

# Policy and Procedures for Peer Evaluation of Teaching

## General

- The goal of this policy is to provide a process for the routine performance of what the university refers to as peer evaluation of teaching for use in both promotion cases and post-tenure reviews. The policy applies to Professional Track, Tenured, and Tenure-Track faculty. Adjunct faculty who are appointed less than half-time and Visiting Professors (at any visiting rank) are not covered by this policy.
- Evaluations will begin in Spring 2016, and each faculty member covered by this policy (other than those on leave in Spring 2016) will be reviewed during that semester.
- In general, it is desirable to (1) review a representative range of courses taught by a faculty member, (2) review courses taught in different modalities (face to face, online, hybrid, MOOC), and (3) review the same course more than once in each promotion cycle. The APT chair will balance these criteria when making reviewing assignments.
- Faculty members may recommend one or more courses that they believe would be suitable for review at the start of each academic year in which they are scheduled for peer review, and these recommendations will be considered when making review assignments.
- At the start of each academic year, faculty members may provide an unordered list of five eligible reviewers. Eligibility criteria specific to each rank are described below. Additionally, reviewers are not eligible to review the same faculty member twice in the same promotion cycle. If such a list is provided, the APT chair will select the reviewer from that list. If no list is provided, or if five or fewer eligible reviewers exist, the APT chair will select from among the full set of eligible reviewers.
- The number of reports to be included in a promotion case are specified below for each rank. During the transition period, when fewer reports may be available, the required number of reports will never be limited to one fewer than the available number. Candidates for promotion will discuss with their Record Preparation Committee (RPC) which reviews will be included in their promotion package. The final decision rests with the RPC, but the candidate's recommendations will be considered. In the event of disagreement, the candidate may submit a written response to the selections.
- Post-tenure review committees for tenured faculty will be provided with all available reports since the most recent promotion or post-tenure review.
- All reports will be available to mentors, to the annual review committee (for Assistant Professors), to the Dean, to the APT chair, and to other academic administrators as directed by the Dean.
- Unless otherwise specified, reviews can occur in any semester (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer I, or Summer II).
- A full-year leave (e.g., any combination of sabbatical, leave without pay, or Intergovernmental Personnel Act appointment) will delay a scheduled teaching review until the next year. Other cases (e.g., part-year leave, or a year in which no review was to be scheduled) are not affected by the leave.
- Guidelines for preparing the report are included below.
- Staff support will be needed to manage reporting and recordkeeping for review results.

## Assistant Professors

- Assistant professors will be reviewed once each academic year. The first review will be scheduled in the faculty member's second semester of teaching (Fall or Spring).
- Eligible reviewers are Associate Professors or Professors.
- Record Preparation Committees will include 3 reports in the promotion package for candidates for promotion to Associate Professor.

## Associate Professors

- Associate Professors will be reviewed in the first year at that rank and in every second academic year following that.
- Eligible reviewers are Professors.
- Record Preparation Committees will include 2 reports in the promotion package for candidates for promotion to Professor.

## Professors

- Professors will be evaluated in their first year at that rank and in every fourth subsequent year.
- Eligible reviewers are other Professors.

## Lecturers

- Lecturers will be reviewed once each academic year. The first review will be scheduled in the faculty member's second semester of teaching (Fall or Spring).
- Eligible reviewers are Senior Lecturers, Principal Lecturers, Professors of the Practice who have been on the faculty for more than three years, Associate Professors, or Professors. During the first three academic years this policy is in force, Lecturers who have been on the full-time faculty for more than six years will also be eligible reviewers for other Lecturers.

## Senior Lecturers

- Senior Lecturers will be reviewed in their first year at that rank and in every second academic year following that.
- Eligible reviewers are Principal Lecturers, Professors of the Practice who have been on the faculty for more than three years, or Professors.

## Principal Lecturers

- Principal Lecturers will be reviewed in their first year at that rank and in every fourth subsequent year.
- Eligible reviewers are other Principal Lecturers, Professors of the Practice who have been on the faculty for more than three years, or Professors.

## Professors of the Practice

- Professors of the Practice will be reviewed in each of their first two years, and in every fourth year thereafter. The first review will be scheduled in the faculty member's second semester (Fall or Spring).
- Eligible reviewers are Professors of the Practice who have been on the faculty for more than four years, Principal Lecturers, or Professors.

## Procedures

### Pre-Observation Preparation

The procedures for preparing a report includes a rubric outlining issues that merit consideration during a review, so the first step in preparing for a review should be to review that rubric. Prior to observing class activity, the reviewer should communicate with the instructor to obtain access to the syllabus and other course materials (including ELMS and Web resources), to agree on a session (or, for online courses, a module) to observe, and to obtain access to any materials that should be reviewed in preparation that session. This interaction will typically be fairly informal. Here are some useful questions to consider at this stage:

1. What are the instructor's goals for the session or module to be observed?
2. What teaching methods does the instructor expect to use?
3. What will students be asked to do to prepare for this session or what will they be asked to do in this module?
4. How does this session relate to previous and subsequent sessions?
5. How typical is this session to the instructor's teaching approach in this class?
6. How will the instructor assess what they learn in the course?
7. Is there anything specific the instructor would like the observer to focus on?

For instructors who have previously taught the same course, the reviewer should also review student evaluations of teaching from at least the most recent prior semester. Access to these evaluations can be provided by the instructor or by the Dean's office.

### Observation

Observers of face-to-face or synchronous online courses will normally visit one session of the course, typically staying for an hour or so (for long sessions, the observer may wish to arrange to arrive or leave during scheduled breaks). Observers for asynchronous online courses will normally spend a similar amount of time observing activities during a single module of that course, but they may choose to spread that time over several shorter periods. Observers may choose any method to record their impressions during the session. For example, taking narrative notes (including lecture content) roughly simulates the students' experience in class while allowing for marginal notations of a more evaluative nature.

### Post-Observation Discussion

As soon as practical after the observation, the observer should talk with the instructor. The focus of this discussion should be on bidirectional sharing of reactions and ideas. The following questions may be useful to the observer for starting that discussion:

1. How did you feel this session or module went?
2. Did students accomplish the goals you set for them?
3. What do you think worked well, or not so well, in this class?

This conversation should occur before the report is drafted.

### Report

The report should typically be about two pages in length and should address at least the following points:

1. A brief description of the preparation and observation, and brief mention of the subsequent discussion prior to drafting the report. This should include at least the names

of the instructor and reviewer, the course number and title, what materials were reviewed before the observation, and the date, time and location of the observation (or, for online modules, brief identification of the module and its structure).

2. A brief description of what happened during the observed session or module.
3. A brief summary of the content of the teaching evaluations that were read in preparation for the observation.
4. Evaluative comments, both identifying noteworthy aspects of the course, session, or module and (where appropriate) raising concerns that are accompanied by constructive suggestions for improvement. Each of the following six broad sets of issues should be addressed. The specific questions listed for each broad set of issues are intended to stimulate thinking, and it is neither expected nor desired that reviewers comment on each specific question.
  - a. **Content.** Is the instructor knowledgeable of the content? Is the depth and breadth of material appropriate to the level of course and the students? Does the material relate to the goals of the course? Does the instructor emphasize a conceptual grasp of material, incorporate recent developments in the field, and relate the material to practical applications? Does the instructor enrich the material by making intellectual connections with related material and placing it in a broader context? Does the instructor distinguish between fact and opinion and present divergent viewpoints when appropriate?
  - b. **Instruction.** Was the instructor well-prepared for class, or was the module well prepared? Were the teaching methods appropriate for the material? Were those methods used effectively? Were different parts of the session or module well integrated? Was the overall organization of the session or module logical? Did the session or module build upon past presentations and prepare students for future classes?
  - c. **Learning.** Were the students well prepared for class? Were they engaged? That required the students to be prepared for the class discussion? Were there student behaviors that fell outside the mainstream of class activity (reading newspapers, random conversations, etc.)? What are the implications of observed student behaviors for the instructor?
  - d. **Interaction.** Were interactions conducive to learning? Did the instructor teach to the whole class or to a select group? Did the instructor show enthusiasm for teaching? Did the instructor show enthusiasm for the subject? Did the instructor create expectations that challenged the students? Was there evidence of instructor-student rapport? Was the instructor effective in facilitating discussion? If discussions occurred, were the purpose and guidelines clear to the students? Were student questions handled effectively by the instructor? Was the instructor sensitive to student confusion or difficulty in understanding? Did any of the instructor's mechanics (audibility, clarity of written materials, etc.) detract from the learning experience?
  - e. **Activities.** Do the assignments, projects, and class activities contribute to the learning outcomes of the course? Are the assessment mechanisms (assignments, project, papers, exams, etc.) appropriate for assessing those learning outcomes?
  - f. **Materials.** What materials (textbook, Web resources, lecture notes, etc.) are used? Are they appropriate for the course? Is the syllabus clear, correct, and sufficiently detailed?

4. The report should conclude with some overall comments. For example, what did you like most about this course, this session or module, or the instructor's approach? What issues deserve particular attention from the instructor in the future?

The instructor should be provided with an opportunity to comment informally on a draft of the report before the final version is filed. The final version of the report should be sent to the staff member designated by the Dean to receive and maintain reports from peer review of teaching, with a copy to the instructor. Instructors have the opportunity to file written comments on a report should they wish to do so, although such comments are not required.