

Documenting Evidence of Good Teaching Practice

Strategies for academic staff

Context and key issues

Gathering and documenting evidence of good teaching practice is a key dimension of academic work. It is important for academics at all stages of their career to document their teaching development and achievements for such purposes as performance review meetings and promotion. Evidence of success in the research domain is determined through such criteria as number of refereed journal articles and amount of external competitive funding. However, evidence of excellence and success in teaching is often more complex to define and document, for teaching in higher education is a multifaceted phenomenon. It may include:

- subject matter expertise
 - skills in curriculum and assessment design
 - skills in classroom teaching/lecturing and student advising
 - management and organisational skills
 - mentoring and supervision of colleagues, graduate students and students in practical or professional workplace settings
 - personal and professional development intended to enhance one's own teaching practice
 - departmental development that enhances teaching policies and practices at department level
 - contribution to the wider community through teaching and sharing of expertise beyond the university.
- (adapted from McAlpine & Harris, 2002)

The following six strategies are designed to give you starter ideas for the range of ways in which you might document evidence in relation to your teaching practice. The relevance of these strategies for individual academic staff will vary according to such contextual factors as career stage and discipline.

Strategies for success

1. **Articulate your teaching philosophy**
Develop a brief introductory statement of your intentions as a teacher in higher education. This statement may evolve over time as you teach in different contexts and develop more expertise.
2. **Keep systematic records of your teaching, course reviews, leadership and service**
 - **Keep a record of courses taught and of learning and teaching materials developed**
Include student numbers, teaching mode and resources you design such as course notes, student workbooks or problem sheets.
 - **Systematically collect and respond to student evaluations of courses and teaching**
Keep hard copies of evaluations for future purposes. For each set of evaluations, document what you have done and any improvements made in response to feedback.
 - **Comment on the currency of your curriculum content and learning objectives**
How and when do you review content and learning objectives? What are your sources for benchmarking?
3. **Describe how you implement a student-centred approach to teaching**
 - **Reflect on your availability to students and strategies for connecting with students**
Document the strategies you employed to facilitate student contact and advising.
 - **Keep a record of your students' accomplishments beyond the classroom**

- Make a note of students' professional or research achievements, awards and publications.
 - **Document your strategies for working with individual students or special student groups**
How do you cater for international students, students with disabilities or students from diverse cultural backgrounds?
 - **Document approaches to providing student feedback**
When and how do you provide feedback to students and what is the impact of this approach?
4. List examples of scholarship in your discipline and in learning and teaching
 - **Argue for your scholarly approach to teaching**
This may include your research into learning and teaching or evidence-based approaches that inform curriculum design or implementation of priority topics areas.
 - **Document professional development you have undertaken**
This may include courses completed, conferences attended, or online professional development.
 - **Articulate how and why you use technology in your teaching**
What impact has the use of ICTs had on student learning, attitudes and outcomes?
 - **List your conference papers and research publications related to learning and teaching**
Outline these in such a way as to include reference to formal feedback and recognition from peers.
 - **Keep track of all awards, citations and invitations to speak on teaching**
e.g. 'My national reputation as a teacher is evident in the regular invitations I receive to...'
 - **Include findings from evaluations and comment on actions taken in response to these**
This could include student surveys, peer review, observations and self-review.
 5. Outline innovations you have developed in your teaching
 - **Document innovations in teaching or grants received for innovation**
Outline successful applications for funds to address issues in relation to student learning in your discipline.
 - **Comment on how you achieve teaching-research linkages in your practice**
Outline your strategies for ensuring that first year students benefit from your disciplinary research program.
 - **Outline ways in which you have adapted curriculum to address the learning and teaching priority areas of the University as appropriate**
How have you adapted curriculum to include international perspectives or blended learning approaches?
 6. Describe examples of your leadership in learning and teaching
 - **Identify your leadership in teaching in the discipline**
Provide details of any textbooks you have written or to which you have contributed. Who uses them? How many universities? What is their international distribution?
 - **Document your influence on the departmental context (and beyond)**
Outline any changes you have influenced in programming and operations in your Department.
 - **Document courses and programs designed, reviewed and revised**
To provide evidence of your leadership in teaching, document your role in developing new courses or programs in your discipline.
 - **Look for opportunities to demonstrate leadership**
Outline your strategies and achievements in initiating change in teaching, curriculum design, and academic culture in your Department.
 - **Document your postgraduate supervision responsibilities**
List the number of students you have supervised and the outcomes of their research in terms of completions, publications, etc.

Final suggestions for presenting evidence of good teaching practice

- View your documentary evidence as an argument and a narrative – tell the story of your teaching and its development. Provide compelling evidence.
- With regard to your contribution to teaching, focus not only on the scope, quality, effectiveness of your work but also the increasing sophistication of your contribution. Trace the increasing complexity of the tasks, document the leadership demonstrated, identify the growing knowledge base required.
- Keep returning to your main theme/organising principle — aim to bring coherence to your argument.
- Strategically select supporting evidence and examples and be sure to keep documenting your evidence in a methodical, easy-to-access way each semester.

Acknowledgements: McAlpine, L., & Harris, R. (2002). Evaluating teaching effectiveness and teaching improvement: A language for institutional policies and academic development practices. *The International Journal of Academic Development*, 7(1), 7-17.