

Implementation of local peer observation of teaching best practices

Objectives

- 1) To provide a process to enhance teaching and document progress
- 2) To provide a framework for formative and summative peer discussion and self-assessment of teaching strategies

All of the following are provided as simple *guidelines* for implementing local peer observation. Our working group recognizes that individual institutions will have (perhaps substantially) different situational needs and will therefore utilize these guidelines differently. A delicate balance needs to be struck: the benefit to individual faculty must be carefully weighed against an additional faculty responsibility.

Working group recommendations (minimum in **bold**):

1. Who will be observed?
 - All teaching faculty
 - **Junior teaching faculty (e.g. pretenure or new hires)**
2. Who will perform the observations?
 - **Two people**- ideally both a content expert and non-content expert
 - Observers selected by observee (*some* choice), administrators, standing committee, or self-selected
 - Observer rank- all faculty levels- junior/mid/senior
3. How are faculty recognized for peer observation efforts?
 - Establish peer observation standing committees at individual institutions with contribution toward FTE
4. How frequently will peer observations be performed?
 - At least **two times before tenure or promotion or at the request of faculty** (eg @ 2 and 5 years)
 - Two or more times for any individual, regardless of rank
5. Will there be any training mechanisms for peer observations?
 - Institution dependent
 - Although there is **sufficient instructional assistance implicit in the instrument itself**, training in educational observation is recommended.
 - The Peer Observation of Teaching Handbook is available for review (Newman LR, Roberts DH, Schwartz ST) - link
 - Recommend first time reviewers working with those more experienced

GUIDELINES FOR USE OF THE INSTRUMENTS

One observer should assume the role of "organizer" to facilitate meetings and adhere to the details of the process

Pre-Observation

- Ask instructor to complete the Pre-Observation form and to provide session objectives.
- Conduct a pre-observation meeting with the instructor to discuss goals/objectives and other pre-observation form items, especially a summary of special efforts, new ideas/techniques, teaching trials, etc. related to the session being reviewed
- Confirm with all parties the date, time and location of scheduled observation

Day of Observation

- Observer(s) should arrive before session begins
- Bring the appropriate Peer Observation form (paper or electronic).
- Take notes to provide comprehensive feedback to the instructor

Post-Observation

- Whether two observers attend the same or different teaching sessions, observers may find it useful to share thoughts on their individual observations prior to meeting with the faculty member undergoing observation
- Arrange a meeting between observer(s) and instructor for formative discussion (coaching, constructive feedback)
- Observers and instructor prepare or edit final comments and suggestions for enhancement then sign and submit final document to the appropriate administrator