BENCHMARKS FOR TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

KU
THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
Center for Teaching Excellence

The Center for Teaching Excellence has developed a framework called Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness to support better methods of reviewing, documenting, and evaluating teaching. The framework is organized around a multidimensional rubric for reviewing faculty teaching. Seven rubric dimensions have been designed to capture teaching in its totality. The rubric includes guiding questions, defined expectations, and potential sources of evidence for each dimension (see reverse). Departments are encouraged to adapt the rubric to fit disciplinary expectations and to weight areas most meaningful to the discipline and different instructional roles.

| GOALS, CONTENT, & ALIGNMENT | TEACHING PRACTICES | ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES | CLASS CLIMATE | REFLECTION & ITERATIVE GROWTH | MENTORING & ADVISING | INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHING SERVICE, SCHOLARSHIP OR COMMUNITY |

Benchmarks Goals and Objectives

1. Help departments and institutions develop common, comprehensive, and transparent expectations for faculty teaching.

2. Encourage the use of multiple sources of information (instructor, peers, and students) to minimize bias in evaluating teaching and to make visible a fuller range of teaching contributions.

3. Improve synthesis and representation of this information at the department or school level.

4. Develop approaches that foster and reward growth and development in teaching.

Benchmarks Contact Information

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EXPLORING APPLICATIONS OF THE FRAMEWORK

In 2017, leaders in KU's CTE and colleagues at the University of Colorado, Boulder, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Michigan State University received funding from the National Science Foundation for a five-year-project called TEval, which supported department-level adaptation and use of the Benchmarks framework. The rubric provides a good starting point for departments to define the elements of effective teaching and improve their approaches to evaluating teaching. The TEval initiative developed new models and tools for evaluating teaching that can be applied in other departments and institutions and CTE continues to assist departments in improving their approaches.

WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

Most evaluations of teaching emphasize results of student surveys or peer observations of a single class. Those approaches provide limited evidence of teaching effectiveness and minimal feedback for improving teaching. The Benchmarks framework provides a comprehensive, balanced view of faculty teaching contributions by broadening the types of activities that are reviewed and the sources of information that are taken into account. In doing so, it makes visible the often hidden intellectual work of effective and inclusive teaching, and the care that excellent instructors put into their interactions with students. Benchmarks aligns with KU policy, which requires multiple sources of evidence in teaching evaluation and specifies students, peers, and the faculty member as required sources in promotion and tenure and progress-toward-tenure processes.

NSF

Benchmarks Framework in Brief

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.

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What it looks like	Where to look
Goals, Content and Alignments — **Organizes course content and activities around relevant, appropriate, and well-articulated goals** • Course goals are well-articulated, high quality, relevant to all students, and clearly connected to program or curricular goals • Content is challenging and innovative or related to current issues and developments in field • Topics are well-integrated and of appropriate range and depth • Materials are high-quality, well-aligned with course goals • Course materials reflect diverse perspectives and promote critical reflection on these diverse perspectives • Content and materials are designed to be accessible	**Instructor:** Syllabus (course goals), sample materials (rubrics, assignment sheets, readings), instructor narrative **Peers:** : Peer review, program or curriculum map or other documentation **Students:** Student survey of teaching, instructor-gathered feedback
Teaching Practices — **Uses inclusive and effective teaching practices that support learning in all students** • Courses are well-planned and integrated, and reflect commitment to providing meaningful assignments and assessments • Uses inclusive and effective or innovative methods known to support learning among all students • In- and out-of-class activities provide opportunities for practice and feedback on important skills and concepts • Students show high levels of engagement. • Assessments and assignments are varied and allow students to demonstrate knowledge through multiple modalities	**Instructor:** Syllabus/schedule, sample class activities, assignments and lesson plans, example feedback on student work, Instructor narrative **Peers:** Peer review, COPUS or other observation tool or protocol **Students:** Student survey of teaching, instructor-gathered feedback
Class Climate — **Creates a motivating and inclusive class climate** • Climate fosters motivation, belief in one's abilities and ownership of learning • Instructor models inclusive language and behavior • Student feedback on teacher accessibility and interaction is generally positive • Instructor seeks and is responsive to student feedback • Fosters a respectful and open class climate that promotes student-student and student-teacher dialogue	**Instructor:** Syllabus, sample class activities and lesson plans, instructor narrative, reflections on student feedback **Peers:** Peer observation, Peer review **Students:** Student survey of teaching, instructor-gathered feedback
Achievement of Learning Outcomes — **Consistently attends to student learning and uses it to inform teaching** • Standards for evaluating understanding are clear and connected to program, curriculum, or professional expectations • Uses formal and informal assessments to gauge student achievement of desired outcomes • Learning supports success in other contexts (e.g., subsequent courses or relevant non-classroom venues) • Instructor makes efforts to support learning among all students (e.g., examining possible inequities in performance across groups and making adjustments)	**Instructor:** Sample assessments and rubrics, student work samples, summary or analysis of student performance, instructor narrative **Peers:** Peer review **Students:** Student Survey of Teaching, instructor-gathered feedback and student reflection or self-assessment of learning
Reflection and Iterative Growth — **Develops teaching over time, in response to student performance, feedback, and professional learning** • Regularly adjusts teaching based on reflection on student learning, within or across semesters • Examines student performance after making adjustments • Seeks to improve student achievement of learning goals in teaching or improved equity in outcomes based on past course modifications	**Instructor:** Syllabi and course materials highlighting changes in course, evidence of changes in student achievement, instructor narrative **Peers:** Peer review **Students:** Changes in student feedback
Mentoring and Advising — **Demonstrates exceptional quality and time commitment to mentoring and advising** • Establishes clear expectations for students and mentor • Supports student development through coaching and timely, constructive feedback • Connects students to opportunities (e.g., networking, advocacy) • Is available and provides emotional support and encouragement	**Instructor:** Instructor statement, CV (# of student mentees and status, service on student committees, letters of recommendation or nomination of students for awards, scholarship with student collaborators) **Students:** Letters or surveys from student advisees
Involvement in Teaching Service, Scholarship or Community — **Makes positive contributions to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus** • Consistently positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution (e.g., curriculum committees, program assessment, co-curricular activities) • Regular engagement with peers on teaching (e.g., teaching-related presentations or workshops, peer reviews of teaching) • Presentations or publications to share practices or results of teaching • Scholarly publications or grant applications related to teaching	**Instructor:** CV (internal or external workshops, presentations, articles, media, grants; participation in communities or development opportunities), teaching committees, involvement in experiential learning or co-curricular activities **Public Artifacts:** Publications or other public repositories of teaching practices or results

TEval

Download full rubric. Learn about our TEval initiative to transform teaching evaluation.