

PORTFOLIO GUIDELINES
TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD
George Mason University
(Updated Fall 2015)

An effective teaching portfolio captures the scope and complexities of your teaching, documenting the various approaches, successes, ongoing refinement, and excellence of your educational work. It is a carefully crafted document that presents your teaching through a particular lens, which you define. This is an opportunity to share what is unique about your teaching in relation to your discipline and the learning of your students—work to capture what makes your work worthy of recognition. Most important is evidence of the impact you have on your students' learning and achievement. The four criteria that will be used to evaluate your teaching portfolio are described later in these guidelines.

Your portfolio must include the following sections. We shall strictly adhere to the page limit requests; that is, we shall not read beyond the maximum number of pages for a section, so follow those closely. You are welcome to save paper by printing double-sided, but a double-sided page will count as two pages. **Please format all written materials in 11-12 pt. font with 1” margins.** Single-spaced text is acceptable. Appropriate use of pictures, graphics, and charts can help make the material easier to understand.

Portfolio Sections

- 1) *Introduction / Cover Letter* (**maximum 1 page**)
- 2) *Table of Contents*
- 3) *Teaching Statement* (**maximum 5 pages**)
- 4) *Teaching Vita* (**maximum 5 pages**)
- 5) *Main Body of Portfolio: Reflections and Evidence*

The main body of your portfolio should speak to the first three evaluation criteria:

- How have you learned to become an effective educator? What has contributed to your growth, development, and identity as an educator? (Criterion #1)
 - How do you engage students within and outside the classroom to facilitate their learning? (Criterion #2)
 - How do you know what your students are learning and achieving? (Criterion #3)
- 6) *Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness & Impact* (**maximum 15 pages, addresses Criterion #4**)
 - A. Summary of student ratings from university evaluations that includes all courses taught in past three years; summary should indicate class size (**maximum 3 pages**)
 - B. Testimonials (**maximum 10 pages**) – Can include letters of support from students (graduate and undergraduate), colleagues, department chairs/deans, or other collaborators internal or external to the institution; student emails, comments from course evaluations, or thank you letters; reports of peers and administrators about your teaching, coaching/mentoring, advising, teaching-related administration, and classroom observations.
 - C. Closing Statement: Reflection and commentary on parts A & B (**maximum 2 pages**)

PLEASE NOTE: Your total portfolio must fit comfortably in the 1” binder that was provided to you. Supplementary materials may be submitted electronically if —and only if —they provide perspectives the committee cannot get in the paper portfolio. That is, if you have materials that are **so unique and experiential in nature that they cannot be conveyed through text** you may include those in electronic format. You are asked to use discretion.

Remember that the purposes of the portfolio are to record your efforts and achievements as an educator, to evidence your reflective practice and consequent improvement of both your teaching and student learning, and to document your teaching for external reviewers. Whatever material you include as evidence of teaching excellence should be accompanied by an explanation/reflection; be sure that the reason(s) that you have included particular materials is clear to your reader.

Your portfolio should paint a compelling picture of you as a teacher, using whatever organizational or structural framework makes sense to you. You might elaborate on themes that emerged in your teaching statement, engage in a case study approach to a particular class or learning situation, etc. The important thing to keep in mind is the evaluation criteria for the portfolio.

If you have any questions about the preparation of your portfolio, please contact the Center for Teaching and Faculty Excellence at 3-8652 or ctfe@gmu.edu.

**CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION
TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD PORTFOLIOS**

Below are the descriptions for the four criteria that will be used to evaluate your teaching portfolio and that should be demonstrated throughout your portfolio. The selection committee will be paying special attention to the quality of your evidence, so be deliberate and selective in your choices. For each criterion, you should provide a brief commentary about why you made these choices and what they illustrate for your readers. For ideas about the diverse ways to provide this evidence, please see the online resource at ctfe.gmu.edu under “Professional Development > Documenting Your Teaching.”

The selection committee will also be looking for clarity in the communication and documentation of your claims, so please keep in mind the following as you frame your case for teaching excellence.

- Consider your audience. The selection committee consists of faculty members from diverse backgrounds and disciplines who share your enthusiasm for teaching but may not share your expertise.
- Be authentic. Just as in the classroom, being yourself in your portfolio is critical.
- Write with as much clarity as possible. It is important to portray a clear sense of purpose, engagement and passion while consistently communicating your key ideas. Your portfolio should be coherent and present a lucid and cohesive picture of you as an excellent educator.

CRITERIA
<p>Criterion #1: Evidence of Growth and Development as an Educator</p> <p>One of the purposes of the portfolio is to track the evolution and enhancement of your teaching and learning practices. Each of you has had a unique set of experiences, key learning moments, and challenges you have encountered; this criterion affords you the opportunity to provide a dynamic portrait of who you are as an educator.</p>
<p>Criterion #2: Evidence of Student and Learner Engagement</p> <p>Research has shown us that learning is significantly enhanced when students are engaged with the course, the subject area, and/or the learning environment. The selection committee will be looking for evidence of your approaches to ensuring student and learner engagement.</p>
<p>Criterion #3: Evidence of Assessment of Student Learning & Achievement</p> <p>One of the most difficult tasks for us as educators is to provide evidence of student learning and achievement. That is, what knowledge, competencies, practices, and meaning are students taking away from our time spent teaching, advising, and mentoring? How do you know?</p>
<p>Criterion #4: Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness & Impact</p> <p>Teaching effectiveness is ideally demonstrated through the examination of multiple sources, e.g., students, peers/colleagues, supervisors, community members, etc. The selection committee is interested in the variety of evidence you might include in this section as well as your reflection/ commentary on your choices.</p>

APPENDIX: Examples of Evidence for each Criterion

NOTE: This list is not meant to be exhaustive, nor are finalists expected to address each bullet point.

<p>Criterion #1: Evidence of Growth and Development as Educator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses • Worked to overcome/ deal with a unique challenge • Willingness to explore and develop strategies/ actions for change • Openness and flexibility • Values what student bring; learning from students • Significant course or learning environment development and/or redesign • Pedagogical knowledge and innovations • Plans for diverse learning needs and preferences • Active engagement with peers around issues of teaching and learning (e.g., mentors other faculty members, team teaching, etc.) • Participation in professional development • Builds institutional capacity around issues related to teaching and learning (e.g., curriculum and program development, development of technology resources, collaborative work at Mason, etc.) • Creation and dissemination of effective teaching practices (e.g., presents teaching knowledge in Mason, local community, regional, national, or global settings; develops on-line resources; publishes work in scholarship of teaching and learning; etc.) • Participates in outreach activities on behalf of Mason and students (e.g., open houses, Science Fairs, events, etc.) • Offers evidence of growth and development through the classroom/ laboratory/ mentoring/ advising experience (e.g., feedback used to make course corrections) 	<p>Criterion #2: Evidence of Student and Learner Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attends to classroom climate and creating community • Incorporates active learning strategies • Promotes learning from peers; incorporates collaborative learning techniques • Uses technology(ies) to enhance learning and engagement • Building of websites and/or electronic tools to facilitate learning • Attends to student learning styles and preferences • Assists student responsibility for learning • Inclusive teaching and learning practices (e.g., teaches to diverse audiences, uses culturally responsive pedagogies, meets students where they are at, etc.) • Models and encourages ethical and leadership behavior within the discipline or field of study • Available/accessible to students in-person or on-line • Works in one-on-one capacity as mentor and advisor; uses an apprenticeship approach; engages students in research or other professional activities; publishes with students (graduate and/or undergraduate) • Engages students in campus/ community /global activities (e.g., co-curricular activities, service learning, experiential learning, field trips, internships, study abroad, etc.) • Demonstrates care and respect for students
<p>Criterion #3: Evidence of Assessment of Student Learning & Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goes beyond university evaluations • Incorporates Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) • Provides examples of impact on student learning; clear link between learning goals and assessment • Variety in student assessment strategies • Uses formative and summative assessments • Evaluation criteria are made clear to students (e.g., use of rubrics) • Learning / education was transformative • Use of external raters 	<p>Criterion #4: Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness & Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes summary of student ratings from university evaluations taught in the past three years; be sure to note class size • Testimonials from diverse sources are included, such as letters of support; student emails, comments from course evaluations, thank you letters, achievements; classroom observations; peer/administrative ratings • Provides closing statement