

Mechanical Engineering Peer Teaching Evaluation Guidelines¹

DRAFT 2018-12-13

Peer observations should be done in a way that promotes improvement. The peer observation protocol and letter should be written in the spirit of being formative (i.e., provide constructive criticism, areas for improvement, areas of excellence, etc.).

Frequency of Observation

1. Every **assistant professor** and **instructor** should be observed at least once per year.
2. Every **associate professor** and **senior instructor** should be observed at least once every other year.
3. Every **full professor** and **senior instructor** should be observed at least once prior to post-tenure review or reappointment, respectively.
4. Every **adjunct** should be observed at least once in the first half of their first semester and after that at the discretion of the department chair.
5. The frequency of observation listed here should be understood as the minimum requirement. Additional observations can be requested by the faculty member or the Department Chair.

Selection of Observers

For purposes of formal review (reappointment, promotion, and tenure) the personnel committee will appoint faculty to conduct observations. In most cases, the observer will be familiar with the course and/or course content, come from the same program, and be senior in rank to the observed faculty member. Faculty members may notify the committee if they prefer not to be observed by a specific colleague.

Procedure for Classroom Observations

1. The observer should talk to the faculty member in advance of the observation in order to understand the objectives for that class and how it fits with the overall course and to provide an overview of the observation to be conducted.

¹ Developed by the MCEN Departmental Action Team (Jean Hertzberg, Jana Milford, and Daniel Knight) working in partnership with the Teaching Quality Framework Initiative (<https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/>) with sponsorship by the National Science Foundation (DUE-1725959) - any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF.

2. Faculty members are required to provide their observer with the course syllabus, and may provide other materials they deem relevant, including access to the learning management system, lesson plans, assessment materials, or outlines explaining the pedagogical goals of classroom activities.
3. The observer should meet with the observed faculty member after the classroom observation but prior to submitting their letter to resolve any questions of factual data, discuss concerns or questions the faculty member or observer may have, and to provide formative and constructive feedback to the faculty member.
4. The observer should review their notes/evidence from the peer observation protocol, syllabus and other materials shared with them, and their meetings with the faculty member and prepare a letter summarizing the observations and assessments. Note that most letters include some suggestions for improvement - it is not expected that any class would ever be perfect.
5. The peer observation protocol should be retained by the observer for their records. The letter should be submitted to the personnel committee representative who requested the observation within two weeks of the classroom observation, who will file it in the faculty member's personnel file.
6. An observed faculty member has the opportunity to provide additional evidence on their teaching practices. This response may be submitted to the personnel committee representative who requested the observation, who will file the report in the faculty member's personnel file.