

Peer Observation of Teaching – Guidance for Departments

DRAFT- Center for Education Innovation & Learning in the Sciences – Dec 2018

Departments should have classroom observations for all instructors periodically, about once every two years. Departments can match instructors in pairs or small groups and provide a timeline for the expectation of completing peer reviews. The goal of peer reviews should be continuous improvement of teaching and the ability to document that evidence-based teaching strategies are being utilized across the department curriculum.

In order for instructors to feel comfortable providing (and receiving) constructive feedback, there needs to be a clear understanding of how the observation report and comments will be used. Departments need to discuss the role of such formal observations in the tenure and promotion process in order to provide incentives without the observations being perceived as punitive. One strategy could be that the instructor is the owner of the observation report, but can provide evidence of having completed the peer observation and document improvements made as a result for the tenure and promotion processes. This could be utilized as part of a case for merit, along with other trainings, workshops, or consultations with CEILS related to teaching and learning.

Peer Observation of Teaching - Classroom Observation Protocol

Adapted from the University of Oregon, Teaching Engagement Program

Protocol for Conducting Peer Observation of Teaching

1. Obtain copies of the course syllabus, course learning objectives, and department learning objectives. Review them so you can assess how the class session you observe fits into the larger context of the course and curriculum.
2. Meet with the instructor to be reviewed to discuss the content of the class session to be observed, the approach they will take, particular teaching practices the instructor has been working on to which they would like you to pay particular attention, and any other items outlined in your department's peer review procedure. Discuss any outstanding questions about the course that you have after reviewing the syllabus.
3. Perform a "fact-based" observation in class: record exactly what the instructor and students do, examples used, etc. You may wish to document your observations for each 5 or 10-minute segment of the class. Bring a copy of the observation form for reference during the observation.
4. After the observation, complete the observation form. Use your responses to the form questions to facilitate your conversation with the instructor in a follow-up meeting.
5. Depending on the protocol for your department, it may be beneficial to conduct another observation at a later date where you can observe changes to the course based on the feedback.

Peer Observation of Teaching - Classroom Observation Summary Form

Developed by the Center for Education Innovation & Learning in the Sciences at UCLA

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the question prompts provided in each section as a guide for your notes and feedback. Bring the prompts to the observation for reference. Following the observation complete the

Structure & Context for Observation

- *What contextual details are important for this classroom observation? (e.g., is it a new course, part of a series, a gateway course, is it a lab or lecture course)?*
- *Did you meet beforehand with instructor and what were their goals for this observation?*
- *How long was the observation?*
- *Is there anything important about the room set-up or other logistics to include?*

Format of Instruction & General Organization

- *Characterize the style of instruction. For example, was instruction delivered to students predominantly in a traditional lecture format or a more interactive format that led to substantial class discussion?*
- *Was the course a hybrid/flipped or online course?*
- *Did the instructor use PowerPoint (or some other form of projected slides), write on the board (document camera or project from some other interactive electronic device), or give demonstrations?*
- *How was the time management and general organization of the class?*
- *Were students working in groups or independently?*
- *If this was a lab, what were the students working on and what was the format?*

Observation of Teaching Strategies Utilized

- *What teaching strategies did you observe? Examples may include think-pair-share, wait-time (wait after asking a question so more students have a chance to participate), group activities such as worksheets, calling on students by name, using random call or an opt-in random call, using polling tools such as clickers to facilitate peer instruction, or incorporating case studies.*
- *Did you observe these and/or other teaching strategies?*

Observation of Student Engagement & Learning

- *How often were students interacting with each other or with the instructor?*
- *Did students seem engaged and what evidence of the level of engagement was there?*
- *If using laptops, were students taking notes or otherwise distracted?*
- *Did the instructor utilize strategies to promote student interaction (e.g. think-pair-share)?*
- *Were there opportunities for the instructor to get feedback on student learning (e.g. open-ended questions, report out after discussion, polling systems)?*
- *Could you determine if the students were achieving the learning outcomes for the class? What was the evidence that this was occurring?*

Course Alignment

- *Having reviewed the syllabus, was this class session in alignment with the overall goals for the course?*
- *Were the activities observed in alignment with the instructors objectives for the session?*
- *Were the learning outcomes for the class session made obvious to students?*
- *Were the connections between different topics and concepts clear?*

Instructor Strengths & Highlights from the Observation

- *What teaching techniques seemed to be effective for engaging students in the learning?*
- *What did the instructor do well?*
- *What moments of the observation did you enjoy the most and why?*

Recommendations for Improvement

- *Are there techniques that the instructor could use to increase student engagement and make the class more interactive? Common suggestions may include incorporating more think-pair-share opportunities. Especially in large classes, the use of polling systems can help the instructor get immediate feedback on student comprehension of the course material and facilitate peer interaction.*
- *Would getting student feedback through a focus group or mid-quarter questionnaire available in CCLE be helpful?*
- *Are slides clearly organized or need additional work?*
- *How was the time management and clarity of instruction?*

Summary and Next Steps

- *What is your general impression of how well the instructor is facilitating student learning?*
- *What should the instructor continue doing?*
- *What are one or two recommendations for now and/or the next time the class is taught?*

Peer Observation of Teaching - Classroom Observation Summary Form

Developed by the Center for Education Innovation & Learning in the Sciences at UCLA

Instructor Name:

Course title:

Class size:

Date Observed:

Observation Completed by:

Structure & Context for Observation

Comments:

Format of Instruction & General Organization

Comments:

Observation of Teaching Strategies Utilized

Comments:

Observation of Student Engagement & Learning

Comments:

Course Alignment

Comments:

Instructor Strengths & Highlights from the Observation

Comments:

Recommendations for Improvement

Comments:

Summary and Next Steps

Comments:

Peer Observation of Teaching - Classroom Observation Notes

Developed by the Center for Education Innovation & Learning in the Sciences at UCLA

*This is an **OPTIONAL** tool that you can use when conducting a peer observation. It does not need to be provided to the instructor along with the observation summary form unless you think it would be helpful to include.*

Instructions: You can print out and use this form during the observation. For each 5 or 10-minute segment of class, note what you see happening. Specifically, look for what teaching strategies are being utilized, level of student engagement, general organization and format, any ideas that come up as you observe, any instructor strengths you identify. Use these notes to provide specific examples as you complete the **Classroom Observation Summary Form**.

Time	Observation Notes
(First 5 mins)	

Time	Observation Notes
General Comments:	

Time	Observation Notes

General Comments: