

Teaching Portfolios: Components, Functions, and Examples

A teaching portfolio is a factual description of an instructor's teaching accomplishments. Teaching portfolios include evidence of professional activity that directly supports student learning. Formats of teaching portfolios vary depending on their intended use (e.g., self-reflection, promotion, teaching award nomination, job search). However, teaching portfolios commonly have the following components: summary of teaching responsibilities, statement of teaching philosophy, teaching goals and methods, evidence that goals have been achieved, and future goals. Please see Penn State's current [Administrative Guidelines for AC 23](#) (Section II. C.) for specific terminology used in reference to portfolios.

Summary of Teaching Responsibilities/Nature of Teaching Tasks

What it is: A description of the courses the instructor has taught. Common formats are a paragraph, a table or chart, or a combination of both. The description includes information such as: number of students, type of students (e.g., majors, non-majors, first-year students) type of course (e.g., studio, lab, lecture, workshop). It can contain a description of advising and mentoring responsibilities.

Functions: Describes what and who is being taught. Provides an overview of courses an instructor has taught and their place in the curriculum. Can demonstrate how the courses an instructor teaches contribute to the overall curriculum.

Examples: See page 6 of the linked document for an example of a [combination of paragraph and table format](#). For more information on the kinds of information to include in the teaching responsibilities section of the portfolio, see the section on "content to include" on this website [Teaching Portfolio Development](#)

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

What it is: A 1–2-page document typically written in first person, using present tense.

Functions: Articulates the instructor's foundational beliefs about teaching and learning and shows how the instructor implements their beliefs using examples.

Examples: See the webpage [“Sample Teaching Philosophies and Dossiers”](#). Scroll to the section “Teaching Philosophy Statements” to view statements by faculty from a variety of disciplines.

Teaching Goals and Methods/Means Chosen to Achieve Goals

What it is: A description of what the instructor wants their students to learn. An explanation of the teaching approaches they use to address their goals and how their approaches align with the Elements of Effective Teaching.

Functions: Explains why the instructor chooses specific teaching strategies and approaches. Describes how the instructor uses those strategies to help students learn.

Example: [Carol Gibbons-Kroeker's teaching portfolio](#)

Evidence that Goals have been Achieved

What it is: An explanation of selected examples of instructional materials and discussion of how they impact student learning. The instructional materials themselves are provided in an appendix to the portfolio and can include assignments, exams, mid-semester feedback, student feedback, group projects, texts, homework, syllabi, discussion prompts/threads, assignments, clinical journals, approach to lecture.

Functions: Explains to the audience how the instructor enacts their teaching philosophy, goals and methods, including information on why and how the instructor used them, and how the materials helped students learn. Evidence can also bring in multiple perspectives, such as from peers or students.

Examples: For an example of how an instructor uses a particular type of instructional material—the syllabus—to enact her teaching philosophy and methods, see page 13 of [Jennifer Nicoll Victor’s teaching portfolio](#). Victor’s teaching portfolio also contains annotated examples of other forms of instructional materials in addition to the syllabus.

Future Goals/Teaching more Effectively in the Future

What it is: A description of future short and long-term teaching goals, and the types of support and resources needed to achieve those goals.

Functions: Identifies and describes specific projects and activities the instructor wishes to pursue in order to continue developing their teaching.

Examples: For an example of future goals, see page 9 of [Man-Wai Chu's teaching portfolio](#). For questions to prompt a draft, consider the following from Seldin et al. 2010, p. 14: What teaching goals have I been unable to attain in the past that I would like to pursue now? Why are they important to me? How can my unit or institution help me achieve those goals? What kind of resource help (e.g., people, funds, space, time) do I need to achieve those goals?

Sources

Michael V. Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning, The Ohio State University. Teaching Portfolio Development <https://drakeinstitute.osu.edu/institute-articles/teaching-portfolio-development> Accessed February 23, 2025.

Seldin, P.; Miller, J.E.; Seldin, C.A. (2010) The Teaching Portfolio. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, University of Calgary. Web Resource Library: Sample Teaching Philosophies and Dossiers: <https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/sample-teaching-philosophy-statements> Accessed March 23, 2023.