

# Quality Teaching Initiative

## Project Management Tools

*High quality is not a finite quantity. It is limited only by our willingness to work for it and to make it a seamless part of what we do.* Dean James White

The Quality Teaching Initiative team offers these project management tools to help departmental committees develop new approaches to evaluating teaching. **While using these tools is not required, these suggestions can support faculty to develop comprehensive evaluation plans.** Departments will find specific requirements guidance in the [VCAC checklist](#) for dossier preparation. See also specific guidance on [Multiple Measures of Teaching](#) and [this working document](#) on University of Colorado policies regarding evaluation of instruction.

When departments use structured tools and processes to evaluate teaching, they facilitate more consistent, equitable evaluation for each instructor over time. Structured teaching evaluation using evidence also promotes continuous improvement. This is a living document; the suggestions are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. Whenever possible, we have linked directly to resources for your easy use and will continue to do so as QTI evolves. If you have questions, suggestions, or need help, contact Heidi Loshbaugh, [heidi.loshbaugh@colorado.edu](mailto:heidi.loshbaugh@colorado.edu), QTI Project Lead.

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# Readiness Questions for Launching the Quality Teaching Initiative (QTI) in Departments:

## Current Departmental Teaching Evaluation Processes

The QTI consultant and unit lead can use this document to initiate department meetings and set goals. Before your first QTI department meeting, please have each committee member answer these questions, which will get you started on creating a common understanding of current unit evaluation activities. **There are no right or wrong answers!** These responses will help you set goals.

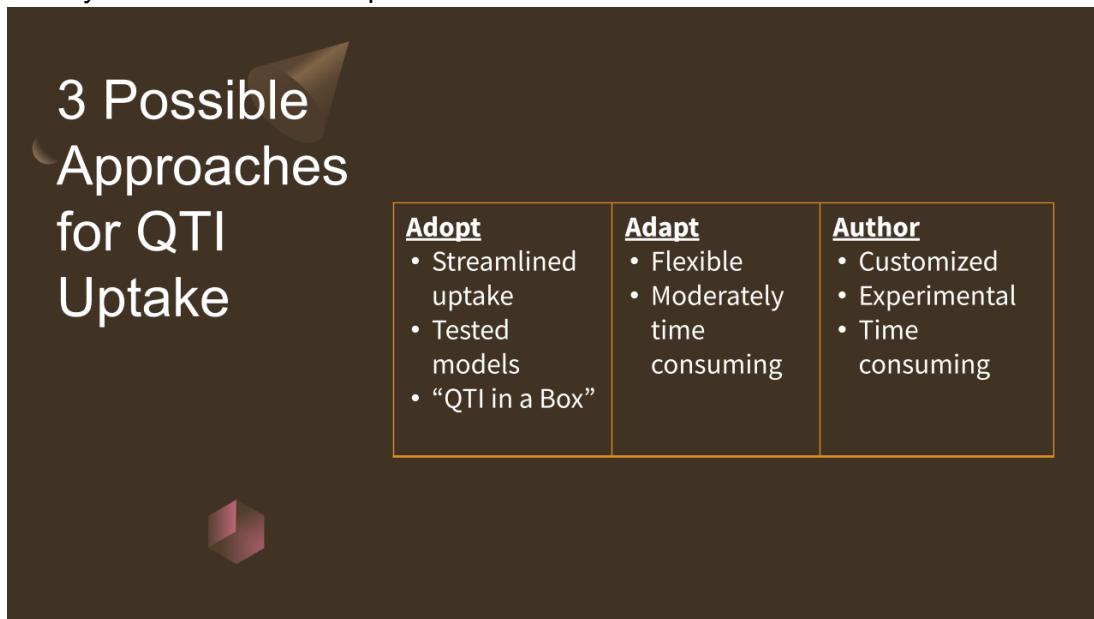
On a scale of 1-5, with 1 = Low and 5= High,

1. How familiar are you with your department's current process to evaluate instruction? 1-5
2. How well does your department currently recognize and/or reward teaching? 1-5
3. Are the recognitions and rewards appropriate for the effort that faculty dedicate to teaching? 1-5
4. Are you aware of any departmental initiatives that align with QTI?
  - a. professional development to address classroom challenges 1-5
  - b. strategies to create a more inclusive teaching focus 1-5
  - c. departmentally defined learning goals 1-5
  - d. assessment of student learning 1-5
  - e. others (open ended)
5. Does your department have instructions, templates, formats to guide faculty to prepare documents/dossiers for evaluation of teaching? 1-5
  - a. If not, would your department benefit from developing support structures as a part of the QTI? 1-5
  - b. If so, would your department be willing to share with other units? 1-5
6. How does your department continually improve the ways in which instruction is evaluated, recognized, and rewarded? (open ended)
7. What is working that you want to keep? (open ended)
8. What is broken that you want to fix? (open ended)

