

Suggested Framework for a Teaching Dossier

The Context

This suggested framework for a teaching dossier has emerged from the ongoing work of the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning. It is designed to be of assistance to those who are applying for tenure, promotion, a teaching award, or academic position, and those preparing for annual review. The structure and categories selected for this document are derived from literature reviews, from the dossier guidelines offered at other Canadian universities, and from the guidelines for the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education's competition for the 3M National Teaching Fellowships. The categories are also compliant with the Canadian Association of University Teachers' (CAUT) *Teaching Dossier* (2007) publication which recommends the submission of "persuasive evidence" for tenure, promotion, and review processes. The CAUT publication is available at <http://www.caut.ca/docs/default-source/professional-advice/teaching-dossier.pdf>.

Important points to consider in using this document:

- This is a suggested content and organizational framework and is not a mandatory requirement of any faculty or school at Memorial University.
- Every teaching dossier is unique. The design, structure, and content of the dossier should reflect the talents, interests, and perspectives of the individual as well as their purpose for developing it.
- This framework seeks to represent nearly all of the items that might be included in a teaching dossier. No individual will have content for all categories of evidence. The framework seeks only to identify the full array of items that could be included.
- For all categories, "documentation should be carefully selected, minimal, and powerfully illustrative of the teacher's personal style and contributions" (Border, 2006).
- In preparing for promotion and tenure, we suggest that individuals consult with their dean, director, or head of department early in the process to seek guidance on the particular expectations of that academic unit.
- While this framework suggests how Course Evaluation Questionnaire scores and comments may be reported in the dossier, such a report is voluntary. They are *not* a requirement of the promotion and tenure process at Memorial University.
- Support and advice in the preparation of a dossier are available from deans, directors, and department heads, from staff in the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, and, for faculty members in the Faculty of Medicine, from staff in the Medical Education Scholarship Centre.

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The Teaching Dossier Framework

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Framework Sections

Note: Section 3.2 of the CAUT publication, “Possible items for a teaching dossier”, lists a number of artifacts that may be included in your teaching dossier to provide evidence of the claims you make about your teaching. The numbers in brackets in the text below correspond to the item numbers in section 3.2 and indicate items that may be appropriate in providing evidence for the category in which they appear.

Preface/Introduction

Begin the dossier with a short introduction of yourself and your teaching experience. State why you have prepared the dossier and point out what you wish reviewers to notice about your teaching practice and you as a teacher.

1. Teaching Philosophy

A teaching philosophy is a one- to two-page statement of your values and beliefs about teaching and learning—about the responsibilities of teaching, the nature of teacher-student relationships, the goals of education—why you hold those values and beliefs, and how you translate them into your teaching practice. It is not a description of your teaching strategies but rather, a philosophical background for your teaching practice. The approaches and priorities you describe here should be reflected in the dossier content which follows.

2. Teaching Responsibility

i. Courses Taught

There are a number of ways to represent your teaching responsibility depending on the amount of teaching you have done and your purpose for preparing the dossier. Use one or a combination of the following methods:

- a. Write paragraph describing the nature and range of your teaching responsibilities and normal teaching load.
- b. Describe each course (or selected courses) in a paragraph which contains information about the topics, goals, level, required/elective, cross-disciplinary, delivery mode, average enrolment, etc.
- c. In the narrative or in an appendix create a teaching assignment table which list courses by course number and title in reverse chronological order by semester and year. Include student enrollment and provide other relevant information such as graduate/ undergraduate level, required/elective, cross-disciplinary, delivery mode, and enrolment.

Your purpose for developing the dossier will determine what time period you should reflect and whether you should include your teaching at all post-secondary institutions. Check with your academic unit about expectations in this regard when preparing for review or applying for promotion or tenure. If applying for an academic position, include all post-secondary teaching experience.

Appendices: Table of teaching responsibility/assignment over a period of years (usually not more than most recent three to five years); sample course outlines/syllabi (1).

Note: It is not recommended that you include the syllabi from all courses you have taught. A few syllabi that represent the range of your teaching responsibility is sufficient. You may add a note that all course syllabi are available upon request.

ii. **Student Supervision**

Describe your approach to student supervision and your goals for students. List graduate and honors students that you have mentored in thesis or project work in reverse chronological order by start date. Provide both start and completion dates and the titles of the papers or projects the students produced under your guidance. You may include additional relevant information such as: joint supervision; honours or awards the student received; publications and presentations authored or co-authored by the student; if student withdrew from program; and current career position and name of employer. Depending on the extent of your activity in this area, you may wish provide a table of this information in an appendix.

Appendices: table of supervisory responsibility over a period of years; feedback from students supervised; feedback from employers (12, 32, 36, 38)

3. **Teaching Effectiveness**

This section is a **reflective** and **descriptive narrative** about your teaching activities, strengths, and accomplishments. Through the narrative you “make the intellectual work of teaching visible” (Goodburn, 2010). It should demonstrate your competence and creativity in teaching, and your ability to be self-reflective and critical. Your dossier will be strengthened if the categories of evidence discussed in this section reflect or connect with your teaching philosophy and if the claims you make about your teaching are supported by direct reference to evidence included in appendices.

• **Teaching Strategies**

Think about your teaching strengths and describe a few of the particularly effective and creative or innovative strategies you use to assist students in achieving learning outcomes. For each, describe how the strategy is executed—what you do, what students do, and what resources are used. Identify the expected learning outcomes and explain why the strategy is effective.

Appendices: Any artifact(s) related to the strategies described, e.g., handouts, a sequence of presentation slides; samples of student work (with permission); feedback from students on the strategies described (5, 6, 16)

Note: Individual student comments may be extracted from evaluations, emails, or other written feedback and used in the narrative to support what you say about a particular aspect of your teaching. If doing so, be sure to source the comment. Without using the student’s name, indicate that the comment was made by a student, indicate the course and semester, and how you received the comment (email, CEQ comment, personal note/card).

• **Methods of Student Assessment**

If you assess students using innovative strategies or methods not commonly used in your discipline, describe them and explain how the assessments are designed to match and measure specific learning outcomes and enhance student learning. Authentic assessment methods, methods that assess higher order cognitive skills, and assessments that offer

students choice in how they demonstrate their learning are some methods of student assessment that will be of interest to reviewers.

Appendices: samples or excerpts from quizzes, tests, or assignments; samples of student work that resulted from assignments (with permission); feedback to students; excerpts from course outlines (6, 8, 9)

- **Course and Instructional Materials Developed**

Describe any original instructional materials or resources you developed, e.g., textbooks, student manuals, lab activities, case studies, digital materials, experiential learning activities, service learning components, etc. For each resource developed, explain why you developed the resource and its effect on student engagement and learning.

Appendices: any artifact(s) related to the resources described; feedback from students and/or colleagues (2, 24)

- **New Courses Developed and Courses Redesigned**

Describe courses you conceptualized, developed, and delivered. Also describe substantial revisions you made in courses you inherited. Explain why you saw a need for the new course or why you redesigned an older one, briefly describe the process, and point out any special features of the course. Include information on the effects on student engagement and learning.

Appendices: course outline (original and revised if applicable); feedback from students, colleagues, or academic administrators (23, 31)

- **Course and Teaching Evaluations**

In this section it is important to demonstrate that you receive feedback about the quality of your teaching and that you value and use that feedback. Feedback may be obtained from mandated course evaluations (Course Evaluation Questionnaire), by personal requests to students, and by peer observation and review. Describe how feedback is collected or received. Point out what you believe are your teaching strengths and discuss any changes or adjustments you have made or plan to make based on feedback or evaluations of your teaching.

Article 9.01 of the collective agreement between Memorial University and the Faculty Association states: “When a candidate wishes student course evaluation instruments to be considered, all such results received during the preceding three (3) year period shall be included.” If including CEQ results summarize them (numerical and qualitative data) for the reviewer in a paragraph or two and explain how you have used the data.

Appendices:

Course Evaluation Questionnaire – Precede a collection of all reports for all courses in the previous three years with a table that summarizes the data for the reviewer. You may choose to report on questions 7 and 13 (the global/overall questions) only or include data for all quantitative questions. (26, 27)

Personal requests for student feedback – If you have developed an evaluation questionnaire or feedback form, either for a full course, for mid-term, or for feedback on a particular teaching and learning activity, include a copy of the form and summarize the results. (28)

Peer evaluations of teaching – If a practice in your discipline or if personally requested, peer evaluations of teaching may be included in the dossier. Describe the process or reason for the request, the focus of the evaluation, the feedback received, and your plan for teaching development. Letters or reports may be included in the appendices. (29)

- **Teaching Awards**

If you have received awards for your teaching, been honored by students, your department or your institution for your teaching, then, in reverse chronological order, list the awards and describe the criteria for selection. Identify the nominee, the granting institution or agency, and the year the award was received.

Appendices: award citations; media clippings (34, 35)

4. Professional Development in Teaching

In this section reflect on your responsibility to develop your teaching skill and be cognizant of current teaching practice in your discipline. Describe formal teaching development you have undertaken as well as what you routinely do to improve your teaching, e.g. attend teaching development workshops, give mid-course evaluations, write notes to yourself about what worked and what didn't, request peer review of your teaching, etc. Note any improvements or revisions you made to course outlines, activities, or instructional resources as a result of your teaching development activities.

Appendices: lists of courses taken; teaching certificates earned; workshops, seminars, and conferences on teaching; memberships in teaching-related organizations, current literature read or teaching publication subscriptions (15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22)

5. Teaching Leadership

This section is a narrative about the ways in which you have offered leadership in advancing teaching in your department, institution, or professional association. If you are new to teaching and have not as yet accumulated significant evidence of your leadership capabilities, you may choose to omit this section as a discrete entity and add the topic under Teaching Effectiveness.

- **Service in Academic Administration**

If you served as an academic administrator and while in that position was responsible for any significant teaching-related accomplishments, describe them in detail in this section.

- **Curriculum Development**

Acknowledge any contribution you made to degree or program reviews, accreditation committees, new program development, or new instituted opportunities for student learning. If you have authored or co-authored a textbook or course manual for use by others in the institution or beyond, describe it here.

Appendices: textbook cover and table of contents; feedback from colleagues or administrators; proposals or reports (23, 24)

- **Service on Committees Related to Teaching and Learning**

Describe your activity on any departmental, faculty/school, institutional, or national teaching-related committee or sub-group. For projects undertaken, describe the origins of the project, the goals, your role and contribution, as well as the overall impact of the project.

Appendices: any artifact from projects undertaken; feedback from colleagues; proposals or reports (33)

- **Research on Teaching and Learning**

Include any research activity in which you examined teaching from a critical perspective. What you include in this section should be verifiable according to accepted research standards. The material supplied in this section may be described as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. If you have received a teaching innovation grant, describe your project and your dissemination plan here. Describe also any experience you may have in editing teaching journals or being involved in the peer review of articles about teaching.

Appendices: List of publications and conference presentations on teaching and learning; abstracts or full-text articles (16, 19, 25, 40)

- **Contribution to the Professional Development of Colleagues**

Describe teaching workshops, seminars or other teaching development events for colleagues or graduate students, which you have offered or organized.

Appendices: participant feedback; resources developed (14, 33)

- **Mentoring of New Faculty and Other Colleagues**

If you have participated in a mentoring program or have simply offered teaching assistance to others in your department or institution, describe your activity in this section.

Appendices: solicited or unsolicited feedback from colleagues; letter from academic administrator; feedback to colleague (14, 33)

- **Community Education**

If you are involved in community outreach work which involves teaching the public about issues in your area, e.g., raising awareness of good nutrition or preserving the environment, or if you are offering courses free of charge to those seeking a particular professional qualification, then mention it here. Describe requests you may have received from the media to educate the public about an issue in your discipline. If you are involved in outreach to schools, describe it here.

Appendices: photos or media clippings; resources developed (39, 41)

6. Teaching Goals

Look ahead and, in one or two brief paragraphs, describe your short- and long-term teaching goals. Include any plans you have for projects or activities that will contribute to your development as a teacher.

Appendices

Include evidence of the claims made about your teaching and artifacts of your teaching in a set of appendices. All items included in the appendices should be referenced in the narrative section of your dossier.

