



Inclusive Excellence in Teaching

NAU Practices for Teaching Effectiveness

Version 2.0 3/1/2024

Endorsed by NAU Teaching Academy 3/1/2024

Endorsed by NAU Faculty Senate 3/18/2024

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this document is to describe a shared understanding of what constitutes effective teaching at NAU. While good teaching looks different across the disciplines, general principles of effective practice are universal. Broad implementation of these Practices is essential to achieving our goals of [Academic Excellence](#) and [Student Success](#)¹.

These *Practices for Teaching Effectiveness* at NAU provide a unified framework that can be used at all levels of the University to align practices and policies with the goal of advancing a culture of excellent teaching and shared responsibility for student momentum, persistence, achievement, and career readiness in the following ways:

- **Promote practices** that keep **students** on a **pathway to success** through course completion and credit accrual while ensuring that they succeed even if they get behind.
- **Position** our **students** for **post-graduation success** by offering a broad portfolio of high-impact learning experiences and perspectives that are responsive to industry standards and societal needs.
- **Inform** community **stakeholders of our commitment to high-quality teaching** through active and timely communications.
- **Attract and retain faculty** who are committed to academic excellence and student success.
- **Align current and future teaching-focused** initiatives and support programs.
- **Encourage** faculty to **adopt evidence-based teaching practices**.
- **Provide guidelines** for **developing consistent evaluation of teaching criteria** across units.
- **Promote equitable teaching** policies and practices.
- **Inform** decisions related to **teaching support resource allocation**.

¹ <https://nau.edu/president/strategic-plan>



Background

The NAU Teaching Academy developed and published the [first version](#)² of these practices in 2020.

Since the first version was published, NAU has announced the “NAU 2025 – Elevating Excellence” strategic roadmap, formed a Teaching and Learning Center, and published a faculty workload policy that clarifies faculty activities that are considered ‘teaching’.

These *Practices* have been used as a basis for the development of guidelines for faculty *Teaching Portfolios* which are tools that can be used to document teaching activities for promotion and annual review.

At the time of this writing, NAU is in the process of refreshing the First Year Learning Initiative (FYLI), updating NAU Online, revising the Conditions of Faculty Service (CoFS), and reviewing unit-level criteria for annual review, promotion, and tenure. These *Practices* will be instrumental in guiding teaching-specific aspects of such efforts.

These *Practices* are instrumental in guiding teaching-specific aspects for campus-wide efforts such as the refreshing the First Year Learning Initiative (FYLI), updating NAU Online, revising the Conditions of Faculty Service (CoFS), and reviewing unit-level criteria for annual review, promotion and tenure.

The current version of these *Practices* is the result of a joint effort of the NAU Teaching Academy and the NAU Faculty Senate Council on Learning: Aimee Quinn, Dawn Hawley, Jennifer Duis, Michael Leverington, Patricia Murphey and John Tingerthal.

Thanks to the following for providing feedback on early drafts of this document: Cody Canning, Michelle Miller, Francisco Villa, Alma Sandigo, Gretchen McAllister, Michael E. Smith, Nicole Hampton, and Len Hostetter.

² <https://in.nau.edu/teaching-academy/best-practices-for-teaching-effectiveness-at-nau/>



Inclusive Excellence in Teaching: NAU Practices for Teaching Effectiveness

The three overlapping categories of Course **DESIGN**, Learning **ENVIRONMENT**, and Curriculum **STRUCTURE** encompass a practice of **Inclusive Excellence** to help all students learn and feel supported and welcome.

DESIGN: Apply intentional course design that is evidence-based, inclusive, and universally accessible

Content-Outcome Alignment	Align content with established course- and program-level learning outcomes to promote learning and career readiness.
Evidence-Based Instruction	Offer evidence-based active-learning experiences throughout the course. Ensure that content is taught with appropriate rigor.
Outcome Assessment	Include multiple forms of assessment that are aligned with course learning outcomes, that take place early and often (<i>formative assessment</i>), that include a clear statement of criteria for success that measure that students are learning content (<i>summative assessment</i>).
Content Diversity	Incorporate diverse perspectives, objectives, content, examples, and activities into course design.
Universal Design for Learning	Reduce barriers to learning, space, and technology for all students. Provide accessible content, practice, assessment, and guidance using a variety of formats and forms of instruction in line with <i>Universal Design for Learning</i> principles

ENVIRONMENT: Create an environment in which students can learn and thrive

Clear Expectations	Clearly explain course expectations and what needs to be done to be successful from start to finish. Provide and explain detailed instructions, examples, rubrics and checklists so students understand what, when and how to do it.
Rapport	Build student-instructor rapport both in-class and out-of-class through your own disciplinary experience and expertise. Cultivate a safe classroom environment that is inclusive, civil, and respectful of diverse perspectives.
Learning-Centered	Focus on the students and the outcome of their learning. Identify the enduring understandings and transfer goals for post-graduation success.
Instructor Access	Be responsive to students by holding regular student (office) hours and offering alternative meeting times and modes.
Feedback to Students	Provide timely, constructive, predictable, and understandable feedback that effectively supports student learning and improvement.

STRUCTURE: Manage courses to meet standards and requirements

Organizational Consistency	Structure your class time deliberately. Use appropriate resources, tools, and technology. Align course learning outcomes, content, assessments, and expectations across sections.
Course and Content Requirements	Ensure your course content and policies meet the requirements of your unit, program, college, university, and accrediting body as appropriate.
Continuous Improvement	Demonstrate a commitment to reflection, professional development and continuous improvement that integrates lessons learned from your teaching, student performance, and student feedback. Maintain a record of this process.