Tracking and Documenting Your Accomplishments

Ann E. Austin
Academic Advancement Network
Assistant Provost for Faculty Development—Academic Career Paths
Setting the Context

• Why is documentation important?

• What should you document?

• How to document?

• What are the uses of documentation?
Why is documentation important?

• Helps make the case for who you are, what you have accomplished, why it is important, and your expected future trajectory

• But...
  • You can’t document what you don’t remember
  • You can’t document what you don’t have evidence to support
Documentation demonstrates who you are as a professional:

• The type of work you do
• What the synergies/connections are across the components of your work
• The impact you are making
• Your path to date
• Your trajectory as you look forward
• Your vitality and excellence in your role
What should you document?

• All aspects of your work – the components related to your assigned duties, and all of the extra responsibilities you take on. Typically, you will organize your documents around three key categories:

  • Teaching
  • Research
  • Service and/or Outreach

• The connections across the components of your work
How to document your work?

• Establish a system for record-keeping – electronic or paper
• Be consistent, systematic, and organized
• Archive each significant event and benchmark in your professional career
• Seek and plan ways to demonstrate impact
What are the uses of your documentation?

• Annual reviews
• Promotion reviews
• Easy access of information for your own use
• Sharing with colleagues or those who request information
• Self-reflection on your progress and impact over time
Teaching
Records to Keep (slide 1 of 2)

• **Formal Classes**
  • Schedule, class size, format
  • Syllabi, course material
  • Exams and grade distribution
  • Student evaluations and summary scores

• **Advising and Mentoring**
  • Formal advising load
  • Mentoring relationships
  • Students supervised in components of your work

• **Workshops, Seminars, etc.**
  • Format, materials, evaluations
Teaching Records to Keep (slide 2 of 2)

• Course and Curriculum Development
  • Development and redesign of courses
  • Teaching materials developed
  • Out-of-class experiences designed

• Professional Activities
  • Professional development opportunities
  • Instructional research and grants
Teaching Issues for Reflection

- Your philosophy and approach
- Your intended learning outcomes for students
- Your teaching methods, and rationale for them
- Approaches and innovations you have developed
- Impact on students: outcomes assessment, unsolicited comments
- How you interpret and respond to your teaching evaluations
- How your teaching has changed over time and why
Research, Scholarship & Creative Activities
Records to Keep

• **Products**
  - Books/monographs
  - Book chapters
  - Articles in refereed journals
  - Creative works, such as exhibits and performances
  - Edited works: journals, other publications
  - Presentations at scholarly/professional meetings
  - Other papers, reports, reviews

• **Funding**
  - Grant proposals: funded and non-funded
  - Grant management: budget, staff
  - Reports
Research, Scholarship & Creative Activities

Records to Keep

• Involvement in the Discipline
  • Manuscript reviews, conference proposal reviews
  • Grant evaluation panels
  • Leadership activities in professional societies

• Standing in the Discipline
  • Journal rankings
  • Citation analysis
  • Reviews and published reactions
  • Awards and honors
  • Invited talks and activities
  • Unsolicited testimonials
Research, Scholarship & Creative Activities
Topics for Reflection

• Overall direction and purpose of your research
• Questions you are addressing
• Methodologies selected and benefits/limitations
• Impact: Major outcomes, why this work is important, whom it impacts
• Future plans and issues to be addressed
Service
Records to Keep (slide 1 of 2)

• At MSU
  • Department, college, university leadership roles
  • Department, college, university committees
  • Task forces and reports

• For Professional Organizations
  • Leadership roles – elected and appointed
  • Committee memberships
  • Conferences/events planned
Service
Records to Keep (slide 2 of 2)

• **For the Broader Community**
  - Consultation and technical assistance to organizations
  - Publications for the public and audiences outside your field
  - Interpretations of technical information for the public
  - Expert testimony
  - Development of programs in educational/cultural organizations

• **Clinical Work**
  - Diagnosis and treatment of clients and patients
  - Supervision of staff in clinical settings
Service and Outreach
Topics for Reflection

• Overall direction and purpose of your service/outreach
• Rationale for selecting these areas of focus
• Impact—major outcomes, who is impacted, why the work is important
• Future directions
Final Thoughts

• Document regularly and make it easy

• Use your documentation as evidence for professional review and advancement, and for your own purposes

• As you document, reflect, plan, and strive to improve

• Consider documenting as part of professional practice and advancement
Questions or Comments?
Preparing Your Documentation
And
Reflective Essay
Major Components of Packet

• Form D
• Reflective Essay
• CV
• Publications, Creative Works
Form D – Basic Documentation (slide 1 of 3)

• Undergraduate and Graduate Instruction
  • List of courses taught, including number of students in them
  • Non-Credit Instruction
  • Academic Advising
  • Instructional Works (publications, presentations, etc. with teaching focus)
Form D – Basic Documentation (slide 2 of 3)

• Research and Creative Activities
  • List of items produced
  • Quantity of items across categories
  • Number of grants (details are listed at end of document)

• Service
  • Scholarly and professional organizations
  • University
  • Broader community
Form D – Basic Documentation (slide 3 of 3)

• Evidence of Other Scholarship
  • Impact of and attention to any work that is not specifically associated with teaching, service, research or creative activities

• Integration across Multiple Missions

• Other Awards/Evidence
Form D – Common Mistakes to Avoid

• Entering the wrong duty period on page 1
• Typos, grammatical language
• Not answering all of the questions
Preparing Your Reflective Essay
The Reflective Essay is an opportunity to:

• To describe who you are as a scholar
• To explain your work and its impact
• To discuss the broader impact of your work
• To discuss the meaning of your work
• To explain your contributions to MSU, your field, and the broader society
What you need to accomplish in the Reflective Essay: (Slide 1 of 2)

• Describe how you **contribute** to the missions of the institution and to the society at large

• Demonstrate the **integration across your work** (show how Teaching/Research/Creative Work/Service connect in your work and make an impact)

• Provide information on **your leadership** in your discipline and at MSU

• Highlight the strength of **your reputation**
What you need to accomplish in the Reflective Essay: (Slide 2 of 2)

- Show a cohesive trajectory in terms of what you have done and where you are going.

- Discuss why the work you have done is important.

- Explain how the work you have done lays a strong foundation for what you will do as your career continues—for your discipline, the university, and the world.

- Highlight the growth, depth, and future of your work.
Important Suggestions:

• Be sure the essay is understandable and appropriate for a broad audience of scholars across disciplines.

• Show you can reflect on your work and be self-evaluative.

• Highlight why you do your work, why you choose your topics and priorities, why you take certain approaches--explain your choices.

• Show your future trajectory as a scholar and expected contributions in the future.
Overall Questions to Answer:

- Why do you do what you do?
- Why does your work matter?
- What do you want to be known for?
- Why?
Tell a Story about:

• Your Vision:
  • What future do you see?
  • What will you be known for?

• Your Progress:
  • What progress have you made toward your goals?

• Your Evidence:
  • What has been the impact of your work (on students, colleagues, community, etc.)? Think broadly!
A Reflective Essay should not be:

- A summary of your vita or Form D
- A list of projects and work
- Filled with jargon
Suggestions for Writing the Reflective Essay:

• Start early!
• Gather examples of essays from your college context
• Use first-person
• Develop a storyline
• Connect the “dots” and show the arc of your career
• Seek reviewers to read and provide feedback
• Communicate at a level appropriate for knowledgeable people across disciplines
• Create a polished document that reflects your story
Final Comments:

- Consider the many ways you can use the essay
  - Award competitions
  - Personal and professional reflection
  - Setting and reviewing personal priorities

- Enjoy the process!
Contact Information

Ann E. Austin
Academic Advancement Network
aaustin@msu.edu
517-355-6757