**Department of Psychological Science**

**The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley**

**Peer Observation of Teaching**

**Policy and Procedures**

The quality of teaching is of great importance to all faculty and peer observation is a possible mechanism for enhancing and documenting the success of the teaching activities of our faculty. There are two purposes, prescribed by the UT System, for using peer observation of teaching: (1) for evaluation purposes (only in decisions regarding tenure or promotion, or special recommendations for other purposes) and (2) for improving teaching.

(1) Conducting Peer Observations for Tenure, Promotion, or Other Recommendations regarding Teaching

All reports of promotion and tenure decisions sent to UT System must show evidence of peer observation of teaching. Evidence of peer observation of teaching may also be required by UT System and/or local reviewers in support of nominations for teaching awards or similar applications.

Details of the processes to be followed by faculty and observers implementing the conduct of peer observations of teaching for all supplemental faculty (i.e., part time, one year appointments, and continuing lecturers), for tenure-track faculty, and for tenured faculty are described under *Procedures*, below.

(2) Peer Observation to Improve Teaching

Understanding that all faculty should receive periodic feedback on their teaching, each peer observation report will be accompanied by comments by the reviewer describing what the instructor does well and, possibly, areas for improvement.

*Policy Note:*

The Department of Psychology views peer observations of teaching as a formative process and, as such, does not expect instructors to release the content of peer observations for inclusion in their personnel files or evaluation dossiers. Additionally, if a course includes a lab section, then review of the lab section is not required.

**Procedures and Timelines for the Conduct of Peer Observations of Teaching**

**Frequency of Observation**

Faculty of various ranks will be reviewed on a schedule appropriate to the nature of their employment and requirements for subsequent employment. Faculty members may request more frequent observation to the extent this can be accommodated by the department.

**Part time faculty** must be observed at least once each regular semester during which they are employed unless they have been observed at least once during the previous 12 months.

**Tenure-track faculty** and faculty members with the rank of **Lecturer I, Lecturer II, and Lecturer III, Clinical Instructor, Clinical Assistant Professor, and Clinical Associate Professor** shall be observed at least once per academic year. Faculty members who have zero percent teaching workload during the academic year will not be required to undergo peer observation of teaching.

**Tenured faculty** and faculty members with the rank of **Senior Lecturer and Clinical Professor** shall be observed at least once every three years. Faculty members who have zero percent teaching workload during a three-year period will not be required to undergo peer observation of teaching.

**Peer Observation Required for Promotion and Tenure**

All promotion and tenure review reports sent to UT System must show evidence of peer evaluations of teaching, including faculty members with administrative appointments of 50% or less.

**Selection of Peer Observers**

Peer observation of teaching demands a definition of “peer.” For the purposes of peer observation of teaching, an appropriate “peer” will be determined by the individual being observed, who will extend a request to a potential observer. Such an invitation could be justified on the basis of shared content areas of expertise or a reputation of excellence in a particular teaching method to which the observed faculty member aspires. The observer may be a faculty member from within or outside of the department.

It is anticipated that all faculty in the department will be prepared to conduct at least one peer observation per academic year, and the expectation is that the burden of conducting such observations will be distributed as evenly as possible among all members of the faculty. No individual faculty member is obligated to perform an excessive number of observations. The peer observation process involves significant time and effort on the part of the peer observer. This service contribution shall be recognized as part of the annual evaluation of the peer observer. Peer observers may have access to institution-wide training for peer observation, though such training is not required.

**Peer Observation Process**

The faculty member to be observed and the observer will mutually agree on the timeline for the review. For traditional lecture classes, the observation will be based on an in-class observation. For online asynchronous classes, the observation will be based on the online course (access must be provided to the observer). For reduced seat time (hybrid) courses, the observation will be based on in-class observation and/or review of the online course (depending on which the instructor is seeking feedback). For online synchronous courses, the observation will be based on attendance at a selected synchronous class meeting. Alternatively, observation may be based on a recording of an agreed-upon sample class period (whether traditional or synchronous online), recorded within the allowable review timeline. Such recording may or may not be made explicitly for the purpose of meeting the observation requirements of this policy. When such recordings are made, they must be captured through a method or platform that allows the peer observer to view/hear content being shown to students.

The observer will make use of the department-approved ***Peer Observation of Teaching Faculty Member Report Form***and***Peer Observer Evaluative Report Form*** (see attachment).

 Following the peer observation, the observer and the faculty member being observed will meet to discuss the results of the observation and the faculty member will be provided with the two forms*.* The *Faculty Member Report Form* must be included in the faculty member’s personnel file and their evaluation dossier (if appropriate) no later than the last day of classes for the semester in which the observation takes place. The *Faculty Member Report Form* must include a short reflection statement written by the faculty member being observed describing what the faculty member has learned from the peer observation process and any plans for improvement or development. The ***Peer Observer Evaluative Report Form*** will become the property of the faculty member.

Adopted by a vote of the eligible faculty: 4/12/2024

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**Peer Observation of Teaching Faculty Member Report Form**

*(to be included in personnel file and/or dossier)*

Name of faculty member to be observed:

Title/rank of faculty member to be observed:

Number and title of course observed:

Type of course observed (TR, REDUC, OASYNC, OSYNC):

Name of peer observer:

Date/time of classroom observation:

Date of *pre-observation* meeting between observer and instructor:

 Syllabus and assignments reviewed (Y/N):

Date of *post-observation* meeting of observer with instructor:

*I affirm that a post-observation meeting took place on the above date at which the peer observation of teaching for the course indicated above was discussed.*

Signature of observer:

Signature of instructor:

**Post-feedback reflection statement.**

Narrative written by the faculty member being observed describing what the faculty member has learned from the peer observation process and any plans for improvement or development:

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**Peer Observer Evaluative Report Form**

*(property of the instructor)*

Name of faculty member observed:

Class observed:

Date of observation:

Name of observer:

The faculty member being reviewed was found to engage students in active learning. The following are some examples:

The following aspects of the observed class were especially positive:

Possible areas for improvement are: