

Appalachian State University

College of Arts & Sciences

Teaching Excellence Statement and Policy

Appalachian State University views teaching as a core value and primary responsibility of its faculty. The College of Arts and Sciences expects all instructors to strive toward teaching excellence by facilitating and evoking transformational educational experiences for all students. Teaching excellence comprises three critical themes: maintaining professional expertise, implementing sound instructional strategies, and promoting an inclusive student-centered learning environment. Each theme is described below.

Instructors will exhibit **professional expertise** by demonstrating mastery of content knowledge and thorough understanding of how concepts are relevant to broader disciplinary or interdisciplinary contexts. They will continue to advance their subject matter expertise by maintaining engagement in new developments in the discipline or by making original contributions to the field in order to inform their classroom instruction. Their professionalism will be demonstrated through confident and appropriate presentation and communication skills in and out of the classroom.

Instructors will use **sound instructional strategies** to facilitate and enhance student learning. They will establish and communicate applicable student learning goals and objectives, and they will develop appropriate assessment tools to evaluate student learning and understanding. Instructors will provide a supportive and structured learning environment conducive to the understanding of complex ideas and concepts. They will use a variety of robust and effective instructional methods, materials, technologies, or activities applicable to student learning. They will strive to consistently enhance and improve their teaching strategies over time.

Instructors will promote an **inclusive student-centered learning environment** that encourages participation and engagement of all students. Understanding that students may have diverse lived experiences, skill levels and backgrounds, instructors will be transparent in their expectations for student success. They will commit to creating a learning environment that is accessible, sensitive, and relevant to a variety of student identities and demographics. Instructors will model methods that promote active processes of student self-reflection and evaluation to encourage continued academic growth.

Finally, to encourage the continuing evolution of teaching expertise, the three themes will be assessed using a comprehensive model determined by departments. This multifaceted approach will specifically incorporate feedback from students and from peers (in accordance with the procedures and intervals stipulated in the Faculty Handbook), as well as a self-evaluation that synthesizes and responds to all available constructive comments. Moreover, evaluations of teaching quality may include a review of classroom teaching methods (e.g., lectures, discussions), course materials (e.g., syllabus, assignments, activities), and assessments (e.g., exams, papers, presentations). Although specific parameters may vary across the College, departments shall have teaching and corresponding assessment policies in place that align with these themes.

(Approved by CAS Council, 2020.05.05)