



UNIVERSITY
OF TASMANIA

GUIDE TO THE TEACHING RECORD AND TEACHING PORTFOLIO

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About this guide

This guide is for all academic staff who are interested in the continuous monitoring, evaluating and improvement of their teaching, and who may wish in the future to develop a case for the quality of their teaching for personnel decisions like promotion, in which case it should be read in conjunction with the documents on promotion to be found at <http://www.admin.utas.edu.au/hr/policies/policies.html>

This guide will also be useful for teaching staff in appraisal situations, and for any other purpose which involves a retrospective reflection on the individual's teaching quality and performance.

Introduction

What is a Teaching Record?

There are no hard and fast definitions of terms like portfolio, dossier, record, archive, profile, and the literature uses them differently in different contexts. For the sake of clarity in discussion at UTAS the following definitions have been adopted. A Teaching Record is a comprehensive collection of documents and other artefacts which has been collected over the years. It is strongly suggested that you should begin such a collection at the beginning of your teaching career, and that for promotion purposes you should be able to draw on at least three years' documentation of your teaching. A "collection" is meant in a quite literal sense: a large box is suggested, the contents of which might be reviewed on a rolling five year basis, say.

What is a Teaching Portfolio?

A Teaching Portfolio is the focused distillation of the appropriate material in your Teaching Record for a specific purpose, like an application for promotion or a Teaching Excellence Award. It contains the evidence to justify the statements you make about your teaching. For example, in a Portfolio for promotion you might say "I keep up to date with teaching in my field." You would then describe how you do this, using evidence where necessary and appropriate from the Record. In the case of an application for for a teaching excellence award you would need to justify your assertion that you are an outstanding teacher by illustrating how you are creative and innovative. You could do this by presenting evidence of your own teaching, and by the way you present the Portfolio itself.

The Teaching Record

What might a Teaching Record contain?

Traditionally, evidence about teaching tendered for promotion has consisted simply of a listing of subjects taught. While this is informative and necessary in its own right, these days it is important to recognise that the qualitative and continuous improvement dimensions of teaching are also important in themselves, and must also be presented for personnel decision-making if valid and reliable judgements are to be made about teaching and about the comparative standing of candidates for promotion.

A diverse collection of material in a Teaching Record will make for a rich basis for reflection and improvement, and for choice in putting together a Teaching Portfolio. So a useful conceptual approach to defining the contents of a Teaching Record is that it should contain:

- a) quantitative, *factual and descriptive material* (e.g. lists of subjects taught, booklists etc.)
- b) *qualitative evidence* about your teaching (e.g. student feedback results and your reflections on them, comments from peers concerning the adequacy and currency of a reading list), and
- c) a record of your *scholarly and developmental activities* in university pedagogy e.g. workshops on teaching and learning you have attended, articles you have written about your own teaching.

Quantitative and qualitative information is often intermixed, so there is no rigorous attempt to keep them in separate categories in this document. For example, you might have instituted an alternative approach to teaching in your subject but it would be expected that you could describe and analyse it, say why you did it and be able to provide evaluative data about it.

a) Factual and descriptive material

It is suggested that a Teaching Record might contain:

1. A list of all subjects taught by you, with a clear indication for each of them of the degree of responsibility you had for:
 - statements of learning objectives;
 - course design;
 - learning resources e.g. booklists, printed notes, Web programs, use of IT, choice of teaching and learning formats;
 - choice of assessment tasks, and reasons for these choices;
 - marking/ grading procedures.
2. Where it was your responsibility, then you should keep examples of the above for each subject in your Record. You should also keep examples of the class lists or marks distribution, which together with worked and marked assessment tasks will help to constitute evidence of student learning in the subject

A note also needs to be kept for each subject concerning:

- size of the class i.e. was it a lecture course for 200 or a tutorial for 20?
- year level of the class;
- whether it was optional or compulsory for students;
- proportion of the class giving feedback if evaluative feedback was sought.

3. A list of PG students you have supervised/ are supervising together with thesis topics and status of the candidatures.
4. Changes and innovations in teaching you have made; you need to keep a written record of these and include reasons for the changes, and a discussion/ evaluation of the results.
5. Materials you have developed, including Web-based materials, if not already covered.
6. Use of Information Technology (IT). Document this, particularly if you were an early user in your School, and include evaluative material about your use of it..
7. Every year or so you might commission a video recording of one of your classroom teaching periods which, together with your written reflection, you would lodge in your Record.
8. A listing of your teaching development responsibilities in your School e.g.
 - unit/ course co-ordination
 - curriculum review and/ or development
 - mentoring less experienced staff
 - QA processes for teaching
 - membership of teaching committees
 - teaching leadership
 - teaching administration
 - liaison between teaching and industry
 - teaching policy development.

Together with any responsibilities you have undertaken in the above areas outside the university.

9. Grants for teaching developments which you have successfully applied for, together with a description of the project.

b) *Qualitative material*

It is suggested that you should keep a log or journal of your practice and progress as a teacher. This might be done by responding in writing at some regular interval to questions like this:

- What has been my best experience in the last...
- What has been my worst experience in the last...
- What did I learn from these experiences?
- What would I do differently next time?
- What are some interesting things about teaching I have heard or read about in the last.

This log will help you clarify your ideas about your teaching and will help you to construct a personal statement about your approach to and philosophy of teaching for e.g. formal applications for promotion.

As well as this, your Teaching Record should contain some or all of the following:

1. Student feedback: You should survey your classes using SETL at least every second year, and should keep the results for at least five years. It is worth attending to the results when you first receive them, and noting in writing how you interpret them, what you will do as a result, and eventually whether you did it and what the outcome was. This is much better done immediately after the event rather than in retrospect perhaps several years later. The actual figures should be of less interest to a Promotions Committee than your reflection in

writing on them and on your actions taken as a result of that reflection. (See the document from the PVC Teaching and Learning)

2. Solicited comments from colleagues and other appropriate people about e.g. the appropriateness of learning objectives, the adequacy and currency of reading lists, the appropriateness of the use of IT, the standard of examining and the award of grades.
3. Comments from your HoS in their capacity as your supervisor and as the person responsible for the maintenance of quality teaching in the School.
4. Comments from educationists about the appropriateness and effectiveness of learning formats and of the congruence between learning objectives, teaching methods and assessment.
5. Unsolicited comments in writing from past students and colleagues about your performance as a teacher. (It is not considered a good idea to solicit comments from current individual students, either PG or UG).
6. Written comments from colleagues invited to sit in on your classes.
7. Your written critique of your own video performance every year.
8. Case study accounts of how you encourage life-long learning habits in students, and the other generic attributes which have been endorsed as UTAS policy.
9. Case study accounts of how you give feedback.
10. Case study accounts of how you encourage active involvement by students in their learning.

c) *Scholarship in teaching/ professional development/ recognition*

Your Teaching Record should contain some or all of the following:

1. The results of research you have carried out on your teaching, and your comments on this.
2. Publications about teaching, both refereed and non-refereed e.g. a column or article in a university newsletter.
3. A note of the most important books, articles etc. you have read and sites you have visited, including a short note to yourself about the most important ideas you found there.
4. Courses on university teaching and learning you have attended, both within the university and at national and international level.
5. Courses and workshops you have conducted on teaching and learning.
6. Qualifications in teaching and learning which you hold. Your membership of professional societies concerned with university teaching, and conferences you have attended.
7. Invitations to present as an exemplary teacher both within and outside the university.
8. Grants gained for teaching development.
9. Recognition for teaching excellence e.g. Teaching Merit award.

Using your Teaching Record to develop your teaching

While you may not need to use the contents of your Teaching Record for promotion purposes more than a few times in your career, it can be used continuously throughout your career to aid your development as a teacher - indeed, this may be its most important long-term use.

Ideally, you would accumulate most of the above material in your record over the years, and you would keep a reflective journal on your teaching. The benefits of doing this, in whatever format and at whatever frequency you choose are well stated thus:

"Reflection is a process of reviewing and thinking critically about our activities and the world around us. It goes beyond describing what we do, to thinking about why we do things, whether they have gone as intended, why we think they worked well or didn't and how we might do them differently next time. Recording these reflective thoughts can help us to crystallise our understanding of experiences, make connections between different aspects of our work and identify possible improvements. Recording personal reflections has the added benefit of documenting learning over time through recognition of the changing nature of our reflections." (UTS Evaluation Guide, 1998, p 16)

If you undertake such reflection on your teaching, in writing, say every couple of years, there will be benefits both to your insight into and development as a teacher and to the richness of the material you are able to produce for a Teaching Profile for whatever purpose.

The Teaching Portfolio

What might a Teaching Portfolio contain?

No two Teaching Portfolios will be the same. It is up to you to choose what to present to a Promotions Committee, bearing in mind what is currently required (see current UTAS documents for candidates for promotion). You should play from your strengths as a teacher, properly documenting them from your Record.

You will of course provide the quantitative material concerning your teaching. The basic question you should be prepared to address is: How do you know that you are an effective, superior or even outstanding teacher, and how do you demonstrate it? In order to evaluate your worthiness as a teacher, Promotions Committees are almost certainly going to be interested in the following qualitative and developmental aspects of your teaching role

1. Your philosophy of teaching and learning - you should be able to produce 1000 words on this – what you believe to be the purposes of what and how you teach;
2. Your approach to the supervision of PG students, in 500 words perhaps;
3. Your strengths as a teacher;
4. Innovations in teaching you have initiated;
5. Where teaching is defined in the widest sense, what others say about your teaching,
 - students
 - colleagues/ peers
 - HoD
 - outside experts
 - educationists
6. What you have done in response to student feedback;

7. How you keep up to date with teaching in your field;
8. How you encourage the generic attributes in students;
9. What self-development as a teacher you have engaged in
10. What leadership roles you have taken on;
11. What recognition you have achieved as a good teacher.

Your Portfolio for an award for excellence in teaching will be different from that for promotion. Again, you will need to provide the basic quantitative material, but the committee this time will be more interested in your philosophies of teaching and learning and the innovative ways you have implemented them for the benefit of student learning. Doing the traditional thing well – ie lecturing, tutoring and demonstrating well – is an expectation of all teachers, so an outstanding teacher will need to show more than this: they will need to show insight and creativity in teaching and learning based on theory, and will need to be explicitly reflective on their own practice.

Further reading

Gibbs, G. (1989) *Creating a Teaching Profile*. Bristol: Technical and Educational Services

Seldin, P. (1991) *The Teaching Portfolio*. Anker Publishing Co, Bolton Ma

Shore, B.M. et al (1986) *The Teaching Dossier*. Revised edition, Canadian Association of University Teachers, Montreal.

UTS Evaluation Guide.(1998) Sydney: Centre for Learning and Teaching, University of Technology Sydney.

UTS A Development Program for New Staff: Guidelines for Participants.(2000) Sydney: Institute for Multi Media and Learning, University of Technology, Sydney.

Murdoch University: Guidelines for presentation of a Teaching Portfolio:
www.murdoch.edu.au/hr/traindev/teachportfolio

University of Western Australia: Creating a Teaching Portfolio
www.csd.uwa.edu.au/portfolio.html