

# BENCHMARKS FOR TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS



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



CLASS  
CLIMATE



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.

## 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.

## Benchmarks Contact Information

If you have any questions or if you would like more information, please contact:

Andrea Follmer  
CTE Director  
dea@ku.edu  
(785) 864-4193

Doug Ward  
CTE Associate Director  
dbward@ku.edu  
(785) 864-7637

Kaila Colyott  
Project Manager  
kcolyott@ku.edu  
(785) 864-7637

## 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.

\*See reverse for complete rubric

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant Number DUE-1726087. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.



***Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness*** posits that effective teaching involves the alignment of course goals and instructional practices, the creation of motivating and inclusive learning climates, and consistent attention to and reflection on student learning and feedback.

(revised Oct 2020)	Developing	Proficient	Expert
<b>Goals, content, and alignment</b> <i>What are students expected to learn? Are course goals appropriate? Is content aligned with the curriculum? Does content represent diverse perspectives?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Course goals are not articulated, or are unclear, inappropriate or marginally related to curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Content and materials are outdated or unsuitable for students in the course <input type="checkbox"/> Range of topics is too narrow or too broad <input type="checkbox"/> Content is not clearly aligned with curriculum or institutional expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Content does not reflect diverse perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Course goals are articulated and appropriate for curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Content is current and appropriate for topic, students, and curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Course topics have appropriate range <input type="checkbox"/> Standard, intellectually sound materials <input type="checkbox"/> Course materials reflect diverse perspectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Course goals are well-articulated, high quality, relevant to all students, and clearly connected to program or curricular goals <input type="checkbox"/> Content is challenging and innovative or related to current issues and developments in field <input type="checkbox"/> Topics are well-integrated and of appropriate range and depth <input type="checkbox"/> High-quality materials, well-aligned with course goals <input type="checkbox"/> Course materials reflect diverse perspectives and promote critical reflection on these diverse perspectives
<b>Teaching practices</b> <i>How is in-class and out-of-class time used? What assignments, assessments, and learning activities are implemented to help students learn? Are students engaged in the learning process?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Courses are not sufficiently planned or organized <input type="checkbox"/> Practices are not well-executed and show little development over time <input type="checkbox"/> Students lack opportunities to practice critical skills embedded in course goals <input type="checkbox"/> Student engagement is generally low <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments and assignments are at inappropriate difficulty level or not well-aligned with course goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Courses are well-planned and organized <input type="checkbox"/> Standard course practices; follows conventions of discipline and institution <input type="checkbox"/> Students have some opportunities to practice skills embedded in course goals <input type="checkbox"/> Students are consistently engaged <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments/assignments are appropriately challenging and tied to course goals	<input type="checkbox"/> Courses are well-planned and integrated, and reflect commitment to providing meaningful assignments and assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Uses inclusive and effective or innovative methods to support learning in all students <input type="checkbox"/> In- and out-of-class activities provide opportunities for practice and feedback on important skills and concepts <input type="checkbox"/> Students show high levels of engagement <input type="checkbox"/> Assessments and assignments are varied and allow students to demonstrate knowledge through multiple modalities
<b>Class climate</b> <i>What sort of climate for learning does the instructor create? What are students' views of their learning experience and how has this informed teaching?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Class climate does not promote respect or sense of belonging among all students <input type="checkbox"/> Class climate discourages student motivation or self-efficacy <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently negative student reports of teacher accessibility or interaction skills <input type="checkbox"/> Little attempt to address concerns voiced by students	<input type="checkbox"/> Class climate is inclusive and promotes respect <input type="checkbox"/> Class climate encourages student motivation <input type="checkbox"/> No consistently negative student ratings of teacher accessibility or interaction skills <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor articulates some lessons learned through student feedback	<input type="checkbox"/> Class climate is respectful, open, and inclusive; promotes both student-student and student-teacher dialogue. <input type="checkbox"/> Climate fosters motivation, self-efficacy, ownership of learning <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor models inclusive language and behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Student feedback on teacher accessibility and interaction is generally positive <input type="checkbox"/> Instructor seeks and is responsive to student feedback
<b>Achievement of learning outcomes</b> <i>What impact do courses have on learners? What is the evidence of student learning? Are there efforts to make achievement equitable?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient attention to student understanding; quality of learning is not described or analyzed with clear standards <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of inadequate learning or inequities in learning without clear attempts to improve <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of learning is insufficient to support success in other contexts	<input type="checkbox"/> Standards for evaluating the quality of student understanding are clear <input type="checkbox"/> Student learning meets dept. expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Some use of evidence of student learning to inform teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of learning is not a barrier to success in other contexts	<input type="checkbox"/> Standards for evaluating understanding are clear and connected to program, curriculum, or professional expectations <input type="checkbox"/> Consistently attends to student learning, uses it to inform teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of learning supports success in other contexts (e.g., subsequent courses or relevant non-classroom venues) <input type="checkbox"/> Efforts to support learning in all students by examining possible inequities in performance across groups and making adjustments
<b>Reflection and iterative growth</b> <i>How has the instructor's teaching changed over time? How has this been informed by student learning evidence?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Little or no indication of having reflected upon or learned from prior teaching, evidence of student learning, or peer or student feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Little or no indication of efforts to develop as a teacher despite evidence of need	<input type="checkbox"/> Continued competent teaching, possibly with minor reflection based on input from peers and/or students <input type="checkbox"/> Articulates some lessons learned or changes informed by prior teaching, student learning, or feedback	<input type="checkbox"/> Regularly adjusts teaching based on reflection on student learning, within or across semesters <input type="checkbox"/> Examines student performance following adjustments <input type="checkbox"/> Reports improved student achievement of learning goals and/or improved equity in outcomes based on past course modifications
<b>Mentoring &amp; advising</b> <i>How effectively has the instructor worked individually with UG or grad students?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> No indication of effective advising or mentoring (but expected in department)	<input type="checkbox"/> Some evidence of effective advising and mentoring ( <i>define as appropriate for discipline</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of exceptional quality and time commitment to advising and mentoring ( <i>define as appropriate for discipline</i> )
<b>Involvement in teaching service, scholarship, or community</b> <i>How has the instructor contributed to the broader teaching community, both on and off campus?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Little or no evidence of positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution <input type="checkbox"/> Little or no interaction with teaching community <input type="checkbox"/> Practices and results of teaching are not shared with others	<input type="checkbox"/> Some positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution <input type="checkbox"/> Some engagement with peers on teaching <input type="checkbox"/> Has shared teaching practices or results with others (e.g., presentation, workshop, essay)	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently positive contributions to teaching and learning culture in department or institution (e.g., curriculum committees, program assessment, co-curricular activities) <input type="checkbox"/> Regular engagement with peers on teaching (e.g., teaching-related presentations or workshops, peer reviews of teaching) <input type="checkbox"/> Presentations or publications to share practices or results of teaching with multiple audiences <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarly publications or grant applications related to teaching



Fair use of KU's Benchmarks framework is permitted through the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-commercial 5.0 International License. It may be reused, adapted and distributed as long as you provide appropriate credit, but it may not be used for commercial purposes. Please cite as Follmer Greenhoot, A., Ward, D., Bernstein, D., Patterson, M. M., & Colyott, K. (2020). *Benchmarks for Teaching Effectiveness*. (Revised 2020).