# Getting Started with QTI

## Phase I: Organizing

- ☐ Coordinate with your QTI consultant
- ☐ Convene meeting for introduction to QTI and resources
  - ☐ Complete “[Readiness Questions](#)” to understand current departmental processes
  - ☐ Identify gaps between current evaluation practices and QTI
- ☐ Create meeting schedule, agendas, and goals using sample [timeline](#)
- ☐ Identify initial mode of QTI uptake:



**3 Possible Approaches for QTI Uptake**

<u><b>Adopt</b></u>	<u><b>Adapt</b></u>	<u><b>Author</b></u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Streamlined uptake</li><li>• Tested models</li><li>• “QTI in a Box”</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flexible</li><li>• Moderately time consuming</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customized</li><li>• Experimental</li><li>• Time consuming</li></ul>

- ☐ Review [Sample QTI Rubric](#) with specific definitions of Teaching Quality as one example for a framework that could be produced or used in an academic unit.

## Phase II: Departmental Work Defining an Approach to QTI Evaluations

- ☐ Review available resources to identify specific tools to use or create
  - ☐ Three voices (evidence): Peer, Student, Self
  - ☐ Map evidence to department’s chosen framework (e.g., rubric)
- ☐ Establish processes for
  - ☐ Collecting evidence for each voice (e.g., How will peer reviews be conducted?)
  - ☐ Integrating evidence into evaluation (e.g., How will faculty map the evidence to the framework and produce the “case?”)
  - ☐ Integrating evidence/activities used for merit for use in RPT cases (i.e., How can the department reduce workload for faculty to document their activities?)

- ☐ Developing a cycle and approach for continuous improvement (e.g., Conduct review of evaluation activities every three years and address these questions:
  - ☐ What are we doing apropos evaluation of teaching?
  - ☐ How well is it working?
  - ☐ How do we know?
  - ☐ What do we need to do to make it better?)
- ☐ Continue check-ins with QTI consultant for resources and guidance
- ☐ Ensure alignment with A&S Priorities (see [Factors for QTI review](#) below)
- ☐ Ensure alignment with campus evaluation expectations ([VCAC checklist](#))
- ☐ Communicate regularly with department and other stakeholders
  - ☐ Share project status
  - ☐ Plan for stakeholder feedback during the process

### **Phase III: Finalizing and Adopting Approach**

- ☐ Review final draft approach with QTI consultant
- ☐ Submit recommendations to Chair/Exec Committee for review and authorization
- ☐ Seek departmental approval
  - ☐ Faculty vote
  - ☐ Identify departmental approval process for hand off to divisional dean
- ☐ Update department documents, such as
  - ☐ Bylaws
  - ☐ Website
  - ☐ New hire packets
- ☐ Identify and schedule training and cycle of training for affected personnel

# A & S Factors for QTI Plan Review

This checklist identifies components of a complete QTI Plan and is based on [A&S Policy on Teaching Quality and Associated Evaluation](#)

- ☐ □ Clear departmental standards and expectations
- ☐ □ Activities, timeline, & sequence for a complete evaluation cycle (e.g. 3-year cycles)
- ☐ □ A scholarly framework aligned with discipline-specific culture, content, and practices
- ☐ □ Tools and processes to evaluate inclusive teaching
- ☐ □ Tools and processes to evaluate the instructor's goals for students
- ☐ □ Tools and processes to evaluate scholarly teaching
- ☐ □ Tools and processes for specific, actionable feedback for faculty on their teaching
- ☐ □ Tools and process (if not already described) for multiple measures
  - ☐ □ Use of FCQs & Student Voice
  - ☐ □ Use of Peer Voice
  - ☐ □ Use of Self Voice
- ☐ □ Clear differentiation between levels of accomplishment (e.g. "meritorious" versus "excellent" teaching) as well as reappointment, tenure, and promotion
- ☐ □ *Starting at hire*, routine, publicly available, and easily accessible *communication activities* with faculty describing evaluation processes and timelines
- ☐ □ Alignment with the [VCAC checklist](#) for Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure (RPT)
- ☐ □ Documentation for submission to the dean (*specific guidelines anticipated Jan 2022*)
  - ☐ □ Relevant bylaws revisions noting RPT *and* merit, including definitions for each level of accomplishment (e.g. merit vs. excellence).
  - ☐ □ The overall scholarly framework used for evaluation

Anticipate how the department may need--even in the future--

- ☐ □ Connections to professional development: mentoring, coaching, trainings, ex., available on campus or externally
- ☐ □ Training, guidance, and norming for all evaluators (cycle for retraining)
- ☐ □ Mapping to other departmental/college priorities (e.g. assessment of student learning)
- ☐ □ Regular review and updates to the plan and unit bylaws with college and university policies (HLC; Regential policy; etc.)

Develop a [Continuous Improvement Cycle](#)

- ☐ □ Activities
- ☐ □ Timeline and cycle
- ☐ □ Responsible parties

# Sources of Evidence: Three Voices

Scholarly teaching relies on evidence as the foundation of evaluating teaching. The three primary sources, or “Voices,” of evidence are Student, Peer, and Self, should serve as the foundation of a QTI evaluation plan.

## Student Voice

Note: Departments can choose from among these multiple modes of student evidence or rely exclusively on FCQs, which are required by [Regential policy](#)

Sample Data Sources and Procedures:

- ☐ How FCQ numerical scores will be used -- the data compilation and reporting (in dossier and/or PUEC) [required by Regents]
- ☐ Number of Desired Student Voice Examples (non-FCQ evidence)
- ☐ Student Letter Request Prompts/Template
  - ☐ Guidelines
  - ☐ Procedures for use
- ☐ Focus Group
  - ☐ Guidelines/Protocol/Template
  - ☐ Procedures for use / inclusion in case.
- ☐ Classroom Interviews
  - ☐ Guidelines
  - ☐ Procedures for use / inclusion in case
- ☐ Other: Identified (e.g., Lab group meeting, etc.)
  
- ☐ Requests for Evidence
  - ☐ Person(s) Who Solicits the Data (Chair; Personnel Committee)
  - ☐ Who sends the request and communicates with students
  - ☐ Format of request
  - ☐ Person(s) who receives/handles the evidence
  - ☐ Parties Responsible for Evaluation
  - ☐ Process for analyzing and submitting evidence
  
- ☐ Departmental Timelines (identified for chosen measure)
  - ☐ Frequency of Data Collection
  - ☐ Deadlines for
    - ☐ Request of Evidence
    - ☐ Evidence to Be Returned to Committee
    - ☐ Completing Review

Submission Format Guidelines

- ☐ Modes of Data Presentation (FCQ Score Analysis and Findings; Focus Group Report out Template; Keyword Analysis Coding and Findings)

## Peer Voice

A broad range of evidence best supports deep understanding of teaching quality, so departments should identify a combination of evidence sources.

### Sample Data Sources and Procedures

- ☐ Classroom Observations
  - ☐ Guidelines / Tools
  - ☐ Procedures
- ☐ Portfolio Reviews
  - ☐ Guidelines / Tools
  - ☐ Procedures
- ☐ Classroom / Lab / Mentoring interviews with students (along with student voice)
  - ☐ Guidelines / Tools
  - ☐ Procedures
- ☐ Peer Interview of faculty
  - ☐ Guidelines / Tools
  - ☐ Procedures

Identifying routine processes and procedures supports equitable, consistent evaluation across all faculty in the department. Such regular processes and procedures could include

- ☐ Number of observations over what period of time
- ☐ How courses will be identified for observation
- ☐ Observation request
  - ☐ Requests for companion evidence (e.g., syllabus, lab assignment)
- ☐ Observation protocol
- ☐ Pre-meeting process
- ☐ Classroom/Laboratory/Mentoring/Studio Observations/ Interview
  - ☐ Other as identified by department
- ☐ Reflection questions/Templates for observer and faculty member
- ☐ Follow up meeting (including process for sharing feedback)
- ☐ Process and format for reporting out
  - ☐ Prompts/Templates/Protocols

### Departmental Timelines:

- ☐ Frequency of data collection
- ☐ Deadlines for evidence to be returned
- ☐ Deadlines for submission
- ☐ Timeframe for review
- ☐ Deadline for reporting back to faculty member
- ☐ Deadline for transmission to dean

#### Committees, Supervisors, Peer Observers

- ☐ Person who solicits the data (chair; personnel committee)
- ☐ Person(s) who handle the data
- ☐ Parties responsible for evaluation

#### Submission Format Guidelines

- ☐ Modes of data presentation (FCQ Score Analysis and Findings; Focus Group Report out Template)

#### Process for Review and Evaluation

- ☐ Sequence and timeline of
  - ☐ dossier submission
  - ☐ review
  - ☐ commentary/feedback
  - ☐ discussion
  - ☐ hand off



# Self Voice

Departments should establish routine practices for using Self Voice in evaluation processes.

## Sample Sources and Procedures

- ☐ Regular / Five-Minute Reflection
- ☐ Annual Reflections
  - ☐ Guidelines / Tools
  - ☐ Procedures
- ☐ Use of FRPA for data mining
- ☐ Course Portfolios
  - ☐ Guidelines / Tools
  - ☐ Procedures
- ☐ Teaching Statement (although required, the Teaching Statement does not serve as a Multiple Measure of Teaching)
  - ☐ Guidelines for crafting the statement (e.g. What worked or didn't work)
  - ☐ Procedures for how to collect and use the Teaching Statement
- ☐ Connecting Self Voice to Annual Teaching Goals: What are individual's strategies?
  - ☐ Impact of strategy--What worked and what did not work?
  - ☐ Refinement for future--What will I do differently next time?

## Departmental Timelines

- ☐ Frequency of data collection
- ☐ Deadlines for dossier submission
- ☐ Deadline to complete review
- ☐ Deadline for transmission to dean
- ☐ Deadline for responses to faculty member

## Committees

- ☐ Person who solicits the data (chair; personnel committee)
- ☐ Person(s) who handle the data
- ☐ Parties responsible for evaluation
- ☐ Reporting Out
  - ☐ Commentary/feedback to author
  - ☐ Discussion among members of the committee
  - ☐ Documenting of decisions
  - ☐ Hand off to next-level reviewer

## Guidelines for Preparation, Submission, Review, Evaluation

- ☐ Prompts/Templates/Protocols
- ☐ Modes of data presentation


# Planning for Continuous Improvement

Use these flexible questions to understand the department's uptake of QT and refine as implementation matures!; individual faculty can use these questions to reflect on their own experiences with A&S evaluation of instruction.

- ☐ Timeline for routine assessment of QTI
- ☐ Who will be responsible for conducting routine assessment of faculty evaluation?
- ☐ What documents, procedures, and approvals need to be created?
- ☐ How will the work of continuous improvement for faculty evaluation be assigned in annual workloads?
  
- ☐ Reflection Questions
  1. What are we doing? (Activity of focus, ex. Teaching)
  2. How well are we doing it?
  3. How do we know? (Evidence, analysis)
  4. What do we need to do next? (Refinement; planning for future improvement)

## Example Comprehensive Departmental Framework

This rubric offers departments one example of a scholarly framework that is designed to satisfy the College's expectations for what a department produces for QTI. Through use of a consistent structure, evaluation of instruction becomes more equitable, transparent, and fair. This example is only one approach, and departments are free to adopt, adapt, or author their own scholarly framework to use in evaluating faculty.

 QTI example rubric-based approach to evaluating teaching [05-11-21]

# Frequently Asked Questions: QTI

## Why is the College of Arts and Sciences undertaking QTI?

Evaluation of instruction often focuses a fraction of what happens in the classroom, laboratory, studio, on stage, etc. Evidence is frequently collected through

- student course evaluations, which have been proven to be inherently biased and unfairly penalize white women, faculty of color, and LGLBTQIA persons, among others, and can be especially punitive in certain fields;
- unstructured peer observations of a single class session.

These practices rarely yield actionable information to help a faculty member improve their teaching craft. Nevertheless, significant decisions—e.g. reappointment, tenure, promotion--about faculty professions emerge from this weak evidence. Through the [Quality Teaching Initiative](#), we seek to

- bolster the quality of evidence we collect and decisions we make with that evidence;
- nurture continuous improvement of teaching.

By adopting a scholarly approach that encourages formative reflection and improvement as well as summative evaluation, A&S can better align the many dimensions of faculty work.

## Where did the QTI originate?

Emerging from research funded by the National Science Foundation, the [Teaching Quality Framework](#) has developed resources to support CU faculty implement world class approaches to evaluating instruction. In parallel, these processes will broaden the tools used for evaluation, draw on scholarship, and capture the full range of educational activities that faculty are engaged in.

The College of Arts & Sciences is transforming its present model by implementing a robust, consistent, and transparent means to collect evidence, evaluate evidence, provide actionable feedback, and reward/honor faculty work that often has been unseen and unpaid.

[Regential policy](#) requires multiple measures for evaluation of instruction, so the QTI ensures A&S is meaningfully compliant with that policy. QTI also offers clear, consistent, measurable, and structured expectations for faculty working toward reappointment, tenure, and promotion. This means that individuals and departments are less likely to be surprised in review processes.

## Why are we doing this now, given pressures caused by COVID19?

In truth, given the many demands on faculty, there is *never* an ideal time to make a significant change to processes. One of COVID19's many lessons is that teaching is a core activity at CU, an activity that can be hidden, substantively difficult, and undervalued.

The huge changes demanded of faculty to continue teaching during the pandemic highlight why it is so critical for A & S to improve *evaluation and rewards* for teaching and to make those improvements *now*.

QTI provides a structure and process to capture, acknowledge, and reward the full range and extent of duties that teaching in the time of COVID has required. When a new normal emerges, our College will be better equipped to recognize and reward the value of teaching as an essential part of faculty work.

### **How do departments get started with implementing QTI?**

When the chair identifies a departmental point of contact to implement the Quality Teaching Initiative, this is what will happen next.

- Follow up from QTI consultant
- [Complete Readiness](#) questionnaire
- Set first meeting with team and consultant
  - Possible first-meeting agenda: clarify expectations, goals, timelines, final product, review workbook and discuss departmental approach, identify any specific disciplinary needs
  - Introduction to resources in QTI/TQF Portfolio
  - Set check-in calendar with consultant

Departments can also

- identify other units for collaborating in uptake of QTI;
- visit [websites](#) of other institutions partnering with CU in [similar work](#).

### **CU is Colorado's flagship research institution; why are we putting so much emphasis on teaching?**

As [Dean James White](#) states, "High quality teaching is absolutely central to our mission." The QTI connects several objectives important to our research institution:

- uptake of regential policies with departmental and college practices;
- aligning research activities with teaching practices;
- making processes and expectations of evaluation more transparent and equitable;
- improving and communicating the value proposition of higher education for students, parents, funders, and other key stakeholders;
- more directly recognizing and rewarding the work of teaching.

At CU Boulder, teaching and research are synergistic rather than competitive. The Quality Teaching Initiative emphasizes our commitment to excellence across all areas of our work.

### **How should departments make decisions about QTI?**

First, the department should identify a committee and/or a department lead to implement this activity. QTI has created "QTI in a Box," a set of tools, processes, and recommendations to support A & S departments. With QTI in a Box, departments have a range of entry points--from using a turnkey approach ("Adopt"), to moderate adaptations ("Adapt"), to starting from scratch ("Author") for their evaluation plans. The NSF-funded Teaching Quality Framework project has worked with CU units to develop [toolkits, timelines, and templates](#) for departments to use in their decision making.

### **How long does the process take?**

QTI offers a process that will support departments to implement substantial change in 8 working meetings. This structure will allow faculty to clarify departmental expectations and evaluation of teaching and supports departments that choose to “start from scratch” to author a new evaluation approach. However, it is highly recommended that units draw on the scholarly resources developed by the QTI and TQF projects. Departments that use existing tools can then direct their time/energy toward meaningful adaptation and implementation of these tools.

**Does this affect my tenure/promotion process?**

QTI has the capacity to simplify and enhance tenure and promotion processes, by aligning teaching activities more effectively with research and scholarship. As departments make the transition, the impact of QTI on reappointment, tenure, promotion, and merit will be to make expectations more clear, measurement more consistent, and application more equitable.

**How does this relate to assessment of student learning outcomes and program assessment?**

QTI resides in the College of Arts & Sciences and is focused on improving evaluation of instruction. Based on Higher Learning Commission accreditation requirements, both the university and the college are engaged with other quality improvement activities, including strengthening assessment plans regarding student learning outcomes. Although these activities seek to clarify essential work and share common interests, these initiatives emerge from distinct campus offices. Such work is entirely complementary to the QTI--any efforts to establish program and student learning outcomes directly address QTI needs, e.g. identifies the goals of Goal Oriented Teaching.