

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEACHING PORTFOLIOS

A teaching portfolio is a collection of evidence, and reflections on that evidence, documenting your teaching development and achievements. Portfolios are used for a number of purposes at Massey, including applying for promotion and awards. As portfolios for these purposes rely on a thorough and extensive collection of evidence and reflection, it is a good idea to start developing a professional development portfolio as soon as you begin teaching.

‘When most of us teach, time constraints and other commitments force us to concentrate on what we teach, namely, the content. In creating a teaching portfolio, the key questions are why you teach and how you teach, that is, your teaching goals and your objectives for achieving those goals.’ (Rodriguez-Farrar, p.4)

A professional development portfolio can be developed in five steps:

1. Develop your personal teaching philosophy
2. Collect evidence
3. Organise the evidence
4. Write reflections on your evidence
5. Seek feedback from others and implement this into your portfolio and practice.

## Step 1: Develop your personal teaching philosophy

Are you a teacher who emphasises engagement? Improvement? Innovation? Or something else? Your teaching motivations can be summed up in a teaching philosophy which forms the basis of the portfolio. Seldin (2004) recommends that, when developing your teaching philosophy, you ask yourself:

- What are your beliefs about teaching?
- What are your aims for students, and why are these aims important to you?
- How do your actions as a teacher reflect your beliefs about teaching and learning?
- What evidence will show that your actions reflect your beliefs? (p. 7)

Consider expressing your teaching philosophy around a central unifying image, story or experience.

Remember that your teaching philosophy should change and develop as you grow as a teacher.

## Step 2: Collect evidence

The evidence you collect should show the scope and quality of your teaching, and come from a variety of sources. It can include both traditional (eg written documents) and electronic (eg videos) media. A review of sources that have influenced your approach may be useful. Evidence may include:

- A list of teaching responsibilities, including specific papers, and a brief description of how each paper was taught
- Samples of assessment tasks.
- Examples of activities and online environments.
- Feedback from students, colleagues and other stakeholders
- Informal and formal evaluations (eg Online Survey tool (MOST), Small Group Instructional Diagnosis [SGID]).
- Records of participation in teaching development.
- Summaries of observations and reviews.
- Learner completion, retention, and progression data.

- Publications
- Information on supervision of theses and research if relevant
- Awards
- Teaching research.

### Step 3: Organise your evidence

Professional development portfolios can be organised in a number of different ways. Some examples of headings could include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Table of contents</li> <li>▼ Teaching philosophy</li> <li>▼ Teaching responsibilities</li> <li>▼ Teaching materials</li> <li>▼ Teaching methods</li> <li>▼ Innovative teaching practices</li> <li>▼ Assessment of teaching effectiveness</li> <li>▼ Awards</li> <li>▼ Goals</li> <li>▼ Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● sample course syllabi</li> <li>● course hand outs</li> <li>● summary of student evaluations</li> <li>● comments concerning supervision of graduate students</li> <li>● statements from peers on teaching effectiveness</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▼ Table of contents</li> <li>▼ Philosophy of teaching and statement of responsibilities</li> <li>▼ Contribution to university and department teaching mission</li> <li>▼ Professional improvement activities</li> <li>▼ Evidence of good classroom instruction</li> <li>▼ Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● representative course syllabi and course materials</li> <li>● peer evaluations</li> <li>● student evaluations</li> <li>● awards and honors</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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(Rodriguez-Farrar, p.15)

If you are nominated for a Teaching Excellence Award at Massey or nationally, you will be expected to provide a portfolio of evidence related to the following categories:

- Design for learning
- Facilitating learning
- Assessing student learning
- Evaluating teaching and learning
- Professional Development and leadership

### Step 4: Write reflections on your evidence

Reflections help connect the evidence to your teaching philosophy. Your reflections present the process you have undertaken to further understand and develop your work as a teacher. It incorporates both your teaching philosophy and evidence into a single narrative.

You may find it easiest to begin your reflection with a review of your evidence summaries. This could be followed by a comparison between your teaching philosophy and your evidence. Write a short reflection on each piece of evidence, describing why it is important to your teaching. Consider how your evidence does and does not reflect your teaching philosophy. Include statements outlining changes you intend to initiate help to demonstrate development.

Useful principles to keep in mind

- ▼ The goal of your portfolio is to meaningfully present your strengths, weaknesses, and growth as a teacher. Reflections provide context and meaning to the evidence.
- ▼ Collaborate with others. Regular, honest feedback on your work will ensure you are meeting your objectives.
- ▼ Teaching portfolios can be assessed on a number of criteria, including their currency, balance of sources, and coherence. Understanding your reader will help you know what to include.
- ▼ Aim for relevance and succinctness.

## **Step 5: Seek feedback from others and implement this into your portfolio and practice**

Feedback from others will help you to edit and develop your teaching portfolio, and may give you ideas on how to extend your practice. It may be useful to work with colleagues who are also developing their portfolios, and to work together to develop and refine your portfolios.

### **For further tips...**

... on developing a teaching portfolio, contact your local Centre for Teaching and Learning.

### **Further reading:**

Ako Aotearoa (2011). *Portfolio pointers: preparing and presenting high quality teaching portfolios*. Available from: <http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-hub/ako-aotearoa-northern-hub/resources/pages/portfolio-pointers-preparing-and-presenting-high-q>

### **References:**

Rodriguez-Farrar, H.B., (2006). *The Teaching Portfolio: A handbook for faculty, teaching assistants and teaching fellows* (2nd ed.). Providence, RI: Brown University.

Seldin, P. (2004). *The teaching portfolio: A practical guide to improved performance and promotional/tenure decisions* (3rd ed.). Bolton, MA: Anker.