



Preparing and Presenting a

Teaching Portfolio



Philosophy, Practice and Performance

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Preparing and Presenting a Teaching Portfolio – Philosophy, Practice and Performance

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Introduction

Teaching is a core activity of universities. As a staff member involved in teaching you are increasingly expected to demonstrate your commitment to and expertise in teaching as well as being broadly accountable for the learning outcomes of your students.

Universities have become increasingly sensitive to competition, both within the university sector, as well as from other higher education institutions now offering degree programs such as TAFE, private colleges and institutes. This has produced increased scrutiny of teaching performance internally by peers, supervisors and university management, and externally through audits by the Australian University Quality Agency (AUQA) and Federal Government requirements for access to additional funding.

The focus on teaching has been enhanced by the growth of teaching awards, sponsored by the Government and our institutions. Teaching performance can also be important in applying for grants, qualifying for membership of professional societies, and in meeting student and community expectations.

A teaching portfolio is becoming the accepted form in which you are expected to demonstrate your commitment to learning and teaching, document your teaching responsibilities, practices and expertise, and provide evidence of your performance as a teacher.

The Changing Learning and Teaching Environment

In 1996, the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) published a guide for members entitled *How to Compile a Teaching Portfolio*. Members of NTEU's National Education Policy Committee have compiled this latest version, with assistance from the National Office, to reflect changes in the learning and teaching environment since the guide was last published.

These changes have been immense, and have had significant impact on the learning and teaching environments within our universities.

Developments that are changing the way you undertake your learning and teaching duties include:

- a) A significant growth in student numbers and class sizes, together with a sharp rise in the number of international students, taught both onshore and offshore.
- b) Technological changes in relation to learning and teaching practice encompassing the use of computer assisted teaching and online communication with students have transformed the infrastructure available for university teaching, and driven the growth of on-line courses.
- c) Government policy now requires greater accountability from our institutions for learning and teaching quality, including increased use of standardised student evaluations.

These changes have also been accompanied by additional funding from Government to enhance the focus on teaching quality. This has included the establishment of the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, introduction of competitive grants specifically aimed at learning and teaching, establishment of the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund, and expansion of government and institution-sponsored teaching awards.

This guide covers the three essential components of a teaching portfolio: teaching philosophy, teaching practice, and teaching performance. It is not this guide's intention to prescribe a particular format for your teaching portfolio. The actual structure of your teaching portfolio will most likely vary depending upon the purpose for which you intend to use it, the discipline field in which you teach, the institution at which you are employed, and what you consider to be your relative strengths.

We hope that this guide assists you in your work and in your career in higher education, and would welcome any suggestions¹ for changes to future editions.

Dr Carolyn Allport, NTEU National President

What is a Teaching Portfolio?

In one of the seminal publications about teaching portfolios, Peter Seldin², answers this question by stating that a teaching portfolio is:

a factual description of a professor's teaching strengths and accomplishments. It includes documents and materials which collectively suggest the scope and quality of a professor's teaching performance. It is to teaching what lists of publications, grants, and honors [sic] are to research and scholarship.

In other words, a teaching portfolio (sometimes also referred to as a 'dossier' or 'record') is a summary you compile to demonstrate your commitment, major accomplishments and strengths in teaching.

A teaching portfolio will normally be comprised of two distinct components:

- a) A statement that outlines your teaching philosophy, practice and performance.
- b) A dossier of relevant material to support the claims you make in the summary statement.

When referring to a teaching portfolio in this guide, we are specifically referring to the statement that you would present to others when applying for a new position, permanency, promotion or a teaching award. However, you should keep in mind that you will need to compile and organise the necessary material to support your statement.

The *Useful Resources* section at the end of this guide provides examples of materials that you may wish to compile for your dossier to demonstrate different aspects of your teaching achievements. In the case of a teaching portfolio statement, like preparing a CV, you are the author and editor and you take responsibility for what is included and what is not.



Self Evaluation and Reflection

All too often staff see the preparation and presentation of a teaching portfolio as only being necessary for the purpose of applying for new positions, probation or promotion or in terms of applying for teaching grants or awards. A teaching portfolio however can also be seen as providing staff with an opportunity to reflect on their own approaches to and philosophies on learning and teaching and be used as a tool to undertake some self-evaluation of their own teaching practices.

As Seldin notes in his seminal work:

In truth, one of the most significant parts of the portfolio is the faculty member's self-reflection on his or her teaching. Preparing it can help professors unearth new discoveries about themselves. Are these changes for the better? What do your syllabi say about your teaching style? What do they say about your interest in students?

To this extent self reflection and self evaluation will not only help you understand what you are trying to achieve as a teacher it will also help you compile a better teaching portfolio. Again as Seldin observes:

Sometimes faculty preparing portfolios fall into the trap of permitting the appendices – the supporting documents – to determine the portfolio creation. A far better approach is to first reflect about one's underlying philosophy of teaching, then describe the teaching strategies and methodologies that flow from that philosophy.

Seldin op cit

Why do I need a Teaching Portfolio?

In advice prepared for University of Western Australia staff, Sally Wijesundera³, suggests the following reasons why staff may need or want to develop a teaching portfolio:

- Evidence in applications for grants, appointments, tenure, promotion, or consultancies.
- Self-evaluation, reflection and improvement.
- Planning for Staff Development Review discussions.
- Fostering discussion about teaching.
- Evidence of work quality.

A teaching portfolio can be used for two important purposes. Firstly, it is a summative statement of what you have achieved, that is, a document that presents your teaching achievements. This information will be necessary when you apply for new positions, probation and promotion or when applying for grants, consultancies or teaching awards.

Secondly, a teaching portfolio can be used as part of the formative assessment of your own performance, that is, to reflect on what you are trying to achieve and how you might improve upon it.

A well balanced teaching portfolio statement will incorporate both summative and formative analysis of your learning and teaching activities.

How should I structure my Teaching Portfolio?

The structure of your teaching portfolio might differ significantly depending upon the purpose for which you intend to use it. In some circumstances the structure of your portfolio might be dictated by institutional policy.

You should also structure your portfolio to highlight what you consider to be your relative strengths in teaching and learning. If you have been heavily involved in scholarship and research into your teaching and used the results to be innovative in the course or curricula design or in the way you prepare materials or deliver your courses you may want to emphasise these aspects.

If on the other hand, you have a long tradition of teaching with positive student feedback this is an aspect you may wish to make prominent.

There is no correct structure for a teaching portfolio, but most of the literature indicates that it should at least address the following aspects of your teaching:

- Your philosophy on teaching and learning.
- Documentation for current teaching practices, self-reflection on current practices and plans for future improvement.
- Evidence of your performance as a teacher.

How exactly you address each of these issues and what weight you assign to each will be very much an individual decision. To help you think about how you go about structuring your teaching portfolio, *Insert 1* provides a number of examples of possible structures.

The institution you teach in might make a difference to the way you compile your teaching portfolio. Firstly, institutional policies and procedures in relation to probation, promotion and performance management might prescribe the form in which your portfolio statement is structured. Secondly, the mission or values of the institution might also influence your teaching philosophy and practice.

In some circumstances, such as applying for promotion, your institution may have restrictions in terms of the length and content of teaching portfolio statements. Some institutions use a standardised pro-forma which staff are expected to follow. Before starting to prepare a teaching portfolio statement, you should first check with the particular institution to determine their policies and procedures in relation to teaching portfolios.

Your teaching portfolio should emphasise your own particular philosophy and practice toward teaching, as well as demonstrate that you are aware of the institution's goals and objectives in relation to teaching and learning.

Teaching philosophy, teaching practice and the way your teaching is evaluated may well vary considerably between disciplines. Check whether your discipline or teaching area has its own standards, in addition to those articulated by your institution.

Insert 1: Examples of Teaching Portfolio Tables of Contents

Example 1

Table of Contents

1. Teaching Responsibilities
2. Statement of Teaching Philosophy
3. Teaching Methodology, Strategies, Objectives
4. Description of Course Materials (Syllabi, Handouts, Assignments)
5. Efforts to Improve Teaching
 - a) Conferences/Workshops Attended
 - b) Curricular Revisions
 - c) Innovations in Teaching
6. Student Ratings on Diagnostic Questions
7. Products of Teaching (Evidence of Student Learning)
8. Teaching Goals: Short- and Long-Term
9. Appendices

Source: Seldin op cit

Example 2

RMIT Guidelines for Promotion:

Teaching Portfolio Summary Format of Presentation

The format in which candidates present information is flexible. Teaching Portfolio Summaries may be structured in different ways with different styles of teaching represented in them.

The only stipulation is that the Summary being presented to the selection panel be limited to five pages and that some attention be given to the following major headings:

1. Background.
2. Teaching approach.
3. Evidence of improvements in teaching and learning.
4. Leadership in teaching and learning.
5. Other relevant supporting statements.

Source: <http://prodmams.rmit.edu.au/31jni17amgq7.doc>

Teaching Philosophy

What is a Statement of Teaching Philosophy?

A statement of teaching philosophy allows you to articulate what you believe your role and objectives are as a teacher and what learning objectives you set for your students. The statement should highlight how and why you adopt certain approaches to teaching to achieve these objectives.

Typically your statement of teaching philosophy should be a brief statement about your views in relation to your assumptions, attitudes and expectations toward your responsibilities and obligations as a teacher and how this impacts on your approach to teaching. It should highlight what you believe to be your strengths as a teacher.

This statement should provide a summary of your portfolio and you will have the opportunity to expand on each of these in more detail in other sections of your portfolio. It also should provide the context for both your teaching practice and the evaluation of your teaching performance.

Extracts from statements of teaching philosophies are included in *Insert 2*.



Insert 2: Extracts for Statements of Teaching Philosophy

Example 1

Teaching has been a major part of my life since 1988. My philosophy of teaching is learner-centred and emphasizes the importance of the learner's active participation in the construction of meaning. I believe we need to remember that our students are individuals, bringing with them a diverse range of experiences, interests and abilities, which will inform their learning. In this context the role of the teacher is very much one of providing an environment where the students can contribute, interact and experiment while building their own knowledge from materials provided by the teacher or by other students or located by themselves. A necessary element in this learning environment is that the students must feel at ease, have fun, and be given the opportunity to develop good cooperative learning relationships with each other and also with the teacher.

<http://www-staff.it.uts.edu.au/~laurel/Teaching/Teaching.htm>

Example 2

I value honesty, endeavour, peace and service to others. This may not be terribly fashionable but these values guide how I live my life. It goes without saying that they extend into my teaching. In this paper I outline my teaching philosophy considering teaching and learning, my role and methods and my understanding of the students' perspective. Throughout I put my thoughts in context.

Teaching and learning are difficult to define. Cranton and Carusetta (2002, p169) define teaching as "a specialised form of communication with the goal of fostering student learning". In addition to its communicative nature they emphasise that teaching is constructed socially within a specific context and is acquired by "experience, reflection and discourse" (p169). I chose this definition simply because it resonates with my current understanding of teaching. I have been teaching ... for over a decade with little formal preparation until recently and have progressed and evolved as a teacher because of the experience, my reflection on it and discussion with others.

