PEER TEACHING EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR TENURE AND/OR PROMOTION

SUMMARY

These guidelines cover teaching evaluations for tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty at all ranks. Teaching evaluations are an important part of the promotion process. One goal of these guidelines is to ensure there are a sufficient number of written evaluations to accompany tenure and/or promotion dossiers.

BACKGROUND

To standardize a policy for the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences (EMS) and to provide consistent, robust teaching evaluations for tenure and/or promotion dossiers, the following are approved EMS guidelines.

GUIDELINES AND PROCESS

Within the AC23 guidelines, policy, and FAQs, there are references to “peers,” both as teaching evaluators and those serving on P&T committees. While “peer” is never clearly defined within AC23 (guidelines, policy, and FAQs), for the purposes of peer teaching evaluations, we in EMS define a “peer” as another faculty member of equal or higher rank regardless of contract type (i.e., tenure-line or non-tenure-line) who has teaching as a significant part of their responsibilities.

The relevant administrator and the faculty member under review collaboratively choose peer reviewers. Faculty members under review should have the opportunity to submit the names of potential reviewers. The faculty member under review can reject a proposed reviewer after consultation with their administrator. The final selection is up to the administrator, ensuring consistent application of guidelines within ranks and appointment types.

Reviewers can be selected from either within or outside of the unit. The administrator must ensure that at least one review is completed by a faculty member with expertise in, or who is familiar with, the candidate’s discipline. The content of each evaluation should include only evidence-based observations. That is, the assessment (i.e., evaluations and conclusions) should be based on corresponding evidence.

Lecturers, assistant teaching professors, assistant professors, associate teaching professors who have not yet attained their highest rank, and associate professors with and without tenure must receive one peer teaching evaluation each year. More than one peer teaching evaluation can be requested by the faculty member or scheduled by the department head if they believe it to be beneficial to the faculty member.

Teaching professors, professors of practice, and professors must receive at least one peer teaching evaluation every five years.

Research faculty who teach should follow the guidelines for the commensurate teaching faculty rank.

Faculty members being evaluated will receive a copy of peer evaluations for their records along with eventual inclusion in the tenure and/or promotion dossier. These evaluations are to be shared with the faculty member by the department head. These evaluations should be discussed as soon as possible, so that the faculty member has the most time available to make any necessary adjustments to their particular teaching style/approach.

BEST PRACTICES AND RECOMMENDED PROCEDURE FOR PEER TEACHING EVALUATIONS

Penn State's research-based [Elements of Effective Teaching](https://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/assessment_of_teaching/elements_of_effective_teaching) should serve as a foundation for the peer review of teaching, and the content of each evaluation should include only evidence-based observations with assessment (i.e., evaluations and conclusions) tied to corresponding evidence.

Prior to a course visit, the course instructor completes the [Instructor Input Form](https://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/sites/default/files/files/PeerReview_HybridCourses_PSU_InstructorInput_November_2022.docx) and meets with the peer reviewer to share that document and to convey additional contextual information about the course.

The peer reviewer attends the course if it is hybrid, remote synchronous, or in person. For remote asynchronous courses, the peer reviewer examines the course materials and online interactions. To facilitate the peer review and the generation of the letter of evaluation, the reviewer may wish to use the [Peer Review Guide for Face-to-Face and Hybrid Courses at Penn State](https://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/evaluate-revise/peerreviewhybrid) or the [Peer Review Guide for Online Teaching at Penn State](https://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/sites/default/files/files/PeerReview_OnlineCourses_PSU_Guide_November2022.docx). The reviewer will be observing how well the instructor addresses the Elements of Effective Teaching. The reviewer will then note the instructor’s strengths and areas for improvement.

The evaluation consists of a letter to the relevant administrator summarizing the feedback and comments from the peer review. The letter is then shared with the instructor and, as appropriate, added to the tenure and/or promotion dossier.

While reviewers may wish to make handwritten notes during the evaluation, the formal review letter should be submitted in electronic form.

Policy updated by the EMS Executive Council on April 30, 2024

Policy reviewed and changes accepted by EMS Executive Council on February 4, 2025