

**Division of Education, Human Development, and Social Sciences  
Guidelines for Peer Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness  
and the Second Form of Student Evaluation**

**I. Composition of the Peer Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Committee**

**Size:** Each faculty member under review shall have a committee of three (3) members.

**Eligibility:** Full-time faculty members who have three or more continuous years of university teaching experience and who are currently employed by Penn State University are eligible.

**II. Procedure for Establishing a Peer Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness Committee**

In the fall semester prior to the one in which the peer evaluation will take place, the Division's Teaching and Mentoring Committee (TEAM) will work with the faculty member under review to establish the committee. In the case of formal P&T reviews, the faculty member under review shall recommend six faculty members to serve on the committee. The TEAM has the final authority in determining the composition of the peer review of teaching committees, and must create committees according to the following rules:

1. At least one member must represent the faculty member's discipline area, which is defined as the current program the faculty member teaches and resides in.
2. At least one member must be tenured.
3. No more than one member of the committee may have reviewed the faculty member's teaching within the last two years.
4. At least two members must be from EDHDSS.

For formative reviews, the faculty member under review should work with the TEAM to identify a suitable committee, which may include fewer members and wider representation from University employees.

**III. Review Process**

**When:** A peer evaluation of teaching shall be conducted during the spring semester preceding an anticipated provisional tenure review, final tenure review, or promotion review. Evaluations of teaching for other purposes may also be conducted at the request of a faculty member or the Division Head. The Division encourages faculty to participate in regular, formative teaching reviews for the purpose of pedagogical development.

**Procedures:** Once constituted by the TEAM, the review committee for each faculty member shall choose its Chair from among the members. The Chair must be from the candidate's division and, where appropriate, the discipline. The candidate under review should provide the committee with a list of the courses to be reviewed, including their meeting times and locations, syllabi, handouts, exams, teaching philosophy, and other relevant documents. It is also advisable that the faculty member under review provide the committee with a short narrative that provides a context for the review by explaining how choices in teaching methods and assessments reflect the faculty member's goals for the course. Before classroom visits begin, it is recommended that the candidate under review and the committee meet to discuss these materials.

There should be at least two classroom visits by all of the committee members, with the visits preferably occurring in different classes. Committee members must agree upon an assessment method and use it

consistently. The TEAM can be a valuable resource for identifying suitable assessment methods. The assessment method must be shared with the faculty member under review, prior to its use in the evaluation. During the course of the classroom visit, committee members should refrain from talking with students about the candidate's teaching practices. Acceptable methods for gathering second forms of student evaluation are described below.

After due observation and deliberation, the committee members shall write a group letter assessing the teaching effectiveness of the faculty member under review and submit it to the Promotion and Tenure Coordinator before the end of the semester in which the teaching review takes place. The Promotion and Tenure Coordinator will place the letter in the faculty member's dossier when the evaluation is part of a tenure or promotion review. For formative reviews, the letter will be given only to the faculty member under review.

The letter should summarize the committee's evaluations in light of the agreed-upon assessment method. All committee members' names should be listed, but only the Chair must sign the document. In the event that there are significant disagreements within the committee about aspect(s) of the review, the letter will include separate majority and minority opinions to clarify those differences.

At the faculty member's discretion (and after the formal review of the dossier in the case of P&T reviews), a candidate may consult with the committee and the TEAM in a manner that will help the faculty member improve his or her teaching effectiveness. The Division strongly encourages this practice, particularly in formative assessments preceding P&T reviews.

#### **IV. Procedures for Conducting and Summarizing a Second Form of Student Evaluation**

In the case of P&T reviews, the Division Head will provide the Chair of the review committee with student written comments and numerical scores from the on-line Student Ratings of Teacher Effectiveness forms (SRTEs) for the faculty member from the previous four semesters prior to the faculty member's teaching review. For candidates undergoing the second-year review, two semesters of student written comments and numerical scores from the online SRTE forms will be included.

At the faculty member's request or the committee's discretion, the committee may consider additional evidence of teaching effectiveness. Additional evidence may include (but is not limited to) feedback from the faculty member's current students. If information from current students is requested, the committee should arrange with the faculty member under review suitable time to solicit in-class anonymous feedback from students concerning the faculty member under review's teaching strengths and opportunities for improvement.

The committee will attempt to provide a balanced summary of second forms of student evaluation. A "balanced" summary would include making sure that excerpted student comments are representative and accurately framed, and that discussion of those comments is weighed in light of other available evidence about the faculty member under review (e.g., SRTE scores and comments, classroom observations). The Chair will provide the summary letter, which should list all committee members and be signed by the Chair, to the Promotion and Tenure Coordinator before the end of the spring semester preceding the anticipated provisional tenure review, the final tenure review, or promotion review.

For formative reviews, use of second forms of student evaluation is optional.

*Approved by Division (4/15/14)*

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