

# A FACULTY GUIDE

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A Guide for Teaching in Clinical Settings



## PART IV Teaching Dossiers



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## WHAT IS A TEACHING DOSSIER?

A teaching dossier is a combination of documents, narrative descriptions of teaching, sample teaching materials, and teaching evaluations-that highlights and summarizes the educator's teaching experience (Burnett, n.d.).

It is a record of your teaching methods, accomplishments, and goals. Like a CV, a teaching dossier is intended to represent you and your work to different audiences, documenting your experiences and strengths as an instructor by presenting facts, evidence, and self-reflection (Anon, n.d.).

Since 1995 the Senate Committee on Academic Development (SCAD) subcommittee on teaching performance recommended that faculty at Queen's be encouraged to prepare dossiers, especially for major career decisions such as tenure and promotion.

In 1997 the first collective agreement signed by the university and QUFA included a clause describing teaching dossiers and describing how they should be used (Knapper et al., 2007).

The content in your teaching dossier is a demonstration of the beliefs, values, and approaches you have articulated in your teaching philosophy statement. It contains a narrative and a curated collection of your teaching materials that best illustrate your teaching approach and methods (Egan, n.d.).

An effective teaching dossier should provide a snapshot of you as a teacher that allows a reader to identify your own approach to teaching and how you value student learning (Burnett, M., n.d.).



## REASONS FOR CREATING A TEACHING DOSSIER

Teaching dossiers aim to provide a brief description of a professor's major teaching accomplishments and strengths, in the form of self-chosen short narrative descriptions of activities and achievements that reflect the scope and quality of the individual's teaching through versatile sources of evidence.

Teaching dossiers are also an excellent tool for continuous improvement and development of one's own teaching through regular documentation of goals, achievements, and reflection on teaching activities and accomplishments. For this reason, faculty are encouraged to maintain a teaching dossier and update it often (Knapper et al., 2007).

# COMPONENTS OF A TEACHING DOSSIER

The contents of your teaching dossier will be based on the purpose of the dossier, the discipline, and the importance assigned to different items by your department and Faculty (Seldin, P., Miller, J. E., & Seldin, C. A., 2010).

The teaching dossier is a highly personalized product that is typically written in the first-person. The following are suggested components of the teaching dossier (as noted in the literature and adapted from 2019-2020 Queen's University Collective Agreement):

- I A statement of the faculty member's philosophy**  
a description of your general approach to teaching and the rationale behind it
- II List and briefly describe your teaching commitments**  
including directed studies and thesis supervisions
- III Examples of course revision, curriculum development, and teaching methods**  
such as evidenced by course outlines, assignments, and other materials the member deems appropriate
- IV A record of the faculty member's role in curriculum and instructional developments**  
such as administrative and committee service for the Department, Faculty, or Senate related to pedagogy, and including directing and coordinating programs, guest lectures, and other presentations
- V An assessment of your teaching effectiveness based on evidence you provide**  
including letters and testimonials
- VI A record of the faculty member's special contribution to teaching**  
including teaching awards, publications, and presentations, educational grants, participation in conferences and seminars on education/pedagogy, and other such evidence as the member deems appropriate

## Optional Components

**Professional development**, where you describe the steps you have taken to evaluate and/or improve your teaching (e.g., attending a workshop on teaching), and the goals you have for your development and improvement as a teacher.

**Teaching scholarship**, such as conference presentations, educational research, and publications on teaching.

**Educational leadership**, (e.g., presenting a workshop on teaching, mentoring TAs or coaching residents, coordinating a departmental series on teaching and learning, etc.) (Burnett, n.d.).



# HOW TO CREATE YOUR TEACHING DOSSIER

As described in *Preparing A Teaching Dossier*, Knapper et al., 2007:

## Criteria for Effective Teaching

Present evidence for effective teaching showing:

- Knowledge, interest, enthusiasm, challenge
- Communication
- Organization, consistency, feedback, fairness, interaction, flexibility
- Curriculum development and knowledge of teaching methods
- Respect for student diversity
- Promotion of independent and collaborative learning
- Reflection and self-evaluation

## Clarifying Teaching Responsibilities

This provides a general framework against which the achievements listed in a teaching dossier can be measured.

## Selecting Indicators of Teaching Activity and Effectiveness

Select indicators of teaching activity consistent with the criteria and agreed responsibilities, and begin collecting evidence that the activity was done effectively.

## Tell a Story

A dossier is not only a compilation of teaching-related material. It states a case for the approach you take to teaching. In a dossier, a faculty member must explain what and how they teach, why they teach that way, and whether or not it works.

## TIPS

Christopher Knapper and Susan Wilcox provided the following tips for creating a teaching dossier:

- Aim for an integrated, cohesive dossier. Tie together the various components -- for example, connect the philosophy with student evaluations, peer review, and student products.
- Aim for internal consistency: correlate assertions with evidence.
- Remember that the teaching dossier is not just a record of your teaching but provides evidence of the impact of your teaching.
- Consider the full range of your teaching activities, including those beyond your home department. Make a case in writing about any circumstances that have affected your teaching. There's no need to be defensive, but it is helpful to explain the nature of particular teaching situations, especially when outcomes are unusual and/or disappointing.
- Find positive ways to address and enhance weaker areas in the dossier. For example, what goals and plans do you have for future development (Knapper et al., 2007)?

## CONTACT

Book a one-to-one appointment or a tailored working session for your school or department with our Faculty Development team who can assist you with creating and reviewing your teaching dossier.

Please contact [fac.dev@queensu.ca](mailto:fac.dev@queensu.ca).

## USEFUL LINKS

**Educational Development Unit, Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning. Resources: Teaching Philosophy Statements, The Teaching Dossier.**

<https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/Teaching%20Philosophies%20and%20Teaching%20Dossiers%20Guide.pdf>

**Preparing a Teaching Dossier: Queen's University, CTL C. Knapper and S. Wilcox 2007 (logical organization- foundational document)**

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/255576822\\_Preparing\\_a\\_Teaching\\_Dossier\\_Ryerson\\_Understanding](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/255576822_Preparing_a_Teaching_Dossier_Ryerson_Understanding)

**Rubric for Statement of Teaching Philosophy UBC**

[http://crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource\\_files/TeachingPhilosophyRubric.pdf](http://crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource_files/TeachingPhilosophyRubric.pdf)

**Teaching Philosophy and Teaching Dossier Guide: University of Calgary- Taylor Institute 2018: (general, comprehensive, detailed, rich in examples and guiding questions)**

<https://med-fom-grad-postdoc.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2019/06/Teaching-Philosophies-and-Teaching-Dossiers-Guide.pdf>

**University of Toronto: Guide to Teaching Dossier (organized, step by step, + guiding tools)**

<https://tatp.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/TATP-Guide-Preparing-the-Teaching-Dossier-Megan-Burnett.pdf>

**Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement that Stands out**

<https://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/career-advice-article/write-a-teaching-philosophy-statement-that-stands-out/>

**Vanderbilt University Centre for Teaching**

<http://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teaching-portfolios/>

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