An Instructor Guide for Creating a Course Portfolio

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his guide is intended to help **instructors** identify and organize the information they provide for review and evaluation of their teaching. It is based on the [**Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness**](https://cte.ku.edu/benchmarks-teaching-effectiveness-project) framework and draws on information from multiple sources, including the instructor being evaluated, peers, and students

## About Benchmarks

Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness posits that effective teaching involves the alignment of course goals and instructional practices, the creation of motivating and inclusive learning climates, and consistent attention to and reflection on student learning and feedback. Benchmarks identifies seven dimensions of teaching to capture the full range of faculty teaching activities. A rubric articulates criteria for each dimension:

1. Goals, content and alignment
2. Teaching practices
3. Class climate
4. Achievement of learning outcomes
5. Reflection and iterative growth
6. Mentoring and advising
7. Involvement in teaching service, scholarship or community

CTE has a collaborative [NSF grant](http://www.teval.net) to explore how we can use this framework to improve teaching evaluation at KU, CU Boulder and UMass Amherst.

# I. What is a Course Portfolio?

A course portfolio is a reflective document or artifact that makes the intellectual work, and evidence related to it, visible in the context of a single course. It organizes course-level evidence/supporting documentation into a coherent package, framed by a course narrative.  The course portfolio has two components: a course narrative and supporting documentation.

**Component 1: Course Narrative.**  The narrative provides a frame and coherence for the review of course materials. centerpiece of instructors’ documentation of their teaching. It enables instructors to explain *what* and *how* they teach a course, as well as *why* they use the approaches they do and *how they know* whether those approaches are effective (i.e., the intellectual work involved in teaching). Key framing questions include:

* What are your goals for students in this course?
* What assignments and activities do you use to accomplish these goals?
* How do you create a motivating and inclusive environment for students to progress toward course goals?
* How do you know if students are meeting your goals?
* What future changes will you consider and why?

*A more detailed guide follows this overview.*

**Component 2: Course Materials**. Materials from your courses can provide supporting evidence and examples to help a reviewer understand your approaches to this course. Consider including:

1. *Syllabus* (or screenshots from course LMS)
2. *Sample course materials*, such as a sample assignment with rubrics or grading criteria, and a sample instructional activity that helps students acquire the skills/knowledge needed for the assignment.
3. *Representations of student learning*, such as summaries of student achievement on different rubric dimensions, or annotated samples of student work (see [this consent form](https://cte.ku.edu/sites/cte.ku.edu/files/docs/Branding/CTE%20Website%20Student%20Consent%20Form.pdf) for permission to use student work). See [this guide on how to represent student learning](https://cte.ku.edu/sites/cte.ku.edu/files/files/Examples-%20Representing%20Student%20Learning%20for%20Review.pdf) for teaching evaluation.
4. *Student feedback*(if available) and your reflections on it.

# Part II: Self-Reflection and Evidence Prompts

You can use the prompts below to produce short statements or bullet points on your activities in each of the course-focused Benchmarks dimensions. In your response, you can point reviewers to examples or additional materials. For each Benchmarks dimension, we’ve included suggestions of the sorts of materials that could speak to that dimension. Feel free to use the language from the [Benchmarks for Teaching Excellence rubric](https://cte.ku.edu/sites/cte.ku.edu/files/docs/KU%20Benchmarks%20Framework%202020update.pdf), but it will be important that you also point to specific examples and evidence along with that language.

### Course number and name that are the focus of this portfolio.

For the target course, what is the typical enrollment? Who takes the course and why? What role does it play in the program?

### 1. Goals, Content, and Alignment. What are students expected to learn in your course and why? What content and materials do you use and why?

Draw Evidence/ Examples from□ Course goals in syllabus □ Sample course materials (e.g., rubrics, assignment sheets, readings)

## If you want to go deeper

* *How are your goals related to department, university, or discipline goals?*
* *Do they match your students’ needs?*
* *What perspectives do course material represent?*

Draw Evidence/ Examples from□ Syllabus or course schedule □ Sample class activities and assignments □ Lesson plans □ Examples feedback on student work

### 2. Teaching Practices. What activities and assignments do you use in and out of class time to help students reach learning goals?

## If you want to go deeper

* + - *How do these activities and assignments provide opportunities for practice and feedback on important skills and concepts?*
    - *What strategies do you use to help all students feel engaged and included?*

### 3. Class Climate. How do you encourage motivation, inclusion, and a sense of belonging among your students?

Draw Evidence/ Examples from□ Syllabus (diversity or climate statement) □ Lesson plans or sample activities □ Reflections on student feedback

## If you want to go deeper

* + - *What strategies do you use to communicate with students?*
    - *How do students interact with each other?*
    - *Are there things you are doing to build a sense of community?*
    - *How has student feedback informed the way you teach?*
    - *How are you supporting struggling students?*

### 4. Achievement of Learning Outcomes. Does the student work on these assignments meet your (or other stakeholders’) expectations and course learning goals? How do you know?

Draw Evidence/ Examples from□ Rubrics and samples of student work (assignments, blogs, etc.) □ Summaries/ analysis of performance on rubrics or other indicators of student achievement □ Item analysis of exam questions that are connected to learning goals

## If you want to go deeper

* + - *Which assignments are most central to the course and best illustrate student learning?*
    - *Do you know if there are any inequities in student performance? If so, have you taken any steps to address them?*

[This guide on how to represent student learning](https://cte.ku.edu/sites/cte.ku.edu/files/files/Examples-%20Representing%20Student%20Learning%20for%20Review.pdf) for teaching evaluation may help you address this section.

### 5. Reflection and Iterative Growth. Have you changed your teaching over time, either within a semester or from one semester to another? If so, what prompted the changes? How did you adapt your teaching because of the pandemic? How effective were the changes you made? Did you learn or try anything that you will continue to do post-COVID?

Draw Evidence/ Examples from□ Syllabi □ Sample assignments or examples of student work that highlight changes in course □ Changes in student achievement (e.g., assignment or exam performance, improvement in a rubric dimension)

## If you want to go deeper

* + - *How has student feedback or evidence of student learning informed your teaching?*
    - *What changes have you made in this course from previous semesters? Why?*
    - *Did the changes yield the outcomes you wanted?*
    - *Are there things you’d like to change in a future version of the course?*