**A Department Guide for Documenting Teaching for Annual Review**

**Using CTE@KU’s Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness Framework**

(Last updated 24 June 2024)

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his guide is intended to help **departments and schools** determine how to document and evaluate faculty teaching contributions for Annual Review. We have developed this guide to address challenges associated with the pandemic, but these are strategies and tools that units can continue to use after pandemic disruptions subside. We provide some example approaches, based on the [**Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness**](https://cte.ku.edu/evaluating-teaching) framework, that support teaching reviews with varying degrees of thoroughness. Departments can adopt one of these approaches or adapt or construct hybrid versions as needed.

**About Benchmarks**

Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness posits that effective teaching involves the alignment of course goals and instructional practices, the creation of motivating, respectful and welcoming 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

Because Benchmarks is designed to capture the intellectual work of designing and redesigning course components, drawing on multiple sources of evidence (not just student ratings)**, it is well-suited for documenting and rewarding faculty efforts to adapt their teaching during the pandemic.** CTE has a collaborative [NSF grant](http://www.teval.net) to explore how we can use this framework and associated tools to improve teaching evaluation at KU, CU Boulder and UMass Amherst.

**I. What Material Can Instructors Provide to Document Teaching?**

For annual review, we recommend that departments collect two types of information from faculty: Instructor statement/reflections and supporting documentation.

**Component 1: Instructor statement(s).** Statements enable instructors to explain *what* and *how* they teach, as well as *why* they use the approaches they do and *how they know* if they are effective. The Benchmarks Framework provides a structure for these statements, instructors can use language from the [Benchmarks for Teaching Excellence rubric](https://cte.ku.edu/evaluating-teaching) to describe and represent their activities. Here are two possible approaches:

* **A single integrated statement** addressing all Benchmarks dimensions.
* **Short individual statements or bullet points on each Benchmarks dimension.** We have developed an Instructor Self-Reflection Form (see Appendix A) as a tool for prompting these mini-statements. This approach may be easier for both instructors and reviewers. A department could also elect to focus on a subset of dimensions each year, cycling through all over them over time.

**Component 2: Supporting documentation.** Materials from an instructor’s courses (e.g., syllabi, sample assignments or activities, representations of student learning) can provide supporting evidence and examples related to their statements. The Self-Reflection Form lists possible supporting documentation or evidence relevant to each Benchmarks dimension. When instructors include supporting documentation, they should point to it in their statements so that evaluators know where to look for more information or example. Here are some examples of Supporting Documentation:

* **Basic Documentation.** Include a syllabus for each course mentioned
* **Moderate Documentation:**  For an example course, include:
1. *Syllabus* (or screen shots from course LMS)
2. *Sample course materials*, such as a sample assignment with rubrics or criteria, and a sample instructional activity that helps students acquire the skills/knowledge needed for the assignment.

**Even better… include:**

1. *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.
2. *Student feedback* (if available) and instructor reflections on it
* **Thorough Documentation:** A *Course Portfolio* that provides examples and evidence for one or more example courses. The Course Portfolio organizes the above information (syllabus, sample course materials, representations of student learning, and student feedback) into a coherent package framed by a brief *course narrative* that provides a guide to the materials. Key framing questions: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?

**II. What and How Much to Collect: Example Approaches**

Approaches can vary on at least three dimensions with decisions affecting the depth and breadth of the evaluation. The Appendices section provides some adaptable tools/templates departments can use to support these approaches.

**How many courses should be included?** Of course, the broadest approach involves gathering information about all courses taught during the evaluation window, but with moderate or thorough documentation, this approach will generate a lot of material to review. A streamlined approach involving fewer courses could allow for more thorough documentation and thus produce a clearer picture of an instructor’s approaches and development as a teacher. Possible approaches:

* Instructor statements (on course-focused dimensions, 1 through 5) address all courses, with supporting documentation on one sample course (or two courses representing different course types)
* Instructor statements *and* supporting documentation focus on a single sample course.
* Instructors focus on a different sample course (or two) each year, cycling through all their course offerings over a few years so as to produce a comprehensive, cumulative record of the faculty member’s teaching over time.

**How Many Benchmarks Dimensions Should be Evaluated**? Another streamlining approach involves focusing on a subset of the dimensions and cycling through them over 2-3 years. Some dimensions could be essential and others rotating. This approach would reduce the number of instructor statements (or length of a single one) each evaluation year, but would probably have a lesser impact on reducing supporting documentation, given that many of the supporting documents address multiple dimensions of the Benchmarks Rubric. More broadly, this approach works against a core value proposition of the Benchmarks Framework: its attention to the full range of teaching activities to provide a holistic assessment of teaching quality.

**How much Supporting Documentation Should be Included?** As described in Part I above, supporting documentation for each dimension could range from basic (syllabi only) to thorough (a course portfolio on a sample course).

