

# The Nomination Dossier Guide

Your nomination dossier is your opportunity to tell the story of your teaching — how it has evolved, what values guide it, and the impact it has had on students, colleagues, and the wider learning community. The dossier is more than a list of activities or accomplishments. It is a reflective narrative that combines experience, evidence, and insight to show how your teaching fosters meaningful learning.

The dossier should make a persuasive case for distinguished teaching, drawing on a range of evidence from students, peers, community members, Elder(s), Knowledge Keepers, and exemplary teaching materials. When presenting evidence, include short annotations or explanations that help readers understand how each piece of evidence connects to the award criteria.

## DOSSIER CONTENTS

**Nomination packages are limited to 25 pages and must be submitted as a single PDF document via email to the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning.**

1. **Cover page:** Mandatory, please use the online form provided on the award page. Not counted in 25-page limit.
2. **Table of contents:** Not mandatory but are appreciated. Not counted in 25-page limit.
3. **Nomination Letter:** A strong nomination letter acts as an *executive summary* of the dossier. It provides reviewers with a clear roadmap, highlighting the nominee's key contributions under each criterion and showing where supporting evidence can be found. The best letters vividly bring the nominee's teaching to life, offering a well-rounded view of their impact. This letter is essential in setting the tone and framing the story of the nominee's teaching. (*Examples may be requested by email to awards\_gmctl@usask.ca*)
4. **Evidence of Teaching & Learning (see four criteria):** Each criterion is equally important. Nominees are encouraged to present meaningful and relevant evidence across all four to illustrate their holistic contributions to teaching and learning. See the detailed criteria descriptions and rubric below.
5. **Achievements:** Provide an annotated list, table, or abbreviated CV highlighting major achievements in teaching, service, and research related to teaching and learning. Examples may include course development, instructional innovation, leadership in teaching initiatives, presentations, or publications in teaching and learning. (*Examples may be requested by email to awards\_gmctl@usask.ca*)
6. **Letters of Support:** Letters should speak directly to the award criteria, providing specific examples of the nominee's influence on learning and teaching. These letters are included in the 25-page limit. Packages may include up to maximum of four letters written by:
  - Students (not currently enrolled or supervised),
  - Colleagues or peers, and/or
  - Indigenous or community members.

### Important Formatting Information

1. The dossier must **not exceed 25 pages**.
  - Cover pages and dividers are excluded *unless* they include text, quotes, or images—then they count toward the 25 pages.
  - The Nomination Letter, Achievements section, and Letters of Support *are included* in the 25 pages.
  - The Adjudication Committee will consider hyperlinks, but each counts as **three pages** toward the total.
  - Dossiers exceeding 25 pages will not be reviewed.
2. Use a **standard 12-point font** with one-inch margins.
3. Number each page clearly.

## ABOUT THE AWARD DOSSIER AND VOICES IN THE NARRATIVE

The strongest dossiers weave together **multiple voices and perspectives** into a coherent narrative about teaching. While all sections contribute to a holistic picture of excellence, each invites a slightly different kind of reflection and evidence:

- **Criterion 1 – Teaching Philosophy Statement**

This section should be written in your own voice. It is a personal reflection on who you are as a teacher — your values, beliefs, and goals — and how these are expressed in your teaching. It should sound like you and give readers an authentic sense of the environment you create for your students.

- **Criteria 2–4 – Evidence of Teaching Excellence, Continuous Improvement, and Leadership**

These sections may include multiple perspectives and sources of evidence. You are encouraged to integrate feedback and examples from students, colleagues, or collaborators, as well as institutional or community data that demonstrate impact.

Quotations, testimonials, peer feedback, and project descriptions can appear alongside your own reflections. Your role is to **interpret and connect** these voices, showing how they link to your teaching philosophy and how they have shaped learning and growth. Together, these components tell a holistic story of teaching — one that highlights both personal reflection and collective evidence. The most compelling dossiers show not only *what* you do, but *what you learn, change, and inspire* through your teaching.

