

4.2.1.1.1 Classroom Observation of Teaching

Classroom visits by senior members of the Faculty are considered an essential and regular aspect of peer evaluation of teaching. It is hoped that increased awareness of different styles and methods of teaching, as will happen when visits are made, will lead to an improvement of teaching in all academic ranks. [Rev. 14-20]

Peer observation is typically of two kinds: formative (faculty member is observed and provided feedback which only he/she sees) and evaluative (untenured faculty member is observed and provided feedback in a formal report by observer). The procedures identified below are primarily, but not exclusively, to be used for evaluative observation. [Added 14-20]

4.2.1.1.1.1 An untenured faculty member may choose to initiate and to undergo formative observation in his or her first year, and is, in fact, encouraged to do so. But normally, no evaluative observation will be conducted during the first year. Normally, at least 50% of all tenured members of the department should observe untenured colleagues at least once before the midterm review, and ideally, all tenured members of the department will observe the untenured colleagues before the tenure review; the exact number of observations may vary depending on the size of the department. The Department Head shall make every effort to ensure that these visits are scheduled appropriately so as not to become burdensome. [Added 14-20]

In the case of untenured faculty with interdisciplinary program appointments, the untenured faculty's advisory committee, as established in his/her MOU and in accordance with Appendix M.1.5.4 of the *Faculty Handbook*, will perform the responsibilities of tenured departmental colleagues. [Added 14-20]

Evaluative observations should be designed to address both breadth and depth of the candidate's teaching. Breadth is achieved when a balance of course types (introductory, survey, upper level, interdisciplinary, etc.) are observed over the probationary period, both pre- and post-midterm. To achieve depth, departments should attempt to have at least some tenured faculty visit the same course both pre- and post-midterm. Members of the candidate's conference committee may be ideal candidates for visiting multiple class sessions over the course of the probationary period. [Added 14-20]

Each academic department shall prepare guidelines stating how the College classroom observation procedures will be followed within the department. Such guidelines shall identify, given departmental size and relative numbers of senior vs. untenured colleagues, the preferred timing and frequency of evaluative observations. The Department Head shall provide a copy of the guidelines to each department faculty member and to the Provost and the Promotion, Tenure, and Review Committee. The Dean of the Faculty, in consultation with the Teaching and Learning Committee and Provost, shall review each department's guidelines to ensure their consistency with the College procedure, and upon approval, shall post them on the Provost's website. Whenever a new faculty member joins a department, the Department Head shall provide him/her with a copy of the Classroom Observation guidelines. [Added 14-20]

These guidelines should be reviewed at least every five years. If departmental or program guidelines change, the new guidelines should be sent to the Dean of the Faculty's office for review in consultation with the Teaching and Learning Committee. [Added 14-20]

4.2.1.1.1.2 To ensure consistency across departments, and to eliminate surprise visits, each evaluative observation should consist of 1) the pre-observation consultation; 2) the pre-observation discussion; 3) the peer observation itself; and 4) the post-observation procedure. [Added 14-20]

1. Pre-observation consultation [Added 14-20]

- a. At the beginning of each academic year (with the exception of the first year), the Department Head will meet separately with each untenured faculty member to decide which courses will be observed and by whom. Normally, each untenured faculty member shall be observed between one and two times per semester and by no more than two senior colleagues per visit. [Added 14-20]
- b. The Department Head will contact the identified tenured faculty members to assist in scheduling their observations. [Added 14-20]
- c. The Department Head will provide observers with any necessary information about the peer observation process (such as department criteria for the evaluation of teaching, if available). The Department Head should also stress the importance of consistency: the observer should use a similar approach in observing different individuals. [Added 14-20]
- d. The tenured faculty members who are scheduled to observe will contact the untenured faculty member (observed) to establish a time for the pre-observation discussion and the observation itself. [Added 14-20]

2. Pre-observation Discussion [Added 14-20]

During this meeting, the person to be observed will share the course syllabus, course learning objectives/outcomes, and goals for the particular class with the observer. The observer will use the evaluation criteria for a quality teacher as defined in section 4.2.1 above. [Added 14-20]

3. Observation [Added 14-20]

- a. The observer should arrive early to class, choose an unobtrusive seat, and be introduced at the beginning of the session. The observer should not otherwise participate in the class. [Added 14-20]
- b. The observer should take notes during the class (and immediately afterwards, if necessary), to maximize the likelihood of an accurate recollection of the observation. [Added 14-20]

4. Post-observation Procedure [Added 14-20]

- a. A meeting between the observer and the person who was observed will normally be held within two weeks after the observation has occurred. At this meeting, the observer will share what was observed, his/ her evaluation of the class (it may be necessary to articulate or clarify criteria at this time), and any suggestions or advice. [Added 14-20]
- b. Within a week after this discussion, the observer will prepare a written report of the observation and the post-observation meeting and provide it to the person who was observed and to the Department Head. The final

paragraph of this report should offer a summary of the evaluation. The observer will send a copy of the summary paragraph to the Provost. The untenured faculty member will provide copies of all such summaries to the conference committee conducting his/her pre- and post-midterm conferences. At the time of the midterm and tenure reviews, the Provost will make the summary reports available to the Departmental Review Committee and PTR. [Added 14-20; Rev. 15-10]

- c. If the untenured faculty member believes that report has misrepresented the observation or discussions, or if he/she desires to provide additional context, he/she may produce a written formal response. The untenured faculty member submits the response to the Provost, and, at his/her discretion, may also provide a copy to the observer, the Department Head, and the conference committee conducting his/her pre- and post-midterm conferences. If the untenured faculty member has released the response to the observer, the Department Head, and the conference committee, the Provost will include the response as part of the materials for the Departmental Review Committee at the time of the midterm and tenure reviews. If the untenured faculty member has not released the response to the observer, Department Head, and the conference committee, it will be made available only to PTR at the time of the midterm and tenure reviews. [Added 14-20; Rev. 15-10]
- d. The department annual report must include a section on observation, including information about who was observed, in which classes, and by whom. [Added 14-20]