Anonymous, University of Canberra

Why should I include in a Statement of Teaching Philosophy?

Like a teaching portfolio itself, your statement of teaching philosophy can serve a number of purposes, including:

- A way to clearly articulate your understanding of your role and responsibilities as a teacher.
- A way of demonstrating to your colleagues and university management that your approach to teaching has a sound philosophical (and where appropriate, theoretical) foundation.
- A way of demonstrating that you appreciate the importance of teaching as part of your duties and responsibilities and your commitment to it, and showing that you are prepared to reflect on your role as a teacher and consider improvements to be part of your professional development.

In other words, your statement of teaching philosophy is very much part of the formative appraisal of your role as a teacher.

What should be included in a Statement of Teaching Philosophy?

A statement of teaching philosophy should include summary statements that outline the following.

- Why being a teacher is important to you.
- Your understanding of how your students learn.
- What your role as teacher is in assisting student learning.
- How your approach to teaching facilitates the learning process.
- How you go about determining whether your approach is achieving its objectives.
- How your philosophy on teaching is informed by your university's or department's learning and teaching policies.
- How you address the particulars associated with teaching across cognitive, skills based (psychomotor) and affective learning domains and help students achieve the higher levels of learning expected in higher education.

In order to help formulate your ideas, it might be helpful to familiarise yourself with the way students learn. An introduction to this literature is presented in *Inserts 3 and 4*.

Insert 3: How People Learn – an Introduction

As a practicing educator it is highly likely that you have eclectic views on the learning process. Your conclusions are likely to be a blend of the diverse theories on learning, motivation, instruction, intellectual development, and effective teaching practices, largely as a result of your own personal experience.

You may thus be drawing from behavioural theories, cognitive theories, social cognition theories, attribution theory, achievement motivation theory, as well as using concepts from Piaget or Vygotsky. We will not go into a great deal of detail here but provide you with a brief overview of some relevant theories.

Until the late 1950s the dominant theory of learning was behaviourism which saw learning as a process of forming connections between stimuli and responses. This had limitations due to its focus on observable behaviour and not the underlying phenomena such as understanding, reasoning and thinking. Some of the principles of behaviourism however are still widely used in today's classrooms and many online and computer-based drill and practice exercises use the behaviourist principle of positive reinforcement.

Cognitive psychology developed in the late 1950s as a way of dealing with behaviourism's inability to adequately explain complex behaviours such as language acquisition. This branch of learning theories is concerned with the things that happen inside our heads as we learn. The developmental theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, also known as cognitive-developmental theories emphasise thought processes such as thinking, understanding, and perceiving.

Cognitive theories take the perspective that students actively process information and learning takes place through the efforts of the student as they organise, store and then find relationships between information, linking new to old knowledge, schema and scripts. Over the last fifteen years, cognitive psychology, and in particular the information processing model, has become dominant partly because of the insights the model gives us in describing and explaining cognitive (mental) processes, such as thinking and problem solving.

continued over page

Robert Gagné built upon behaviourist and cognitive theories to recommend approaches to instruction. His work played a key role in the systematic design of instruction which is still widely used in the development of training material.

Continuing research into learning rejected the idea that learning is a process where knowledge is transmitted to and acquired by learners. Contemporary theorists suggest that learning is a process where knowledge is constructed either individually or socially and is based on a person's previous knowledge. Though there are a number of theories that come under the label constructivism they all have a similar view of learners as being actively engaged in a process of integrating new experiences and information with existing concepts.

They suggest that learners' pre-existing knowledge, skills, beliefs and concepts influence what they notice about the world they live in and how they organise and interpret it. As a consequence rather than simply absorbing ideas communicated to them by teachers, students take those ideas and assimilate them with their pre-existing notions and experience to modify their knowledge and understanding in a more complex, complete and refined way.

Teaching therefore is the process which supports this construction and reconstruction of new knowledge rather than the communication of knowledge. Research suggests that educational technology is most effective when used to enhance constructivist or student-centred instructional strategies because they emphasise interactivity, learner control and student engagement.

So where does that leave us? Drawing on the variety of theoretical perspectives on learning can be useful when developing effective teaching practices. Flexibility in our theoretical position allows us to use a number of methods in our teaching in order to cater to the diversity of learners and the kind of information and skills they need.

Extract from:

Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (eds). 2000.

How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School: Expanded Edition.

The National Academy Press. Washington, D.C.

An expanded version can be downloaded from:

http://hsc.csu.edu.au/pro_dev/teaching_online/how_we_learn/index.html

What else might be included?

It might also be useful to highlight those aspects of your career that emphasise the importance you assign to your role as a teacher. Supporting evidence might include some or all of the following.

Qualifications/Courses Attended

Make mention of any formal qualifications you have obtained that pertain to teaching. Any courses you may have attended that do not lead to formal qualifications should also be noted.

Self Reflection

This might include a brief statement of changes you have made as a result of your own self-reflection and evaluation or evaluation by others.

You might also include examples of teaching innovations and evaluations you have made of their effectiveness.

Research and Scholarship

A brief description of any research into teaching, courses, curriculum development and student learning should be included as it provides evidence of your commitment to teaching. Grants received to support any research into teaching and learning provides proof of your expertise.

Research and scholarship would also include your participation in any seminars, workshops and professional meetings intended to improve teaching practice. If you played a special role, for example, chairperson, presenter, key speaker or panel member, this should also be noted.

