



Standard Administrative Policy and Procedure

Subject: Procedures for Assessing Effective Teaching

Number: 2.5.1

I. PURPOSE

The overarching purpose of the University's teaching evaluation system is continuous improvement of the educational experience. It should provide academic personnel with feedback from a variety of sources for assessing, improving and refining methods of instruction. A comprehensive teaching evaluation system should also provide the evidence needed for making summative decisions about overall teaching performance.

Teaching effectiveness evaluations should reflect the extent to which the instructor informed students about the subject matter, fostered skill development, and enhanced the development of educational goals. Teaching and learning is a very complex and multifaceted process, which is why no single source of evidence can reasonably evaluate teaching effectiveness.

Student evaluations of teaching are useful tools for improving teaching and learning outcomes. Student surveys of teaching can provide meaningful information about their perceptions and satisfaction of the learning experience, including the degree to which the instructor has created a learning environment that is supportive and gives each student equal access to learning. Similarly, student interviews and focus groups can provide important insight into aspects of the class students think are going well and aspects that may need to be modified. This type of information is valuable to improving and shaping the quality of teaching (i.e., formative assessment). However, students only offer a single perspective, and their evaluations should not be the sole form of feedback used for the purpose of personnel action (i.e., conducting annual performance reviews, determining reappointment, tenure, fixed-term, and promotion, conducting extensive post-tenure reviews, or terminating employment).

Rather, these high stakes decisions should be made using a body of evidence, including but not limited to peer evaluations; supervisor evaluations; student surveys; teaching awards; participation in professional development; implementation of inclusive pedagogy and evidence-based techniques and strategies; and self-reflection, including assessment of student learning outcomes.

II. DEFINITIONS

Formative evaluation – Evaluation for the purpose of improving instruction, including the revision of courses and alteration of teaching methods.

Summative evaluation – Evaluation for the purpose of ‘summing up’ overall teaching performance.

III. PROCEDURES FOR MANDATED EVALUATION OF TEACHING

A. Unit Guidelines for Assessing Teaching Effectiveness

Academic personnel with teaching responsibilities in each academic unit shall establish and publish guidelines for assessing the effectiveness of each faculty member’s teaching. These guidelines shall:

1. Address standards and expectations of effective teaching and purposes of assessment (e.g., formative, summative)
2. Outline procedures and timelines for completing reviews, consistent with University regulations and University and College timelines.
3. Describe strategies for assessing innovation in teaching.
4. Outline methods used for assessing teaching effectiveness on annual reviews.
5. Incorporate multiple methods in comprehensive reviews for collecting information about teaching effectiveness. Examples include teaching awards, peer evaluation, student survey, student interviews or focus groups, professional development and innovation around teaching, personal reflection, scholarship of teaching and learning, and instructional artifacts such as course materials, student assessments, scoring rubrics and student work.
6. Describe methods used to maintain confidentiality of student evaluations (e.g., student surveys will not be administered for any class containing fewer than five students).
7. Specify a timeframe for reviewing and updating guidelines.

B. Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

Each college shall develop its own teaching effectiveness system appropriate to the subject being taught and the instructional delivery mode being used. Colleges may allow for academic units to establish discipline-specific instruments and procedures to evaluate teaching effectiveness.

1. Instruments

Teaching evaluation instruments should include intentional measures of teaching effectiveness and evidence based best practices, such as clarity in organization, conveying ideas, transparency in learning goals and assessment strategies, building rapport through sharing ideas with students, checking in with students regularly, using questions to check for understanding, providing regular feedback, and providing multiple practice opportunities.

Each college or academic unit shall design instruments for the evaluation of teaching in all courses taught in/by that unit. Standardized instruments may be used by more than one college or department; however, instruments should be customizable so that unique aspects of a particular class can be captured, including the instructional delivery mode.

For student evaluations:

1. The instrument shall provide a reasonable opportunity for all students in a course to express their evaluations.
2. The instrument shall state that it is available in alternative formats upon request to accommodate a disability.
3. Because students and administrators may be utilizing a variety of evaluation instruments, it is important that clear instructions to the students be part of each instrument, including methods for ensuring confidentiality.

2. Administering Evaluations

Student Evaluations

1. Mandated end-of-course evaluations must be given during the last twenty percent of the contact hours of the scheduled course period.
2. Evaluations must be conducted in a manner that preserves the anonymity and confidentiality of student responses and maintains the integrity of the process. If evaluations described in this subsection are to be completed in the physical classroom, an appropriate member of the University community other than the class instructor must administer them.

Peer Evaluations

1. Academic units are encouraged to establish a system that includes formative feedback given by peers during the semester. The peer review process for this purpose provides an opportunity for peers to observe, discuss and reflect on ways to improve teaching during the term and it provides process for better aligning teaching practices with disciplinary and department goals. Formative reviews are intended for the personal use of the observed instructor.
2. The timeline for conducting summative review should accommodate the reappointment, promotion, tenure and fixed-term review process. It is recommended that these reviews take place over multiple class periods, with the observations preferably occurring in different classes.
3. Academic units should define 'peer' and determine whether the peer can be of higher, equal or lower rank and/or drawn from different academic units or external institutions.

4. The right to make a written statement to accompany the results of the evaluation process as they are distributed, is the prerogative of any instructor, academic unit head, dean, or appropriate committee.

3. Processing and Release of Evaluation Results

Student Evaluations

1. Results of student evaluations shall be made available to the instructor and the instructor's immediate supervisor only after the semester or term is completed and final grades have been submitted to the Registrar's office. ["Results" refers to the online report or typed or transcribed responses and compilations of any numerical responses.]
2. Results shall be preserved by the college or department in accordance with UW's record retention policy.
3. In the event student evaluations are not digital, the original completed student responses from any student evaluation system are generally not available outside the department unless requested by the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs.

Peer Evaluations

1. A copy of the written peer review should be provided to the faculty being reviewed prior to placement in their personnel file or reappointment, tenure, promotion, fixed-term or post-tenure review case file.
2. The faculty being reviewed should be able to provide corrections to any factual errors in the written peer review and be provided the opportunity to acknowledge that they have read the review. Then, one copy of the written peer review, signed and dated by the reviewer shall be placed in the permanent personnel file of the faculty being reviewed.
3. The faculty being reviewed may submit a response to the written peer review to also be placed in their permanent personnel file.
4. All written peer reviews (and any responses) shall be included in the evaluation of a faculty member's teaching for the purpose of reappointment, promotion, tenure, fixed-term and post-tenure review and are to be carefully reviewed at each level of review.

Responsible Division/Unit: Academic Affairs

Source: None

Links:

Associated Regulations, Policies, and Forms: University Regulations 2-5

Approved: