SENATE COMMITTEE ON TEACHING & LEARNING

Teaching Documentation Guide

Teaching needs to be properly documented for formative and summative purposes: on the one hand to promote teaching enhancement, on the other to provide credible evidence of effective teaching. Teaching and research enrich and reinforce one another in several profound ways. As Ernest Boyer famously observed, there are many kinds of scholarship, including integration and application, most of them deeply implicated in teaching. Equally important, teaching itself can and should be a kind of scholarly activity, involving reflection on what we are seeking to achieve and the most effective means of reaching those goals, and critical assessment and rigorous recording of the results. This *Teaching Documentation Guide* contributes to good teaching by seeking to stimulate faculty self-analysis and self-development.

Additionally, however, if teaching achievement is to garner appropriate recognition in merit awards, local, university-wide, national, and international teaching awards, and in the conferring of tenure and promotion, all those concerned to secure that recognition have an interest in providing valid and reliable evidence in its support. This *Guide*'s second fundamental purpose is to offer useful, practical advice on amassing and presenting such evidence.

This *Guide* is divided into three sections, aimed at distinct but overlapping audiences. The first section provides practical advice and useful sources of information for all those interested in preparing their own teaching dossiers. The second section applies more broadly to all those who, for whatever purposes, need to document teaching in a curriculum vitae. Finally, a major reason for revising the first edition of this *Guide* is the approval by Senate, YUFA, and the Administration of new *Tenure and Promotions Policy, Criteria and Procedures (TPPCP)*. The final section of this *Guide* is intended to help File Preparation Committees (FPCs) discharge their obligations to prepare the teaching portion of tenure and promotion files under the new *Policy*. It also provides a useful guide to T&P candidates as they prepare information as part of the T&P process.

It must be noted that, while the *Guide* aims to be of use to those involved in the tenure and promotion process, it has no official status. The final authority on tenure and promotion matters is the *Tenure and Promotions Policy, Criteria and Procedures*, along with the *Alternate Stream Document and Procedures Governing Advancement to Candidacy*. These can be found at: http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/tnp/index.htm.

THE TEACHING DOSSIER

A. PURPOSE AND USE

A **teaching dossier** (or teaching portfolio, as it is called in the US and UK) provides "an opportunity for instructors to articulate their teaching philosophy, review their teaching goals and objectives, assess the effectiveness of their classroom practice and the strategies they use to animate their pedagogical values, and identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. It also highlights an instructor's range of responsibilities, accomplishments, and contributions to teaching more generally within the department, university, and/or scholarly community" (SCOTL 2002).

A teaching dossier enables one to look systematically at the various components of one's teaching, ground the decisions about teaching that are made, engage in ongoing development as a teacher, and subsequently refine and revise the document as a ongoing scholarly process. A teaching dossier is a selection, not an exhaustive compilation, of those materials that together convey the scope and quality of one's teaching accomplishments and contributions to teaching. For an elaboration of the characteristics of outstanding teaching at York, see the criteria for student learning experience, substantive innovation, teaching/learning strategies, professional and curriculum development, and mentoring in SCOTL's University-Wide Teaching Award guidelines.

The teaching dossier is complementary to, and elaborates on, the **teaching portion of the c.v.** (see below), and provides a context for the different forms of evidence that are used to assess teaching quality. For the faculty member compiling one, a dossier provides a framework for systematic and critical reflection on teaching and ongoing improvement. Additionally, an excerpt from or an abbreviation of a teaching dossier might be adapted as part of the **candidate's personal statement in the T&P file**. (see TPPCP, F.3.1.5)
Further, File Preparation Committees may find teaching dossiers helpful in providing a framework for the evaluation of teaching that takes into account the full range of a candidate's accomplishments and contributions.

Since no one perspective can accurately reflect the complexity of teaching, informed judgments on teaching quality can best be made when multiple sources of evidence and criteria are brought to bear on the full range of an individual's accomplishments and contributions to teaching. (For further information see SCOTL's *Guide to Teaching Assessment and Evaluation, 2002.*) Course planning and development, research and papers on teaching and learning, as well as classroom performance, are some of the activities that might be considered in an assessment of teaching quality. A teaching dossier provides a succinct and coherent overview of all such activities.

