**What is this?**

This document is a guide for evaluating faculty members using the **Benchmarks for Teaching Excellence** framework. It provides short forms for evaluators to use in providing feedback to instructors on each of the seven dimensions of teaching in the Benchmarks framework:

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

Each section has a list of questions to consider in evaluating an instructor’s materials and a list of information sources where an evaluator can find appropriate evidence. For annual evaluations, the process could be streamlined by focusing on a subset of the dimensions and cycling through them over 2-3 years (some could be essential and others rotating).

This document is intended to be used alongside the [Benchmarks for Teaching Excellence rubric](https://cte.ku.edu/evaluating-teaching). That rubric (see p. 6) provides further guidance, including language that an evaluator can use in deciding whether an instructor’s teaching contributions fit into the **developing, proficient or expert levels**. The proficient level is where most instructors will fit. The expert level requires exceptional work in all the dimensions of teaching. Departments must **identify expectations** for achievement of the rubric levels for evaluation purposes.

**Best Practices-Departments should build consensus on:**

1. Expectations on rubric for instructors at different career phases (e.g., “for junior faculty to meet expectations, most ratings should be in the proficient category.”)
2. Adaptations of rubric language and criteria to fit discipline
3. The relative weights of the seven teaching dimensions

**Where do I find evidence?**

The Benchmarks framework draws on evidence from the instructor, peers, and students. Here are examples of what each can provide.

**From the instructor**

* Statements explaining:
  + Approaches and techniques related to each Benchmarks dimension (pointing to evidence in course materials and student work)
  + Successes or challenges in the approaches used, and evidence of those
  + What changes the instructor will consider in the future
* Syllabi from classes
* Sample course materials, including assignments, rubrics and other materials used for evaluating student learning
* Samples of student work and representations of student learning

**From peers**

* Evaluations of course materials
* Discussions with the instructor
* Class visits, or review of online site (Blackboard, Canvas) and related interaction sites (like Teams)
* Results from observation protocols (e.g[., the COPUS observation protocol](https://trestlenetwork.ku.edu/copus-observation-resources/))

**From students**

* Results and comments from student surveys
* Instructor-gathered feedback (and instructor reflection on it)
* Letters from alumni

**2. Teaching practices**

Focus on the instructor’s use of in- and out-of-class time.

* Are courses well-planned and integrated, reflecting commitment to providing meaningful assignments and assessments?
* Does the instructor use effective or innovative methods to support learning in all students?
* Do in- and out-of-class activities provide opportunities for practice and feedback on important skills and concepts?
* Do teaching practices foster high levels of active engagement among students?
* Are assessments and assignments varied, allowing students to demonstrate knowledge through multiple approaches?

**Where to look**

**Instructor:** □ Instructor statement □ Syllabus or course schedule □ Sample class activities and assignments □ Modules in Blackboard or Canvas □ Lesson plans

□ Examples of feedback on student work

**Peers:** □ Peer observations □ COPUS observation □ Peer Review

**Students:** □ Student survey (Expectations, Deadlines and Feedback items) □ Instructor gathered feedback

**Other:**

**1. Goals, content and alignment**

Focus on what the instructor expects students to learn and why.

* Are course goals well-articulated, relevant to students and clearly connected to program or curricular goals?
* Is course content appropriately challenging or innovative and related to current issues in the field?
* Are course topics well-integrated and of appropriate range and depth?
* Are course materials of high quality and aligned with course goals?
* Does course reflect multiple viewpoints in the field and promote meaningful reflection on them?

**Where to look**

**Instructor:** □ Instructor statement □ Course goals from syllabus □ Sample course materials (e.g., rubrics, assignment sheets, readings), □ Modules in LMS

**Peer**: □ Peer Review

**Students:** □ Student survey (Couse Materials item) □ Instructor gathered feedback

**Other**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Rubric level**

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Rubric level**

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Rubric level**

**4. Achievement of learning outcomes**

Focus on the impact of the instructor’s courses on learners.

* Are standards for evaluating learning clear and connected to program, curriculum or professional expectations?
* What is the evidence of student learning? Does the instructor use it to inform teaching? Does the quality of learning support success in other contexts?
* Are there efforts to improve learning or other course outcomes, based on examination of student performance?

**Where to look**

**Instructor:** □ Instructor statement □ Rubrics and samples of student work (assignments, projects, journals, 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

**Peers:** □ Peer review

**Students:** □ Student perceptions of learning (Questions about Course)

**Other**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**3. Class climate**

Focus on the sort of climate for learning the instructor creates.

* Is the climate motivating, open and respectful? Does it promote student-student and student-teacher dialogue? Does it foster motivation, self-efficacy and ownership of learning?
* Does the instructor model respectful and welcoming language and behavior?
* What are students’ views of their learning experience and their instructor’s accessibility?
* How has the instructor sought student feedback and how has feedback informed teaching?

**Where to look**

**Instructor:** □ Syllabus □ LMS site □ Lesson plans or sample activities □ Instructor statement □ Results of syllabus review tool, along with changes made to course

**Peers:** □ Peer observation □ Peer review

**Students**: □ Student survey of teaching (Climate items) □ Instructor-gathered feedback from students, along with instructor reflection **Other**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Rubric level**

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Rubric level**

**5. Reflection and Iterative growth**

Focus on how the instructor’s teaching has changed over time.

* How and why have the instructor’s teaching, and the student learning experience, changed over time?
* How have adjustments been informed by reflection on student learning evidence, within or across semesters? By feedback from students and/or peers? By other factors (e.g., contextual) prompting adaptation?
* Are student achievement or other outcomes improving over time?

