

# BENCHMARKS FOR TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS



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

If you have any questions or if you would like more information, please contact:

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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.



## 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 multiple viewpoints and promote meaningful reflection on them
- 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 well-planned 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
- Teaching practices elicit students' active 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, open and respectful class climate

- Climate fosters motivation, belief in one's abilities and ownership of learning
- Instructor models welcoming 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 whether students are getting left behind 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 level and consistency of student achievement of learning goals and other course 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

