

# College of Agricultural Sciences Guidelines for Peer Evaluation of Teaching

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### Introduction

The College of Agricultural Sciences wants to ensure fair and equitable review of teaching faculty efforts and that faculty are well-represented in the promotion and tenure process. The intent of this document is to outline general guidelines and minimum criteria that should be part of meaningful peer evaluation of teaching. Units are free to select the explicit tools used to conduct the evaluation.

All teaching faculty with an academic home in the College of Agricultural Sciences must experience *periodic* (defined below) peer evaluation of teaching. This includes faculty that teach on-campus, off-campus, online, credit or non-credit courses. An example of a non-credit course can be a recurring or nonrecurring class, workshop, lecture, etc.

Peer evaluation of teaching reviews should be positive, constructive, evaluative, and reflective experiences for the teaching faculty member and should be conducted fairly and with a spirit of collegiality. The goals of peer evaluation of teaching are to: 1) assist in the improvement of teaching; 2) foster faculty collaboration for the purpose of assessing teaching; and 3) at times provide an assessment used in evaluation for promotion and tenure.

Peer evaluations of teaching will focus on providing input and assessment to teaching faculty from their peers, and as such, student input is not required. However, periodic peer evaluations of teaching are only one element of maintaining high quality teaching within the College and other evaluations (e.g., eSET scores/participant evaluations, annual performance evaluations, student interviews) may be conducted as part of an overall assessment process. While student input is specifically required when teaching faculty submit dossiers for promotion or tenure, that input comes from a student committee, formed separately from the peer evaluation of teaching committee. The letter from the student committee is separate from and should not be confounded with the letter provided by the unit's Peer Evaluation of Teaching Committee. The guidelines and processes outlined in this document represent the *minimum* standards for peer evaluations of teaching required of every faculty member with teaching responsibilities.

### Frequency of Peer Evaluations of Teaching

Teaching faculty may request a peer evaluation of teaching at any time and unit heads may initiate more frequent reviews if desired; otherwise, "periodic" is defined as:

- non-tenure track faculty should undergo evaluation at least once every 3 years; with a minimum of two evaluations before consideration for promotion.
- non-tenured assistant professors and associate professors will undergo peer evaluation of teaching at least twice prior to submitting their dossier for promotion and tenure. An exception can be made if a faculty member goes up early for promotion and tenure. The intent of these peer evaluations of teaching is to identify, well in advance of the promotion and tenure deliberations, areas of teaching that may need improvement.
- tenured associate professors should be evaluated at least once every 5 years; with a minimum of one additional evaluation before consideration for promotion to full professor.

Full professors who are teaching faculty are not required to undergo periodic peer evaluation of teaching. However, a peer evaluation of teaching for a full professor can be requested at the discretion of the unit head or the faculty member.

## **Membership of Peer Evaluation of Teaching Committees**

Evaluations should be conducted by a committee that consists of a minimum of 2 members. At least one member of the committee must come from the teaching faculty member's home department, and at least one member should come from outside the teaching faculty member's home department. It is not necessary for the external committee member to be a content expert as their evaluation may focus on the teaching delivery and not the content. The Unit Head or their designee will select each teaching faculty member's committee. Administrators with supervisory authority may not serve on a peer evaluation of teaching committees.

## **The Peer Review Process**

The Six Principles of University Teaching<sup>1</sup> should serve as the guide for what teaching faculty are trying to achieve with their instruction. These Six Principles synthesize the literature on cognition and pedagogical research. *Units will design a specific review program around these guiding principles that is substantive and consistently applied.* The review process should accommodate differences in the teaching program within individual units by addressing differences in instructional appointments (level and/or type); on campus, off campus, or online courses; credit or non-credit; didactic or experiential learning environments; and individual teaching or team-taught faculty-led activities.

For the purposes of this document, "peer evaluation of teaching" is defined as a systematic review of all teaching by a faculty member. It is not appropriate to rely on a "sample" of 1 or 2 examples of teaching. Units may choose to *review all examples of teaching in the same year or stagger their review over several years.*

All teaching faculty being reviewed will compile a teaching dossier. The exact form of the dossier may vary, but its content should allow the committee to review all relevant teaching materials (Table 1). All dossiers should include a narrative from the teaching faculty member about their approach to teaching and the accomplishments and challenges experienced since the last review.

Peer evaluations of teaching will include teaching observations but do not need to include observation of all of the courses taught by the teaching faculty (Table 2). For online courses, virtual teaching observations will include entering the teaching faculty member's Canvas website while the course is being taught to evaluate the teaching faculty member's interactions between the students on the Discussion board and other methods. Because online courses do not have finite, confined class times, more than one virtual teaching observation will be required when reviewing these courses. For off-campus or non-credit courses, team-taught courses, or other non-traditional teaching assignments, units will have flexibility to define what will be included in a teaching observation. Faculty teaching all or predominately non-credit courses (e.g. extension faculty) are still required to compile a teaching dossier including learning outcomes and their teaching philosophy for review by the peer evaluation of teaching committee.

Reviews will include a meeting between the teaching faculty member and the peer evaluation of teaching committee to summarize findings, provide an opportunity to discuss issues raised by the teaching faculty member during the review, and provide an opportunity for the teaching faculty member to respond to the findings of the committee

## **Outcome of the Peer Evaluation of Teaching**

Reviews will result in a letter that summarizes the committee's findings, considers the Six Principles of University Teaching, and circles back to the unit's program learning outcomes (e.g. how the course/instruction fits in with the unit's broader curriculum/programming). The letter will be signed by the peer evaluation of teaching committee. The review letter should be evaluative, performative, and summative. The teaching faculty member may submit a response to these findings in writing to the Unit Head, including what they learned, what they are going to implement, and if they have already implemented any changes. Both the peer

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ctl.oregonstate.edu/sites/ctl.oregonstate.edu/files/six\\_principles\\_of\\_university\\_teaching.pdf](http://ctl.oregonstate.edu/sites/ctl.oregonstate.edu/files/six_principles_of_university_teaching.pdf)

evaluation and the teaching faculty member responses will be considered in any further evaluation.

### Unit Process for Peer Evaluation of Teaching

Each unit should consider the Six Principles of University Teaching<sup>2</sup> as a guide for composing the single letter from the peer evaluation of teaching review committee for a promotion and tenure dossier as written in the OSU Faculty Senate's Faculty Handbook: Promotion and Tenure Guidelines (right inset). Each unit must outline and post the specific process used for peer evaluations on their website.

### 3. Peer Teaching Evaluations

*Peer evaluations should be based on a review of course syllabi, texts, assigned reading, examinations, class materials, and other assessments such as attendance at lectures as appropriate for the field and subject area. Peer teaching evaluations should be systematic and on-going, following unit guidelines for peer review of teaching. A letter from the peer teaching review committee that summarizes all peer teaching reviews over the evaluation timeframe should be included in the dossier.*

<http://oregonstate.edu/admin/aa/faculty-handbook-promotion-and-tenure-guidelines#dossier>

**Table 1. Review of Teaching Materials<sup>3</sup>**

#### Content Is it up-to-date?

- Is the treatment balanced and fair?
- If appropriate, are conflicting views presented?
- Are the breadth and depth of coverage appropriate for the intended audience?
- Has the educator mastered the subject matter?
- Is the coverage responsive to the needs of the audience? It is relevant to the discipline?

#### Objectives

- Are the objectives clearly communicated to the audience?
- Are objectives consistent with overall curricular objectives?
- Does instruction incorporate the appropriate themes and skills?
- Where appropriate, are in-class and out-of-class work appropriately balanced?
- Does the educator encourage participants to think for themselves?
- Do objectives support curricular objectives at the departmental level?

#### Assessment

- Are assessment tools suitable to content and objectives?
- Are assessment tools representative of content?
- Are assessment tools clearly written and fairly graded?
- Are assessment standards made clear to the participants?

#### Organization

- Is the syllabus/program outline current and relevant to the objectives?
- Are audience expectations clear?
- If appropriate, are due dates clearly defined?
- Are the lecture, laboratory, or other assignments/activities integrated? Should they be? Is the time devoted to each topic appropriate?
- Have online courses been reviewed by Ecampus for "Best Practices" or Quality Matters (QM)?

<sup>2</sup> [http://ctl.oregonstate.edu/sites/ctl.oregonstate.edu/files/six\\_principles\\_of\\_university\\_teaching.pdf](http://ctl.oregonstate.edu/sites/ctl.oregonstate.edu/files/six_principles_of_university_teaching.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from The University of Missouri. 1992. Teaching Evaluation. And Seldin, P. 1985. Changing Practices in Faculty Evaluation. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.

## **Table 1. Review of Teaching Materials (continued)**

### Assignments/Activities

- Do assignments/activities supplement lectures, discussions, labs, and field work? Do assignments/activities reflect and support objectives?
- Are they challenging and appropriate for the level of the audience?
- Is adequate time given to complete the assignments/activities? Is it consistent with expected quality?

## **Table 2. Guidelines for Reviewing Teaching Observations<sup>4</sup>**

### Structure and Goals

- Are the educator's presentations well-planned and organized?
- Are the various instructional elements (lecture, course management software material, handouts) effectively integrated? Is the instructional time used efficiently?
- Is the material presented clearly and effectively?

### Teaching Behaviors

- Is the oral delivery appropriately paced?
- Is the language used understandable to students?

### Educator-Student Rapport

- Does the educator demonstrate fair and equitable concern for all students? Do the students seem receptive to the educator's ideas?
- Is the educator sensitive to response of the audience? Are student questions answered clearly and simply?
- Does the educator provide opportunities and encourage student questions? Does the educator accept student ideas and comments?
- How would you describe the educator-student relationship?

### Subject Matter and Instruction

- Does the educator demonstrate adequate knowledge of the subject? Are the transitions between topics effective?
- Is the instructional material presented in a lively and interesting style? Are the students generally attentive?
- Does the educator demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject and for teaching? Does the educator include material relevant to existing student interest?

### Specific to Online courses:

- Is lecture material presented in a clear and engaging manner? Does the educator participate in online discussions?
- Is there an opportunity for students to have "live" discussions and/or interactions with the educator? Are students given an opportunity for anonymous course feedback?
- Does the educator respond to posted questions in a timely manner?

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted from The University of Missouri. 1992. Teaching Evaluation, and Seldin, P. 1985. Changing Practices in Faculty Evaluation. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco.