

## SENATE SPECIAL JOINT TASK FORCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FACULTY TEACHING ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

### Implementation of Peer Review within the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework

(Informational)

#### **Executive Summary**

The following is an informational report from the Joint Implementation Taskforce charged with implementing the “Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework” (FTAF), an advisory/consultative report passed by the Faculty Senate on September 14, 2021.

This report addresses the recommended changes to peer feedback. The committee found that most of the recommendations from the FTAF report are implementable as written. In areas where there were inconsistencies within the original FTAF report or clarification was needed, clarifications are provided to ensure the recommendations can be operationalized, including differentiation between formative and summative assessment and the clarification of the term “peer review.” It is important to note that, according to Penn State policy and the promotion and tenure guidelines, peer review does not require class observation, although it is common.

Items within the FTAF report that are not implementable as written include monetary reviewer compensation for participation in peer reviews, Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence consultants' participation in the summative peer review process, mandating utilization of a post-observation meeting in summative reviews and limiting summative peer review to once annually.

#### **Summative verse Formative Review**

Peer review of teaching is the process by which a faculty's peers can assess a full range of teaching activities. Two different forms of peer review can take place.

*Formative* peer reviews of teaching focus on improving teaching and are considered part of ongoing professional development. They are designed to help a faculty member improve teaching practice.

*Summative* peer reviews focus on informing personnel decisions, including reappointment, promotion and/or tenure decisions.

Ideally, peer review of teaching during a faculty’s appointment incorporates both formative and summative components as the continuous improvement of teaching quality is valued at Penn State University. Striving for improved student engagement and disciplinary pedagogy requires flexible and varied professional development options. All faculty are encouraged to seek formative feedback on their teaching at any point, and these efforts should not be held against them. Therefore, formative peer reviews should be for faculty consumption, not for use by the administrator in summative evaluation. At the faculty member’s discretion, aspects of formative evaluations may be integrated into a dossier.

While this document, at times, refers to formative peer review this report is focused on **summative peer review**, which is the only form of peer review referenced in Penn State policy AC40 and the Administrative Guidelines for AC 23.

### **Clarification of Terms – Peer Review**

The FTAF report uses the terms “peer feedback,” “peer review,” and “peer evaluation” interchangeably. Current policy ([AC 40](#)) and [Administrative Guidelines for AC23 Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations, 2022 – 2023](#) use the term “peer review.”

Peer review is the process by which an individual’s peers can evaluate a full range of teaching activities. Most usually it involves class observation. Peer review shall consider a range of teaching activities, including, but not limited to, the development of materials such as case studies and class assignments, advising, research collaboration, and graduate student mentoring. (Some of this evidence might be made available to peers by the candidate via a teaching portfolio.) The specific means and methods employed by a particular unit shall be adopted by that unit to address its own unique standards and practices. (Administrative Guidelines for AC 23, II.C.1.c, page 5)

Thus, we recommend using the term “peer review” in the implementation of this report. According to the administrative guidelines, peer observation is not a required element of peer feedback.

Classroom observation is the process whereby a peer evaluator gains insight into a faculty member’s teaching practices through direct observation of instructional activities. In face-to-face instruction, these observations entail attending a class session to observe instructional actions and interactions throughout the class period. Classroom observations are also possible in remote teaching and classrooms. Observations in these classes can be based on artifacts that are representative of the faculty member’s instructional actions such as a sent emails, discussion board posts, and performance-based feedback.

### **Recommendations for Peer Review from the [Faculty Assessment of Teaching Framework Report \(FATF, 2021\)](#)**

The implementation committee was asked to evaluate the feasibility of implementing the overall peer review recommendations within the FATF (2021) advisory/consultative report. Their recommendations were as follows (para. 20).

1. Each unit should determine their own best practices within the framework. Those practices should include clear guidelines for implementation and equitable reviewer compensation (monetary or workload adjustment).
2. The faculty member being evaluated should have the option to choose an evaluator from one of three sites: within their unit, outside their unit, or from a pool of Schreyer consultants. The faculty member may also choose the source of assessment (e.g., Hybrid, Face-to-Face or Online)
3. Each evaluation should include a pre-review consultation, one class period observation (virtual or in-person), and a post visit conversation to discuss the class observation and the final evaluation.

