

College of Sciences
UTeach

Guidelines for Peer Observation of Teaching

Purpose: As part of UTeach Rio Grande Valley faculty members' desire to continuously improve their courses for our students, the faculty believe that teaching effectiveness may be reviewed using: 1. Student evaluations of the course, 2. Continued participation in the various endeavors of mentoring our students, revising current courses, etc., 3. Peer observation of teaching and review of course material. This policy is to formalize the peer observation and review of course materials.

Objective: This policy affects all UTeach Assistant Professors in Practice (UTeach Master Teachers) and UTeach Associate Professors in Practice. Each faculty member will be observed and his/her course materials will be reviewed by peers every year. Faculty may request additional observations as desired. Faculty will select the course for which the observation is to take place among those that he or she is teaching from the courses designated by the UTeach Institute for Master Teachers to teach (Step 1, Step 2 and Apprentice Teaching Seminar) or any other UTeach course where the Master Teacher is listed as the primary instructor.

Selection of Observer: Faculty may select from one of the following options for observation:

- a) Faculty being observed may choose any member of the UTeach faculty who is not coteaching the class to be observed. UTeach faculty includes UTeach Master Teachers, full time faculty who have taught a UTeach course within the past two academic years and UTeach Co-Directors.
- b) Faculty may ask a UTeach co-director to select a UTeach faculty member.

The Observation: Observers should be contacted regarding an observation request early in the semester. The observation consists of four activities: a meeting between the instructor and the observer prior to the observation (pre-observation conference), at least one scheduled classroom visit, a review of course material (syllabi, methods of assessment, assignment sheets, notes, etc.) and a final informal oral discussion between the faculty member being observed and the observer (post-observation conference), where the bulk and details of the observation are presented.

Faculty Member Report: The observed faculty member will prepare a Faculty Member report, which includes:

1. Name and signature of the faculty member,
2. Name and signature of peer observer,
3. Name and course number of observed class,
4. Date of any pre-observation meeting,
5. Date of observation(s),
6. Date of any post-observation meeting,
7. A brief narrative (not to exceed one page) by the faculty member describing what the faculty member has learned from the peer observation process and any plans for improvement or development.

The Faculty Member Report shall be provided to the UTeach co-director from the College of Sciences via email, no later than the last day of class for the semester in which the observation takes place. A copy of the Faculty Member Report must be placed in the observed faculty member's annual review folder as well as any promotion dossier that the candidate submits.

Peer Observer Evaluation: The observed faculty member may request a written Peer Observer Evaluation from the observer summarizing the observation process and providing an assessment of the observed faculty member's teaching effectiveness, which the faculty member may include in the observed faculty member's annual review folder and promotion dossier. A Peer Observer Evaluation should include all four aspects of the observation described above, and should address the following questions:

1. Does the instructor clearly define and explain the course objectives and expectations?
2. Is the instructor prepared to teach for each instructional activity?
3. Does the instructor communicate effectively?
4. Does the instructor encourage students to take an active role in their own learning?
5. What specific recommendations would you make to improve the instructor's effectiveness?

Approved by UTeach Program February 2, 2018.