



RESOURCE GUIDE FOR TEACHING ACADEMIC COURSES AT UCALGARY

Teaching is a major university function. The purpose of teaching is to facilitate learning and to guide the next generation of learners on their educational paths.

Approaches to teaching and learning should be pedagogically informed and grounded in a clearly articulated teaching, supervision, and/or mentorship philosophy, as applicable. Teaching effectiveness and expertise are characterized by high-impact teaching and learning strategies to improve student learning and include a demonstrated ability to apply pedagogically informed teaching and learning experiences.

Excerpt from GFC Academic Staff Criteria & Processes Handbook, Section 1.3

✓ **Connect with your Academic Lead**

Connect with the academic leader who oversees the course(s) and program in which you are teaching (Dept. Head, Associate Dean, Program Director and/or Course-Coordinator) depending on the academic unit – ask about background information on the course, materials from past course offerings. Seek their input on building a support network of colleagues with whom you can connect as you prepare for the course.

✓ **Build a Teaching Support Network**

Build connections with experienced course instructors within the program in which you are teaching. Connect with the academic leader(s) in your unit to help identify teaching mentors. Seek guidance and advice from mentors who can provide insights into teaching practices specific to the program. Book a consultation with staff from the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning for additional ideas on mentorship and support.

✓ **Familiarize Yourself with University Policies, Regulations and Resources**

Take the time to familiarize yourself with the university's policies, procedures, and guidelines, such as those in the Academic Calendar, Academic Staff Criteria & Processes Handbook, and Code of Conduct, Copyright, Mental Health, Gender and Sexual-Based Violence Support, Student Success Centre and Student Conduct Office. Explore the various resources available to support teaching and learning, such as the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, Libraries and Cultural Resources and through your academic unit.

✓ **Review the Course and Program Requirements**

Review the program requirements, program-level learning outcomes and learning outcomes specific to the course(s) you are teaching. Familiarize yourself with any accreditation or professional standards relevant to the program in which you are teaching. Review course outline(s) for courses you are teaching and ensure they are aligned with Course Outline Regulations in the Academic Calendar and check out the resources for course outlines. Course outlines must be approved prior to the start of term by Associate Dean or Department Head, as determined by the program in which you are teaching.

✓ Design for Student-Centered Teaching

Student-centered teaching prioritizes the needs, interests, and active involvement of students in the learning process in a positive learning environment. In student-centered teaching, the focus shifts from the teacher as the sole source of knowledge to the students as active participants in learning. Encourage students to take ownership of their learning and provide opportunities for reflection. Encourage students to utilize resources offered through the Student Success Centre and Student Wellness. Consider partnering with the Thrive Priority Support Network for supporting students facing academic challenges.

Establish Clear Communication & Transparent Expectations

Set up effective communication channels with your students, such as emails and course announcements. Communicate your course policies and guidelines to ensure students are well-informed, and expectations are transparent. Articulate in your course outline dates, timelines and weights for assessments, and what students need to do if they miss course components. Refer to the Attendance section and Assessment section in the Academic Calendar when developing course policies for absences.

Utilize Assessment Practices for Learning

Ensure assessment strategies align with the learning outcomes. Provide timely and constructive feedback through informal and formal assessment of learning to guide students' learning and development. Ensure assessment practices are aligned with the Assessment and Examinations regulations outlined in the Academic Calendar.

Promote Academic Integrity

Promoting academic integrity is an ongoing effort that requires a combination of education, awareness, and proactive measures. Familiarize yourself with the Student Academic Misconduct policy and procedures and academic integrity support resources for students. Clearly articulate the importance of and expectations for academic integrity with your students in your course outline and during class sessions.

✓ Engage in Professional Learning Opportunities

Stay informed about upcoming events and resources that can enhance your teaching skills and knowledge. Take advantage of professional development opportunities offered through the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, including workshops, conferences, and teaching-focused programs. Ask academic leaders in your faculty for updates on professional development opportunities available.

Foster Inclusive, Equitable and Accessible Learning Environments

Create an inclusive, accessible and anti-racist learning environment that respects and values diversity and ensures equitable opportunities for all students. Use inclusive language, incorporate diverse perspectives and examples, and be mindful of cultural sensitivity. Ensure anti-racist teaching strategies are utilized and incorporate Universal Design for Learning approaches in your teaching. Support students requiring academic accommodations and seek support from Student Accessibility Services.

Leverage Technology Tools and Resources

Explore the technology tools and resources provided by the university, including our learning management system (D2L Brightspace), and platforms such as YuJa, TopHat, Zoom and Leganto. Check out resources on using technology provided by the Taylor Institute to learn more about utilizing technology effectively in your teaching. Consider reaching out to a Learning Technology Coach for support.

Develop a Safety Plan

Review the safety procedures and resources so you know how to respond if a situation arises in your classroom or learning environment that is concerning or poses an immediate threat. Develop a proactive plan for addressing disruptive or harmful behaviors in advance, designed for your specific course context. Connect with the Student at Risk Team for support if needed.

✓ Seek Feedback and Reflect on Your Teaching

Regularly seek feedback from students to gain insights into their learning experiences and identify areas for improvement. Ask a teaching mentor or other colleagues to observe your teaching to help reflect on your teaching practices, adapt as needed, and stay up to date with current research and best practices in teaching and learning.