### Criterion #1: Teaching Philosophy

**Guiding Question:** *“Who am I as a teacher, and what space do I create for my students?”*

Your teaching philosophy offers a personal and authentic reflection on who you are as an educator — the values, beliefs, and experiences that shape your approach to teaching and learning. It is the foundation for the rest of your nomination dossier, helping readers understand how your teaching choices and practices reflect your underlying philosophy.

This section should be written in **your own voice**. It is an opportunity to speak directly to the adjudication committee, offering insight into how you think about teaching, how you create space for student learning, and what principles guide your decisions. The tone should be genuine and reflective rather than formal or academic; reviewers are looking for *your perspective*, not a literature review.

Your teaching philosophy can include examples or stories that show your beliefs in action, illustrating how your values come to life in the classroom, lab, community, or online learning environment. These reflections help the committee understand how your approach impacts students and connects to the evidence shared elsewhere in the dossier.

#### Suggestions for Reflection

- **Beliefs and Values:** Reflect on your core beliefs about teaching and learning. What matters most to you as an educator? How have your personal, disciplinary, or scholarly experiences shaped these beliefs?
- **Teaching Strategies and Practices:** Describe how your values and beliefs influence the way you teach. How do they shape your approach to designing courses, engaging students, or assessing learning?
- **Impact on Students:** Consider how your teaching philosophy helps create inclusive, supportive, and engaging learning spaces. How do your teaching choices support student learning, growth, or belonging?
- **Growth and Future Goals:** Reflect on how your philosophy has evolved over time. What have you learned about yourself as an educator, and what areas of growth or change do you continue to pursue?
- **Connection to Evidence:** Briefly note how your philosophy aligns with the evidence presented in later sections (e.g., course design examples, student feedback, innovations). This helps create a clear through-line across the dossier.

## Criterion #2: Teaching Excellence

**Guiding Question:** “How does my teaching impact student learning?”

This section invites you to illustrate how your teaching philosophy comes to life through your day-to-day practice and how your approach supports meaningful learning for students.

Teaching excellence can look very different across disciplines — from fieldwork and performance studios to clinics, laboratories and online courses. What matters most is showing how your teaching *helps students learn*, and how your decisions as an educator are intentional, thoughtful, and connected to your philosophy.

The adjudication committee will be looking for evidence that demonstrates quality and intentionality across four interconnected areas of teaching practice:

1. **Learning Environment** – How you create a welcoming, inclusive, and engaging space for students.
  2. **Course Design** – How you plan and organize learning experiences, including outcomes, materials, and structure.
  3. **Instruction** – How you teach, guide, and interact with students during learning.
  4. **Assessment** – How you design and use assessments to promote and evaluate learning.
- You don’t need to cover all four equally — most strong dossiers focus on two or three areas that best reflect your strengths, innovations, and context.

Suggested structure to display evidence of teaching excellence:

1. **Teaching Context:** Provide a brief overview of your teaching context, including course types, class sizes, and your teaching responsibilities.
2. A description of 2–3 **teaching approaches or innovations and creativity in pedagogy and assessment** that reflect your philosophy and goals.
3. A short **explanation** of why you chose these approaches and how they support learning in your context.
4. Examples of **implementation** (course design, instructional strategies, activities, or assessments).
5. **Evidence** showing how these approaches influenced student learning, engagement, or development. *See examples below.*

### \*Examples of approaches to teaching excellence may include:

- **Course Design Innovations:** Share how you structured a course, built connections between theory and practice, or aligned learning outcomes and assessments.
- **Learning Environment:** Describe strategies you use to create a respectful, inclusive, and motivating classroom or online space.
- **Innovative Course Activities and Materials:** Excerpt relevant materials or assignments, explaining how they illuminate aspects of your teaching philosophy. Example: A critical-thinking assignment that reflects your values and has an impact on student learning.
- **Teaching Approaches:** Highlight creative, interactive, or experiential learning methods (for example, community-engaged projects, problem-based learning, or land-based education).
- **Assessment Design:** Excerpts of assignments, rubrics, or assessment methods that foster deeper learning.
- **Land-Based Learning:** Highlight instructional activities that use the land as a context for learning, helping students connect with Indigenous perspectives, sustainability, or experiential learning.
- **Innovative Lecturing:** Showcase how you’ve enhanced the traditional lecture format with dynamic methods such as interactive discussions, multimedia tools, or storytelling to foster student engagement and active learning.
- **Inclusive, Relevant, and Accessible Content:** Demonstrate the use of resources, UDL principles, and activities that remove barriers and respect diverse perspectives, ensuring all students have equitable access to learning.
- **Learning Charter Integration:** Explain how your strategies incorporate themes like Indigenization, sustainability, inclusivity, and interdisciplinary teaching (see box below for our Learning Charter)

**Our USask Learning Charter in Action** - Examples might demonstrate how the nominee integrates strategic themes from [Our Learning Charter](#) into their teaching, by highlighting:

- **Indigenization:** Include instructional activities that address or one or more of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action or incorporate aspects of [ohpahotân | oohpaahotaan](#). For example, integrating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum or use of Indigenous educational practices such as a focus on building relationships with and among students, competency-based outcomes or experiential learning.
- **Assessment:** Provide examples of [authentic assessments](#) aligned with the learning outcomes and accommodates a variety of learners (e.g. Universal Design for Learning)
- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity:** Showcase activities that create an inclusive learning environment, such as incorporating diverse perspectives in discussions or course readings.
- **Flexible Learning:** Highlight strategies that adapt to diverse student needs, such as hybrid or blended learning formats, flexible deadlines, or self-paced modules. For instance, providing multiple means of engagement, expression, and representation ensures accessibility for all students and fosters deeper learning.
- **Learning Technologies:** Highlight novel instructional activities that effectively support student learning, such as using new technologies or incorporating Generative AI.
- **Sustainability:** Highlight activities that contribute to a sustainable future, such as projects focused on environmental issues.
- **USask Student Competencies:** Provide examples of how your teaching aligns with or develops any of the six [USask Student Competencies](#).

#### **\*\*Demonstrate Impact**

- **Teaching Evaluations (SLEQ):** Summarized feedback reflecting improved student engagement or satisfaction.
  - SLEQ or other student evaluation data that has been collected and presented in an accessible manner, such as in a graph or chart is acceptable, as are sections of unabridged student comments from one class. Please do not include unannotated pages of raw data.
- **Learning Outcomes:** Examples of knowledge gains, pre- and post-test results, or performance improvements.
- **Peer Teaching Reviews:** Summaries from colleagues assessing the impact and effectiveness of your methods.
- **Student Achievement Data:** Evidence of improved grades, retention rates, or pass rates.
- **Longitudinal Impact:** Follow-up data showing students' success in later courses or alumni feedback on long-term skill retention.
- **Qualitative Feedback:** Student reflections, testimonials, or exit survey excerpts that highlight personal growth and course impact.
- **Awards or Recognition:** Teaching awards, grants, or honors received specifically for innovative or impactful teaching practices.

### Criterion #3: Continuous Improvement and Professional Growth

**Guiding Question:** *“How do I grow and evolve as an educator?”*

This section invites you to reflect on your ongoing growth as a teacher – how you continue to learn, adapt, and strengthen your practice over time. Teaching excellence is not static; it develops through reflection, experimentation, and learning from experience, feedback, and collaboration. Describe how you have intentionally engaged in activities—such as **professional development programs, scholarly inquiry, mentorship, peer feedback, or classroom experimentation**—to strengthen your teaching. Reflect on what prompted your learning (e.g., student feedback, challenges, new opportunities, collaboration), what you discovered, and how this learning has been integrated into your teaching practice.

A useful framework for this reflection might be: “I used to do this... I learned this (through a challenge, failure, opportunity, or feedback)... Now I do this”. Use this reflection to highlight how **intentional professional growth** has enhanced student learning, engagement, and your overall effectiveness as an educator.

#### Examples of evidence could include:

- Participation in **professional learning opportunities** (e.g., CUTL, GMCTL workshops, conferences, learning communities) and how these influenced your practice.
- **Peer review of teaching** or feedback from colleagues that informed changes to course design, assessment, or teaching strategies.
- **Student feedback** or learning analytics showing improvement or increased engagement following instructional changes.
- **Changes you have made** to your teaching — such as course redesigns, new instructional strategies, or improved assessments — and *why* you made them.
- **Results or impact** of those changes, such as improved student engagement, deeper learning, or more inclusive practices.
- **Scholarly engagement** with teaching and learning research (e.g., SoTL projects, presentations, publications, or applications of educational research).
- **Collaborative initiatives**—team teaching, mentorship, or curriculum development—that demonstrate shared learning and growth.
- **Reflective teaching statements, portfolios, or journals** that trace your evolving philosophy and practice over time.
- **Evidence of impact on others**, such as mentoring peers, contributing to faculty development, or leading discussions on teaching innovation.

## Criterion 4: Exemplify Leadership in Teaching & Learning

**Guiding Question:** "How do I lead, beyond my own hallway?"

This section invites you to show how your work in teaching and learning extends beyond your own courses and classrooms — how your leadership has contributed to the growth, innovation, and improvement of teaching practices more broadly. Leadership in teaching can take many forms, from mentoring and collaboration to shaping curriculum or influencing institutional change. Your goal is to demonstrate how your efforts have made a *wider impact* — how you have helped others teach more effectively, improved learning experiences at a program or institutional level, or advanced teaching and learning in your discipline or community.

### 1. Identify Leadership Beyond Your Own Hallway

Leadership may be expressed through activities such as:

- **Mentoring or supporting colleagues**, helping others enhance their teaching, whether through formal roles or informal collaboration.
- **Contributing to program or curriculum development** that strengthens student learning across multiple courses or departments.
- **Leading or participating in teaching and learning initiatives** that influence policy, practice, or culture at the institutional or disciplinary level.
- **Sharing your expertise** by presenting, publishing, or facilitating workshops on teaching innovation or evidence-informed practice.
- **Engaging communities beyond campus**, such as through partnerships, land-based learning collaborations, or projects that connect student learning to societal needs.
- **Advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)**, contributing new knowledge or perspectives that benefit peers across disciplines.

The common thread is that your influence reaches *beyond your own hallway* — meaning your teaching leadership has a ripple effect that supports others, strengthens programs, and contributes to the wider educational community.

### 2. Demonstrating Impact

To make your leadership visible, focus on the *difference* your work has made. You might describe:

- How your leadership has improved teaching practices, curriculum quality, or student learning across courses or programs.
- Ways you've built capacity for teaching excellence among colleagues or teaching assistants.
- How your ideas or practices have been adopted by others, shared more widely, or sustained over time.
- Recognition or outcomes that demonstrate lasting influence (for example, invitations, collaborations, institutional initiatives, or awards).

#### Examples of Evidence

Evidence may come from a variety of sources, such as:

- Testimonials or letters highlighting your mentorship and influence on others.
- Examples of collaborative projects or committee work that led to concrete improvements in teaching and learning.
- Records of workshops, talks, or presentations you've led for peers.
- Publications, conference proceedings, or SoTL projects showing how you share your expertise.
- Documentation of program-level changes, new policies, or resources you've helped to develop.
- Community feedback recognizing contributions to partnerships or experiential learning initiatives.

## AWARD DOSSIER RUBRIC

|                                                                                                                                  | Developing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Proficient                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Exemplary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <b>Criterion #1 - Teaching Philosophy Statement</b><br><i>Who am I as a teacher, and what space do I create for my students?</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows emerging insight into personal beliefs and values about teaching and learning.</li> <li>Shares early examples or stories that begin to illustrate their approach, but connections between beliefs and teaching practice are still developing.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly expresses values and beliefs about teaching and connects them to specific examples from practice.</li> <li>Uses reflection to show how philosophy guides choices in creating learning experiences that support student growth and engagement.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides an authentic, deeply reflective statement written in their own voice.</li> <li>Clearly articulates a coherent framework that links values, principles, and teaching practices, offering a compelling and personal picture of who they are as an educator and the learning environment they create.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Criterion #2 - Evidence of Teaching Excellence</b><br><i>How does my teaching impact student learning?</i>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describes teaching approaches across some areas of practice (such as learning environment, course design, instruction, or assessment) with limited connection to their teaching philosophy or goals.</li> <li>Mentions what is done in class or course design, but not why these choices were made or how they support learning. Provides limited or single-source evidence (e.g., one student evaluation or anecdote) with minimal interpretation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly explains two or three approaches across key areas of practice — for example, how courses are designed, how learning is supported in class, and how students are assessed — and connects these directly to teaching philosophy and student learning goals.</li> <li>Provides a clear rationale for choices, supported by multiple forms of evidence (e.g., course materials, peer or student feedback, learning data) that demonstrate positive results for student engagement or achievement.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates how teaching philosophy is fully enacted across all areas of practice — learning environment, course design, instruction, and assessment — in ways that are evidence-informed, innovative, inclusive, and responsive to learners.</li> <li>Provides multiple, complementary sources of evidence (e.g., student or alumni feedback, peer reviews, curriculum changes, or recognition) and interprets them to show meaningful, sustained impact on student learning, course quality, or program outcomes.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Criterion #3 - Continuous Improvement and Professional Growth</b><br><i>How do I grow and evolve as an educator?</i>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows openness to feedback and reflection as part of professional growth.</li> <li>Describes participation in professional learning and early efforts to apply new ideas in their teaching.</li> <li>Provides examples of how experiences or feedback have prompted initial changes, with some indication of benefit for student learning or engagement.</li> </ul>                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly explains how reflection, feedback, and professional development have guided purposeful improvements to teaching and learning.</li> <li>Connects learning experiences and/or collaboration to specific improvements in course design, teaching strategies, or assessment.</li> <li>Reflects on how teaching has evolved over time and how this growth contributes to student success.</li> </ul>                                                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates a thoughtful, well-informed approach to ongoing learning and improvement as an educator.</li> <li>Draws on relevant evidence or research to guide teaching choices and shows clear, sustained impact on student learning or course quality.</li> <li>Shares learning and insights through mentorship, presentations, scholarship, or leadership in teaching and learning. Reflects deeply on how continued growth and feedback have shaped professional identity and influence.</li> </ul>                         |
| <b>Criterion #4 - Exemplify Leadership in Teaching &amp; Learning</b><br><i>How do I lead, beyond my own hallway?</i>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributes to teaching and learning improvements within their department or program, showing emerging leadership potential.</li> <li>Demonstrates early impact on colleagues or curriculum, with growing reach beyond their own classroom.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leads or co-leads initiatives that enhance teaching and learning beyond their own department — such as curriculum renewal, mentorship, program design, or teaching innovation across departments, or disciplines.</li> <li>Demonstrates measurable improvements in teaching quality, collaboration, or student outcomes that extend beyond their immediate context.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrates influential leadership in teaching and learning that has a broad and sustained impact across the institution, discipline, or community.</li> <li>Leads significant initiatives or partnerships that shape educational practice, policy, or culture.</li> <li>Serves as a mentor, collaborator, or knowledge-sharer whose work inspires and supports others.</li> <li>Provides clear evidence of lasting contributions to teaching excellence beyond their own context.</li> </ul>                                  |