PREPARING A TEACHING PORTFOLIO

What is a teaching portfolio?

A teaching portfolio is a comprehensive record of one’s teaching that may serve a number of purposes including:

- to provide evidence of teaching-related views, activities and achievements in submissions for probation/tenure, promotion, accreditation, grants, consultancies, awards,
- to provide a record of work that will assist planning for teaching and professional development,
- to prompt professional development,
- to aid preparation for performance appraisal and development meetings,
- to provide a resource that can be drawn on for research and publications on learning and teaching,
- to provide convincing evidence that the outcomes of a teacher education programme have been achieved (e.g. the Post Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching),
- to provide evidence of scholarly teaching and engagement in the scholarship of teaching.

What can be recorded in a teaching portfolio?

The record may include:

- philosophy/theory that underpins your teaching,
- sources for your philosophy, including reading, reflection and scholarship,
- examples of learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities, assessment criteria and tasks that align with your philosophy,
- actions taken to evaluate your teaching and students’ learning, evaluations, your response to evaluations,
- other actions to develop your teaching and to improve student learning, and evaluations of their impact,
- current agenda for continuing professional development,
- new teaching skills/strengths, innovations,
- contributions to the development of colleagues,
- contributions to a wider community of teachers,
- future teaching goals.

What can the process of preparing a portfolio help you do?

- identify and make explicit your philosophy/theory,
- explain why you have come to hold particular conceptions,
- relate your practice to ideas and research documented in the tertiary education literature,
- evaluate the alignment between your conceptions, plans and practices,
• plan an agenda for your continuing professional development,
• apply reflection and scholarship/research skills to the evaluation and development of your teaching,
• assess the strengths, weaknesses and benefits of particular evaluation and development methods,
• assess the extent to which you have developed new teaching capabilities, been innovative, assisted colleagues to develop their teaching,
• identify research/publication possibilities,
• design a format that will enable you to present rich and convincing evidence of your teaching conceptions, capabilities and achievement,
• communicate effectively about learning and teaching matters.

Where can I see some examples of portfolios?

Contact Dorothy Spiller for examples of portfolios prepared by staff who have completed the Post Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching programme.

Griffith Institute for Higher Education (Griffith University, Australia) has a helpful site on portfolios that includes seven illustrative portfolios. Associated with each portfolio is a commentary on its structure, style and strengths. The site also provides guidelines on compiling a portfolio and maintaining an archive of materials that can be used to illustrate and support elements of a portfolio.  

University at Buffalo, Center for Teaching and Learning Resources
http://wings.buffalo.edu/provost/ctlr/files/teaching_portfolio.htm#sample_portfolios

This site includes 35 sample portfolios from across the disciplines.

What resources on teaching portfolios can I have access to?

Books in the University Library and TLDU Library


WWW Sites

The following is a representative sample of the numerous sites on developing a teaching portfolio.

Griffith Institute for Higher Education (Griffith University, Australia)
Teaching Portfolios
As described above.

The Centre for Effective Teaching and Learning, University of Texas
http://cetal.utep.edu/resources/portfolios/stages.htm
Stages of Developing a Teaching Portfolio
A comprehensive tutorial on stages associated with the development of a teaching portfolio and which covers a wide range of related topics including writing a statement of teaching philosophy, strategies for reaching teaching goals, mapping future goals, feedback from peers and students. The overview include the following statement:
Assembling a complete portfolio can seem as daunting to the beginner as it is personally rewarding to the veteran. But an effective portfolio does not emerge overnight (anymore than effective teaching itself is instantaneous). Here is a way to conceive the long-term development of a teaching portfolio, in four stages, from humble beginnings and development, through the critical juncture of tenure review to the basis for sharing a career's worth of expertise. First, the teacher begins by establishing the baseline and structure of the portfolio, including basic evidence of teaching and teaching ability. Second, the teacher should expand the depth and robustness of evidence, while using past results to explore new ways to expand teaching practice and skills. Next, in preparing for tenure, a teacher must consolidate the evidence into a cohesive account of teaching style and habits of productive teaching. Finally, a veteran teacher should show continued growth and, as expertise develops, the sharing of that expertise with colleagues, on campus and/or to others in the same discipline.

Faculty and TA Development, The Ohio University
http://ftad.osu.edu/portfolio/index.html
Developing a Teaching Portfolio
Also very comprehensive, this site has the following main sections: overview, summary of teaching responsibilities, philosophy of teaching statement, rationale for course materials, documenting teaching effectiveness, web resources, additional readings, further assistance. Each section covers a range of related topics and issues. For example - Writing a philosophy of teaching statement includes what is it, purpose, formatting, samples, major components, links to other resources, references. Frequent examples and links to other sites are helpful features.

Teaching and Learning Centre, Southern Cross University
Developing a Teaching Portfolio
A 13 page booklet on which covers – what is a teaching portfolio, why develop a teaching portfolio, choosing what to include, organization and style, updating your portfolio, writing a scholarly reflection, collegial peer review of teaching, student feedback, organization and content of example teaching portfolios. 