4. The content of each evaluation should include only evidence-based observations and action-oriented recommendations.
5. The frequency of peer evaluations varies across units but should occur no less than every five years and no more than once per academic year.
6. Create a Schreyer module or e-learning course (e.g., “Peer Review of Teaching Academy”) to train interested faculty reviewers from a variety of disciplines. The goal would be to incentivize a ready pool of reviewers which would increase consistency among units.

## Implementation Process

To implement the recommendations on peer review as outlined in the FTAF (2021), a careful analysis was performed for each component of the recommendations.

The subcommittee reviewed Penn State policy and the administrative guidelines for AC 23, consulted with staff who oversee Activity Insight, sought guidance and review from the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, sought guidance from the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, explored the practices at other institutions, and reviewed literature on peer review (see citations in Appendix A), engaged with original authors of the FTAF, and presented progress to the Faculty Senate standing committees of Educational Equity and Campus Environment, Faculty Affairs, Intera-university Relations, and Education, the Faculty Affairs Advisory Council.

For clarity of implementation, we have broken down each recommendation into relevant components. For example, recommendation 1 from the FTAF contained three components. These are indicated below as recommendations 1(a), 1(b), and 1(c).

1. “1(a) Each unit should determine their own best practices within the framework. 1(b) Those practices should include clear guidelines for implementation and 1(c) equitable reviewer compensation (monetary or workload adjustment).”

After each component, we have indicated:

1. what is **implementable** as written;
2. where **clarification for implementation** is needed to operationalize the recommendation; and
3. what is **not implementable**.

## Implementation of FTAF (2021) Peer Review Recommendations

**FTAF Recommendation 1:** Each unit should determine their own best practices within the framework. Those practices should include clear guidelines for implementation and equitable reviewer compensation (monetary or workload adjustment).

*1(a). Each unit should determine their own best practices within the framework.*

Implementable

The methods of, and procedures for, the peer review of teaching to be used by a unit, as well as the way the results are presented in the dossier, shall be voted on by the faculty of

the unit and formalized as “INSERT UNIT NAME Peer Review Guidelines.” The Executive Vice President and Provost shall give final approval to the unit’s summative peer review guidelines. ([Per Administrative Guidelines for AC23 Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations, 2022 – 2023, p. 32-33.](#))

Appendix B is a resource to help units determine their own best practices. It provides best practices on how peer reviews can be conducted, and example forms for conducting peer observations, should observation be part of the unit’s peer review process. Each unit should address their efforts to minimize bias (e.g., training, clear protocols, evidence-based note taking) in their framework.

*1(b). Those practices should include clear guidelines for implementation.*

Implementable

Unit-level summative peer review methods outlined in the unit’s guidelines must be consistently applied across the unit and ranks, and clearly communicated to all faculty. Each college must oversee its academic units’ peer review process to insure they are in line with university policy, administrative guidelines, and the FTFA recommendations, as implemented.

*1(c). Those practices should include equitable reviewer compensation (monetary or workload adjustment).*

Implementable

To operationalize this recommendation, the work of conducting a peer review shall be valued as significant service and/or teaching development activities, and therefore assigned while understanding the faculty’s entire workload.

The value of peer reviews should be acknowledged in annual reviews and promotions as documented by the reviewer in their annual report or dossier. Units may consider service load adjustments to account for the effort of peer review. It is suggested that units consider the construction of a service dashboard that illustrates the value of distinct types of service and the weight of those forms of services in comparison to one another.

Activity Insight should be modified to allow faculty to easily count peer review within their service obligations, and this should be incorporated automatically into annual faculty activity reports and the dossier.

Not implementable

Monetary compensation is not implementable across the University as peer review is considered a form of faculty service and is part of faculty rights and responsibilities within the promotion and tenure review process.

**FTAT Recommendation 2:** The faculty member being evaluated should have the option to choose an evaluator from one of three sites: within their unit, outside their unit, or from a pool of

Schreyer consultants. The faculty member may also choose the source of assessment (e.g., Hybrid, Face-to-Face or Online)

*2(a). The faculty member being evaluated should have the option to choose an evaluator from one of three sites: within their unit, outside their unit, or from a pool of Schreyer consultants.*

Implementable

To maximize a potential pool of effective and unbiased peer reviewers, the administrator and faculty member being reviewed should collaborate on choosing reviewers, with the administrator making the final decision. Similar to the selection of external reviewers for tenure-line promotion, an opportunity will be given to the faculty under review to submit names of potential reviewers to be considered. To prevent the inclusion of a reviewer who might bring a negative bias against a candidate, the faculty member under review can reject a proposed reviewer after consultation with their administrator. Reviewers can be selected from within the unit and outside of the unit, but units should outline the need for discipline expertise across reviewers.

Appendix B provides additional guidance and suggestions on how peer reviewers can be selected.

Not Implementable

The Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence does not feel they can support a pool of evaluators, nor does summative evaluation of teaching meet their mission which is to “advance and inspire excellence in Penn State’s teaching and learning community.”

*2(b). The faculty member may also choose the source of assessment (e.g., [Hybrid](#), [Face-to-Face](#) or [Online](#)).*

Implementable

The FTAF report states in 1(a), listed above, that “each unit should determine their own best practices within the framework.” This part of the recommendation prescribes limited examples of assessment forms. Units have the flexibility to determine which forms and processes constitute their own best practices. Additional examples of forms and potential procedures, including those that are cross-referenced with the *Elements of Effective Teaching* (presented within the Implementation of Structural Elements within the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework, 3/27/2023), can be found in Appendix B. To meet the intentions of 1(a) and 2(b), units must have guidelines for reviewing courses for each delivery mode.

Units are encouraged to include various sources of assessment for each delivery mode that maximize peer reviewer’s assessment capabilities (e.g., reviewing Learning Management Systems (such as Canvas) sites for remote mode classes, and joining remote synchronous class periods for remote synchronous mode classes). Because peer reviewers may be conducting reviews from different campuses, how they engage with sources of assessment (class observations, case studies, Learning Management System materials, student advising, student mentoring, etc.) may be done remotely or face-to-face.

**FTAT Recommendation 3:** Each evaluation should include a pre-review consultation, one class period observation (virtual or in-person), and a post-visit conversation to discuss the class observation and the final evaluation.

Implementable

In accordance with 1(a) above that states that each unit should determine their own best practices within the framework, each unit should determine and make clear to faculty within that unit what constitutes a class observation, should one be required (this is at the discretion of the unit, as per the Administrative Guidelines, page 5). Appendix A provides a sample process for a class observation that includes pre-observation consultation and observation.

Clarification

As mentioned previously, the Administrative Guidelines state that peer review and peer observation are not synonymous. Peer review is the process by which an individual's peers can evaluate a full range of teaching activities. While class observation is a fundamental assessment practice, according to the Administrative Guidelines it is not mandatory. "Peer review shall consider a range of teaching activities, including, but not limited to, the development of materials such as case studies and class assignments, advising, research collaboration, and graduate student mentoring" (page 5). Some of this evidence might be made available to peers by the candidate via a teaching portfolio. Summative peer review of teaching ideally consists of more than one source of assessment that may or may not include class observation. Units will determine which sources of assessments will be used and as stated above, how those sources of assessment will be reviewed

Not implementable in summative review

Given that summative reviews are used for personnel actions, post-observation conversations are not advisable. Two reasons for this recommendation are to avoid unduly burdening the reviewed faculty with further bias and to reduce the chance of the reviewer feeling pressure to purely affirm the faculty's expertise. We do encourage post-review discussions for formative reviews so that faculty can learn from their peers.

**FTAT Recommendation 4:** The content of each evaluation should include only evidence-based observations and action-oriented recommendations.

*4(a). The content of each evaluation should include only evidence-based observations...*

Implementable

The FTAF emphasizes the importance of using evidence-based observations to reduce bias. The assessment (evaluations and conclusions) should be tied to corresponding evidence.

*4(b). The content of each evaluation should include only ... action-oriented recommendations.*

Not implementable in summative review

Formative reviews benefit from action-oriented recommendations; however, summative reviews should not include them as their purpose is to assess teaching effectiveness to inform personnel actions.

**FTAT Recommendation 5:** The frequency of peer evaluations varies across units but should occur no less than every five years and no more than once per academic year.

