

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING

University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine

I. Peer Review Teams and Process – Guiding Principles

- a. Formation of review teams or selection of external reviewers will be based on UTCVM and UTK guidelines but can be addressed by college by-laws. Department Heads are responsible for the assignment of teams, appointment of a team leader, clarifying the charge to the team, and completion of timely reviews. Best practices (from addendum to UTK Faculty Handbook) include:

“A peer teaching review should be conducted for a tenure-track faculty member typically twice during their probationary period, and for a tenured faculty member at least once prior to consideration for promotion. Department bylaws may specify more specific intervals for peer assessment, as well as whether or if full professors are reviewed. Where special circumstances arise, a faculty member has the right to request reconvening of a peer assessment team or formation of a new peer assessment team in the interval between scheduled peer reviews. Peer assessment of teaching should also be conducted as part of a “triggered” cumulative review of tenured faculty as described in the Faculty Handbook.

The peer assessment team should consist of three tenured faculty members. An exception is in the peer review of tenure-track faculty, when the review team may include a tenure-track faculty member. One is selected by the faculty member under review, one by the department head, and the third is agreed upon by the two. Departments are encouraged to have at least one faculty member from outside the department included on peer assessment teams.”

- b. At UTCVM, non-tenure track faculty members are full participants in the educational program and participate in the peer review process as reviewers and reviewees.
- c. Note that peer colleagues are considered the best judge of the following aspects of teaching: *subject matter expertise, currency and appropriateness of teaching materials, appropriateness of assessment and grading approaches, and professional behavior of the instructor.*
- d. Good peer review programs are built on collegiality and trust, and foster an open and encouraging constructive dialogue about teaching. Participation in the peer review process is a service expectation of UTCVM faculty and the process is expected to benefit both the faculty member under review and the members of the peer assessment team.
- e. Those selected as “peers” should be comfortable enough with the reviewee’s teaching content and educational practices to provide useful review on teaching material or methods. Peer review teams for formative and summative reviews of the same instructor should maintain at least one common reviewer for continuity but may be expected to change based on available personnel and other reasons. Changes in teams should be made by collaboration of the department head with the reviewee as described above.

II. Preparation for Peer Review -- Reviewers

- a. To facilitate optimal completion of peer reviews, orientation sessions will be provided at the beginning of each semester by OVEE personnel or faculty leaders.
- b. The team leader should contact the reviewee and set an initial meeting. The review team should meet with instructor (reviewee) to discuss his/her teaching goals and

- strategies and to determine if the instructor has particular questions, needs or goals which may be met by peer review
- c. The charge to the team must clearly identify whether review is for *formative* (ongoing, informal improvement) or *summative* (personnel, promotion and tenure, or merit) purposes
 - d. The team should:
 - i. Review instructor's written teaching philosophy, as well as written goals/objectives for current courses or lectures/laboratories as applicable
 - ii. Compare instructor's teaching philosophy and goals with reviewer's for potential bias (conflict in philosophy does not necessarily preclude effective review)
 - iii. Identify any other potential bias or conflict of interest; resolve or withdraw

III. Preparation for Peer Review – Reviewees

- a. Prepare your teaching philosophy and establish your teaching goals for review
- b. Gather appropriate teaching materials and provide them to the peer review team prior to any classroom observations (ideally in the form of a teaching portfolio).
- c. Meet with the review team as described in section II.
- d. Well in advance, provide the appropriate times and locations for the peer review team to observe your teaching. Choose the settings that will best reflect your efforts and goals.

IV. Review of Teaching Materials by Team (*see templates for review of marked items)

- a. Course syllabus (for course coordinators);*
- b. Course and/or Lecture/Lab Objectives
- c. Recommended text(s) or readings
- d. Notes or Handouts*
- e. Videos or other teaching aids
- f. Exercises or Assignments, including grading methods and examples of graded material*
- g. Examinations, including grading methods*
- h. Articles, grants, proposals, or documentation of other innovative strategies related to teaching (Teaching portfolio if available)
- i. Note that quantitative results of student ratings of teaching should not be reviewed prior to the observational peer review (in order to minimize bias).

V. Classroom Observation

- a. Solicit invitations for classroom observation opportunities from reviewee, and announce visits ahead of time
- b. Attempt to observe classroom setting at multiple points in time and in multiple courses (if applicable) including different types of classroom performance (e.g. lecture, laboratory, case discussion) as much as possible
- c. Discuss with instructor the particular purpose(s) of the class you will be observing
- d. Take sufficient notes to prepare useful report
- e. Selected captured presentations may be used for local or external review of teaching, although some elements of classroom environment and engagement may be lost.

VI. Preparing a Peer Review Report

- a. Peer review team members provide written feedback to team leader
- b. Peer review team leader ensures completion of the review, accumulates reviewer responses, prepares a written summary report, and provides other team members an opportunity to respond to the final draft of the report.
- c. Team leader provides a copy of the written summary report to the reviewee and sets a meeting to discuss the results and recommendations.
- d. Team leader revises report if needed and forwards the final copy to department head
- e. The faculty member under review has the right to provide a written rebuttal/response to his/her department head.

Other Resources for UTCVM Faculty: Templates for “Peer Review of Teaching Materials” reports and “Peer Review of Teaching: Observations” are available via VetNet for download and use in recording observations and preparing reports.

Primary Resources

Chism, N. (1999) Peer Review of Teaching: A Sourcebook. Bolton, MA: Anker. Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (Wingspread Conference, 1987)

What the Best College Teachers Do (Bain, 2004)

Newton, Klein and Mylona. Becoming an Effective Course Director Workbook (IAMSE, 2006)

Best Practices for Assessment and Evaluation of Faculty Teaching (UTK Faculty Senate, approved March 2006)

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