

DEVELOPING A PEER EVALUATION OF TEACHING (PET) PROTOCOL

A GUIDE

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Step 1: Answer critical questions

The first step is developing answers to 8 critical questions, provided on page 3. Your final PET protocol will be informed by those 8 critical decisions regarding how Peer evaluation of teaching (PET) will be implemented in your academic unit.

- ◆ Further notes and best practices relevant to the critical questions are included on pages 4-5.

Step 2: Review sample PET protocols and forms

Several sample PET protocols and forms are provided as examples of how the answers to the 8 critical questions can be incorporated into a process.

- ◆ Sample PET protocol 1: A simple summative evaluation process requiring minimal faculty investment. A sample classroom evaluation form is included. (see pages 6-8)
- ◆ Sample PET protocol 2: A summative and formative process requiring intermediate faculty investment. A sample classroom evaluation form is included. (see pages 9-11)

Step 3: Review the sample Classroom Observation Form

A sample Classroom Observation Form is included, which can be used as-is or adapted for use. (see pages 12-14)

Step 4: Develop a final protocol for local use, based on the provided sample PET policies and sample observation form

The fastest option to produce a locally appropriate policy and observation form may be to select one sample PET policy (from Step 2) and adapt the policy and the sample observation form (from Step 3) to meet specific local needs.

Instructional Designers from the Center for Excellence in Teaching are available to assist with developing your PET protocol. To contact an Instructional Designer, email uscet@usc.edu.

8 CRITICAL DECISIONS

Before developing a protocol for peer evaluation of teaching (PET), a number of critical decisions must be finalized.

1. Will the PET process be summative or formative, or both?
A summative process is used to make decisions, such as promotion, tenure, or reappointment. A formative process is used to help an instructor improve his/her teaching performance.
2. Will the PET process be transparent?
In a transparent process, the faculty member being evaluated would have access to any reporting done by his/her peer evaluator(s).
3. Who will perform the evaluation?
Will a committee of departmental faculty do the evaluations, or will evaluators be selected from the entire department? Will faculty from cognate disciplines be used?
4. How will evaluators be prepared?
In order to have a valid process, evaluators should have similar expectations and methods of evaluation. This is best achieved through a common preparation process.
5. What will be expected of evaluators?
How many classroom observations will be made by each evaluator? Will syllabi and course materials be included in the evaluation? What is the reporting expectation?
6. How many observations will be made for each instructor being evaluated?
Reliability requires more than one observation, but how many will be conducted? Will several evaluators observe the same instructor, or will one evaluator perform multiple observations?
7. What level of granularity is required?
Will teaching performance be evaluated as poor/acceptable, or poor/fair/average/above average/excellent, or some other level of detail.
8. Who will define "good teaching?"
Essential to the evaluation process are criteria for good teaching in the relevant discipline. How will the criteria be decided upon? Who will be involved and what will be their process?

NOTES AND BEST PRACTICES

Who will perform the evaluation?

Reviewers (both summative and formative) should be:

- ◆ *tenured faculty, or non-tenure-track faculty with primarily teaching and advising responsibilities.* Untenured assistant professors should not have to rate colleagues who may later be in a position of evaluating his/her candidacy for tenure. (Another way to avoid this situation is to use raters from different departments, subject to the *knowledgeable* condition below.)
- ◆ *experienced.* Faculty with less than three years of teaching experience should generally not be called upon to rate someone else's teaching.
- ◆ *knowledgeable.* Raters should understand the criteria to be used in the peer review process and, to a reasonable extent, the broad discipline of the course being reviewed if not the specific course content.
- ◆ *competent.* While it is not necessary to use only winners of outstanding teacher awards as peer reviewers, reviewers should be faculty who are generally recognized as good teachers.
- ◆ *flexible.* There is no single correct way to teach. Instructors whose styles vary from traditional lecture-based instruction to full-bore active, cooperative, problem-based learning may all be excellent teachers. Faculty with a rigidly narrow view of what constitutes acceptable teaching should not be peer reviewers.
- ◆ *unbiased.* Individuals who have strong personal or philosophical differences with a faculty colleague should not be asked to serve as peer reviewers for that colleague. If they are asked to do so, they have an ethical responsibility to decline.

The above section extracted from (Brent & Felder, 2004)

The instructor being observed may be allowed to veto one assigned observer, to avoid personality conflicts that could introduce bias, or the perception of bias, to the evaluation process.

How will evaluators be prepared?

Training the observers can increase reliability and validity in the peer evaluation process. "Research has shown that when colleague ratings are based solely on classroom observation, only slight inter-rater agreement can be expected. However, research also demonstrates that if peer review evaluators are given proper training and experience, their ratings based on classroom observations are sufficiently reliable." (Fernandez & Yu, 2007)

Evaluator training can include the following.

- ◆ Use of standardized forms and procedures
- ◆ Observers discussing their interpretation of criteria listed on standardized forms
- ◆ Observers viewing a class (live or videotaped) and discussing their assessment of the teaching performance

What level of granularity is required?

While the evaluation's granularity will be determined by local needs and culture, it can be noted that the USC 2013 UCAPT manual specifies that teachers should "meet an acceptable standard," "are expected to be good teachers," and should be compared to "school and department norms." (UCAPT Manual, 2013) University standards of promotion and tenure do not insist on teaching evaluation beyond acceptable and good. A low-granularity evaluation scale such as "acceptable" or "not acceptable" could satisfy this requirement.

Who will define "good teaching?"

Although sample observation forms are included in this document, the characteristics of "good teaching" vary between disciplines and academic cultures. Ideally, the observation form will be developed within the academic unit in which it will be used.

"Designing a system of summative PET should begin with a discipline-specific discussion of what effective teaching entails, either among the evaluators, or in the unit as a whole. Such a discussion should yield a rubric that the evaluators can use to structure their judgments." (Summative Peer Evaluation of Teaching, 2009)

Basic steps in a PET protocol

The following components are essential to a complete peer evaluation of teaching protocol.

1. Finalizing evaluation criteria and observation forms
2. Selection of evaluators
3. Review of course materials
4. Pre-observation consultation (in a formative process)
5. Teaching observation
6. Post-observation consultation and feedback (in a formative process)
7. Written evaluation
8. Monitoring and re-evaluation of the peer review process

SAMPLE PROTOCOL 1

Guiding decisions for Protocol 1

Sample Protocol 1 (a simple summative process) is guided by the following answers to the 8 critical questions.

1.	Will the PET process be summative or formative, or both? The PET process will be summative only.
2.	Will the PET process be transparent? The PET process will not be transparent.
3.	Who will perform the evaluation? An evaluation committee of four tenured departmental faculty will be responsible for making classroom observations.
4.	How will evaluators be prepared? The evaluation committee will meet to discuss the criteria selected for good teaching and come to agreement on their expectations for classroom performance.
5.	What will be expected of evaluators? Evaluators will make one classroom observation for each instructor to whom they are assigned. Evaluators will examine the relevant course syllabus prior to the class observation to understand how the class fits into the course as a whole.
6.	How many observations will be made for each instructor being evaluated? Each instructor will be observed once each by two different evaluators.
7.	What level of granularity is required? Instructors will be evaluated in written comments and one final designation as “acceptable” or “unacceptable.”
8.	Who will define “good teaching?” The dean, in collaboration with the evaluation committee, will develop the criteria by which the instructors will be evaluated. The draft criteria will be disseminated to the entire academic unit for comment. The final criteria will then be decided in a meeting between the dean and the evaluation committee.

Sample peer evaluation policy for Protocol 1

1. Develop discipline-specific criteria for good teaching
 - ◆ Dean collaborates with evaluation committee to develop criteria for good teaching.
 - ◆ Draft criteria are shared with entire academic unit, with invitation to comment.
 - ◆ Dean and evaluation committee produce final version of criteria.
2. Prepare evaluation forms for use by classroom observers, based on finalized criteria for good teaching.
 - ◆ See attached sample observation form.
3. Share peer evaluation information with all faculty.
 - ◆ Peer evaluation process.
 - ◆ Criteria for good teaching.
 - ◆ Evaluation forms.
4. Select four tenured faculty who will serve as classroom observers.
5. Prepare classroom observers.
 - ◆ Discuss criteria for good teaching.
 - ◆ Reach consensus on expectations for classroom performance.
6. Instructor is informed of the two specific observers assigned to them.
 - ◆ Instructor is allowed one veto, without justification.
7. Observer examines course syllabus, provided by instructor, for context.
8. Observer and instructor communicate to agree on one specific class that will be observed. Each observer will attend a different class.
9. Observer attends class.
 - ◆ Observation begins 10 minutes before the start of class until the scheduled end of the class.
 - ◆ Standardized observation form is completed during the class.
 - ◆ Observer remains silent during and after class, retaining any comments for post-observation meeting.
10. Observer prepares final report.
 - ◆ Includes completed observation forms only, not additional notes (to ensure consistency across instructors and observers).

