

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.

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 all 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 those who teach in the Faculty of Management, whether on Dalhousie Faculty Association (DFA), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) or other appointments, except where otherwise noted.

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. Make appropriate use of technology to inform and engage students;
5. Communicate clearly with students and the school director in the event of cancelled classes¹;
6. Adapt teaching strategies to the needs of students, recognizing that undergraduate, graduate, and mid-career students have different needs and require different teaching approaches.

(Appendix 1 “Excellent Communication Skills: A Checklist” provides further detail on the role of good communication skills in teaching performance.)

¹ All instructors are expected to teach every class for which they have been contracted. If an emergency arises and a class must be cancelled, it is the instructor's responsibility to contact both their school director, to explain why a class must be cancelled and to provide details of how the class topic will be covered, and to contact the students (through email, BbLearn, etc., along with arranging for a paper notice on the classroom door).

Effective course design

Successful teachers:

1. Establish learning outcomes that highlight a range of skill types and varying levels of ability appropriate to the course;
2. Devise learning activities that provide students with active opportunities to practice the required skills and to engage with the material in preparation for evaluation;
3. Create assessment tools that enable students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of the course in meaningful ways.

Effective assessment

Successful teachers:

1. Link assessment to learning outcomes;
2. Use a balance of assessment tools (including appropriate qualitative/quantitative tools), and ensure that overall assessment structure effectively assesses learning outcomes, as set out in the course syllabus;
3. Provide students the opportunity to learn and practice tasks before being evaluated;
4. 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;
5. Assess student learning fairly and accurately;
6. Provide clear, constructive and timely feedback;
 - i. To ensure that feedback is useful in improving student performance, it should be provided as promptly as possible, ideally before the student submits a subsequent assignment. Ideally, students should receive some graded feedback within the first third of the course. During the term assignments should be graded and returned to students within two weeks of submission.

- ii. To make instructor expectations clear, rubrics should be used to provide informative feedback to students. Grading rubrics should be provided to students as part of the assignment template.

Self-reflexivity

Successful teachers:

1. Regularly re-assess their teaching methods and activities;
2. Seek opportunities to obtain informal feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching (such as informal midterm course reviews and informal classroom observations by colleagues);
3. Participate in professional development for teaching improvement.

Appendix 2 provides some resources for informal midterm evaluations.

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, of which the following are examples.

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 and approaches, syllabi, and responses to SRI feedback).
- Informal classroom observations by colleagues.

Evidence from the teacher

- Annual reports.
- Annual review meetings with school director or delegate:
 - 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 (SRI) results
- Reflection on Student Rating of Instruction (SRI) results.

(See Teaching Dossier resource links provided by the Centre for Learning and Teaching at <http://www.dal.ca/dept/clt/services/Dossiers/Resources.html>)

Developing Teaching Excellence

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.

Recognition for Excellent Teachers

1. 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.
2. Professors whose teaching is recognized as excellent should be encouraged to mentor their colleagues and faculty members who are developing as teachers should be encouraged to seek out mentors.
3. Professors whose teaching is consistently excellent should also be recognized through nominations for faculty and university teaching awards (see Appendix 3).

The Role of the Annual Review Meeting

1. 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.
2. An integral part of the discussion of teaching performance should be an annual Teaching Self-Evaluation (see Appendix 3), 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.
3. In addition to self-assessment, the SRI system provides the most commonly available source of feedback on which to base development efforts. School directors 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, and 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. The reliability of SRI data is based on consistency over time, and the results for a single course, while useful for developmental purposes, do not necessarily reflect overall teaching effectiveness.

4. Professors are encouraged to participate in events and activities such as teaching workshops and conferences (such as the annual Dalhousie conference on Teaching and Learning organized by CLT) and to share their innovative teaching strategies, either through workshops and/or conference sessions or by posting to the Dalhousie Idea Bank blog (<http://www.dal.ca/dept/DALVision/idea-bank.html>).
5. Written reports of each annual review meeting should be filed in the office of the school director.

Intervention protocol guidelines

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.

Approved by Faculty Council, July 22, 2009
Revised October 30, 2013

Appendices

Appendix 1: Excellent Communication Skills – A Checklist²

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)

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.

² Prepared by David Wheeler, Dean of Faculty of Management, 2006-2009

Appendix 2: Sample Midterm Evaluations³

Summative vs Formative Evaluations

The Dalhousie Student Ratings of Instruction Program is a formal process in which student ratings of instruction data are used for administrative purposes in the summative evaluation of teaching performance. Summative evaluations are concerned with the overall quality of teaching and so the data collected focuses on those teacher behaviours that are correlated with the desirable outcomes for students. Formative evaluations of teaching are concerned with the on-going development of teaching and are conducted by individual instructors to explore how the learning process might be best facilitated. Formative evaluations are conducted while the course is still on-going. They usually focus on specific elements of teaching and learning rather than being concerned with the overall performance.

Why conduct mid-term evaluations?

