

Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observation of Teaching

Section 1. Purpose and Rationale

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley recognizes the essential contribution of its faculty members to the quality of students' education and learning experiences and supports faculty development in all aspects of instruction. The process of formative peer observation provides an effective tool for faculty development in teaching.

Departments are encouraged to use this process to engage in constructive conversations between faculty members for the purpose of facilitating faculty growth in teaching, as well as in building healthy collegial relationships through conversation in the context of professional development. This document provides the requirements for the peer observation process to be used by departments.

The goal of the peer observation process is to improve teaching and student learning while serving as a tool for mentoring. The peer observation process shall foster a culture of teaching excellence through collegial dialogue. Thus, the outcome of the faculty peer observation process shall be a reflective summary by the faculty member describing any steps taken or changes made towards the enhancement of teaching and improvement of student learning as outlined in the teaching performance category in [HOP ADM 06-503](#) and [06-504](#).

Section 2. Applicability of Guidelines

Peer observation of teaching applies to all full-time faculty including:

1. All faculty whose duties consist of teaching organized courses, including hybrid and online courses, and/or clinical instruction.
2. Full-time faculty with administrative appointments who teach at least one class per academic year.

The decision on whether to include peer observation for review of part-time faculty shall be made at the department or unit level.

Section 3. Definitions

Faculty Member – The individual whose teaching is being observed.

Faculty Member Report – A report written by the faculty member being observed. This document is to be included in the faculty member's dossier.

Peer Observer – Individual who observes and provides feedback to the faculty member.

Peer Observer Evaluative Report – The observer's written evaluation that is provided to the faculty member after the evaluation is complete. The Peer Observer Evaluative Report must be included as a component in the faculty member's report.

Section 4. The University of Texas System Reporting Requirements

Per the [University of Texas System \(UTS\) Office of Academic Affairs Guidelines for Submission of Tenure](#)

[Recommendation](#), UTS institutions are required to submit evidence of peer evaluations of teaching to the UTS Board of Regents for all faculty seeking tenure and promotion.

Section 5. Frequency of Observation

Frequency of observation differs by faculty member title and rank. The Dean and department chair/director have the discretion to *increase* frequency of observation, however, minimum frequency requirements for peer observations of teaching must be maintained. Likewise, faculty members may request more frequent observation.

Tenure-track Faculty: Must be observed at least twice during their probationary period.

Tenured Faculty: Must be observed at least twice during their comprehensive evaluation period.

Professional (Non-Tenure) Track Faculty (All titles): Must be observed at least once every three years or at least once every renewal cycle.

Section 6. Selection of Peer Observers

Peer observers may be members of the same department or unit as the faculty member, but this is not required. The faculty member being observed shall have considerable input into who will serve as his or her peer observer. Observations by non-faculty experts cannot substitute for peer observations.

Section 7. The Peer Observation Process

1. Peer Observation Pre-Conference

Faculty member and Peer observer meet to discuss elements of teaching that faculty would like to improve, change or wants general feedback. The faculty member and peer observer should discuss and decide on one or two elements of teaching to be observed and evaluated. These may include, but are not limited to:

- [Teaching strategies](#)
- [Content delivery](#)
- [Student engagement/active Learning](#)
- [Student assignments and/or feedback](#)
- [Flow and pace of teaching and course design](#)
- [Course alignment with assessment](#)
- [Syllabus review](#)
- [AI integration](#)

2. Observation

Peer Observer performs observations/evaluation. They should begin to draft their evaluation report.

3. Post Observation Conference

Peer Observer and Faculty Member discuss observation and evaluation of teaching elements discussed in pre-conference

4. Final Report Provided to Faculty

Within 30 days, the evaluator provides the Peer Observation Evaluative Report to the faculty member

Section 8. Peer Observation Evaluative Report Requirements

1. Course number, section, and title of observed class
2. Date, time, and location of observation(s)
3. Name, title, and signature of faculty member
4. Name, title, and signature of peer observer
5. Faculty member's goals for class day of observation
6. Peer observer's feedback

Section 9. Faculty Member Report Requirements

The Faculty Member Report must be included in the faculty member's dossier for the corresponding evaluation timeframe.

1. Name and signature of faculty member
2. Name and signature of peer observer
3. Name and course number of class observed
4. Date of any pre-observation meeting
5. Date of observation(s)
6. Date of any post-observation meeting
7. Copy of the Peer Observer Evaluative Report
8. A reflection written by the faculty member describing what the faculty member has learned from the peer observation process and any plans for improvement, development, or innovation.

Section 10. Recognition of Service of Peer Observer

The peer observation process involves significant time and effort on the part of the peer observer. This is deemed an important service contribution and shall be recognized and reflected as such in the peer observer's annual evaluation.

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