



Teaching Effectiveness Standards and Evaluation (TESE) Guidelines

Introduction

The Faculty Handbook 3.4.2 charges department or school faculty with the responsibility of articulating standards for evaluation of teaching, scholarship/professional activity, and service:

Because the nature of teaching, scholarship or artistic creativity, and service differs in some respects among academic disciplines, the faculty of the college, schools, and division develop, adopt, and publish their respective clarifications of the three criteria.

While SCU schools and departments have developed standards for scholarship, most have not yet developed them for teaching or for professional activity and service. Over the last decade, the Faculty Senate Council and the Subcommittee on Lecturers and Adjuncts have challenged the overuse of SETs in faculty evaluation, the lack of involvement of/transparency to lecturers and adjunct faculty in defining the terms of evaluation, and the imprecision of terms such as “superior” performance (3.4A.1.1) and “extraordinary teaching” (3.4A.2.1).

Describing Teaching Effectiveness

There is no single definition of effective teaching. But we can identify values and practices that recur in decades of scholarship about teaching and learning—for example, compassion and respect for students, passion for the discipline, active learning, inclusion, multiple opportunities for demonstrating learning, clear feedback, and transparent course design, to name a few.

Excellence in Teaching at SCU

Jesuit education at Santa Clara University concerns the whole person--mind, body, and spirit--and reflects our faculty commitment to building diverse communities of belonging. Our commitment to excellence in teaching aligns with our Jesuit educational values and with the use of evidence-based, inclusive pedagogies. At its best, SCU teaching imparts academic rigor and fosters critical, creative, and reflective thinking; complex problem solving; effective communication; and application of knowledge that advances a more just, humane, and sustainable world.

Consistent with our mission and values, effective teaching at SCU¹ is:

1. Respectful and Professional

- a. Models and expects respectful and appropriate behavior in all professional interactions
- b. Develops professionalism in students through high expectations for mindful, ethical, responsible behavior
- c. Recognizes the power differential between professor and student, and acts with integrity toward students

2. Challenging and Supportive

- a. Creates learning objectives and experiences that are challenging but attainable
- b. Models and fosters critical, analytical, and creative thinking
- c. Encourages student curiosity, exploration, and self-directed learning
- d. Fosters a mindset where growth is always possible, and ability is not fixed
- e. Provides encouragement, positive reinforcement, and support

3. Inclusive and Diverse

- a. Creates an open environment conducive to intellectual risk-taking
- b. Includes students' strengths, experiences, and identities in the learning process
- c. Acknowledges historical practices of exclusion of underrepresented perspectives and provides materials, cases, or applications that examine diverse experiences, perspectives, or populations
- d. Applies multiple techniques and strategies to reach all students in a culturally-responsive way

4. Relevant and Engaging

- a. Uses content that is current, rigorous, and informed by theory, research, evidence, and context
- b. Uses active learning strategies to promote development of mastery
- c. Fosters transfer of learning and problem-solving skills to address real-world challenges
- d. Fosters student participation and fosters peer-to-peer collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and feedback
- e. Facilitates student engagement in inquiry and research

¹ We acknowledge USC's project on defining excellent teaching, from which this list is drawn.

5. Prepared and Purposeful

- a. Uses instructional plan aligned with learning objectives that includes assessment of student prior knowledge, instruction followed by application, and shared reflection on what was learned
- b. Manages learning effectively: plans activities, uses routines, and manages time, behavior, and participation
- c. Utilizes educational technologies to provide students access to course materials, grades, and other feedback

6. Fair and Equitable

- a. Establishes clear expectations and learning objectives
- b. Uses formative assessments to evaluate student progress, and summative assessments to evaluate mastery
- c. Provides specific, regular, and timely feedback
- d. Maintains reasonable course policies that are applied uniformly and fairly

7. Evidence-Based

- a. Uses results from formative and summative peer and student teaching evaluations to inform teaching practice
- b. Pursues continuous improvement of teaching and course design by applying research-based best practices

Developing Teaching Effectiveness Guidelines

Because evaluation occurs at the school or department level (Faculty Handbook, section 3.3) for full-time faculty of all appointment types (in annual evaluations as well as periodic reviews for reappointment, promotion, and tenure) each program needs to articulate transparent, department/school-supported standards that reflect current, peer-reviewed scholarship in teaching and learning. The 2012 Task Force on Teaching Evaluation and the Faculty Handbook's descriptions of effective teaching further identify the need to draw upon multiple sources in the evaluation of teaching (Sections 3.4.2 and 3.4A.1.1).