Mid-term evaluations are formative evaluations and allow you to address problems and difficulties while the course is on-going. By asking detailed questions, you will receive specific feedback from students on specific items for improvement as well as communicating what you are doing well. Students will often give more extensive feedback in mid-term than end-of-term evaluations because the outcomes will directly affect them. Changes can be implemented and you will be able to compare and contrast the students' original response in the mid-term evaluations with the end-of-term evaluations.

How to design mid-term evaluations?

You can't address all aspects of the teaching and learning process in one questionnaire. Consider three or four aspects of your course that you would like students to comment upon. Your choices do not have to focus only on problem areas; ask questions about what is going well, too. Make sure your questions are clearly worded and open-ended. Avoid questions that result in a yes or no response.

Distributing your mid-term evaluations

Ask students to fill out your questionnaire at the beginning of class rather than at the end of class when they are in a hurry to get to their next class. You should leave the room while they respond to the questionnaire and emphasize that they should not sign the form. Make sure you explain the purpose of the questionnaire to your students, both orally and in a brief written synopsis at the start of the questionnaire. Express your interest in knowing their opinion about what is working and what is not working for them. Have a student collect the completed questionnaires and place them in an envelope.

³ Prepared by Suzanne Le-May Sheffield, Director, Centre for Learning and Teaching

Responding to your mid-term evaluations

When you read your students' mid-term evaluations, consider the big picture. What are the general trends in the feedback? There may be some items that are impossible to change mid-way through the course, but you should respond to at least one major concern as the course is still on-going. If you conduct mid-term evaluations and then fail to respond to students' concerns, you will undermine your own credibility with your students.

Share the general results of the mid-term evaluations with your students. Indicate to them how you will address significant problems or concerns. Alternatively, you might ask the class to vote on how certain aspects of the course should be changed or enhanced. Students will usually be impressed with the fact that you have taken the time to consider their concerns and to address them immediately.

Sample mid-term evaluation tools can be found at:

Mid-Term Evaluation Questions

<http://www.princeton.edu/mcgraw/library/for-faculty/midcourseevals/Mid-term-Evaluation-Questions.pdf>

Feedback Forms

http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/citl/teaching/evaluations/hardcopy_survey.htm

Incorporating Mid-Term Course Evaluations

<http://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/midterm-evaluations>

Appendix 3: Teacher Self-Evaluation

All those who teach in the Faculty of Management should complete this self-evaluation annually, in advance of their annual review meeting with their school director or designate. The completed self-evaluation can form the basis for a discussion of teaching performance during the annual review meeting.

	Examples/evidence of how I meet these criteria	I would be interested in the following type of support in this area...
<p>Leadership...</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>Good communication...</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 make appropriate and effective use of technology;</p> <p>I communicate clearly in the event of a cancelled class;</p> <p>I adapt teaching strategies to the needs of students.</p> <p>Effective course design....</p>		

<p>I establish learning outcomes that highlight a range of skill types and varying levels of ability appropriate to the course;</p> <p>I devise learning activities that provide students active opportunities to practice the required skills and to engage with the material in preparation for evaluation;</p> <p>I create assessment tools that enable students to demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes of the course in meaningful ways.</p>		
<p>Effective assessment...</p> <p>I link assessment to learning outcomes;</p> <p>I use a variety of appropriate assessment tools;</p> <p>I provide opportunities to learn and practice tasks before being evaluated;</p> <p>I 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</p> <p>I assess students fairly;</p> <p>I provide timely and constructive feedback.</p>		
<p>Self-reflexivity...</p> <p>I regularly re-evaluate my teaching methods and activities;</p> <p>I seek opportunities to obtain informal feedback on my teaching;</p> <p>I participate in professional development for teaching improvement.</p>		

Appendix 4: Dalhousie University Teaching Awards

University-wide awards

Dalhousie Alumni Association Award of Excellence for Teaching (see <http://www.dal.ca/dept/clt/services/Awards/DalWide/DAAAward.html>)

Dalhousie Sessional and Part-Time Instructor Awards of Excellence for Teaching (see <http://www.dal.ca/dept/clt/services/Awards/DalWide/SessandPT.html>)

Educational Leadership Award (see <http://www.dal.ca/dept/clt/services/Awards/DalWide/ela.html>)

Faculty of Management Teaching Awards

Faculty of Management Teaching Excellence Awards in Management Education (see <http://www.dal.ca/faculty/management/rsb/about/awards-and-accreditation/faculty-awards.html>)

Professor of the Year, School of Business Administration

Gordon Archibald Teaching Excellence Award (see <http://www.dal.ca/faculty/management/rsb/about/awards-and-accreditation/faculty-awards.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>)

STLHE College Sector Educator Award (see <http://www.stlhe.ca/awards/college-sector-educators-award/>)

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

Faculty of Management Professor-Student Contract on Academic Integrity available at http://management.dal.ca/academic_integrity/fom_policy/A_Professor-Student_.php