Committees

If you sit on any departmental, university or external committees or boards that deal with learning and teaching issues, including curricula development and design, these should be mentioned to indicate your professional commitment.

Awards

Any teaching awards you may have received will highlight your effectiveness as a teacher.

Other Evidence

Here the range of possibilities is wide and might include: reviews of new materials such as texts, films, computer programs; exchanges of course materials with colleagues elsewhere; and involvement with an association or society concerned with the improvement of teaching and learning.

Leadership

Leadership can be a difficult concept to clearly define and demonstrate. Your leadership may be acknowledged by the fact that you hold a particular position such as course, program or discipline coordinator or have been appointed

Insert 4: Bloom's Learning Domains

During the 1950s, Benjamin Bloom led a team of educational psychologists in the analysis of academic learning behaviours. The results of this team's research produced what is known today in the field of education as Bloom's Taxonomy, which is briefly outlined below.

The Cognitive Domain

The Cognitive Learning Domain is exhibited by a person's intellectual abilities. Cognitive learning behaviours are characterised by observable and unobservable skills such as comprehending information, organising ideas, and evaluating information and actions as shown below:



Evaluation	Judges the value of information.
Synthesis	Builds a pattern from diverse elements.
Analysis	Separates information into parts for better understanding.
Application	Applying knowledge to a new situation.
Comprehension	Understanding information.
Knowledge	Recall of data.

to or elected to learning and teaching related committees. However, Joan Eveline in her book *Ivory Basement Leadership*⁴ notes that new models of organisation behaviour define leadership as “the capacity to create the conditions for continuous improvement and collective learning.” [p.39]

Eveline points out that much of what might be considered everyday or DIY leadership in academia is invisible to the institution and not formally recognised or acknowledged in hierarchical structures. Therefore, if you have taken a leading role in the development of course design, the development of new materials or changes to modes of delivery, and been prepared to share this with your colleagues this would be considered as a leadership role.

The Affective Domain

The Affective Learning Domain addresses a learner’s emotions towards learning experiences. A learner’s attitudes, interest, attention, awareness, and values are demonstrated by affective behaviours. These emotional behaviours which are organised in a hierarchical format also, starting from simplest and building to most complex, are as follows:



Internalising Values	Behaviour controlled by a value system.
Organisation	Organising values into order of priority.
Valuing	The value a person attaches to something.
Responding to phenomena	Taking an active part in learning; participating.
Receiving phenomena	An awareness; willingness to listen.

The Psychomotor (Skills Based) Domain

The psychomotor domain refers to the use of basic motor skills, coordination and physical movement. Development of these skills requires practice and is measured in terms of speed, precision, distance, procedures, or techniques in execution.

*Jennifer Martin, Educational Technology, San Diego State University,
The Encyclopedia (sic) of Educational Technology,
<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Articles/BloomsLD/index.htm>*

Invisible leadership will also be demonstrated where your colleagues consult you about teaching and learning related matters and where you act as a mentor to new or junior members of staff or tutors you may be responsible for coordinating. In these circumstances, it might be useful to have colleagues who respect your ability as a teacher and seek your guidance and advice to provide supporting statements.

Teaching, Research and Scholarship

Both Government and institutions themselves are moving to distinguish more sharply between the teaching activities of academic staff on the one hand, and research activities on the other. This is likely to contribute to pressures to have formal distinctions in terms of work roles and position descriptions and expand further the hiring of academic staff only for teaching duties. In presenting an account of your teaching achievements, you should make explicit and provide examples of the links between teaching and research.

This might include:

- References to the latest research in your field of study.
- How you integrate the nature and importance of research in the creation of new knowledge into the subjects you teach.
- Whether you encourage your students to actively participate in research through the way you design your courses and/or assessment.
- Where you incorporate your own research findings into your teaching.

NTEU opposes the creation of teaching-only academic positions, supporting strongly the view that teaching and research can and must inform each other, albeit to varying degrees across institutions and disciplines. It is the interconnectedness of teaching and research that lies at the heart of the definition of a 'university' and informs the professional identity of university teaching. Where possible we would encourage members to emphasise these important inter-related roles.

Teaching Practice

In this section you should document your past and current teaching duties and related roles and responsibilities. This section covers:

- Courses you have taught, supervised and/or coordinated.
- Postgraduate and honours students you have supervised.
- Materials you have prepared for courses.
- A brief description of your approach to teaching, including how you attempt to cater for the diverse cultural, learning style and motives of your students.
- Assessment of student work.
- Evidence of professional development of teaching skills and/or disciplinary enhancement.

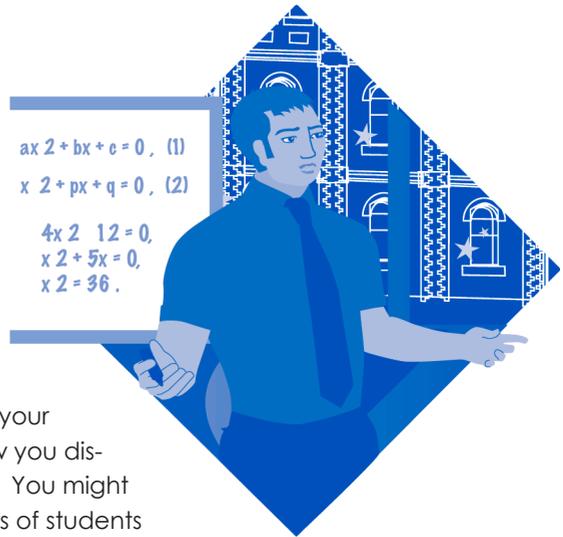
Courses Prepared, Taught, Supervised and/or Coordinated

In this section you should list:

- Your involvement in course design and curriculum development.
- Undergraduate and postgraduate course titles and numbers, modes by which they are offered (on-campus, distance, open, flexible, etc.), unit values (credit points, etc.) and student enrolments in each course or class.
- Details of workload including contact hours and teaching format (lecture, tutorial, laboratory, clinical session, field trip, etc).

If you have been involved in teaching for a number of years and have taught a large number of different courses you may find it more efficient to provide this information in the form of a table or appendix.

Supervision of Honours and Postgraduate Students



A brief statement about how you see your responsibilities as a supervisor and how you discharge these duties is important here. You might also include summaries of the numbers of students supervised, the extent of supervision, and an indication of the time devoted to supervision. This is often underrated in workload allocations, and yet, it is a critical component of teaching duties for many staff.

List of course materials prepared for students.

This should include:

- Course/subject outlines and reading lists.
- Other handouts including laboratory manuals, course outlines, reprints of hard to find articles and other published material, worksheets, study guides, assignments, reading lists, annotated bibliographies, and so on.
- Other educational media including audio tapes, video tapes, multimedia, etc, including short pieces used for teaching.
- Online resources produced for specific courses.

An indication of the nature of and time you take to prepare your material as well as noting any other support from your institution such as teaching and learning centres or media production services should also be included. You should ascertain whether there are any limits in reference to materials supplied.

If you have been teaching for many years, it might be better to provide a short written summary of your teaching accomplishments in early years, and concentrate on providing more substantial evidence for later years.

Examples of Course Materials Produced

In order to give the readers of your teaching portfolio a feel for the nature of materials you produce to support your teaching, it might be useful to provide selective examples of this material.

Given extensive wide spread use of on-line and computer-based teaching materials in recent years, you might find it necessary to provide some of this material in electronic format such as on a CD.

Other Teaching Related Responsibilities

Make mention of any other official teaching responsibilities and duties you perform including responsibilities for supervision of other staff, and service on departmental or university or external committees or boards of which you are a member.

Description of Current Teaching Practices

It is important to provide an outline of the characteristics of your teaching methods and the rationale for their choice. This should reflect your teaching philosophy as outlined above. It is here that you can expand on why you do what you do in relation to teaching and why you believe this to be effective. You should also highlight what you consider to be your teaching strengths.

In many circumstances it might not be possible to implement what you might consider to be an ideal pedagogical package for a particular course or student cohort because of student numbers or resource constraints including departmental/school budgets, timetabling issues, your own time due to other teaching and/or research commitments or due to a lack of institutional support and/or infrastructure.

Where such constraints exist it might be worth emphasising that the approach taken is very much a pragmatic one that both reflects these realities, and the changing balance of your work over time between teaching, research and other professional activities.

Details of Assessment Practices and Extent of Feedback Provided to Students

Provide a brief account of examinations or other assessments used, why you choose to use this form of assessment, the nature and extent of feedback provided to students through written comments, subsequent discussion with students and any remedial action taken to improve inadequate student performance.

Dealing with Academic Misconduct

The unfortunate reality is that part of your teaching and learning responsibilities include dealing with students who might be guilty of academic misconduct including cheating on exams and/or plagiarism. You should note how you deal with such cases and how this relates to your institution's policies. This can sometimes be a difficult area, and you may wish to consult with a senior colleague when drafting this section of your portfolio.



Teaching Performance

Your teaching portfolio should include a section that provides evidence of your teaching performance, covering:

- Your students' achievements and results.
- Evidence of student reactions to your teaching.
- Other evidence of your reputation as a teacher.

Student Achievement/Results

Undergraduate courses

In this section you should provide relevant summaries of your students' achievements. You may like to supplement this data with examples of student work (essays, laboratory reports, etc.).

You must respect privacy rights and therefore it is important to obtain prior permission and ensure that you do not include information that might identify particular individuals. If you have any doubts about whether including such material is a breach of privacy rights or institutional policy you should consult the appropriate authorities within your institution.

It can be overly simplistic to suggest any direct link between teaching competence and student performance, because there are a variety of contextual factors that will determine student outcomes.

Any special contextual factors that may have affected your students' results should be referred to explicitly, as data on student performance is becoming an increasingly important performance indicator.

Postgraduate students

In this section you should provide details of:

- Performance of postgraduate students supervised.
- Completion rates for students supervised.
- Any available evidence of their subsequent success, eg examiners' comments, student awards.
- Action plan for professional development as a supervisor.
- How you reflect on your supervisory practice.
- Supervisory philosophy statement.
- Mentoring of novice supervisors.
- Invitations to be an examiner.

Insert 5: Student Feedback

In addition to standardised university administered evaluations of subjects and/or teaching, staff may wish to consider a number of alternative methods of gaining student feedback about the effectiveness of their teaching, and these might include:

- Exploring the possibility of adding or subtracting questions from the standard questionnaire, which more specifically address the objectives of teaching.
- Constructing and administering your own questionnaire.
- Conducting interviews or fora with students.
- Learning journals.

We recommend that staff make maximum use of institutional resources to ensure that the validity of any self-administered evaluation process be validated by people who have expertise in this area.

The other issue staff need to be conscious of is the need to ensure they do not breach any privacy provisions when using information gathered from students or other staff. You should always seek the permission of the owner of the work before using it in a public document such as a teaching portfolio.

Two very helpful resources on different types of evaluation for different purposes can be found at:

- a) Learning and Technology Dissemination Initiative (LTDI) Evaluation Cookbook, <http://www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/ltdi/index.html>
- b) Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (CTLA) Reviewing Your Teaching, <http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/resources/ryt/index.htm>

Evidence of Student Reaction to your Teaching

The use of standardised student evaluation of teaching instruments has become widespread over the last decade. Universities are now required to conduct such evaluations and publish them on university websites if they are to be eligible for grants under the Government's Learning and Teaching Performance Fund.

Student surveys conducted by universities fall into two categories namely those that solicit student responses to courses and others that are designed to evaluate the effectiveness of individual teaching. In the majority of cases the standardised university-wide instruments will evaluate students' responses to a course rather than the teaching of individual staff members.

Therefore, there will be an expectation that all staff employed at Australian universities will have had the courses they have taught evaluated through a university administered survey. Research however, indicates that the results of these instruments might be unreliable and biased by a number of contextual factors, such as the discipline area, the level of the course and size of class. These factors make interpreting the results, especially in trying to compare them between different classes, problematic.

In a review of the literature on the factors affecting student evaluations, Davies, Lunt and Johnston⁵ at the University of Melbourne concluded that:

Evaluation ratings are a modestly helpful barometer of teaching effectiveness, and generally valid, but:

- *need to be interpreted cautiously, and*
- *affected by variables that are independent of teaching quality.*

Inserts 5 & 6 provide useful hints on how to make best use of student evaluations.

Other Reactions by Past and Present Students

These could be, for example, statements, comments, letters of appreciation, etc. They could emanate from a student committee or appear in a student journal. Whether such comments are solicited or not should be made clear.

Insert 6: Using Student Evaluations to Improve Your Teaching

One way to demonstrate that you have used the results of your student evaluations to help improve your teaching and learning outcomes is to use them to form the basis of a Subject Evaluation Report. The report should include:

- A description of the subject/teaching context, including the nature of the subject, where it fits in a program/degree structure, and a description of the assessment.
- Your goals as a teacher and the expected learning outcomes.
- Sources of information gathered and methods used to collect it to evaluate the subject.
- An interpretative summary of the student evaluations for the subject.
- Indicate how you will use the results to improve your future teaching practices, including plans for implementing these strategies.

Interpretative Summary of Student Evaluations

To summarise students' responses to scaled-item questions you should:

- Indicate the number of students enrolled in the subject and the number of responses.
- The distribution of students' responses to each question.

This information should then be used to confirm whether your teaching practice seems to be achieving your objectives. To summarise open-ended questions you should:

- Read through the open-ended responses and look for key themes, phrases or words in order to write a brief summary.
- Think about how the open-ended responses relate to the scaled-item questions and your interpretation of them.

You should use your analysis of all the information to prepare an interpretative summary of students' evaluations, highlighting perceived strengths and weaknesses in your teaching. The information collected from student evaluations should be used to develop a plan of action to improve your teaching. In doing so you are advised to consult with trusted colleagues or experts in your university's teaching and learning units.

Source: Adapted from **Evaluating Your Teaching, Book 1: The Process of Evaluation**, University of Canberra (pp13-16).

Other Evidence of your Reputation as a Teacher

This might include:

- Evaluation of your teaching by colleagues, such as from fellow members of a teaching team or from those who teach courses for which a particular course is a prerequisite or from independent observers. A statement explaining how a colleague is in a position to make judgements about one's teaching should be included. It should be made clear whether the reported comments are solicited or not.
- Evidence of help given to colleagues for improvement of teaching.
- Requests for advice from, or acknowledgments of advice received by, a committee on teaching or similar body.
- Preparation of a textbook, internet resource, computer program or other teaching materials.
- Contributions to a professional journal devoted to the teaching of one's discipline.
- Ratings by alumni or other graduate feedback.
- Reports from employers of students (for example a work-experience or cooperative program).
- Invitations to be a guest lecturer or to speak about your teaching at conferences or other institutions,
- The receipt of a teaching award or similar accolade (*see Insert 7*).
- Interviews in the media about some teaching activity or issue.
- Invitations to chair institutional working parties or committees focussed on learning and teaching, and professional recognition through fellowships, awards, invitations to mentor early career professionals.

Insert 7: Australian University Teaching Awards

The Australian University Teaching Awards are administered by the Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (CILTHE).

Selection Criteria for 2005

Applicants will be assessed on the basis of evidence which supports their claims against the following criteria:

1. Interest and enthusiasm for undertaking teaching and for promoting student learning.
2. Ability to arouse curiosity, and to stimulate independent learning and the development of critical thought.
3. Ability to organise course material and to present it cogently and imaginatively.
4. Command of the subject matter, including the incorporation in teaching of recent developments in the field of study.
5. Innovation in the design and delivery of content and course materials.
6. Participation in the effective and sympathetic guidance and advising of students.
7. Provision of appropriate assessment, including the provision of worthwhile feedback to students on their learning.
8. Ability to assist students from equity groups to participate and achieve success in their courses.
9. Professional and systematic approach to teaching development.
10. Participation in professional activities and research related to teaching.

In assessing these criteria, the selection committee will be looking for evidence of creativity, innovation and imagination but this could just as well apply to more traditional forms of teaching as to the latest technological developments.

The committee is also looking for evidence that candidates are putting their teaching philosophies into practice and that this is having a positive effect on student outcomes.