Developing these standards should be inclusive and transparent: faculty of all academic-year appointment types and evaluators should have a shared understanding of what and how much evidence to provide and how this information will be assessed and weighted in evaluation.

The Faculty Collaborative for Teaching Innovation and Faculty Development have prepared these research-based materials to assist departments in developing explicit teaching guidelines based on decades of scholarly work on teaching evaluation, national examples, informed practices from multiple universities, a multi-institution NSF project, and SCU faculty and departments using these materials as they were developed and revised.

These materials will help programs to

1. **Define effective teaching.** Discussions of teaching effectiveness and how it will be evaluated should draw on these resource materials and include faculty across academic-year appointment types.
2. **Create standards for evaluating effective teaching.** These will draw upon multiple sources of evidence and will include what types of evidence and how much of each form of evidence are expected.
3. **Ensure standards are tailored appropriately for faculty of different appointment types and occasions of evaluation.**
4. **Implement an evaluation template.** Consider how best to implement an evaluation template and on what timeline. Develop a process for evaluating how well the template is working for faculty of all appointment types.

Templates for Evaluating Effective Teaching

Programs should use the Teaching Evaluation Template below to identify dimensions of teaching effectiveness they wish to prioritize, identify acceptable sources of evidence, and assign weights for each of four dimensions of teaching so that they add up to 100%.

The *overall* contribution in the teaching category is itself weighted by appointment type, typically, for example, 40% for tenure stream, 70% for teaching stream, 95% for Academic Year Lecturers. *Within the teaching category*, departments must assign percentage weights to each dimension of teaching (e.g. Classroom Teaching 60%, Mentoring and Advising 20%, etc.). Departments may also choose to vary weights by appointment types.

In addition to the template below note that the TESE site includes sample materials on which to draw:

1. blank [Worksheet for Departments](#),
2. fictitious Social Science Department completed [Worksheet](#),
3. fictitious Social Science Department final [TESE](#)

SCU Sample Teaching Evaluation Template
Use to identify sources of evidence for particular dimensions of teaching effectiveness

Overview

Dimensions of Teaching Effectiveness:

There are four main dimensions for evaluating teaching effectiveness. Dimension 1, Course Design and Teaching, applies to all faculty; other dimensions may vary according to appointment type.

1. Course Design and Teaching includes four areas
 - A. Course Goals, Content and Alignment
 - B. Instruction
 - C. Assessment of Student Learning
 - D. Class Culture and Student Perceptions
2. Mentoring and Advising
3. Faculty Reflection and Iterative growth
4. Involvement in Teaching Professional Development, Service, Scholarship, or Community

The template includes sample bulleted descriptors for each dimension below. These are not exhaustive. Departments or schools may wish to use these selectively, add to them, or otherwise revise.

Possible Sources of Evidence

Departments should identify multiple forms of evidence by which to evaluate teaching effectiveness. The same sources of evidence need not apply to each dimension.

For Course Design and Teaching, for example, departments may ask faculty to provide annotated samples of select class material and feedback from a peer observation of teaching, along with student feedback (e.g., SETS and end-quarter narratives). To assess Faculty Reflection and Iterative Growth, departments may ask faculty to provide a brief narrative on how they have made adjustments to their teaching practices based on student feedback or performance.

