

Purpose

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences values excellence in teaching. Such excellence can be enhanced through constructive and candid evaluation of peer teaching. Periodic peer teaching evaluations (PTE) can also serve as helpful and productive supplements to student evaluations and for faculty promotion and tenure. With these goals in mind, the College encourages each unit to develop a system for peer teaching evaluation and offers the following as a starting point for such development.

Coordination.

Units in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences should have a coordinator for Peer Teaching Evaluation (PTE), who is responsible for assigning evaluating duties to faculty. The coordinator should generally be the Chair/Director or his/her designee. The coordinator will select courses for evaluation. The coordinator should pair instructors and evaluators as early in the semester of evaluation as is feasible to facilitate organizing classroom visits. Evaluators of tenured and tenure-track faculty should be recruited from among tenured faculty, although the chair may invite a retired colleague, or a colleague in the same discipline from another university. Senior lecturers may be recruited as evaluators for lecturers.

Frequency.

The College encourages units to arrange PTE *at a minimum*: for tenured faculty every two to three years, every year for untenured tenure-stream faculty and lecturers, and each semester for graduate instructors and adjunct lecturers.

Suggested Procedures for the Peer Evaluator

Arranging the Observation

Contact the instructor and provide reasonable notice of the observation (at least two weeks). Arrange a mutually convenient date and time. For online classes, the evaluator should ask to be added as an observer in the course website (for a mutually agreed on period of time) with access to all materials including virtual office hours and other interactive components of the course (such as discussion boards). Instructors should consider, in light of course content, making students aware of the observer.

Look at the course syllabus before the visit to ascertain the basic structure of the course. Does the syllabus clearly and sufficiently describe the major components of the course (e.g., objectives, course policies, evaluations, schedule)? Does the syllabus include information required by the University, such as honor code requirements, and procedures for accommodating students with special needs? Does the course make use of accessible and assistive technologies, and are course materials designed to maximize visibility and readability? Where appropriate, does the course contain equivalents to auditory or visual content, such that students with impairments can encounter material in alternatively accessible form?

Talk to the instructor to find out what he or she is planning to do during that session.

Conducting the Observation

Face-to-face Classes

Arrive before the class starts and take a seat in an unobtrusive place. Plan on staying the entire length of the class for a 1- or 2-period class. For a longer class session, if staying for the full class is not possible, try to leave during a break.

As the class progresses, take notes on:

How the instructor structures class sessions (lecture, discussion, small groups, exercises, etc.) and interacts with the students; if a lecture format, how the lecture organized and its clarity; if discussion, the effectiveness in soliciting student interaction;

How he or she makes use of visual aids (if any) and other resources (handouts, etc.);

How (and how many) students participate; what fraction of the class was in attendance;

To what extent does the instructor draw connections between current lesson and previous discussions;

Whether the instructor encountered any particular pedagogical challenges (e.g., disrespectful students, students' lack of preparation, etc.) and, if so, how the instructor handled these challenges;

Note what the instructor does particularly well, as well as what might be done in the future to improve and use the notes to complete the narrative.

Appended is a template that may prove helpful to evaluators.

Online Classes

If this is an online course, are the syllabus, course calendar and other materials clearly labeled on the course home page and easily located? Are all deadlines included in the course schedule? Are there means (examples include an introductory quiz) to allow students to check their knowledge of these components of the course?

Does the course-site outline netiquette for the course and/or expectations for behavior in course discussion boards, instructor-student communication, etc.? Are there clearly delineated provisions in places to address technological failure?

Completing the Observation

As soon as possible after the class, while everything is still fresh in mind, please type up the observation report, using the questions above and/or on the form as a guideline for the kind of information to include.

Evaluators shall complete the written report and submit it to the instructor within two weeks of the observation; the instructor shall be offered the opportunity to discuss the evaluation with the evaluator prior to its being finalized and placed in the employee's evaluation file and may submit a written reply, which shall be attached to the report. The report shall indicate if the course was assigned to the instructor with less than six weeks' notice. Evaluators should arrange a meeting with the instructor to discuss the evaluation report and may opt to revise it after meeting with the instructor. The instructor should have the option of appending comments to your observation.

Evaluators should then send the final observation (including any comments from the instructor) to the department coordinator (whether the chair or the chair's designee), to the instructor, and have the report included in the instructor's file.

Appendix I. Evaluation Template

Instructor: _____ **Course:** _____

Evaluator: _____ **Class Session Content:** _____

Type/Length of Visit: _____ **Observation Date:** _____

Course Type (face-to-face, blended, purely online)

This form can be completed during the visit as a means to take useful notes for a subsequent report. Try to assume a student perspective as you observe the class. Be as specific and objective as you can, so as to provide the most valuable feedback to the instructor. The items in the left column marked (OL) apply only to online courses while the rest apply to all courses.

Class Notes (what you observe) Note: OL is for online courses	Comments on what worked well AND suggestions for improvement/enhancement
<p><i>Goals for Student Learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What did the instructor want students to take away from this class session? ● Was it possible to ascertain whether the students achieved the lesson's expressed goal(s)? ● Did the lesson align with the syllabus? 	
<p><i>Student Assessment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are students given clear information about how their performance will be assessed? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the means of student assessment target the stated goals/learning outcomes? • What kind of feedback is provided on student work, and is it appropriate for the course? • (OL) What measures are taken to secure the integrity of student work completed online (such as ProctorU use, turnitin.com)? Is it sufficient? 	
<p><i>Method of Instruction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was course material presented? • (OL) Do the technologies used by the instructor seem likely to be effective in engaging students and facilitating learning? • (OL) Has the instructor provided clear and conveniently located instructions and tutorials for proper use of course technologies? • Comment on how and the extent to which the teaching method supported student learning. • Think in terms of organization (introduction, main points, summary), presentation style, use of examples, use of technology, variety of instructional activities, use of class time, pacing of material, instructor knowledge/preparation, etc. 	
<p><i>Instructor/Student Interaction</i></p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How were students involved during the class, or provided opportunities for participating online? ● (OL) How are real-time elements of the class (if any) structured? ● (OL) Does the design of the course reflect active instructor engagement? ● How did this interaction support student learning (i.e., to what extent did the level of interaction align with the goals for student learning)? ● Consider: opportunities for questions and interaction among students; answers to questions; comprehension checks; facilitation of discussion; level of student engagement; rapport; feedback to students; and assessment of student comprehension. ● (OL) If there are opportunities for large/small group or individual activities, how do they work? 	
<p><i>Classroom Space/Site</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What aspects of the classroom space (face-to-face) or technology (OL) either facilitated or inhibited aspects of teaching (e.g. face-to-face: seating arrangement, size of room, location of media equipment, physical access to students, sound, etc OL: video, access to files, sound bites, interactive whiteboards, chat sessions, etc.)? ● (OL) Does the course site make clear the role that each element of the online environment will play in the course? 	
<p><i>General Observations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When did the students seem particularly engaged? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What worked well, from your perspective? Why? What didn't work well, from your perspective? Why? ● What areas need improvement? ● How could these improvements be made (consider long-term as well as short-term possibilities)? ● Would the faculty member benefit from observing a peer? 	
<p><i>Positive Outcomes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did observing your colleague have a positive outcome in terms of your own approach to classroom teaching? For example, did it offer you new insights into best teaching practices? 	