

Getting Started with Teaching and Learning at UBC Science

Welcome to the UBC Science teaching and learning community!

We created this document to provide you with an overview of the UBC Science educational context and with Science-specific resources to support your teaching responsibilities. Please refer to the UBC-wide [New Faculty Orientation Guide and Faculty Primer](#) for information about central technologies, policies, course components, examinations and grading, funding, and resources to support your teaching. UBC Science's [Teaching Guidelines and Resources](#) webpage has resources related to dates and deadlines, course management guidelines, academic conduct, exam information, teaching resources, and student health and wellbeing.

We are the second-largest Faculty offering undergraduate programs at UBC Vancouver. It is organized into 12 departments and academic units and offers a range of research and study opportunities. As of 2024, UBC Science is represented by:

- 9,900 undergraduate students (2,261 of which are international students)
- 2,922 undergraduate co-op placements
- 1,673 graduate students
- 455 faculty members
- 647 staff members
- More than 50,000 alumni

Transforming Science Education

UBC Science is a leader among North American research universities in transforming science education, and our faculty members are well versed in evidence-based teaching practices. From 2007–2017, the [Carl Wieman Science Education Initiative](#) (CWSEI) supported UBC Science departments in their efforts to provide an unrivalled education for undergraduate students by applying the latest advances in pedagogical research and developing a significant knowledge base of resources and research. The knowledge and best practices derived from this initiative continue to inform teaching and learning at UBC Science.

[Skylight, the Science Centre for Learning and Teaching](#), is a Faculty-specific teaching and learning support unit which fills an important gap between central UBC support units and UBC Science departments. Most staff in this unit are embedded within central UBC units or UBC Science departments to enrich collaborations and advance science education.

[Science Education Specialists](#) (SEs), who have both disciplinary and educational expertise, are staff members embedded within Skylight and eight of the departments (BOTA, CHEM, CPSC, EOAS, MATH MBIM, PHAS, and ZOOL) within UBC Science to enrich teaching and learning. The SEs work closely with instructors and TAs and are an excellent person to help you navigate teaching at UBC. If your department does not have an SE, please reach out to Skylight (skylight@science.ubc.ca) and members of our team will help to support you.

Teaching and Learning at UBC Science

UBC Science recently committed to infusing inclusion within curriculum, pedagogy, and culture and to supporting faculty in their engagement and training in inclusive teaching ([UBC Science Strategic Plan](#)). This recent and growing effort aligns with UBC's campus-wide plans, including the [UBC Strategic Plan](#), the [Strategic Equity and Anti-Racism \(StEAR\) Framework](#), and the [Indigenous Strategic Plan](#). You can find curated [resources about inclusive teaching in STEM](#) on our website.

The [Teaching Start-Up Program](#) is UBC Science's strategy for implementing the paired teaching model where a new faculty member is paired with another faculty member who is experienced in implementing evidence-informed teaching practices. Together, they collaboratively teach an existing course that has already aligned learning goals, assessments, and evidence-informed pedagogy. Both faculty members are responsible for all aspects of teaching, and both receive full teaching credit. We encourage you to talk with your departmental leadership about the potential to participate in this program.

Skylight hosts sessions, events, reading groups, and invited speakers throughout the year that allow faculty, staff, and students to share their educational work and to build networks with peers across UBC Science. Some of Skylight's popular events include:

- [Skylight Teaching Series](#)
- [Science Education Open House](#)

Invitations to Skylight's events are sent by email. If you do not receive invitations or other important announcements from Skylight, please contact skylight@science.ubc.ca to be added to the mailing list.

Both Skylight and UBC Central have several funding sources to support teaching and learning. Skylight can provide consultation on funding proposals, and you can reach out to the [Skylight Faculty Liaison](#) for support.

- Skylight funding opportunities:
 - [Skylight Development Grants](#)
 - [Science Academic Equipment Funds](#)
 - [Science Student Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Funds](#)
- UBC Central funding opportunities:
 - [Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund \(TLEF\)](#)

- [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning \(SoTL\) Seed Program](#)
- [Open Educational Resources \(OER\) Funds](#)

You can find a full list of [funding opportunities across UBC](#) on our website.

Skylight consults and collaborates with faculty to improve teaching and learning outcomes through research, evaluation, and data analysis. Our [Research Analyst](#) can facilitate data access requests, liaise with other support units on campus, and help you to explore and analyze data sets relevant to teaching and learning (such as learner demographics and performance data, course and project evaluation data, data relating to equity and inclusion, survey data, and data extracted from learning technologies).

Learning Technology at UBC Science

UBC Science supports more than 80 learning technologies (LT) to promote teaching and student learning. Skylight's LT team provides support and training to UBC Science instructors, working closely with other LT and IT teams to enrich teaching and learning across campus.

The [LT section of the Skylight website](#) is a great resource and provides information about [LT tools and user guides](#), [resources and best practices](#), [training and support](#), and innovation.

If you have questions regarding LT, please contact the Science LT team at LT.support@science.ubc.ca or attend the [drop-in sessions](#) for assistance.

Departmental Resources

Check with your department administrators and/or colleagues for additional instructional resources and policies. Some departments have internal IT/LT support, teaching and learning events, and discussion/community groups for educators. It would also be valuable for you to touch base with instructors who have taught your courses in the past and to see if they would share the course syllabi or notes with you.

We are always looking for ways to make this document more useful to you. Please reach out to us with your input and feedback at skylight@science.ubc.ca.