Guidelines for Preparation of a Teaching Portfolio

A teaching portfolio is a self-assessment that documents one’s achievement and growth as a teacher. It therefore needs to involve reflection on one’s teaching practice as well as on contributions to enhancing the quality of teaching at the university. It should be an evidence-informed narrative account of oneself as an academic teacher.

- One way of making a portfolio effective is by viewing it as being similar to a scholarly article, the purpose of which is to make an argument about the quality of one’s teaching. This means that claims need to be carefully supported and justified with a suitably wide range of concrete, documented evidence. Reference to and analysis of these different sources of evidence should converge and be carefully integrated into the portfolio itself.

- As a document submitted for the evaluation of teaching, a teaching portfolio makes a case for the quality of one’s teaching. In developing the portfolio, it is important to ensure that it is aligned with the following criteria that indicate good teaching. The portfolio should demonstrate:
  1. teaching practice that is focused on student learning;
  2. appropriate levels of expertise in the discipline, teaching the discipline, and integrating these two kinds of expertise;
  3. engagement in continuous development as a teacher;
  4. reflection on practice informed by appropriate levels of relevant theory;
  5. nurturing of a supportive culture by sharing teaching practice, thereby developing educational leadership.

These criteria have been derived from the current research on teaching and learning in higher education (see list of references).

The portfolio should highlight challenges faced as an academic teacher; steps taken to reflect on and enhance teaching (approach and strategies used to meet these challenges); achievements as a teacher, including contribution to the cause of education above and beyond regular teaching and administration; and future goals.

Length: 10-15 pages, font 12, single-spaced (excluding teaching CV and appendices)

Note: There are many ways of constructing a teaching portfolio. While adherence to the basic structure as well as alignment with the criteria for good teaching is required, it is important to design the portfolio in a way that best represents the individual’s achievement and growth since it needs to be a personalised document that evolves over time. For example, our recommendation here is to focus on individual case studies, but there may of course be other ways to present, reflect on, and analyse data to support claims. It is important to stress that meeting the requirements should not be seen as a tick-box exercise.
The teaching portfolio should consist of 4 parts:

1. Teaching Curriculum Vitae (CV)
   Provide brief context (2-3 pp.) prior to the teaching philosophy statement, for example in the form of a teaching CV. This should highlight the author’s disciplinary background and research focus, details of courses taught, and contributions in relation to teaching at departmental, faculty, institutional, or inter/national level.

2. Teaching philosophy
   The teaching philosophy can be considered as the thesis statement of the teaching portfolio. It should consist of around 2 pp. of text that state the 2-3 key principles that form the basis of one’s practice as a teacher. It should further briefly highlight the learning goals one seeks to attain as an academic teacher who is an expert in a particular discipline or disciplines, the strategies used as part of the approach to attain these learning goals, and the impact of these strategies.

3. Evidence:
   The remainder of the portfolio develops the ideas summarised in the teaching philosophy statement by providing and analysing concrete examples from one’s practice: evidence that relates to the approach taken and strategies used, and the impact that results. Instead of covering all aspects of one’s teaching practice, the portfolio should instead focus on a few reflective case narratives (2-3 are suggested), each of which builds on a critical incident. Data used as supporting evidence in each case narrative can be derived from 4 evidence domains, and should focus on 4 cumulative levels of impact (click on this link to see example):

   Levels of impact
   a. Students
   b. Colleagues/department
   c. Institutional
   d. National/International

   Domains of evidence
   e. Self-assessment (evidence of approach; source: self)
   f. Professional contributions (evidence of approach; source: self)
   g. Direct or indirect evidence of student learning (evidence of impact; source: students)
   h. Peer recognition (evidence of impact; source: peers)

   Reflection on these examples from practice need to be integrated and connected with the ideas presented in the teaching philosophy statement in order to support claims relating to one’s achievements as a teacher (the documented evidence itself is compiled in the appendices). The different sources of evidence need to converge so as to support the overarching narrative.
4. Appendices:

The appendices should contain documentation of evidence from the 4 domains analysed in the teaching portfolio. It is possible to provide a wide array of evidence relating to your teaching practice in the appendices. The following is minimally required:

a. Relevant course materials, including sample syllabi, assessments, teaching and learning materials (as part of evidence of professional contributions; source of evidence: self).

b. Official student feedback for the period under consideration (as part of indirect evidence of student learning; source of evidence: students).

c. Official peer review reports for the relevant period (as part of peer recognition of teaching achievement; source of evidence: peers).