

University of Saskatchewan, College of Medicine
ABOUT THE TEACHING DOSSIER OR PORTFOLIO

The **TEACHING DOSSIER** is a comprehensive record of teaching activities and accomplishments *drawn up by the professor*. It is similar to a c.v. but restricted to teaching activities.

There are two basic purposes of **TEACHING DOSSIERS**:

1. to cause professors to reflect on their teaching, and
2. to document teachers' educational activities and reputations.

The dossier provides an opportunity for faculty members to report what they feel they should get credit for in terms of *what they do* as teachers and *how well they do it*.

The dossier should work *for* faculty members, not vice versa. If there are categories or sections which do not apply, e.g. postgraduate clinical education, then teachers should leave the sections blank rather than respond "not applicable". If the dossier does not provide categories for which faculty members feel they deserve credit, then they should be added, e.g. CME teaching, peer reviewer of manuscripts on teaching.

The dossier is a summary of activity and reputation, not a total history. The dossier should be no longer than 6 pages; with appendices, no longer than 12 pages.

Re: documenting teaching activities

In some instances, e.g. regular undergraduate teaching assignments, listing of courses taught, number of students, etc., should be only for the past five years. In other instances, e.g. graduate students, the number listed should be for all time.

Re: documenting teaching reputation

This should be a summary of student ratings, notation of testimonials, etc., with examples of comments noted in a brief appendix.

THE "COOK" DOSSIER

The dossier we recommend for use in the College of Medicine is one developed by Dr. David Cook, Division of Studies in Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine, University of Alberta. Dr. Cook suggests ten major sections plus numerous subsections:

1. TEACHING AWARDS

2. UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

- Teaching Hours and Enrolment
- Student Evaluation of Undergraduate Teaching
- Peer Evaluation of Undergraduate Teaching

Handouts/Manuals Written to Accompany
Undergraduate Teaching

3. GRADUATE/RESIDENT TEACHING

- Lectures, Small Group Discussions
- Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows
- Supervision / Supervisory Committees
- Summer Students
- Evaluations by Students/Peers of Graduate/Resident Teaching
- Handouts/Manuals/Protocols Written to Accompany Graduate/Resident Teaching
- Distinction Achieved by Graduate Students/ Residents/ Postdoctoral Fellows

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Teaching Workshops, Seminars, etc. Attended
- Teaching Workshops, Seminars, etc. Presented

5. EXTERNAL TEACHING

6. TEACHING INNOVATION

7. ADMINISTRATION ASSOCIATED WITH TEACHING

8. PUBLICATIONS/PRESENTATIONS CONCERNING TEACHING

9. SELF EVALUATION

10. OTHER MATERIAL

For teachers completing the dossier, Dr. Cook advises the following:

The dossier will be read by intelligent people who are capable of reading between the lines. For example, if you have forty hours teaching a year in one course and three hours in another, and you choose to submit assessments of your teaching by peers and students for the three-hour contribution only, it will look odd -- and your dossier will be less informative and less credible. If there is a reason (for example, no assessment was carried out on the major course) a word of explanation may help.

Some sections may not apply to you -- you may not have won teaching awards or you may never have supervised graduate students. Delete these sections rather than writing "none" or "not applicable".

The dossier is about TEACHING. Do not try to pad it with thinly-disguised research contributions.

Keep all undergraduate material current. The last five years is a good rule, and it will keep the dossier from becoming too

long. Graduate student records obviously need to be recorded from the beginning of your career. With regard to the rest of the dossier, use your judgment, but a dossier based on your performance ten years ago will not be convincing. The whole thing (excluding appendices) should not be more than six pages, unless you have teaching as your most important responsibility, in which case you may need a few more pages. Do NOT try to baffle your readers by the sheer volume of material!

Details of specific sections

1. TEACHING AWARDS

List ONLY awards specifically for teaching or other activities to do with education. An award given for a paper on educational research would be included, but one for research in your scientific or medical discipline would not be listed here but in your curriculum vitae.

2. UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING

2.1 TEACHING HOURS AND ENROLMENT: If you have only a very few hours in some courses, do not list these individually. At the end of the appropriate section, rather than "course name/number" you can list these as "additional teaching hours", and delete the "enrolment". A good source of information for this section is "back issues" of your "Annual Report of a Faculty Member".

2.2 STUDENT EVALUATION: It is often helpful to have evaluations which are recent, or from successive years from the same course, or both. Do not overwhelm the reader with evaluations but try to choose those which will be more informative. Assessments for four or five undergraduate courses should provide a successful impression of how you teach. While quantitative evaluation of bedside teaching by students is still a difficult issue, any data in this regard is better than none. Wherever possible, you should use data from standardized questionnaires that have been processed by a third party. The point of this section is to enable the reader to get a good idea what the students think of your teaching, so try to simplify this section and make it very clear what the scores actually mean. Narrative comments should be submitted as an appendix (if at all). It is probably best to use "Appendix 1" to list all narrative comments from undergraduates and subdivide so that the comments of each course or year are listed as "Appendix 1a", "Appendix 1b" and so on. It is *enormously* more convincing if all comments are provided rather than a few "typical" comments (remember that "typical results are shown" often translates as "best results are shown"!)

You should make it clear whether the comments represent all the comments received or whether you have picked them over and submitted only some of them. Narrative comments are generally less valuable than numerical data for summative purposes.

If you have not kept copies of student evaluations, your chair, course director or general office may be able to help. Finally, you are NOT obligated to provide ANY information about student assessment, although if you supply no information, some may conclude that they are uniformly unfavorable. It is clearly ill-advised to provide details of a course in which you obtained very poor ratings, and it is not dishonest to exclude those from the dossier. After all, your research c.v. does not usually include papers which were rejected or grants which were not approved!

2.3. PEER EVALUATION: Try to get a written assessment of your teaching from the course director, your department chair or some other credible individual to include in this section. There are many merits to peer evaluation, but the most important relates to assessment of the appropriateness of content. Available evidence suggests that evaluation of PRESENTATION by peers corresponds very closely to evaluation by students, but students are not always in a position to judge the appropriateness of CONTENT. If the letter itself does not explain why the referee is an appropriate and unbiased judge of your teaching, you should append a brief note explaining this.

2.4. HANDOUTS/MANUALS: List them and append some examples. These should be prepared specifically for teaching. If you hand out a review you wrote for a medical journal to those taking a graduate course from you (and it may be an entirely appropriate handout), it should not be listed, but if you prepare some material SPECIFICALLY to help students in that course, then it should be listed.

3. GRADUATE TEACHING

3.1 When you list students/trainees it may be worthwhile adding the source of financial support if it is an indicator of success, thus: Dr. A.B. (1986-1992) MRC Studentship, Dissertation Studentship (U of S)

3.2 It is possible to be on an examination committee without being on the supervisory committee. This usually has more to do with research expertise than educational skills, but if you wish to list membership in these committees separately, that would not be inappropriate.

3.3 DISTINCTION ACHIEVED BY RESEARCH TRAINEES: This is a chance to boast about the successes of those who have trained with you! It is an indicator of your skill at graduate training, but it should be concise and supported by incontrovertible fact. Merely stating that "X has gone on to do well" is not helpful, but if X received research awards or rapid promotion to senior positions, this suggests success.

3.4 RESIDENCY TRAINING is difficult to document, but there are often evaluations by the Residents which can be included. In issues such as this, *narrative comments* are extremely useful.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 List workshops specifically to do with teaching.

4.2 Teaching workshops you have presented may be within your own Faculty, in the University at large or for other bodies. Make clear who is the sponsor of the workshop.

5. EXTERNAL TEACHING

In this section, list invitations to teach in courses offered in other Faculties, or Universities, or by various public bodies. If you are invited to give a research talk to the cardiologists at Harvard, it is probably because of your research reputation; do NOT list it. If you are asked to contribute to an undergraduate course in another college at this University, it is probably because of your reputation as an instructor; DO list that. When in doubt, list it unless your dossier is already overweight.

6. TEACHING INNOVATIONS

This should be a brief narrative account of any changes you made which can be regarded as innovations in the method of teaching or evaluation. If you were responsible for introducing an OSCE into the evaluation of your course, or you introduced problem-based learning into a section of it, it should be listed here. These changes will have MUCH more impact if you can provide data which bear on whether the innovation was a success or not. It may be worth remembering that trivial changes listed in this section will detract from rather than enhance the impression left with the reader!

7. ADMINISTRATION ASSOCIATED WITH TEACHING

List committee work, course directorships, examination committee memberships and so on. Include dates and, if appropriate, a brief comment on your role.

8. PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

8.1 Record published articles on teaching or education. Include research articles, reviews on teaching methodology, and also (although they will carry less weight) any letters or opinions which have been published.

8.2 List also any invited talks on educational matters. The distinction between this and presentations to extramural bodies about teaching techniques is a slight one: if you give

a talk on "how to provide good tutorials", list that under "Professional development - workshops and seminars presented". If you are asked to speak on "Is there still a place for the lecture in the medical curriculum?", list that under this section.

9. SELF-EVALUATION

This section should be one or two pages which outline your overall philosophy of teaching, including your successes and the events from which you learned. You should try to discuss where you feel that your major contributions to teaching have been made and indicate what you would like to do in future. The importance of this section is a matter of debate. It certainly is not an absolute requirement, but its completion may give YOU some insights.

10. OTHER MATERIAL

Add any other material which will help your cause.

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