Possible sources of evidence across all dimensions may include:

1. Select class material created by the instructor (slides, assessments, in-class activities, assignments, etc.)
2. Narrative description by instructor explaining relevant elements of the course syllabus, course material, etc.
3. Peer observation of teaching (in-person or video, as pertains to the modality of the class).
4. Examples of student work/engagement with class – test performance, sample work, performance on learning objectives, etc.
5. Anonymous surveys of students (SETS, narrative evaluations, department surveys)
6. Other forms of student feedback – focus groups, letters, interviews, etc., collected independently of instructor
7. Record of faculty activities (e.g., completing professional development course, presentation made to local or national group about teaching, article about teaching in blog or journal)

1. Course Design and Teaching

1A. Goals, Content, and Alignment

- Goals for student learning and skill-development are established and at appropriate level for the course and the students expected to take it.
- Learning goals are clearly articulated to students and connected to program or curricular goals.
- Content is related to current issues and developments in the field.
- Course materials reflect diverse contributions to (and address exclusions from) the disciplines.
- Topics are of appropriate range and depth, with integration across topics.
- Assessments are varied and well-aligned with learning goals.

1B. Teaching Practices

- Activities are well planned, integrated, and reflect commitment to providing meaningful assignments and assessments.
- Course expectations and assignments are communicated transparently with rationales.
- Communication about student learning is intentional, using growth-mindset language and reducing stereotype threat.
- Use of effective, high-impact and/or innovative methods to improve students' understanding and support their learning.
- In- and out-of-class activities provide opportunities for practice and feedback on key skills and concepts.
- Efforts are inclusive, demonstrating responsibility for equitable access and outcomes in the course that demonstrates support for learning in all students.
- Teaching practices result in high levels of student engagement.

1C. Assessment of Student Learning

- Assessments of student learning are connected to program or curricular expectations.
- Standards for evaluation are well-communicated to students.
- Multiple forms of effective assessment aligned with course objectives are used.
- Level of learning supports success in other contexts (e.g., subsequent courses) and for all students.

1D. Class Culture and Student Perceptions

- Class climate is respectful, cooperative, inclusive, and civil.
- Teaching practices support a class climate that promotes a sense of belonging, values diverse contributions, and respects individual differences.
- Class climate demonstrates instructor's awareness of the social and historical context of exclusionary practices in higher education.
- Class climate encourages motivation and engagement.
- Instructor is accessible and interacts well with students.
- Students perceive that they are learning important skills or knowledge.

2. Mentoring and Advising

In what ways has the faculty member contributed to students' educational experience through advising and/or mentoring?

- Evidence of quality and time commitment to advising and mentoring (defined as appropriate for the discipline and activity).
- Evidence of creating mentoring or advising relationships reflecting an ethics of care (supporting students' emotional well-being, while also encouraging students to accomplish more than they thought possible.)
- Mentoring or advising grounded in asset-based approaches, such as focusing on community cultural wealth and acknowledging, affirming, and amplifying on the strengths students bring to SCU and their discipline.
- Mentoring and advising attends to traditionally and currently marginalized students' experiences and affirms, supports, and advocates for these students.
- Promoting greater awareness among faculty peers about explicit or implicit policies or filters that perpetuate or create inequities.

Note: Mentoring or advising can occur in formal and informal settings (e.g., work on research and creative projects, student organizations, internships, work-settings).

3. Reflection and Iterative Growth

How has the faculty member's teaching changed over time? How has this been informed by evidence of student learning?

- Evidence that the instructor is responsive to, and reflective on, student and peer feedback in the short- and long term.
- Engages in professional development on anti-racist teaching (e.g. structured activities, reading, or reflection on unconscious bias, stereotype threat, microaggressions, positionality).
- Regularly makes adjustments to teaching/mentoring practice based on reflections on student learning, within or across quarters or semesters.
- Re-examines student performance following adjustments.
- Improved student achievement of learning goals based on modifications to teaching/mentoring practices.

4. Involvement in Teaching Professional Development, Service, or Scholarship

In what ways has the instructor contributed to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus?

- Engagement in professional development workshops, webinars, conferences focused on teaching broadly or in the discipline.
- Engagement with peers on teaching (e.g., teaching-related presentations or workshops).
- Creation of curricular materials or pedagogical approaches adopted by others
- External presentations.
- Publications to share practices or results of teaching or educational activities.
- Scholarly publications or grant applications related to teaching.

Note: If presentations and publications on pedagogy are already counted as Scholarship, they should not be included here.