B. SUGGESTIONS TO CANDIDATES FOR PROCEEDING

The following section describes suggested items that might be included in your teaching dossier. Ideally, you should begin collecting information that pertains to your teaching from the first day of your first teaching assignment and continue gathering information on an ongoing basis. You might install a box or folder somewhere near your work space where you can collect copies of teaching documentation, such as course outlines, evaluations, letters from students and chairs, samples of student work, samples of multimedia tools created, pages from course websites created, workshop notes, etc. In this way you will have at hand a detailed record of your activities and professional development, and in time you will have a broad range of material in your collection from which you can extract information to prepare your dossier.

C. COMPONENTS OF A TEACHING DOSSIER

SECTION 1- APPROACH TO TEACHING

The items in this first section provide a basis for judgments on the other information presented, and afford the opportunity to direct attention to areas that you consider most important to your teaching.

2

A. Statement of Teaching Philosophy

A statement of teaching philosophy is a personal statement that sets out the central components of what you are trying to achieve in your teaching and the learning goals you have for your students within the context of your discipline. An effective teaching philosophy serves as a thesis statement that is then supported in the subsequent sections of the dossier by evidence of specific practices and strategies you use in your courses, the scope of your responsibilities and contributions, and your success in achieving your teaching and learning goals.

In developing a statement of teaching philosophy, it might be helpful to consider your answers to fundamental teaching and learning questions, such as those listed below, in order to elicit thoughts about your own teaching which can then be expanded upon and integrated into a statement on teaching.

- How do you conceptualize learning? teaching?
- How would you describe the ideal learning environment?
- What are your learning goals for your students? for yourself? Why?
- How are these goals reflected in your courses?
- How do you engage diverse students in the subject and make your teaching inclusive?

B. Teaching Practices and Strategies

This section demonstrates the ways in which you bring your teaching philosophy to life by outlining the specific strategies and methodologies you have adopted or adapted for your courses. This generally involves offering a brief description of each key strategy along with an explanation of how it advances your teaching, learning and/or course goals. In identifying key strategies within your own teaching, you might consider such factors as how you structure your courses; how you make decisions about course content, resources, technology use and assignments; how you respond to different learning needs; how you assess students; how you integrate student feedback and encourage participation.

C. Professional Development

This section affirms your commitment to ongoing growth and improvement as a teacher through the acquisition of new knowledge and approaches, and participation in dialogue about teaching and learning. For example, in this category you might provide a list of teaching development sessions, conferences, professional networks, readings, etc., you have participated in to learn about new strategies and keep up with developments in university teaching.

SECTION 2 - TEACHING RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Items in this section combine with the statements in the previous section to provide a context and background that will inform subsequent judgments about the quality of your teaching. All the information in this section reflects your roles and responsibilities within the department, substantiates your professionalism as a teacher, highlights any special recognition you've received, demonstrates your leadership within this area, and features activities that have contributed to strengthening the culture of teaching more generally. Many of these items will be listed in the teaching section of your c.v. (see below); however, you may wish to elaborate on specific items within the dossier to situate the contribution more fully. Subsections can include some or all of the following:

A. Courses Taught
- Include enrolment information, level of responsibility, co-teaching, supervision of TAs, etc.
- Make special note of those courses you've substantially revised or developed anew
- Provide context that might be taken into account in viewing other evaluative information, for example, complexity of course content, student demographics, preparatory level, special challenges, and mandatory or elective courses

- Provide details of other teaching activities such as supervision of a teaching or research practicum, athletic coaching, field placement supervision, coaching in the performing arts, mentoring, etc.

B. Supervision

- Document the nature and extent of supervision activity for students preparing theses or dissertations, indicating whether supervisor or committee member, and whether at the doctoral, masters or undergraduate levels
- As appropriate, indicate the outcomes of the supervision (such as thesis titles and acceptance dates, thesis prizes and awards, citations of student publications, dates and venues of public performances)
- Provide contextual information such as the average supervision load in your department

C. Teaching Awards and Nominations

- Internal awards (department, Faculty, university-wide)
- External awards (provincial, national, international)

D. Teaching Related Activities

- Committee membership (departmental, Faculty or university-wide), and the nature of your contribution
- Teaching development activities, such as invited presentations on teaching, requests to demonstrate your teaching, mentoring colleagues on course development or teaching improvement, professional exchanges with colleagues inside or outside the institution on, for example, course materials or teaching methods, resources developed, etc.

E. Curriculum Development
- Curriculum revision, development of new programs, integration of new technologies

F. Research and Publications

- Curriculum materials, such as published or unpublished curriculum materials, textbooks, workbooks, case studies, lab manuals, etc.
- Research, conference presentations, articles, etc., appearing in general or discipline-specific publications on teaching
- Grants and leave fellowships for teaching projects

SECTION 3 - SELF-EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND STUDENT LEARNING

This section provides measures of the success of your strategies and methods in light of your teaching and learning goals. To document this success, you might collect and synthesize information from a variety of sources, such as individual student achievement, learning outcomes, and class outcomes. The results of classroom research (one minute papers, focus groups, critical incident questionnaires, mid-year mini surveys, etc.) can be used to demonstrate your students' learning and achievements. In addition, you might outline steps you have taken to improve your teaching and your courses, including any changes you've made as a result of your self-evaluation and feedback from students.

THE TEACHING PORTION OF THE CURRICULUM VITAE

A. FORMAT

The following text is based on a format that has been prepared by York University's CST to assist in the preparation of c.v.s for a variety of purposes, such as tenure and promotion, grant and leave fellowship applications, and teaching award nominations. This format is adapted from and expands on the c.v. format required by the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies. No standard format for c.v.s has been specified in the new *Tenure and Promotions Policy, Criteria and Procedures*. Because there is no standard format required and because this guide is not an officially legislated document, candidates for T&P are advised to consult with their Chair (in a departmentalized Faculty) or Dean (in a non-departmentalized Faculty) about local expectations governing the format of c.v.s.

B. CATEGORIES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE TEACHING SECTION OF THE C.V.

After you have established the format of your c.v., it is necessary for you to determine what to include in it. As regards teaching, your consideration will be significantly shaped by the tenure and promotion standards of your unit. The standards take into account such factors as the range of candidates' teaching situations or formats; whether or not graduate teaching and supervision were expected; the weight to be placed on numerical student evaluations; internal and external teaching awards; the basis for comparisons, if any, with teaching by others; and the importance attached to significant teaching activities beyond direct instruction.

Different discipline standards will embody different expectations regarding teaching. For example, one department, in addition to assessing candidates' in-class performance, also values developing new curriculum, recruiting PhD students and supervising their work, developing technology-enhanced learning, and serving as a teaching consultant. This unit does not expect that all candidates will contribute equally to all these activities, but recognizes and values demonstrated effectiveness in one or more such teaching activities. In preparing the teaching portion of your c.v., therefore, it is important that you consult the standards established by your unit to determine which of the following categories of activity are most relevant to your situation. Finally, though you are not required to submit a teaching dossier in support of your tenure and promotion file, if you are including a teaching dossier (see above), then all activities you choose to highlight in the dossier should be listed in your c.v. In particular, your c.v. must include a complete and accurate listing of all formal supervision and classroom teaching.

> **Resources to assist you in preparing your c.v.**
>
> Many resources, both documentary and personal, are available to assist you in the process of preparing your c.v. in general, and the teaching portion in particular. The CST has prepared a "Suggested Curriculum Vitae Format," going beyond the teaching portion produced above (available at the CST, 1050 TEL).

1. **SUMMARY OF TEACHING & TEACHINGCONTRIBUTIONS**

2. **UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING**

   - Courses taught*
   - Independent reading courses directed
   - Honours theses supervised
   - Guest lectures in other courses

3. **GRADUATE TEACHING**

   - Courses taught*

- Independent study or reading courses directed
- Masters theses supervised
- Doctoral theses supervised
- Guest lectures in other courses

(* New courses developed or substantially revised by you may be indicated by an asterisk. Also make note of courses that were team-taught.)

4. **OTHER TEACHING RELATED ACTIVITIES**
   (Some items may be cross-referenced under SERVICE)

   - Seminars, workshops presented
   - Professional development
   - Other

5. **COURSES TAUGHT AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

6. **TEACHING AWARDS**
   (May be cross-referenced under PERSONAL)

7. **COURSE/CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**
   (May be cross-referenced under SERVICE)

8. **PEDAGOGIC INNOVATION/DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED LEARNING**

9. **SERVICE ON TEACHING COMMITTEES**
   (May be cross-referenced under SERVICE)

10. **PUBLICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO TEACHING**
    (Some items may be cross-referenced under PUBLICATIONS & PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS)

    - Curriculum/course materials
    - Publications
    - Funding

THE TEACHING SECTION OF THE T&P FILE

Under the *Tenure and Promotions Policy, Criteria and Procedures* (TPPCP), responsibility for assembling a candidate's T&P file is assigned to a File Preparation Committee (FPC). The FPC plays a vital role in ensuring scrupulous adherence to Senate's criteria and procedures. This section provides guidance to FPCs on preparing the teaching section of the T&P file in a way that maintains the integrity of the Senate process.

A. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CANDIDATE

The Candidate is responsible for providing relevant material to the File Preparation Committee. For teaching, this includes:

- Curriculum vitae
- Course outlines, assignments and handouts
- Personal statement, including statement of teaching philosophy (optional)
- Teaching dossier (optional). NOTE: The teaching dossier is provided for the use of teaching referees. It will not ordinarily become part of the tenure/ promotion file (F.3.1.2.(a).(iii)
- Any other material which the candidate deems relevant.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FILE PREPARATION COMMITTEE

The FPC is responsible for preparing the candidate's tenure and promotion file. It is important that the FPC be fully informed about the relevant policies, criteria and procedures. In preparing the teaching section of the file, the following needs to be done:

1. Collecting appropriate teaching materials from the candidate for the use of collegial referees.

2. Selecting collegial referees:

- Two referees are chosen by the FPC and one by the candidate (see TPPCP F.3.1.2a).

- For all questions relating to the selection of referees see the T&P FAQ Sheet (3.3 1).

3. Determining procedures for randomly selecting undergraduate and graduate students to act as referees.

4. Selecting graduate students supervised by the candidate.

5. Providing the candidate with an opportunity to review the names of student referees (see TPPCP F.3.1.2b).

6. Preparing solicitation letters asking colleagues and students for evaluation, specifically referring to your unit's criteria (see T&P Toolkit for sample letters).

- "Confidentiality and the Candidate's Right to Know" (see TPPCP F.3.1.6)

- "Letters of Reference and Evaluations" (see TPPCP F.3.1.7)

7. Where appropriate soliciting references from faculty and teaching assistants with whom the candidate has taught.

8. Obtaining numerical class evaluations and comparative unit data. Where available, signed student comments on course evaluations may be used. While it is the responsibility of the FPC to "ensure that teaching evaluation is conducted wherever the candidate teaches" (TPPCP F.3.1. 2b), the student evaluation of teaching is generally done by, and the data are available from, the home unit.

9. Making appropriate use of a teaching dossier, e.g., providing excerpts for the use of teaching referees, using it judiciously to characterize what is distinctive about a candidate's teaching philosophy and practice.

10. Preparing contextualizing commentary (see Section D below).

Sources of Information Specific to the Teaching Section of a T&P File

A variety of information is available that gives specific direction to the development of the teaching section of a tenure and promotion file. The File Preparation Committee should carefully study and review all pertinent information.