The authors note that - *A teaching portfolio consists of a scholarly reflection on your teaching ... with documentary evidence attached as appendices. This reflective text outlines your teaching goals and 'the claims you wish to make about yourself as a teacher.' It provides a scholarly argument in support of these claims.*

*Learning and Teaching Development Unit, University of Adelaide*
*http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/LTA/download/t_portfolio.pdf*

Developing Your Teaching Portfolio
A similar 17 page resource which includes an example of a teaching portfolio.

*Scholarship of Teaching Project: RMIT University*

The Scholarly Teaching Portfolio
This resource was developed as a component of a Scholarship of teaching project that involves four Australian universities - RMIT University, La Trobe University, University of Technology Sydney, Griffith University.

The introduction states - *A scholarly teaching portfolio is a document that illustrates what you value in your teaching, how you approach teaching and your students' learning as an object of research and investigation. This document is supported by an archive of materials that demonstrate your scholarly practice. The portfolio shows what you have seen as issues and problems in your teaching. It demonstrates what you have done to attend to these and how your students' learning has benefited as a result. It also indicates how and what you have learned*

Main sections focus on
- A review of what constitutes scholarly teaching
- Presenting yourself as a scholarly teaching
- Developing the evidence of scholarly teaching
- Demonstrating the scholarship of your teaching.

*Learning and Teaching Unit, University of New South Wales*
*http://www.ltu.unsw.edu.au/ref3-3-5_teaching_portfolio.cfm#putting*

Developing Your Teaching Portfolio
While emphasizing the development of a portfolio that can be used to advance career prospects, the resource is well organized and provides links to a number of other helpful resources.

**What is the place of Teaching Portfolios in the Postgraduate Certificate of Tertiary Teaching (PGCertTT)?**

The second paper for the PGCertTT programme - Tertiary Teaching Research and Development - involves one activity: development of a teaching portfolio.
Developing a teaching portfolio will provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate that (a) your approach to teaching and professional development is informed by scholarship and on-going reflection and research, (b) your teaching knowledge and skills have developed significantly during your participation in the programme, and (c) you can present a well-constructed and written portfolio.

While you may ultimately be able to draw on your portfolio for other purposes, you will need to keep these purposes clearly in mind as they will influence your decisions about content and format. The latter can vary considerably according to end-use.

The learning outcomes associated with the task include the following:
- construct and make explicit your personal conceptions of education, learning and teaching,
- explain why you have come to hold particular conceptions,
- assess the alignment between your conceptions, plans and practices,
- plan an agenda for your continuing professional development,
- apply specific reflection and research skills to the evaluation and development of your teaching,
- assess the strengths, weaknesses and benefits of particular evaluation and development methods,
- assess the extent to which you have developed new teaching skills/strengths, been innovative, assisted colleagues to develop their teaching,
- design a portfolio format that will enable you to present rich and convincing evidence of your teaching conceptions, capabilities and achievements,
- communicate effectively about teaching matters.

There are two related assessment tasks: the development of a teaching portfolio and participation in a conversation about the experiences and outcomes associated with the portfolio task. Performance on these two tasks will be graded pass/fail on the basis of evidence they provide of satisfactory achievement of the learning outcomes presented above.

Evidence documented in the portfolio that will provide evidence that the learning outcomes have been achieved (i.e. assessment criteria) will include:
- the philosophy/key conceptions that underpin your teaching, and their bases (personal reflection and research, scholarship on tertiary learning and teaching),
- examples of learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities and assessment criteria and tasks that align with those conceptions (for one paper in which you make a significant teaching contribution),
- formal and informal actions that you have taken to evaluate your teaching, the evaluations made, your responses to them and the outcomes for student learning,
- other actions that you have taken to develop your teaching and their outcomes
- evaluations of the activities that you have engaged in to evaluate and develop your teaching,
- your current agenda for continuing professional development,
• new teaching skills/strengths, innovations and contributions to the development of colleagues.

Evidence from the conversation, which will contribute to an assessment of your ability to “communicate effectively about teaching matters”, will include your views about (a) the impact of scholarship and on-going reflection and research on your teaching, (b) the development of your teaching knowledge and skills, and (c) the experience of developing a portfolio.

A format for the portfolio is not prescribed as this is one of the learning outcomes (i.e. designing an appropriate and effective format). We encourage you to explore options that include the use of computer/multi-media/on-line modes. Word length should not exceed 7000 words.

During the period when you are preparing your portfolio, you will meet periodically with Dorothy or another experienced university teacher and also a PGCertTT colleague who can assist you to engage in the reflection activities that the task necessarily requires. Periodic meetings with other participants in the programme who are completing the task will also serve this purpose and are encouraged. We will discuss personal and ‘colleague assisted reflection’ during the initial briefing session.

Note: the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia (HERDSA) now offers higher educators the opportunity for recognition of the quality of their teaching through award of a HERDSA Fellowship. As this award is based on peer review of a portfolio, the portfolio that you prepare for the PGCertTT would provide a significant stepping stone towards that goal and further enhance your career prospects. For further information about HERDSA and the Fellowship Scheme, visit [http://www.herdsa.org.au/](http://www.herdsa.org.au/). We encourage you to consider joining HERDSA which offers members the following services and benefits: