

# Faculty of Management Policy on Teaching Quality

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## **Policy Statement**

Regardless of program or type of class taught, successful teachers demonstrate leadership, good communication skills, effective evaluation techniques, and self-reflexivity about their teaching.

## **Examples of Successful Teaching**

### **Leadership**

Successful teachers:

1. Motivate students to learn;
2. Actively engage students in the learning process using participatory approaches that are consistent with the learning outcomes of the class;
3. Demonstrate enthusiasm for the class material and for teaching;
4. Demonstrate genuine concern for student learning;
5. Are approachable and respectful of students.

### **Good communication**

Successful teachers:

1. Set clear aims, goals and objectives for learning outcomes;
2. Facilitate student-professor communication both inside and outside of class;
3. Stimulate student interest in the course material;
4. Adapt teaching strategies to the needs of students.

Appendix 1 (Dean Wheeler's "Excellent Communication Skills: A Checklist" provides further detail on the role of good communication skills in teaching performance.)

## Effective assessment

Successful teachers:

1. Assess student learning fairly and accurately;
2. Provide clear, constructive and timely feedback;
3. Adhere to the Faculty of Management Professor-Student Contract on Academic Integrity available at [http://management.dal.ca/academic\\_integrity/fom\\_policy/A\\_Professor-Student\\_.php](http://management.dal.ca/academic_integrity/fom_policy/A_Professor-Student_.php)
4. Link assessment to learning outcomes;
5. Provide students the opportunity to learn and practice tasks before being evaluated.

## Self-reflexivity

Successful teachers:

1. Regularly re-assess their teaching methods and activities;
2. Participate in professional development for teaching improvement.

## Reason for Policy

The Faculty of Management Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion recognize that teaching in this faculty is characterized by diversity; the Faculty of Management offers many different types of classes of different sizes and at different levels. Thus, the Guidelines state:

*The major tasks of the instructor lie primarily in imparting the basic concepts, principles, and theories of his or her field of specialization; in imparting a range of intellectual, professional skills; and also in imparting appropriate professional values. Furthermore, the instructor's effectiveness is evidenced by his or her ability to stimulate the intellectual interest and operational capacity of his or her students.... Teaching includes lectures, seminars, laboratories, tutorials, and field instruction, supervision and co-ordination. It also extends to less formal teaching situations, such as counselling students and directing graduate student research, theses, and in the practicum.*

In keeping with these broad Guidelines, any Faculty policy on teaching quality must also be broad enough

- (1) to allow diverse professors to thrive and to foster development in teaching across the whole career span, and
- (2) to consider appropriate assessment and evaluation of teaching.

This policy is intended to apply to all professors teaching in the Faculty of Management, whether on Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) or other appointments, except where otherwise noted.

## **Defining Evidence of Teaching Quality**

Teaching is a complex task and the formal evaluation of teaching should be based on evidence from multiple sources and over sustained periods of time.

### **Evidence from students**

- Student Rating of Instruction (SRI) scores
- Signed qualitative comments.
- Emails or signed letters sent to program/school administrators.

### **Evidence from peers**

- Peer review of the teaching dossier (check for alignment of teaching philosophy, syllabi, objectives, sample assignments, etc.)

### **Evidence from the teacher him/herself**

- Annual reports.
- Annual review meetings with school director:
  - Completion of yearly teacher self-evaluation.
  - Discussion of teacher self-evaluation.
- Teaching dossier, which should include:
  - Statement of teaching philosophy
  - Sample assignments
  - Sample syllabi
  - Student Rating of Instruction results
  - Reflection on Student Rating of Instruction results

## Procedures

In addition to formal evaluation processes, the Faculty of Management should reinforce the commitment to continuous improvement and formative development in teaching performance for each professor throughout his or her career. Evidence from both self-assessment and SRI (Student Rating of Instruction) results are valuable sources of data in our efforts to improve teaching effectiveness. In these efforts, it is essential that a supportive climate in which development can thrive be maintained.

