

The University of Texas at Tyler
School of Education
Guidelines for Faculty Peer Observation of Teaching

The School of Education at The University of Texas at Tyler recognizes the essential contribution of its faculty members to the quality of students' education and learning experiences and supports faculty development in all aspects of instruction. An effective tool for faculty development in the area of teaching is provided by the process of peer observation. These guidelines provide information regarding the nature of the peer observation process, policies, and timeline for the performance of peer observations in the School of Education.

The goal of the peer observation process is to improve teaching and student learning and should serve primarily as a tool for mentoring and professional development. The peer observation process should foster a culture of teaching excellence through collegial dialogue. Thus, the outcome of the faculty peer observation process should be a reflective summary written by the observed faculty member describing any steps taken or changes made towards the enhancement of teaching and improvement of student learning.

Peer observation purpose

The peer observation process should:

- focus on formative faculty development and the mentoring aspects of peer observation,
- protect against the possibility for harm caused by personal conflict or disagreements,
- reflect the variety of instructional delivery methods and topics within each department,
- and recognize that no single teaching method or approach is inherently superior to any other.

Who should be observed?

Beginning in the fall of 2014, all promotion and tenure review reports sent to the University of Texas (UT) System must show evidence of peer observations of teaching, including individuals with administrative appointments of 50% or less. Hence, anyone applying for tenure or promotion consideration in fall 2014 MUST have peer observations of their teaching done beforehand (i.e., early fall 2014).

How often should peer observation be conducted?

Assistant Professors shall be reviewed every other year starting with the first year of employment. Observations may be conducted during the second and fourth years if requested by the faculty member. Tenured faculty should have peer observations at least once every three years. If a post-tenure review determines that a tenured faculty member needs to improve in the area of teaching, more frequent peer observations can be scheduled. Beginning fall 2014, full-time lecturers, visiting faculty, and clinical faculty shall be observed annually, and senior lecturers shall be observed every three years. Individuals may also request more frequent observation to the extent that this can be accommodated by the School of Education.

Who can serve as a peer observer?

Any full-time faculty member may serve as a peer observer. The faculty member being observed should have considerable input into who will serve as the peer observer. Observations by non-faculty experts cannot substitute for peer observation.

What training requirements and options are available to the peer observer?

Peer observers must successfully complete the Peer Observation Online Training modules provided by the School of Education prior to any peer observation activities.

What is to be included in the faculty member's report for inclusion in the faculty member's record?

- A. Name and signature of Faculty Member
- B. Name and signature of Peer Observer
- C. Name and course number of observed class
- D. Date of pre-observation meeting
- E. Date of observation(s)
- F. Date of post-observation meeting
- G. A narrative reflection written by the faculty member describing what the faculty member has learned from the peer observation process and any plans for improvement or development.

Note: While the peer observer will provide written feedback to the faculty member who has been observed, that feedback should not be included in the final report. Only the faculty member's narrative is included in the final report.

The report should be provided to the SOE Director (or to the CEP Dean in the event the faculty member being observed is the SOE Director) no later than the last day of classes for the semester in which the observation takes place. The director or dean will file the report with the faculty member's record.

Peer Observation Timeline

<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>
At least two weeks prior to first day of class.	Provide faculty member with department guidelines.	SOE Director
No later than the third week of the semester.	Identify peer observer and provide name of observer to director.	Faculty member
No later than fifth week of semester.	Meet to discuss teaching materials and set date(s) for observation.	Faculty member and peer observer.
No later than twelfth week of semester.	Peer observation(s)	Peer observer
Within two weeks of observation.	Post-observation meeting	Faculty member and peer observer
No later than last day of class.	Faculty report provided to director.	Faculty member