BENCHMARKS FOR TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

KU THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
Center for Teaching Excellence

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 (below) have been designed to capture teaching in its totality. The rubric includes guiding questions and defined expectations 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.

| GOALS, CONTENT, & ALIGNMENT | TEACHING PRACTICES | ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES | CLASSROOM CLIMATE & STUDENT PERCEPTIONS | REFLECTION & ITERATIVE GROWTH | MENTORING & ADVISING | INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHING SERVICE, SCHOLARSHIP OR COMMUNITY |

Benchmarks Goals and Objectives

1. Broaden faculty perspectives on and build consensus on effective teaching

2. Encourage the use of multiple sources of information to evaluate teaching (instructor, peers, and students)

3. Improve synthesis and representation of this information at the department or school level.

Benchmarks Contact Information

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*See reverse for complete rubric

EXPLORING APPLICATIONS OF THE FRAMEWORK

CTE has received funding from the National Science Foundation for a 5-year-project that supports department-level adaptation and use of the Benchmarks framework. With assistance from CTE, participating departments are having conversations about what effective teaching is and how it should be evaluated. As they do this, they are adapting the rubric and identifying materials that that could provide information for each category. They are sharing their efforts with colleagues in other departments and with colleagues at the University of Colorado, Boulder and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, which have created similar programs. The goal is to develop models that can be applied in other departments and other institutions.

WHY WE ARE DOING THIS

Most evaluations focus on a narrow range of teaching practice and prioritize a limited source of evidence. Often, teaching is measured either through student evaluations, which contain inherent biases, or peer observations of a single class period. 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 on those activities. Thus, the Benchmarks aligns with KU policy, which requires multiple sources in teaching evaluation and specifies students, peers, and the faculty member as required sources in promotion and tenure and progress-toward-tenure processes.

NSF

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Rubric for Faculty Teaching Effectiveness *(department should modify as needed)*

Departments should align categories with their own expectations for summative evaluation.

Category	Developing	Proficient	Expert
Goals, content, and alignment *What are students expected to learn from the courses taught? Are course goals appropriately challenging? Is content aligned with the curriculum?*	• Course goals are unclear, inappropriate, or marginally related to curriculum • Content and materials are outdated or unsuitable for students in the courses • Range of topics is too narrow or too broad • Content is not clearly aligned with curriculum or institutional expectations	• Course goals are articulated and appropriate for curriculum • Content is current and appropriate for topic, students, and curriculum • Course topics include an appropriate range • Standard, intellectually sound materials	• Course goals are well-articulated, high quality, and clearly connected to program or curricular goals • Content is challenging and innovative or related to current issues and developments in field • Topics are of appropriate range and depth, with integration across topics • High quality materials, well-aligned with course goals
Teaching practices *How is in-class and out-of-class time used? What assignments, assessments, and learning activities are implemented to help students learn?*	• Teaching practices are not sufficiently planned or organized, or are poorly implemented • Practices are not well executed; little development in methods despite evidence of need • Students lack opportunities to practice the skills embedded in course goals • Student engagement is variable	• Teaching practices are well planned and organized • Standard course practices carried out; follows conventions within discipline and institution • Students have some opportunities to practice skills embedded in course goals • Students consistently engaged	• Activities are well planned, integrated, and reflect commitment to providing meaningful assignments and assessments • Uses effective, high-impact or innovative methods to improve understanding • In- and out-of-class activities provide opportunities for practice and feedback on important skills and concepts • Students show high levels of engagement
Achievement of learning outcomes *What impact do these courses have on learners? What evidence shows the level of student understanding?*	• Insufficient attention to student learning – quality of student learning is not described or analyzed with clear standards • Evidence of poor student learning; low level of skill/understanding is required or achieved without clear attempts to improve	• Clear standards for evaluating the quality of student understanding • Typical student achievement for courses at these levels	• Standards for evaluating student understanding are connected to program or curriculum expectations, or use authentic assessments • Efforts to support learning in all students • Quality of learning supports success in other contexts (e.g., subsequent courses or non-classroom venues), or is increasing over successive offerings
Classroom climate and student perceptions *What are the students' views of their learning experience? How has student feedback informed the faculty member's teaching?*	• Classroom climate does not promote civility or discourages student motivation and engagement • Consistently negative student reports of teacher accessibility, interaction skills • Poor sense of learning among students • Little attempt to address concerns voiced by students	• Classroom climate promotes civility • No consistently negative student ratings of teacher accessibility, interaction skills • Most students indicate progress with their learning • Instructor articulates some lessons learned through student feedback	• Evidence that classroom climate is respectful, cooperative, and encourages motivation and engagement • Student feedback on teacher accessibility, interaction skills is generally positive • Students perceive that they are learning important skills or knowledge • Instructor is responsive to student feedback in short- and long-term
Reflection and iterative growth *How has the faculty member's teaching changed over time? How has this been informed by evidence of student learning?*	• No indication of having reflected upon or learned from prior teaching or feedback	• Continued competent teaching, possibly with minor reflection based on input from peers and/or students • Articulates some lessons learned from prior teaching and feedback	• Regularly makes adjustments to teaching based on reflections on student learning, within or across semesters • Examines student performance following adjustments • Reports improved student achievement of learning goals based on past course modifications
Mentoring & advising *How effectively has the faculty member worked individually with UG or graduate students?*	• No indication of effective mentoring or advising students (but expected in department)	• Some evidence of effective advising and mentoring *(define as appropriate for discipline)*	• Evidence of exceptional quality and time commitment to advising and mentoring *(define as appropriate for discipline)*
Involvement in teaching service, scholarship, or community *In what ways has the instructor contributed to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus?*	• No interaction with broader community about teaching, including involvement with teaching-related committees • No evidence of keeping up with reports on effective teaching • Practices and results of teaching are not shared with others • Actions have negative impact on teaching culture in department or institution	• Some involvement in teaching-related committees, or engagement with peers on teaching (e.g., teaching-related presentations or workshops) • Participates in department-level curriculum decisions	• Regular involvement in teaching-related committees, engagement with peers on teaching (e.g., teaching-related presentations or workshops) • Occasional (or more) local or external presentations or publications to share practices or results of teaching • Contributes to department or university curricular planning or assessment • Advanced—Scholarly publications or grant applications related to teaching