1. A very important resource is the "T&P Toolkit"' prepared by the University Secretariat www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/tnp/toolkit/index.htm

   Specific relevant documents and sections include:
   - Criteria for tenure and promotion with respect to teaching (TPPCP B. 1)
   - Procedures for file preparation in teaching (TPPCP F.3.1. 2)
   - Important additional information with respect file preparation ("T&P Sheet" – sections 2. Standards, 3. File Preparation, 3.3 Referees and 3.4 File Contents)
   - "Sample Letters to for T&P Applications"

2. Local unit document on standards for tenure and promotion
3. Guidelines that may be at the Faculty level of initiating unit
4. SCOTL documents *Guide to Teaching Assessment & Evaluation* (2002)

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COLLEGIAL REFEREES

It is the responsibility of the FPC to ensure that referees for teaching are "provided with copies of course outlines, assignments and handouts, a teaching dossier, if available, and such other materials as the candidate deems relevant" (TPPCP F.3.1.2a). Copies of University and unit-level teaching criteria should also be provided.

The FPC's letter of solicitation should give some direction as to the responsibilities of the collegial referees. For example, referees should:

- Review material provided before visiting classes,
- Make more than a single class visit and "ensure coverage of all relevant teaching formats" (TPPCP F.3.1.2a).
- Be clear in their letters as to which aspects of teaching were assessed.
- In speaking of the candidate's teaching, make reference to any relevant items in the criteria

Where a teaching dossier is available, the use of judicious excerpts can provide both a context and a succinct overview of what is distinctive about a person's teaching philosophy and practice.

D. COMMENTARY OF THE FPC ON TEACHING

The commentary should contain procedures, contextualizing information and facts, and not include judgmental statements. The contents might include:

- Reference to important information in the file that distinguishes the candidate's teaching
- Information on background of collegial evaluators
- Identification (if appropriate) of "faculty members or teaching assistants with whom the candidate has taught" (TPPCP F.3.1.2a)

8

- Procedures for selecting student referees
- Number of students in the randomly selected pool, with response rate (graduate and undergraduate classes)
- Classes used as the source for student names
- "Contextualizing commentary" on the classes and courses from which the student evaluators were selected. Information might include:
- Class size and format
- Required or elective course
- Contextualizing commentary on the place of the course in the program curriculum, e.g., introduction to a field, capstone of specialization, cross listed with a specific interdisciplinary program, etc.
- Laboratories or tutorials

E. DOCUMENTATION ON TEACHING IN THE T&P FILE

- Procedures and contextualizing commentary from the FPC
- List of collegial assessors and authors of student letters
- Candidate's personal statement of teaching philosophy (optional)
- Collegial letters
- Undergraduate and graduate student letters
- Letters from faculty and teaching assistants with whom the candidate has taught (if appropriate)
- Numerical student evaluations, evaluation scale, comparative numeric data and signed student comments, if available

---

Sources of Information on Teaching Documentation

For further information on developing teaching dossiers and statements of teaching philosophies, and evaluating and assessing teaching, see:

Allchin, Douglas. Teaching Portfolios, University of Texas at El Paso, December 1998. www.utep.edu/~cetal/portfoli/index.htm

Cross, K. P. and Angelo T. A. (Eds.). Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for Faculty, Ann Arbour, MI: National Center for Research to Improve Post-Secondary Teaching and Learning, 1998.

Goodyear, Gail E., and Allchin, Douglas. "Statements of Teaching Philosophy, " in Matthew Kaplan (Ed.) To Improve the Academy: Resources for Faculty, Instructional, and Organizational Development (Volume 17, Number 8), 1998. www.utep.edu/cetal/pub/stofteac.html

Seldin, Peter. The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions (2ndEd.). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, 1997.

Seldin, Peter and Associates. Changing Practices in Evaluating Teaching: A Practical Guide to Improved Faculty Performance and Promotion/Tenure Decisions. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, 1999.

Senate Committee on Teaching and Learning (SCOTL), Guide to Teaching Assessment & Evaluation, York University, January 2002. www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/scotl/tevguide.pdf

Tenure and Promotions Policy, Criteria and Procedures, York University Senate, March 2002. www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate/committees/tnp/procedures.html

These and other resources on teaching, as well as sample teaching dossiers, are available at the Centre for the Support of Teaching (CST), 1050 TEL Building, York University.