11. Reports from both observers are forwarded to the academic dean and/or personnel committee along with other materials required for the personnel decision-making process.
12. Evaluation of the entire peer evaluation process, including input from observers, instructors, and members of the personnel committees.

SAMPLE PROTOCOL 2

Guiding decisions for Protocol 2

Sample Protocol 2 (a summative and formative process) is guided by the following answers to the 8 critical questions.

1.	Will the PET process be summative or formative, or both? The PET process will be both summative and formative.
2.	Will the PET process be transparent? The PET process will be transparent.
3.	Who will perform the evaluation? Evaluators will be selected as needed from the tenured departmental faculty with current teaching responsibilities.
4.	How will evaluators be prepared? Evaluators will be provided a standardized classroom observation form. Evaluators will meet to watch videos of classroom teaching and compare their observations and judgments of the teaching performance, in an effort to reach agreement on how to consistently score instructors.
5.	What will be expected of evaluators? Evaluators will make two classroom observations for each instructor to whom they are assigned. They will examine the relevant course syllabus prior to the class observation to understand how the class fits into the course as a whole. They will also review course materials and the course LMS site, when applicable. The completed class observation form will be submitted to the academic dean. (LMS = learning management system, such as Blackboard)
6.	How many observations will be made for each instructor being evaluated? Each instructor will be observed twice by two different evaluators for a total of four classroom observations.
7.	What level of granularity is required? Instructors will be evaluated by written comments and numerical scores (1-5) on each of the criteria for good teaching. A final evaluation of the overall teaching performance will be made on the scale poor/fair/average/above average/excellent.
8.	Who will define “good teaching?” During the semester prior to implementation of PET, a departmental committee will convene to develop discipline-specific criteria for good teaching. After each biweekly meeting, the committee will make their minutes and draft criteria available to other department members for comment. Once the draft criteria have been decided, the committee will present them to the entire department for approval or amendment. Final criteria will be disseminated to all instructors to ensure that they are familiar with the criteria by which they will be evaluated.

Sample peer evaluation policy for Protocol 2

- 1) Develop discipline-specific criteria for good teaching
 - ◆ Convene multiple meetings of committee to develop criteria for good teaching.
 - ◆ Draft criteria are shared with entire academic unit, with invitation to comment.
 - ◆ Committee produces final version of criteria.
 - ◆ Prepare evaluation forms for use by classroom observers, based on finalized criteria for good teaching.
 - ◆ See attached sample observation form.
- 2) Share peer evaluation information with all faculty.
 - ◆ Peer evaluation process.
 - ◆ Criteria for good teaching.
 - ◆ Evaluation forms.
- 3) Select tenured faculty who will serve as classroom observers.
 - ◆ Note: If possible, peer evaluators for personnel decisions (summative evaluation) should be different from peer evaluators for course improvement (formative evaluation).
 - ◆ Peer evaluators should be of equal or higher academic rank than instructor being observed.
- 4) Prepare classroom observers.
 - ◆ Discuss criteria for good teaching.
 - ◆ Practice evaluating teaching using written or video examples.
 - ◆ Compare how different observers scored examples, with goal of reaching consensus.
- 5) Instructor is informed of the two specific observers assigned to them.
 - ◆ Instructor is allowed one veto, without justification.
- 6) Each observer examines materials for context, provided by instructor.
 - ◆ Course syllabus.
 - ◆ Course LMS site.
 - ◆ Handouts, worksheets, assignment descriptions, instructional videos, etc.

- 7) Each observer conducts pre-observation meeting with instructor.
 - ◆ Observer and instructor agree on two specific classes that will be included in the observation process.
 - ◆ Instructor addresses any questions from observer about course and/or materials.
 - ◆ Instructor explains teaching goals and strategies.
 - ◆ Instructor offers questions to which they would like the observer to pay particular attention.
 - ◆ Ex: When do the students seem most active during the class?
 - ◆ Ex: What can I do to make the lecture more engaging?
- 8) Observers attend classes.
 - ◆ Observation begins 10 minutes before the start of class until the scheduled end of the class.
 - ◆ Standardized observation form is completed during the class.
 - ◆ Observer makes additional notes addressing question(s) posed by instructor.
 - ◆ Observer remains silent during and after class, retaining any comments for post-observation meeting.
- 9) Each observer conducts post-observation meeting with instructor.
 - ◆ Observer shares his/her completed observation form.
 - ◆ Observer shares his/her notes regarding the questions posed by the instructor.
 - ◆ Instructor provides comments and clarifications.
- 10) Each observer prepares a final report.
 - ◆ Includes completed observation forms only, not additional notes (to ensure consistency across instructors and observers).
 - ◆ Observer may edit his/her initial comments on observation form, if warranted, after conversation with instructor and before submission to the academic dean.
- 11) Instructor being evaluated is allowed to submit, to the academic dean and/or personnel committee, comments or rebuttals to the observers' reports.
- 12) Reports from both observers are forwarded to the academic dean and/or personnel committee along with other materials required for the personnel decision-making process.
- 13) Evaluation of the entire peer evaluation process, including input from observers, instructors, and members of the personnel committees involved.

SAMPLE OBSERVATION FORM

The following sample observation form can serve as a template for more program-specific documents. It is designed for a summative evaluation process.

When used for a formative evaluation process, it is advised that the check-box evaluations are removed. In a formative process, the observations and other comments are more useful than discrete scoring in a collegial conversation on teaching.

Classroom Observation Form

Instructor:

Course:

Date:

Room:

Class time:

Standard	Indicators of mastery	Observations
Preparation	On-time and prepared before start of class. Familiar with class content, materials, and instructional plan. Competent in the use of classroom technology. Presentation shows clear signs of planning and organization.	
		Mastery of standard was <input type="checkbox"/> not displayed <input type="checkbox"/> apparent <input type="checkbox"/> strong <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Organization	Class time filled with teaching/learning activities. Clearly communicates the purpose of class session and activities. Stays on topic and satisfies class session objectives.	
		Mastery of standard was <input type="checkbox"/> not displayed <input type="checkbox"/> apparent <input type="checkbox"/> strong <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Time management	Time used efficiently; little or no time spent on non-class activities. Students released from class by the scheduled end time.	
		Mastery of standard was <input type="checkbox"/> not displayed <input type="checkbox"/> apparent <input type="checkbox"/> strong <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Communication techniques	Consistently uses body language that encourages communication and reduces affective barriers. Is lively and enthusiastic. Speaks clearly. Does not speak too rapid or slow. Does not exhibit distracting mannerisms. Encourages discussion, student input, and student-to-student interaction.	
		Mastery of standard was <input type="checkbox"/> not displayed <input type="checkbox"/> apparent <input type="checkbox"/> strong <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Classroom management	Manages classroom activities for a smooth flow of learning. Responds appropriately to unanticipated situations. Deals with disruptive behavior in a professional, fair, non-confrontational manner.	
		Mastery of standard was <input type="checkbox"/> not displayed <input type="checkbox"/> apparent <input type="checkbox"/> strong <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Standard	Indicators of mastery	Observations
Subject matter and instruction	Demonstrates adequate knowledge of the subject. Works easily through material. Answers questions confidently, clearly, and simply. Material is appropriate for course and student level. Material is presented effectively.	 Mastery of standard was <input type="checkbox"/> not displayed <input type="checkbox"/> apparent <input type="checkbox"/> strong <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Clarity	Uses concrete examples and illustrations to clarify material. Uses visuals and handouts to support verbal presentation. Language and instructions are understandable to students	 Mastery of standard was <input type="checkbox"/> not displayed <input type="checkbox"/> apparent <input type="checkbox"/> strong <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Student activity	Uses a variety of activities to ensure all students are engaged. Uses activities to determine whether students understand material. Requires students to be active, rather than passively listening. Students are generally attentive, active, and are comfortable asking questions.	 Mastery of standard was <input type="checkbox"/> not displayed <input type="checkbox"/> apparent <input type="checkbox"/> strong <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Other criterion	<<Add criteria specific to a department or discipline here>>	 Mastery of standard was <input type="checkbox"/> not displayed <input type="checkbox"/> apparent <input type="checkbox"/> strong <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Other comments		

Overall Assessment of Teaching Performance (select one):

unsatisfactory needs some improvement meets expectations exceeds expectations

Submitted by: _____ (name)

_____ (signature) _____ (date)

RESOURCES

Brent, R. & Felder, R. (2004). A protocol for peer review of teaching. Retrieved December 4, 2015, from [http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Papers/ASEE04\(Peer-Review\).pdf](http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/Papers/ASEE04(Peer-Review).pdf)

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