Peer Teaching Evaluations, UA Geosciences Departmental Policies/Procedures

Peer Teaching Evaluations are required for inclusion in a Teaching Portfolio for reviews, promotion, and tenure decisions for each faculty member. These policies are intended to help new faculty build a useful portfolio, as well as provide feedback on and opportunities to improve teaching effectiveness. New faculty have a semester to pick an individual in the department (a Teaching Mentor), in consultation with the Department Head, who will take charge of peer teaching evaluations for them, either by doing the evaluations his/herself, or by arranging for another individual to do them (or both).

Process:

Faculty will be evaluated at least twice, in two separate courses, preferably a grad and undergrad course, for a total of four evaluations. Each evaluation will consist of:

- Pre-Observation (faculty and observer can discuss desired learning outcomes)
- In-class observation (we agreed on 20 suggested criteria; see below)
- Post-Observation (faculty and observer can discuss the evaluation)

The evaluator will also write a letter, addressed to the Department Head, explaining the evaluation outcomes. It is optional for P&T candidates to include any previous teaching observations that were not done for promotional review. A least one peer observation is done at the time of promotional review and is included in Section 9 of the dossier. This observation is organized by the departmental committee, not the candidate. The following questions can be used as a guide for preparing the summary letter:

- What is the class that was observed/reviewed (level, format, content)?
- How many class sessions were observed and how many observers collaborated on this review?
- What did the instructor do during the class sessions/in online learning activities and assessments to engage students in learning important content? How could the instructor have improved student engagement?
- What did the instructor do during the class sessions/in online learning activities and assessments to assess students’ learning of important content (informally or formally)? How could the instructor have
improved student assessment?

Evaluated faculty members will be provided with a copy of the letter, and if desired, faculty can prepare a response for inclusion in the Teaching Portfolio

For an Assistant Professor, these evaluations will take place in the year before the third-year review, and before the promotion to Associate Professor. Other promotion and review cases (e.g., from Associate to Full Professor) will also be supported by peer teaching evaluations done in the year before the review. It is the responsibility of the faculty up for promotion as well as the teaching mentor to ensure that these evaluations are done on time and in a conscientious way that provides adequate demonstration of teaching effectiveness for review and tenure decisions.

Criteria:

Each evaluation will focus on elements related to issues discussed in https://teachingprotocol.oia.arizona.edu/content/4 and is listed there as the “Classroom Observation Tool”. When you Schedule an Observation, you will be able to select a Department Observation for either a Lecture Class or Seminar/Discussion Class.

These are the 10 currently selected items which faculty will be evaluated on:

- Explicitly shared the learning outcomes of the class session or current unit.
- Made effective use of technology tools to support teaching and learning.
- Solicited question responses from a wide cross section of the class.
- Presented short lecture segments interspersed with active-learning strategies: e.g., Think/Pair/Share cycles, polling questions, small-group work, low-stakes writing tasks.
- Assigned small-group tasks that were related to the lesson’s learning outcomes.
- Guided synthesis of small-group work at the conclusion of a collaborative activity.
- Established a classroom environment that affirms students’ identities.
- Asked questions, with adequate wait time, to assess students’ learning.
- Asked questions that required varying levels of thinking: e.g., recall, analysis, synthesis.
- Demonstrated flexibility and compassion regarding students’ requests.
Additionally, please address:

1. What do you think the students learned from this lesson?
2. What were the instructor’s major strengths as demonstrated in this class session?
3. What suggestions do you have for improving this instructor’s teaching?

Classroom Observation Tool

Faculty, teaching mentors, and peer evaluators must use the Classroom Observation Tool provided by the Office of Instructional Assessment (OIA). The Department of Geosciences has prepared a template for observation or “peer teaching evaluation”, which may be used directly or modified to suit the needs and objectives of the faculty, mentor, and evaluator.

It is recommended that you first consult the Quick Start User Guide for instructions on how to schedule, confirm, record, and print out observation reports.

To find the Classroom Observation Tool:

A. Go to https://teachingreview.oia.arizona.edu/

For Faculty TO BE Observed:

1. It is the instructor to be observed who needs to log in, set up an observation, and identify the observer.
2. When the instructor logs in, he/she will be on the Observations tab. Under Select Observation Function, select “Schedule an Observation” in order to use the departmental template.
3. The observation will assign an observer and choose an observation date.
4. Then select Departmental Template.
5. To finish scheduling an observation, click SAVE.
6. This will automatically general an email confirmation to you and your observer requesting that they log in and confirm the observation

For Faculty WHO ARE the Assigned Observers:

1. Once you have logged in and confirmed the observation, you will complete the assigned observation. Then, select RECORD MY OBSERVATION to record your comments on the 10 selected criteria items. Click FINALIZE to finish
recording this observation. Generate and print an official report from the system. In addition to this report, the observer must write a separate observation letter.

2. Please email the OIA report and separate observation to the Department Head and Michelle Garcia. Copies of both documents will also be emailed to the faculty being observed (with the exception of a peer evaluation done for a promotional review by the departmental P&T committee).

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