Reflective Teaching Statement
Guidelines and FAQs

If you are enrolled in the Graduate Teaching Program your final step is to write a reflective teaching statement of 750-1000 words. In the following rubric, we name four topics that should be discussed in your statement.

- your teaching responsibilities at UMass Boston
- a particular challenge you faced and how you attempted to address it
- the values, goals and methods that have emerged for you as most important to the teaching and learning process
- the ways in which your teaching experiences at UMass Boston have helped you to understand the challenges and rewards of inclusive teaching

You will have an advisor to guide you in the writing of this statement and the fulfilling of this rubric. Your advisor will review drafts, make suggestions, and provide final approval. When your advisor approves your statement, the requirement is fulfilled. There will be no further evaluation.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Reflective Teaching Statement

1. How do I find an Advisor?
   We suggest you meet with your GPD to discuss your options. Your advisor can be the GPD, another faculty member in your program or the following GPD faculty advisors associated with the Center for Innovative Teaching (CIT):
   - Prof. Emily Jones, CNHS: Emily.Jones@umb.edu
   - Prof. Karen Riccardi, School for the Environment: Karen.Riccardi@umb.edu
   - Prof. Ping-Ann Addo, CLA: Ping-Ann.Addo@umb.edu
   - Prof. Stephanie Hartwell, CLA: Stephanie.Hartwell@umb.edu

2. Once I have an Advisor, what do we do?
   Meet with him or her to discuss your process and set your deadlines. For example, your process might include:
   - Reviewing these guidelines and FAQS together
   - Discussing the Teaching Statement Rubric
   - Reading sample teaching statements on the GTP website: http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum
   - Choosing two sample statements to share with your advisor as possible models.
   The schedule of deadlines might include:
   - Deadline 1: a one-page plan or outline (advisor responds with comments)
3. **Should I inform the Graduate Teaching Program that I am working on my statement with an Advisor?**
   Yes. As soon as you and your advisor have formed a plan with deadlines, send it to the GTP faculty liaison: Sari.Edelstein@umb.edu

4. **Should my reflective teaching statement be written in an impersonal, academic style or can I be personal?**
   - A reflective teaching statement is a *personal* narrative. You are invited to describe your teaching experiences, and to explain what values, goals and methods for teaching and learning have become most important to you. It should be an honest appraisal in your own voice of your *current* understanding.

5. **What if the classes I assisted in or taught did not go very well? What if I have more questions about my teaching values, goals and methods than answers? Am I still qualified to write a statement?**
   - Yes! Your personal narrative is a record of your experience and understanding of teaching and learning to this point. Reflecting on difficulties or problems can be just as useful as reflecting on successes. One purpose of this statement is help you assess your current understanding of teaching and learning so that you can move forward and keep developing.

6. **How do I get started writing the statement?**
   - Below is a list of possible questions for generating content. Spend a good amount of time answering these questions in writing, but do not be concerned about quality at this point. Once you have answered a lot of these questions, look for emerging themes, patterns, or lines of development that can help you to organize and draft your statement with the help of your advisor. To begin, ask yourself:
     - What courses did I assist in and/or teach?
     - How would I describe my teaching values, goals and methods when I first started?
     - What stand out as the most meaningful, enjoyable and successful aspects of my teaching experience?
     - What stand out as the most difficult or unsuccessful aspects?
     - Can I recall specific classes I taught or students I worked with that illustrate the successful and unsuccessful aspects of my teaching experiences? *(Please do not refer to students by name.)*
     - How have these experiences, both the successful and unsuccessful ones, affected my teaching values, goals and methods?
o What aspects of the teaching and learning process do I wish I knew more about?
o What are my most vivid experiences of working with diverse students?

7. Do I have to answer all these questions in the statement?
   • No. These questions are intended to help you reflect on your experiences so that you can develop a 750-1000 word statement in which you discuss:
     o your teaching responsibilities at UMass Boston
     o a particular challenge you faced and how you attempted to address it
     o the values, goals and methods that have emerged for you as most important to the teaching and learning process
     o the ways in which your teaching experiences at UMass Boston have helped you to understand the challenges and rewards of inclusive teaching

8. What if my statement is a little shorter or a little longer than 750-1000 words?
   • This will not matter. What matters is that your statement addresses the rubric in a way that allows a reader to understand what your emerging views about teaching are and why. The statement does not need to follow the order of the rubric. The rubric is not intended to be used mechanically but to help you think about your teaching.

9. Are there examples of reflective teaching statements that I can read?
   • Yes. The reflective teaching statement is an important part of a graduate student’s dossier when going on the job market. Many research universities have programs like the GTP for certifying preparation for teaching and a reflective statement is typically required (though it is sometimes called a teaching philosophy statement.) Because the UMass Boston program is new, there is not yet a collection of teaching statements from this campus to offer as examples. However, the University of Michigan has an excellent archive of such statements at http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum.

10. What should I do if I’m having problems working well with my advisor?
    You should speak with your Graduate Program Director about this or you may contact the faculty liaison for the GTP program directly: Prof. Sari Edelstein: Sari.Edelstein@umb.edu

11. When my advisor approves my statement and I am ready to apply for program completion, how do I notify the GTP?
    Send the following materials via campus mail to: Professor Sari Edelstein, English Department, Wheatley 6th floor.
• Your teaching statement with a cover page that includes your name and signature, your advisor’s name and signature, and the date of approval.
• All your signed certification forms for the other program criteria.
• A teaching completion sheet that lists the teaching you have done to fulfill the GTP criteria. This sheet must include the signature of your GPD or department chair.

Note:
• Keep copies of all your materials.
• Send Sari.Edelstein@umb.edu an email telling her that your materials have been sent via campus mail.

12. What kind of recognition will I receive for completing the GTP?
• You will receive a notation on your transcript. This notation will provide evidence for claims you make on your résumé regarding the GTP.
• Students who complete the program and send in their materials before March 15 of a given year will also have their names included in the Graduate Convocation booklet.