# Teaching Portfolios

**What Is a Teaching Portfolio?**

* Portfolios provide documented evidence of teaching from a variety of sources—not just student ratings—and provide context for that evidence.
* The process of selecting and organizing material for a portfolio can help one reflect on and improve one’s teaching.
* Portfolios are a step toward a more public, professional view of teaching as a scholarly activity.
* Portfolios can offer a look at development over time, helping one see teaching as on ongoing process of inquiry, experimentation, and reflection.
* Teaching portfolios capture evidence of one’s entire teaching career, in contrast to what are called course portfolios that capture evidence related to a single course.

**Why Assemble a Teaching Portfolio?**

Portfolios can serve any of the following purposes

* Job applicants for faculty positions can use teaching portfolios to document their teaching effectiveness.
* Faculty members up for promotion or tenure can also use teaching portfolios to document their teaching effectiveness.
* Faculty members and teaching assistants can use teaching portfolios to reflect on and refine their teaching skills and philosophies.

**General Guidelines**

Start now! Many of the possible components of a teaching portfolio (see list below) are difficult, if not impossible, to obtain after you have finished teaching a course. Collecting these components as you go will make assembling your final portfolio much easier.

* **Give a fair and accurate presentation of yourself.** Don’t try to present yourself as the absolutely perfect teacher. Highlight the positive, of course, but don’t completely omit the negative.
* **Be selective in which materials you choose to include**, though be sure to represent a cross-section of your teaching and not just one aspect of it. A relatively small set of well-chosen documents is more effective than a large, unfiltered collection of all your teaching documents.
* **Make your organization explicit to the reader.** Use a table of contents at the beginning and tabs to separate the various components of your portfolio.
* **Make sure every piece of evidence in your portfolio is accompanied by some sort of context and explanation.** For instance, if you include a sample lesson plan, make sure to describe the course, the students, and, if you have actually used the lesson plan, a reflection on how well it worked.

**Components of a Teaching Portfolio**

1. Your Thoughts About Teaching
   * A reflective “teaching statement” describing your personal teaching philosophy, strategies, and objectives.
   * A personal statement describing your teaching goals for the next few years
2. Documentation of Your Teaching
   * A list of courses taught, with enrollments and a description of your responsibilities
   * Number of advisees, graduate and undergraduate
   * Syllabi
   * Course descriptions with details of content, objectives, methods, and procedures for evaluating student learning
   * Reading lists
   * Assignments
   * Exams and quizzes, graded and ungraded
   * Handouts, problem sets, lecture outlines
   * Descriptions and examples of visual materials used
   * Descriptions of uses of computers and other technology in teaching
   * Videotapes of your teaching
3. Teaching Effectiveness
   * Summarized student evaluations of teaching, including response rate and relationship to departmental average
   * Written comments from students on class evaluations
   * Comments from a peer observer or a colleague teaching the same course
   * Statements from colleagues in the department or elsewhere, regarding the preparation of students for advanced work
   * Letters from students, preferably unsolicited
   * Letters from course head, division head or chairperson
   * Statements from alumni
4. Materials Demonstrating Student Learning
   * Scores on standardized or other tests, before and after instruction
   * Students’ lab books or other workbooks
   * Students’ papers, essays, or creative works
   * Graded work from the best and poorest students, with teacher’s feedback to students
   * Instructor’s written feedback on student work
5. Activities to Improve Instruction
   * Participation in seminars or professional meetings on teaching
   * Design of new courses
   * Design of interdisciplinary or collaborative courses or teaching projects
   * Use of new methods of teaching, assessing learning, grading
   * Preparation of a textbook, lab manual, courseware, etc.
   * Description of instructional improvement projects developed or carried out
6. Contributions to the Teaching Profession and/or Your Institution
   * Publications in teaching journals
   * Papers delivered on teaching
   * Reviews of forthcoming textbooks
   * Service on teaching committees
   * Assistance to colleagues on teaching matters
   * Work on curriculum revision or development
7. Honors, Awards, or Recognitions
   * Teaching awards from department, college, or university
   * Teaching awards from profession
   * Invitations based on teaching reputation to consult, give workshops, write articles, etc.
   * Requests for advice on teaching by committees or other organized groups