



MSU's CERTIFICATION in COLLEGE TEACHING: *GETTING STARTED*

[MSU's Certification in College Teaching](#), an initiative of the Graduate School, helps graduate students organize, develop, and document their teaching experience for their own professional development and as a means for meeting teaching demands of the higher education workplace. CCTP participants create a **teaching portfolio**, attend **workshops** focused on five core areas/competencies, take a **class in higher education pedagogy**, and take part in a **mentored teaching experience** involving an MSU faculty member in their discipline. This information sheet should help you get started on your certification program.* Although certain standards are required for completion across disciplines, Colleges may adopt variations of these guidelines.

How do I Apply for the Program? Participants must submit an application form, statement of interest, and a letter of support from your research advisor. Submit all materials to your college's Graduate Associate Dean. Check with your college to see if they've developed their own application form. Examples include: [College of Natural Sciences: Certification in Teaching College Science and Mathematics](#) and the [College of Arts & Letters](#).⁺ The College of Social Sciences has developed an application form as part of their recent commitment to the CCTP and soon will have it available. Contact Dean Bob Caldwell in the meantime for more information. The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources has also adopted the program but have not yet published a specific application form. **What is a [Statement of Interest](#)?** Generally, a statement of interest describes your desires to participate in the program, your professional rationale for completing it, proposes a timeline for completion, and, if possible, describes your mentored teaching project (or ideas for developing one). One can begin completing teaching portfolio and workshop elements of the CCTP before submitting an application, but the application should be in before the mentored teaching experience commences. Upon completion, participants should complete the Teaching Certification Requirement Checklist (located in the Guidebook) and turn it in with the completed Portfolio first to their Associate Dean for Graduate Education and then to the TAP Program. Once accepted, the TAP Director will contact the Graduate School to request that a certification acknowledgement be added to the applicant's transcript.

* Certification in College Teaching Guidebook: <http://grad.msu.edu/teaching.htm>. Detailed descriptions of the Core Areas, the Teaching Portfolio, options for classes covering higher education pedagogy, guides to writing workshop reflections, and recommendations for mentored teaching experience topics and participation guidelines are contained in the Guidebook, as are resources for further study. Kevin M. Johnston, Director of MSU Teaching Assistant Programs is available to assist participants and faculty in all stages of the experience. Please contact him directly at kmj@msu.edu.

⁺ CNS <http://naturalscience.msu.edu/students/graduate/Certificate.htm>

Statement of Interest Form: http://naturalscience.msu.edu/students/graduate/documents/cert_interest.doc

Note: As of this printing, the College of Education underwent an entire Web change. Check with your graduate Secretary for the location of their Certification Program.

What's in a *Teaching Portfolio*? In short, CCTP Teaching Portfolios document your participation in the program; however, they also document in detail your teaching, serving ideally as an organic compilation that changes as your teaching experience grows. Detailed descriptions of Teaching Portfolio contents can be found in the Certification in College Teaching Guidebook (Hyperlink easily located through the TA Program Website homepage, <http://tap.msu.edu>). Participants can take advantage of an electronic professional portfolio project begun spring 2008 by Professor Patrick Dickson, Education, and Kevin Johnston, Director, TA Programs. Contact Kevin at kmj@msu.edu for more information.

What *Classes do I need to take*? Check the Academic Calendar and Course Listings within your college first for 800-level classes devoted to teaching in higher education. Some colleges have outstanding courses devoted to teaching within certain disciplines, NSC 870 and Psychology 890 for example. The College of Education (Departments of TE and EAD) also offers outstanding courses (some at the 900-level) focusing on teaching and learning development, higher education pedagogy, and curriculum development. Direct any questions you have about the applicability of certain classes to Kevin Johnston, MSU TA Programs, at kmj@msu.edu.

How many and what kind of *Workshops do I need to attend*? CCTP participants are invited to attend workshops within series covering the core competencies provided by The Graduate School, The TA Programs, Responsible Conduct of Research, PhD Job Search, Explorations in Learning Technology, and *selected* Lilly Faculty Development workshops. CCTP participants must attend at least one workshop per CCTP Competency so, the minimum number of workshops is 5. As of spring 2009, Series' workshop schedules are posted at the TAP Website, located on the homepage, and include Lilly seminars to which TAs are invited <http://fod.msu.edu/LillySeminar/about.asp>, and Byron Brown's Exploration in Technology Series.

What is a *Reflection Paper* (CCTP Guidebook, Appendix A, pg. 32)? Reflection papers (1 – 3 pages) generally summarize a workshop experience (what happened, what you learned) and describe how the experience might affect your teaching. For more details, including a Workshop Competency Chart, check the Guidebook.

What is a *Mentored Teaching Experience*? The mentored Teaching Experience is an opportunity for students to work closely with a faculty mentor to broaden and develop their teaching experience. It should culminate in a teaching project developed by the graduate students in conjunction with a faculty member. Mentors can be faculty other than one's research advisor. **How do I set up a *MTE*?** The Mentored Teaching Experience must go beyond developing lab/grading assignments or lectures. Participants are encouraged to consider classroom assessment as the basis of their mentored teaching project. Kevin Johnston is available to meet graduate students and their faculty mentors to map out a Mentored Teaching project (Students including their faculty mentor in this meeting will receive a free copy of Angelo & Cross's *Learning Assessment Techniques!*). Other project possibilities can be found in the CCTP Guidebook.