

Policy Title:

**Teaching Portfolios (SPS B2)**

Approved by:

**Senate**

**Board of Governors**

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Responsible Executive: Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Policy-Specific Enquiries: [Office of the Provost and Vice-President \(Academic\)](#)

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**Alternate Format Requests and General Policy Enquiries:** [policy@mcmaster.ca](mailto:policy@mcmaster.ca)

## Preamble

1. A teaching portfolio is a record of a faculty member's teaching methods, accomplishments and goals. One purpose of a teaching portfolio is to represent the faculty member's involvement in teaching to potential reviewers.
2. Every faculty member should have a teaching portfolio, which they update regularly. The portfolio is owned by the faculty member and may contain any and all information that the faculty member wishes to document.

## Structure of Teaching Portfolios

3. The portfolio consists of two main parts:
  - a) **Part A: Executive Summary** which consists of the following items:
    - [1] description of responsibilities and mechanism of evaluation drawn from the appointment letter, or updates thereto (maximum one page);
    - [2] description of teaching approach/philosophy (about one page);
    - [3] description of teaching practice, including examples of how the approach/philosophy has been realized, or how teaching has been adapted to unusual conditions (one to two pages);
    - [4] description of contributions to teaching, for example, course design, publications and research on teaching and learning, presentations on teaching and learning, professional development, educational leadership, reports on issues pertaining to teaching and learning (about one page);
    - [5] complete details of responses to the summative question in the student feedback on all courses taught over the past five years. The information should be set in the context of all the teaching done in the department. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to provide all instructors with contextual data for all the courses given in each term.

- b) **Part B: Supporting Documentation**, which is optional and may contain additional material compiled by the faculty member in support of Part A.
4. This structure of the teaching portfolio accords with best practice and will ensure that departmental evaluation of a candidate's teaching can be conducted most effectively.
  5. The elements of Part A constitute, in effect, an "executive" summary of a potentially much larger portfolio. The intent of this summary is to provide a means to manage the larger portfolio rather than to require that all such portfolios have a distinct length and uniformity. For example, the supporting documentation in Part B could record the changes and evolution in the items (i) through (iv) and collect relevant items such as course outlines, exams and assignments.
  6. Student comments are **not** to be included in the Executive Summary – Part A, or in the Departmental Evaluation Report. Anonymous statements from students are unreliable and typically unverifiable, and a summative evaluation (such as is conducted when candidates are considered for tenure and promotion or permanence) should not be based, in whole or in part, on such comments.
  7. When a candidate is being considered for re-appointment, permanence, tenure or promotion the teaching portfolio will be reviewed at the department level, and the department will construct a Departmental Report, incorporating the elements of the Executive Summary that capture the substance of activities (refer to [SPS B1: Procedures for the Assessment of Teaching](#)).

## Related Resources

- [Preparing a Teaching Portfolio Guidebook](#) (Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching)
- [Teaching Portfolios at McMaster](#) (MacPherson Institute)