); bibliographies; newsletters; unpublished conference papers; workshop presentations; and unpublished professional reports.
- Funding related to teaching.
- Internal and external teaching development grants, fellowships, and research grants received.

## Appendix G

### *Documentation of Results of Teaching*

- Results of the multifaceted teaching evaluations.
- Results (statistics) and student comments from the GFC Universal Student Ratings of Instruction as well as the results of questions selected by your department, faculty, and you.
- Unsolicited letters from students; and solicited letters from students and teaching assistants.
- Feedback which has been initiated by groups of students.
- Objective indicators of student progress, where available (e.g., proficiency tests; examples of students' work "before" and "after"; students' standings on nation-wide tests).
- Peer evaluations or reviews based on visits to your classroom or on scrutiny.
- Teaching awards received by you including departmental, faculty, and University of Alberta awards, and external awards (professional association, civic groups, nation-wide, and international teaching awards).
- Nominations for awards.

# A SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

\*this section is adopted from Kenny et al. (2018).

## Teaching Philosophy Statement

- ✓ Clearly summarizes core beliefs about teaching and learning.
- ✓ Core beliefs are grounded in personal experience.
- ✓ Core beliefs are grounded in the scholarship of teaching and learning, where appropriate.
- ✓ Briefly illustrates beliefs with examples of strategies and approaches – either demonstrated or planned.
- ✓ Provides examples of strategies used to evaluate own effectiveness – either demonstrated or planned.
- ✓ Demonstrates a commitment to continuous learning and growth – summarizes future goals.

## Quality and Alignment of Evidence

- ✓ Evidence of teaching strategies and approaches is from multiple perspectives (self, students, peers).
- ✓ Sources of evidence are appropriate to the context of person’s roles, responsibilities and experiences (including both formative and summative feedback where appropriate).
- ✓ Evidence is meaningfully chosen and illustrates/directly connects to the beliefs described in the philosophy statement.
- ✓ Evidence is introduced with a clear rationale for its inclusion as well as a description of its context.

## Critical Reflection

- ✓ Thoughtfully integrated throughout the dossier.
- ✓ Clearly addresses how evidence of teaching and learning reflects stated beliefs and has implications for future goals and learning.
- ✓ If appropriate, reflects on how teaching practice has evolved over time based on experiences and feedback.

## Personal Expression and Context

- ✓ Author’s voice is clear and authentic.
- ✓ Narrative summaries are provided to give context to teaching experiences and evidence chosen.
- ✓ Quality of writing and expression enhances reader’s overall impressions of the dossier.

## Design and Organization

- ✓ Professionally presented in a way that is appropriate for audience and purpose.
- ✓ Logical and consistent structure, including a table of contents.
- ✓ Presented as a clear, succinct, integrated document.





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This document was compiled primarily from two main sources:

Day, R., Robberecht, P., & Roed, B. (1996). Teaching dossier: A Guide. University Teaching Services, University of Alberta.

Kenny, N., Berenson, C., Jeffs, C., Nowell, L., & Grant, K. (2018) Teaching Philosophies and Teaching Dossiers Guide. Calgary, AB: Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning. Retrieved from: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/taylorinstitute/resources/>

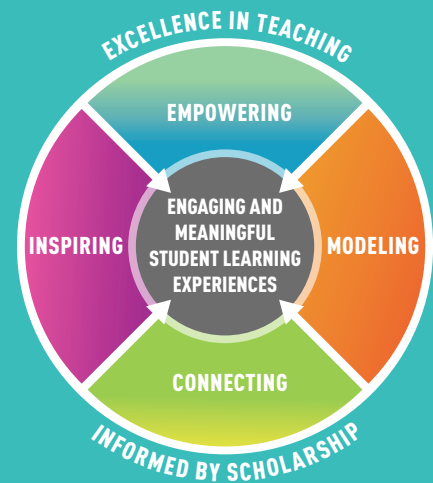
## About the Centre for Teaching and Learning

### VISION

CTL promotes excellent university teaching that leads to engaging and meaningful learning experiences for students.

### MISSION

We pursue this goal through a combination of consultation, facilitation, technology integration, collaboration, and research to advocate for and support evidence-based, responsive, and positive change in teaching and learning. We provide important face-to-face and peer experiences for instructors and extend our reach through blended and online programming.



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