**Where to look**

**Instructor:** □ Instructor statement □ Syllabi highlighting changes over time

□ Annotated screenshots from learning management system

□ Sample assignments or examples of student work that highlight changes in the course □ Changes in student achievement (e.g., assignment or exam performance, improvements in a rubric dimension)

**Peers:** □ Peer review

**Students:** □ Changes in student feedback

**Other** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Rubric level**

**6. Mentoring and advising**

* How effectively has the instructor worked individually with undergraduates or graduate students? (define expectations as appropriate for discipline and department)

**Where to look**

**Instructor:** □ Instructor statement □ CV (e.g., thesis or dissertation committees; directed study; awards)

**Students:**  □ Letters from students or alumni □ Examples of student achievement or awards

**Other**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Rubric level**

**6. Involvement in teaching service, scholarship, or community**

* How has the instructor contributed to the teaching and learning culture in the department or institution (e.g., curriculum committees, program assessment, co-curricular activities)?
* How has the instructor engaged with peers on teaching, on or off campus (e.g., participation in teaching communities, workshops, peer reviews)?
* Has the instructor engaged in educational leadership activities (e.g., leading teaching communities or workshops, internal or external presentations or publications of teaching, internal or external grants related to teaching)?

**Where to look**

**Instructor:** □ Instructor statement □ CV (workshops, presentations, articles or work done in other media, social media posts, participation in committees) □ **Public Artifacts:** Publications or other public repositories of teaching practices/results

**Other**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| ***(revised Oct 2020)*** | **Developing** | **Proficient** | **Expert** |
| **Goals, content, and alignment**  *What are students expected to learn? Are course goals appropriate? Is content aligned with the curriculum? Does content represent diverse perspectives?* | * Course goals are not articulated, or are unclear, inappropriate or marginally related to curriculum * Content and materials are outdated or unsuitable for students in the course * Range of topics is too narrow or too broad * Content is not clearly aligned with curriculum or institutional expectations * Content does not reflect diverse perspectives | * Course goals are articulated and appropriate for curriculum * Content is current and appropriate for topic, students, and curriculum * Course topics have appropriate range * Standard, intellectually sound materials * Course materials reflect diverse perspectives | * 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 * High-quality materials, well-aligned with course goals * Course materials reflect diverse perspectives and promote critical reflection on these diverse perspectives |
| **Teaching practices**  *How is in-class and out-of-class time used? What assignments, assessments, and learning activities are implemented to help students learn? Are students engaged in the learning process?* | * Courses are not sufficiently planned or organized * Practices are not well-executed and show little development over time * Students lack opportunities to practice critical skills embedded in course goals * Student engagement is generally low * Assessments and assignments are at inappropriate difficulty level or not well-aligned with course goals | * Courses are well-planned and organized * Standard course practices; follows conventions of discipline and institution * Students have some opportunities to practice skills embedded in course goals * Students are consistently engaged * Assessments/assignments are appropriately challenging and tied to course goals | * Courses are well-planned and integrated, and reflect commitment to providing meaningful assignments and assessments * Uses inclusive and effective or innovative methods to support learning in 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 |
| **Class climate**  *What sort of climate for learning does the instructor create? What are students’ views of their learning experience and how has this informed teaching?* | * Class climate does not promote respect or sense of belonging among all students * Class climate discourages student motivation or self-efficacy * Consistently negative student reports of teacher accessibility or interaction skills * Little attempt to address concerns voiced by students | * Class climate is inclusive and promotes respect * Class climate encourages student motivation * No consistently negative student ratings of teacher accessibility or interaction skills * Instructor articulates some lessons learned through student feedback | * Class climate is respectful, open, and inclusive; promotes both student-student and student-teacher dialogue. * Climate fosters motivation, self-efficacy, 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 |
| **Achievement of learning outcomes**  *What impact do courses have on learners? What is the evidence of student learning? Are there efforts to make achievement equitable?* | * Insufficient attention to student understanding; quality of learning is not described or analyzed with clear standards * Evidence of inadequate learning or inequities in learning without clear attempts to improve * Quality of learning is insufficient to support success in other contexts | * Standards for evaluating the quality of student understanding are clear * Student learning meets dept. expectations * Some use of evidence of student learning to inform teaching * Quality of learning is not a barrier to success in other contexts | * Standards for evaluating understanding are clear and connected to program, curriculum, or professional expectations * Consistently attends to student learning, uses it to inform teaching * Quality of learning supports success in other contexts(e.g., subsequent courses or relevant non-classroom venues) * Efforts to support learning in all students by examining possible inequities in performance across groups and making adjustments |
| **Reflection and iterative growth**  *How has the instructor’s teaching changed over time? How has this been informed by student learning evidence?* | * Little or no indication of having reflected upon or learned from prior teaching, evidence of student learning, or peer or student feedback * Little or no indication of efforts to develop as a teacher despite evidence of need | * Continued competent teaching, possibly with minor reflection based on input from peers and/or students * Articulates some lessons learned or changes informed by prior teaching, student learning, or feedback | * Regularly adjusts teaching based on reflection on student learning, within or across semesters * Examines student performance following adjustments * Reports improved student achievement of learning goals and/or improved equity in outcomes based on past course modifications |
| **Mentoring & advising**  *How effectively has the instructor worked individually with UG or grad students?* | * No indication of effective advising or mentoring (but expected in department) | * Some evidence of effective advising and mentoring *(define as appropriate for discipline)* | * Evidence of exceptional quality and time commitment to advising and mentoring *(define as appropriate for discipline)* |
| **Involvement in teaching service, scholarship, or community**  *How has the instructor contributed to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus?* | * Little or no evidence of positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution * Little or no interaction with teaching community * Practices and results of teaching are not shared with others | * Some positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution * Some engagement with peers on teaching * Has shared teaching practices or results with others (e.g., presentation, workshop, essay) | * 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 with multiple audiences * Scholarly publications or grant applications related to teaching |