**Example Approach A: Broad**

1. Basic information on all courses taught: Course name, number, enrollment, role of course in curriculum.
2. Instructor statement(s) addressing all Benchmarks dimensions (instructors could use the Self-Reflection Form)
3. Syllabi for courses taught

**Example Approach B: Spotlight on a Sample Course\***

1. Basic information on all courses taught: Course name, number, enrollment, role of course in curriculum.
2. Instructor statement (completed Self-Reflection Form) on all Benchmarks Dimensions, focused on a sample course
3. Syllabus and example materials (could be packaged as a Course Portfolio) for that Sample Course

\*This is our preferred approach!

**Example Approach C: Spotlight on Subset of Teaching Contributions**

1. Basic information on all courses taught: Course name, number, enrollment, role of course in curriculum.
2. Instructor statement (completed Self-Reflection Form) on a subset of Benchmarks Dimensions. For example, all faculty address dimensions 6 & 7 and then faculty select two or three additional dimensions to address on a single course. Alternatively, the whole program could address the same subset each year, enabling the department to bring attention to different pedagogical categories each year.
3. Syllabus and example materials (could be packaged as a Course Portfolio) for a Sample Course

**III. How to Evaluate Teaching Documentation**

To help evaluators apply the Benchmarks Rubric and provide feedback to instructors, we have developed an **Evaluation Form** that is available for download[**here**](https://cte.ku.edu/rubric-department-evaluation-faculty-teaching). The form has a section for each Benchmarks dimension; each section has a list of questions to consider in evaluating an instructor’s materials, and a list of information sources where you can find appropriate evidence.

The Evaluation Form is intended to be used alongside the [Benchmarks for Teaching Excellence rubric](https://cte.ku.edu/evaluating-teaching). The rubric 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 Practice:** Departmentsshould 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

**Appendix A: Self-Reflection Form**

(Departments can adapt as needed)

Use the prompts below to produce a short statement or bullet points on your activities in each of the Benchmarks dimensions. In your response, you can point reviewers to examples or additional materials (ideally these could be organized into a short Course Portfolio, as suggested above). For each Benchmarks dimension, we’ve included suggestions of the sorts of materials that could speak to that dimension. You can use this document alongside the [Benchmarks for Teaching Excellence rubric](https://cte.ku.edu/sites/cte.ku.edu/files/docs/KU%20Benchmarks%20Framework%202020update.pdf), which provides language for representing teaching contributions. Feel free to use the language from the rubric in your responses, but it will be important that you also point to specific examples and evidence along with that language.

**Course number(s) and name(s) that are the focus of this report:**

For each 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(s) 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 like they belong?*

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

**Draw Evidence/ Examples from** □ Syllabus □ 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?*

**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 all students are achieving desired learning outcomes? Have you taken any steps to improve the level or consistency of learning or other outcomes?*

[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?

**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?*

**6. Mentoring and advising.** Describe your mentoring or advising of students for academic and career choices and for scholarship. How do you make yourself available and communicate with students? How do you support students’ professional development?

**Draw Evidence/ Examples from** □ # of undergraduate mentees □ # of graduate mentees and status □ Service on graduate committees □ Letters of recommendation written for students □ Nomination of students for awards, grants scholarships □ presentations or publications with student co-authors □ letters from or surveys of student advisees

**7. Service, scholarship and participation in teaching community.** In what ways do you participate in or contribute to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus (e.g., participation in CTE, CODL or IT workshops- see evidence/examples to the right for more ideas)?

**Draw Evidence/ Examples from** □Teaching/assessment committees □ Participation or supervision of co-curricular activities or experiential learning □ Participation in teaching community or development opportunities (e.g., CTE, CODL, IT workshops, teaching-focused conferences or networks) □ Leadership roles in teaching communities or development opportunities. □ Internal or external presentations or publications on teaching □ Internal or external grant applications related to teaching

**Appendix B: Alternative Reporting Form for Dimensions 6 and 7**

(Departments can adapt as needed)

Departments may choose to use simple reporting forms like this for the two Benchmarks dimensions that are not course-focused.

**MENTORING AND ADVISING (Dimension 6)**

1. Undergraduate Research Engagement

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Semester | Name(s) |
|  |   |

 \*Indicates you are supervising the student’s honors thesis.

1. Other Undergraduate Advising

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Semester | Name(s) or # of students Advised |
|  |   |

1. Graduate Student Advising/Mentoring- Primary Advisor

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Current status |
|  |   |

1. Other Graduate Student Advising/Mentoring- Committee Membership

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Year | Name, Program |
|  |   |

1. Postdoctoral Advising

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name | Current Status |
|  |   |

**INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHING SERVICE, SCHOLARSHIP AND COMMUNITY (Dimension 7)**

**List any involvement in the following activities:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** |  |
| A. Teaching/assessment committees (note, some departments may place this contribution under Service) |  |
| B. Participation/supervision of co-curricular activities or experiential learning  |   |
| C. Participation in teaching community or teaching development opportunities (internal or external)  |  |
| D. Leadership roles in teaching communities or teaching development opportunities |   |
| E. Internal or external presentations or publications on teaching (e.g., public portfolio, posters, essay, paper, videos, shared course material) |   |
| F. Internal or external grant applications related to teaching (indicate year, status, and amount) |   |
| G. Other |   |