



Peer Review of Teaching Protocol Guidelines for Instructor to be Reviewed (Reviewee)

The protocol for peer review of teaching is designed to guide UA instructors in the process of *formative review* of peers' teaching, as well as *evaluation of teaching* for summative review.

Formative review is used to provide feedback for professional growth and development; it is usually confidential and non-judgmental and its goal is self-motivated change. It is grounded in the belief that instructors can be their own best resources for improvement of teaching. *Evaluation of teaching* (e.g., for annual reviews and P & T) is a more formal process; guidelines for using this protocol in that process are outlined in the document titled Evaluation of Teaching.

In selecting a colleague to review your teaching, it will most effective to select someone in your unit with considerable teaching experience and whose teaching you respect. Since this peer review is formative, the reviewer's faculty rank is not an issue.

The process of peer review of teaching includes three stages:

1. a pre-observation meeting to discuss the target class and goals for the observation,
2. a classroom observation, and
3. a post-observation meeting to discuss how the class went and what the observer noticed.

This protocol includes guidelines for the pre- and post-observation meetings, a customizable observation tool for the classroom observation, a note-taking template, and a summary of the process to be given to the observer.

Once you have identified the colleague you will invite to review your teaching, please provide him/her a copy of the Reviewer Guidelines, the Classroom Observation Template, and the link for the Classroom Observation Tool. The guidelines provide an overview of the Peer Review Process, and include suggestions for structuring the pre- and post-observation meetings and conducting the classroom observation.

Pre-Observation Meeting

Why is a pre-observation meeting important for the peer review of teaching?

The pre-observation meeting “sets the stage” for a productive observation of your teaching. In this meeting, you and your reviewer will have a chance to discuss your course, including its structure, goals, role in your unit’s curriculum, and typical student reactions. You will also be able to discuss the class session to be observed, including your learning goals and planned activities for that day’s lesson. This meeting will require about an hour. Before that meeting, please provide your reviewer with a copy of the course syllabus and your written reflection (described below).

Why is a written reflection about the target course important?

This reflection is designed to spark your thinking about the ways in which teaching your course represents an act of scholarship. For your reviewer, it serves as a window into your thinking about the course. Prior to the pre-observation meeting, provide your reviewer with a copy of the course syllabus, along with your written reflection. Some questions are listed below to guide your thinking. **You may not need to address all of these questions to illustrate your thinking about the course; choose those questions that are the most useful to you and spend 30-45 minutes crafting your responses. If time is of concern, please review these questions and share your verbal responses to the most salient ones with your reviewer in the pre-observation meeting.**

Possible questions for reflection¹:

- **Shape and Content:** How does the course begin? What do you and your students do as the course unfolds? What are the key assignments and/or student assessments? How does it end? What do you want to persuade your students to believe or question?
- **Organization:** Are there distinctly different ways to organize your course, ways that reflect quite different perspectives on your discipline or field? Do you focus on particular topics while other colleagues might make other choices? Why?
- **Connections:** How does your course connect with other courses in your own or other fields? To what extent does your course lay a foundation for others that follow it? How does it build on what students have already learned in other courses? How does your course fit within a larger conception of curriculum, program, or university experience?
- **Student Reactions:** What do you expect students to find particularly fascinating about your course? Where will they encounter their greatest difficulties, of understanding or motivation? How does the content of your course connect to matters your students already understand or have experienced? Where will it seem most alien? How do you address these common student responses in your course? How has the course evolved over time in response to these responses?
- **Metaphor:** Lastly, you might try playing with some metaphors for characterizing your course and its place in the larger curriculum or in the lives of your students. Is your course like a journey, a parable, a football game, a museum, a romance, a concerto, an Aristotelian tragedy, an obstacle course, one or all or some of the above? How does your metaphor(s) illuminate key aspects of your course?

¹*Questions adapted from:* American Association for Higher Education. (1995). *From idea to prototype: The peer review of teaching*. AAHE: Washington, DC.

Classroom Observation

This Classroom Observation Tool includes observation items in eight areas: Lesson Organization, Content Knowledge & Relevance, Presentation, Instructor-Student Interactions, Collaborative Learning Activities, Lesson Implementation, Instructional Materials, and Student Response. In consultation with your reviewer, **you should select those items that will be most useful to you, based on the improvement goals for the observation and your planned instructional activities for the class period.** During the observation, your reviewer will watch your teaching and take any notes that will help in completing the Classroom Observation Tool.

Post-Observation Meeting

Why is a post-observation meeting important for the peer review of teaching?

As the final step in the peer review of teaching, the post-observation meeting is where your reviewer can share overall impressions of the observed class session and responses on the Classroom Observation Tool, and where the two of you can have a substantive discussion about your course. This meeting will be the most useful if it occurs within a few days of the classroom observation, while the class activities are still fresh in you and your reviewer's minds. This meeting will require about an hour.

What happens after the post-observation meeting?

If you are using this peer review as formative assessment; i.e., for professional growth and development, nothing needs to happen after the meeting, beyond your own reflection on the review and any subsequent adjustments to your teaching. However, many instructors expand on this first peer review cycle and either do the cycle again (with the same reviewer) or exchange roles (your reviewer invites you to peer review his/her teaching). If you feel that the class that was observed was not very reflective of your teaching, or if the activities didn't go as planned, it might be helpful to invite your reviewer to do a second observation. Alternatively, you might both benefit by switching roles, so that you can observe a colleague's teaching.

If you do ask your reviewer to do a second (or third) peer review, you wouldn't need to prepare another reflection on the same course. However, it is still important to hold another pre-observation meeting to prepare your reviewer for that class session, and another post-observation meeting to discuss the second class session.