Further information and application forms: www.carrickinstitute.edu.au

Useful Resources

Information on Teaching Portfolios *Current as at July 2005*

Seldin, Peter (1991) **The Teaching Portfolio – A Practical guide to improved performance and promotion/tenure decisions**. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Co, Inc. http://www.lgu.ac.uk/deliberations/portfolios/ICED_workshop/seldin_book.html.

The Teaching Portfolio. The Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, University of Michigan. <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/occ11.html>.

Preparing a Teaching Portfolio: A Guidebook. The Center for Teaching Effectiveness, The University of Texas at Austin. <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cte/teachfolio.html>.

Recommended Portfolio Contents. Center for Teaching Excellence, Iowa State University. <http://www.cte.iastate.edu/portfolio/contents.html>.

Creating a Teaching Portfolio. Office of Teaching Advancement, University of Toronto, Canada. http://www.utoronto.ca/ota/issues/Teaching_portfolios.pdf.

Designing a Teaching Portfolio. Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Pennsylvania State University. <http://www.psu.edu/celt/portfolio.html>.

Teaching Portfolio Resources. University of Chicago Writing Program, University of Chicago. <http://writing-program.uchicago.edu/jobs/portfolio.htm>.

Teaching Portfolios in Higher Education. Web Tools Newsletter, Education Development Office, City University of Hong Kong. <http://webtools.cityu.edu.hk/news/newslett/teachingportfolios.htm>.

The Teaching Portfolio at Washington State University. Office of the Provost, Washington State University. http://provost.wsu.edu/teaching_portfolio.

Institute for the Advancement of Teaching in Higher Education. www.iathe.org

Learning and Technology Dissemination Initiative (LTDI) Evaluation Cookbook <http://www.icbl.hw.ac.uk/ltdi/index.html>

Centre for Teaching, Learning and Assessment (CTLA) Reviewing Your Teaching <http://www.tla.ed.ac.uk/resources/ryt/index.htm>

University of Adelaide.....	www.adelaide.edu.au/learning
Aust. Catholic Univ.....	www.acu.edu.au/ACU_National/Teaching_and_Learning/index.cfm
Australian National University	www.anu.edu.au/cedam/teachingandlearning
University of Ballarat.....	www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/acsupport/lts
University of Canberra	www.canberra.edu.au/celts
Central Queensland University	www.learning.cqu.edu.au
Charles Darwin University	www.cdu.edu.au/tldg/index.html
Charles Sturt University	www.csu.edu.au/division/landt
Curtin University of Technology	http://ltn.curtin.edu.au/teach
Deakin University	www.deakin.edu.au/teachlearn/index.php
Edith Cowan University	www.ecu.edu.au/links/teaching-learning
Flinders University.....	www.flinders.edu.au/teach/support.htm
Griffith University	www.gu.edu.au/landt
James Cook University.....	www.jcu.edu.au/teaching
La Trobe University.....	www.latrobe.edu.au/teaching
Macquarie University	www.cpd.mq.edu.au
University of Melbourne	www.unimelb.edu.au/student/teaching.html
Monash University.....	www.celts.monash.edu.au/staff
Murdoch University.....	www.murdoch.edu.au/index/teaching
University of New England.....	www.une.edu.au/tlc
University of New South Wales.....	www.unsw.edu.au/learning/pve/learning.html
University of Newcastle	www.newcastle.edu.au/services/teaching-learning
University of Queensland	www.uq.edu.au/teaching_learning
Queensland University of Technology	www.talss.qut.edu.au/service/learning
RMIT University.....	www.rmit.edu.au
Southern Cross University.....	www.scu.edu.au/services/tl
University of South Australia	www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learningconnection
University of Southern Queensland	www.usq.edu.au/learn/learn/default.htm
Univ. of Sunshine Coast.....	www.usc.edu.au/University/AbouttheUniversity/LearningTeaching
Swinburne University of Technology.....	www.swin.edu.au
University of Sydney	www.itl.usyd.edu.au
University of Tasmania	www.utas.edu.au/tl/index.html
Univ. of Technology, Sydney.....	www.iml.uts.edu.au/learn/learn/resources/tm/index.html
Victoria University	www.vu.edu.au/home/Learning_and_Teaching
University of Western Australia	www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au
University of Western Sydney	www.uws.edu.au/about/teaching
University of Wollongong.....	www.uow.edu.au/about/teaching/index.html

Examples of Information for inclusion in a Teaching Dossier

Teaching Responsibilities

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
Subjects taught and supervised.	List of course titles & codes, year, points value, enrolments, hours, level of responsibility, and a brief description of the way each course was taught. Number of honours and postgraduate students supervised. Research group activities directed. Schedule of times you are available to students outside class.
Concurrent related duties	Concurrent teaching related duties and responsibilities, eg course coordination.
Departmental expectations and resources	Summary statement of your department's policies, expectations and resources in relation to teaching. A statement by the Head of Department assessing your contribution to the department and how the department plans to use your skills in the future.

Personal Teaching Objectives

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
Teaching philosophy and methods	Summary of your own practices, approaches and attitudes to student learning. Evidence of the way you monitor or evaluate your classes and teaching. How you identify student difficulties and encourage participation in courses and programmes. Description of student assessment methods and rationales, and feedback to students. Methods in supervising postgraduate students. Summary of your qualifications and main strengths as a teacher.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
Steps taken to evaluate and improve your teaching	Changes might be as a result of others' evaluation or self-evaluation, time spent reading journals on improving teaching, reviewing new teaching materials or exchanging course materials with colleagues.
Teaching goals	A personal statement describing teaching aims, objectives and goals for the next five years.
Representative course syllabi	Details of course content, objectives, teaching methods, reading lists, homework assignments, student assessment procedures, reflective statements as to the course construction.

Teaching-Related Professional Activity

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
Teaching innovations	Examples of innovations designed or adopted and their effectiveness. This might include work carried out as part of a teaching development grant or a video of your teaching.
Course, curriculum or departmental development	Revising, setting up or running a course, programme or internship. Contribution to the improvement of teaching in your department.
Course and instructional materials	List and examples of quality course materials, manuals, outlines, new projects, assignments, study guides, reading lists, annotated bibliographies. Publication of a textbook or other instructional materials.
Use of technology	Description of how audiovisual or computer-based materials were used in teaching.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
Teaching Research	Pursuing research that contributes directly to teaching.
Teaching publications	Contributing to a professional journal on teaching in general, or in a specific discipline.
Teaching associations	Participating in seminars, workshops and professional meetings intended to improve teaching and learning.
Use of support services	Using general support services, in improving one's teaching.
Teaching development	Participation in seminars, workshops etc. to improve your teaching and that of your discipline and institution.
Teaching consultancies	Teaching consultancies in outside institutions and agencies or requests for demonstrations of effective teaching methods.
Securing Grants	Success at securing grants for teaching related activities.

Information from Students

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
Formal student feedback	Student, course and teaching feedback. Statements that such data has been collected and provide a short summary of the results. Also provide summaries from structured individual group interviews and from student committees. Include here any formal feedback from alumni or from postgraduate students.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>
Informal student feedback	Unsolicited comments, including letters received and articles in student newspapers.
Teaching awards	Awards for teaching excellence presented by student bodies.
Student outcomes	<p>What your students have learned and achieved. Student or class grades improvement on teacher-made or standardised tests.</p> <p>Exemplary student work: essays, creative work, reports, lab workbooks, publications, presentations on course-related work, advanced study and your influence on students' career choices.</p>
Formal peer feedback	Feedback from colleagues (team-teachers, subsequent course teachers, peers, head of department) regarding aspects of your teaching that are generally not evaluated by students (eg course development, content and administration, teaching materials, student assessment, text selection, reading lists, student support practices) and out-of-class activities such as instructional and curricular development and teaching research.
Classroom observations	Reports from colleagues or independent observers who have viewed you in the classroom.
Assistance to colleagues	<p>Evidence of help given to colleagues on course development or teaching improvement (e.g. contributing to departmental seminars or workshops, acting as a mentor, letters of acknowledgment or thanks).</p> <p>Professional exchanges with colleagues inside or outside the institution. This might focus on course materials or methods of teaching particular topics.</p>

Item	Description
Request for advice	Requests for or acknowledgment of advice given to committees on teaching or similar bodies.
Invitations to teach, present or publish.	Invitations to teach from outside institutions and agencies or to demonstrate effective teaching methods. Invitations to present at conference on topics about teaching. Invitations to contribute to the literature on teaching.
Teaching awards	Teaching honours or other peer recognition and awards for excellence in teaching.

Source: Wijesundera, S. (1995). **Teaching portfolios – what are they and how do I create one?** In Summers, L. (Ed), *A Focus on Learning*, pp276-280. Proceedings of the 4th Annual Teaching Learning Forum, Edith Cowan University, Feb 1995. Perth: Edith Cowan University. <http://lsn.curtin.edu.au/tlf/tlf1995/wijesundera.html>

Endnotes

1: Any feedback or suggestions should be sent to the Policy and Research Unit, NTEU National Office, PO Box 1323 South Melbourne VIC 3205.

2: Seldin, Peter (1997) **The Teaching Portfolio - A practical guide to improved performance and promotion/tenure decisions.** 2nd Ed. Anker Publishing Company, Inc. http://www.city.londonmet.ac.uk/deliberations/portfolios/ICED_workshop/seldin_book.html

3: Wijesundera, Sally. **Teaching portfolios - what are they and how do I create one?** Centre for Staff Development, University of Western Australia, www.uwa.edu.au

4: Joan Eveline (2004) *Ivory Basement Leadership. Power and indivisibility in the changing university*, University of Western Australia Press.

5: Dr Mark Davies, Dr Helen Lunt and Associate Professor Carol Johnston *Factors influencing Student Ratings: The Literature* http://tlu.ecom.unimelb.edu.au/papers/factors_influencing_student_ratings.pdf

Preparing and Presenting a Teaching Portfolio

This guide is an initiative of NTEU's **Education Policy Committee**, and was written by the 2004–2006 Committee with the assistance of the Policy and Research Unit of the NTEU National Office.

The 2004–2006 Committee is comprised of the following NTEU members.

- Cathy Rytmeister, Macquarie University
- Kate Patrick, RMIT University
- Maria Madsen, Central Queensland University
- Tanya Bramley, RMIT University
- David Holloway, Murdoch University
- Kathy Grattan, University of Technology, Sydney
- Graham Hendry, University of Sydney.

The role of the Education Policy Committee is to:

- Represent within the NTEU the interests and views of members regarding tertiary education.
- Monitor the effects of Federal and State government education policies on the activities of tertiary institutions, staff and students.
- Develop and promote NTEU policy on all matters relating to the organisation, funding and management of education within tertiary institutions.
- Represent NTEU and its education policy in member forums, and to Government and other organisations.
- Advise the National Executive and the National Office on strategies to further these policies, and assist in their implementation.
- Actively promote the participation of members in the policy work of NTEU, particularly in relation to issues generally relating to teaching and learning, including their support and funding and their implications for staff working conditions.

Members of the Committee are elected every two years and meet twice every year.