In terms of self-assessment, each professor with a DFA appointment should have an annual review meeting with his or her school director or designate to discuss teaching performance as well as research and service. An integral part of the discussion of teaching performance can be an annual teaching self-evaluation (see Appendix 2), in which the professor is encouraged to reflect on his or her teaching performance over the past year and to identify possible goals for improvement or strategies for support. This meeting is an opportunity to acknowledge successful teaching performance as well as to identify areas for further improvement. Written reports of each annual review meeting should be filed in the office of the school director.

In addition to self-assessment, the SRI system provides the most commonly available source of feedback on which to base development efforts. School directors must interpret SRI scores in the context of several important variables (the size of the class, the level of the class, whether the class is required or elective, the professor's level of experience in general and with the specific class in particular). It is therefore impossible to establish an objective "number" which denotes an acceptable (or unacceptable) level of teaching performance in all cases. It is also important to appreciate that the reliability of SRI data is based on consistency over time and raters, and that the results for a single course, while useful for developmental purposes, should not be used to judge overall teaching effectiveness.

## Proposed intervention protocol

However, there will be occasions when SRI scores or other evidence indicates a concern with teaching performance. In these instances, the following intervention protocol is proposed for all professors, whether on DFA, CUPE or other appointments:

### **Step 1: Initial concern:**

The school director should interpret the SRI scores and signed qualitative comments in light of the variables listed above. If the scores in a class suggest a cause for concern about teaching performance, the school director or designate should have an informal, non-evaluative discussion with the professor outside of the annual review meeting. No record of the meeting should become part of the professor's personnel file. During this discussion, the professor should be encouraged to reflect upon his or her teaching. It would be appropriate for the school director or designate to ask questions such as "How do you feel this class went? How would you interpret these data? Are there things you

would change if you teach this class again?" Appropriate resources should be offered, if needed.

If the school or program administrators receive an isolated signed letter or email of complaint from a student, that complaint should be followed up by the school director or designate, taking care to protect the identity of the student and, except in extraordinary circumstances, only after grades have been submitted. The complaint should be approached with an open-minded examination of possible explanations, and considered in the context of the larger body of SRI data. Appropriate resources should be offered, if needed.

### **Step 2: Repeat concern or more serious concern:**

If

- a) a professor has poor teaching scores in all classes in one term; and/or
- b) a professor has poor teaching scores in a particular class over two consecutive offerings of the class; and/or
- c) the school/program director receives signed letters or emails from several students expressing concerns with the professor's teaching,

the school director or designate should meet with the professor to identify and discuss reasons for these outcomes and to make a professional development plan for addressing the issues identified.

Developmental strategies could include some or all of the following:

- a) Mentoring. The mentor could be:
  - a colleague from within the school;
  - the program director;
  - a staff member from the Dalhousie Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT also provides a confidential peer consultation program).
- b) Attending workshops or participating in other training offered by CLT or other appropriate units or organizations.
- c) Attending a conference related to teaching performance and strategies.
- d) Observing another professor's class(es).
- e) Other strategies, as appropriate.

### **Step 3: No improvement or no compliance:**

If there is no observable improvement in SRI scores in the following year or if there is no follow-up with the recommended professional development strategies, the professor should be referred to the Dean for further discussion of teaching improvement strategies.

### **Recognition for Excellent Teachers**

Professors whose teaching reflects particularly high levels of achievement should be acknowledged by a formal letter from the school director, a copy of which should be kept in the personnel file. Professors whose teaching is consistently excellent should also be recognized through nominations for faculty and university teaching awards (see Appendix 3).

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Excellent Communication Skills – A Checklist (Dean Wheeler)

Observe the communications-related components of the Professor-Student Contract of the Faculty of Management (latest version posted at [http://management.dal.ca/academic\\_integrity/fom\\_policy/A\\_Professor-Student\\_.php](http://management.dal.ca/academic_integrity/fom_policy/A_Professor-Student_.php))

Engage students through excellence in communicating ideas and enthusiasm for the subject, in line with course design.

Be able to present lecture-style, rich-content teaching when this is consistent with the learning outcomes of the class.

Be able to engage students in a range of learning strategies other than lecture where these modes of learning are consistent with the learning outcomes for the class.

Set a professional tone in all communications in and out of the classroom.

Respond promptly to emails from students and administrators (within 2-3 days of receipt).

Be available for office hours at least two hours per week.

Be able to use BLS competently and post grades correctly and electronically in Banner in a timely manner, and within University guidelines.

Be able to explain to students the expectations and grading criteria for assignments, quizzes and examinations.

Be able to explain clearly to students why they have received a given grade on any assignment or quiz.

## Appendix 2: Teacher Self-Evaluation

Each professor in the Faculty of Management should complete this self-evaluation annually, in advance of his or her annual review meeting with his or her school director or designate. The completed self-evaluation can form the basis for a discussion of teaching performance during the annual review meeting.

	<b>Examples/evidence of how I meet these criteria</b>	<b>I would be interested in the following type of support in this area...</b>
<p><b>Leadership...</b></p> <p>I motivate students to learn;</p> <p>I actively engage students in the learning process using participatory approaches;</p> <p>I demonstrate enthusiasm for the class material and for teaching;</p> <p>I demonstrate genuine concern for student learning;</p> <p>I am approachable and respectful of students.</p>		
<p><b>Good communication...</b></p> <p>I set clear aims, goals and objectives for learning outcomes;</p> <p>I facilitate student-professor communication both inside and outside of class;</p> <p>I stimulate student interest in the course material;</p> <p>I adapt teaching strategies to the needs of students.</p>		

<p><b>Effective assessment...</b></p> <p>I assess student learning fairly and accurately;</p> <p>I provide clear, constructive and timely feedback;</p> <p>I adhere to the Faculty of Management Professor-Student Contract on Academic Integrity available at <a href="http://management.dal.ca/academic_integrity/fom_policy/A_Professor-Student_.php">http://management.dal.ca/academic_integrity/fom_policy/A_Professor-Student_.php</a></p> <p>I link assessment to learning outcomes;</p> <p>I provide students the opportunity to practice tasks before being evaluated.</p>		
<p><b>Self-reflexivity...</b></p> <p>I regularly re-evaluate my teaching methods and activities;</p> <p>I participate in professional development for teaching improvement.</p>		

## **Appendix 3: Dalhousie University Teaching Awards**

### **University-wide awards**

Dalhousie Alumni Association Award of Excellence for Teaching (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c01.html>)

Dalhousie Sessional and Part-Time Instructor Awards of Excellence for Teaching (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c02.html>)

Educational Leadership Award (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c32.html>)

### **Faculty of Management Teaching Awards**

Faculty of Management Teaching Excellence Awards in Management Education (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c23a.html>)

Professor of the Year, School of Business Administration (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c23.html>)

Gordon Archibald Teaching Excellence Award (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c22.html>)

### **Regional and National Teaching Awards**

Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) Distinguished Teacher Awards (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c35.html>)

Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) Educational Leadership Awards (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c35.html>)

3M/ Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) Teaching Awards (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c36.html>)

Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) Pierre de Celles Award for Excellence in Teaching (see <http://learningandteaching.dal.ca/celeb/c40.html>)

## Related Information

**Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA) Collective Agreement**, available at <http://humanresources.dal.ca/dfa/index.htm>

**CUPE 3912 Collective Agreement with Dalhousie University**, available at [http://www.3912.cupe.ca/Collective\\_Agreement](http://www.3912.cupe.ca/Collective_Agreement)

**Faculty of Management Professor-Student Contract on Academic Integrity** available at [http://management.dal.ca/academic\\_integrity/fom\\_policy/A\\_Professor-Student\\_.php](http://management.dal.ca/academic_integrity/fom_policy/A_Professor-Student_.php)