# 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