*5(a). The frequency of peer evaluations varies across units but should occur no less than every five years...*

Implementable

To promote professional development for tenured faculty, five-year extended post-tenure reviews should include a summative peer review. For non-tenure-line faculty, reviews should occur at least every five years until the faculty member attains promotion, and then every five years after the most recent promotion.

*5(b). The frequency of peer evaluations varies across units but should occur ... no more than once per academic year.*

Clarification/Not implementable in summative review

At times, due to the timelines for promotion and tenure reviews, it may be necessary to conduct more than one peer review in an academic year.

The frequency of summative peer evaluations varies across units but should occur no more than once per academic year unless the timeline of a promotion or tenure dossier necessitates multiple peer reviews in one academic year. This should be an exceptional situation.

An administrator can conduct a summative peer review of a faculty member at any time if there are concerns about their teaching quality.

**FTAT Recommendation 6:** Create a Schreyer module or e-learning course (e.g., “Peer Review of Teaching Academy”) to train interested faculty reviewers from a variety of disciplines. The goal would be to incentivize a ready pool of reviewers which would increase consistency among units.

Implementable

Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence will offer a “Peer Review of Teaching Academy” module accessible to faculty from all disciplines. The training will focus on minimizing the bias of peer reviewers. Peer review processes must strive to be free from bias while acknowledging that bias is inherent. Recognizing the impossibility of fully eliminating bias in teaching evaluation, peer review processes must work to minimize bias. The training will draw attention to the issue of implicit bias and share strategies for limiting the influence of bias. Suggestions on how to reduce bias are included in Appendix A.

Units will determine if participation in this training is required for all senior faculty who complete peer reviews. Unit administrators should acknowledge the training as professional development.

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## Appendix A

### References

#### Websites

Holman, Mirya, Ellen Key, and Rebecca Kreitzer. 2019. "Evidence of Bias in Standard Evaluations of Teaching." <http://www.rebeccakreitzer.com/bias/>

Annotated running bibliography with link to document of summaries of articles.

Savonick, Danica and Cathy N. Davidson. 2018. "Gender Bias in Academe: An Annotated Bibliography of Important Recent Studies." HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory) Blog.

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/03/08/gender-bias-in-academe-an-annotated-bibliography/>

Annotated running bibliography of research related to possible discrimination in academia, including in teaching evaluations. Also has a link to a public document with more papers listed and described:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QRcQU4RSizluHxDY2uZxYp4EmYslmvm9BMtd-RUis/edit>

#### Articles

Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M. W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M. C., & Norman, M. K. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. John Wiley & Sons.

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Berk, R. A. (2005). Survey of 12 strategies to measure teaching effectiveness. *International journal of teaching and learning in higher education*, 17(1), 48-62.

Chew, S. L., & Cerbin, W. J. (2021). The cognitive challenges of effective teaching. *The Journal of Economic Education*, 52(1), 17-40.

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Simonson, S. R., Earl, B., & Frary, M. (2022). Establishing a framework for assessing teaching effectiveness. *College Teaching*, 70(2), 164-180.

Weaver, Gabriela C., Ann E. Austin, Andrea Follmer Greenhoot, and Noah D. Finkelstein. 2020. "Establishing a Better Approach for Evaluating Teaching: The TEval Project."

Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 52:3, 25-31.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2020.1745575>

Wieman, Carl. 2015. "A Better Way to Evaluate Undergraduate Teaching." Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning 47(1): 6-15.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2015.996077>

### **Higher Education Institutions with teaching excellence frameworks or definitions**

Pennsylvania State University: Attributes of an excellent teacher:

<http://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/Definition/>

University of Colorado, Boulder: Teaching Quality Framework:

<https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/>

University Of Oregon: Complete new system: definition of teaching quality, automatic self-evaluation after class; student ratings changed to align with definition.

<https://provost.uoregon.edu/revising-uos-teaching-evaluations>

University of Kansas: NSF-funded TEval participant. Excellent holistic rubric of accomplishment. <https://cte.ku.edu/benchmarks-teaching-effectiveness>

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign: Draft Campus-Wide Definition of Teaching Excellence. <https://uofi.app.box.com/s/rhp1ehri60e43441pxyr5np2ehzzhup1> (appendix 4)

University of Southern California: Complete new system: definition of teaching quality, peer review rubrics, templates for annual instructor self-evaluations, use of student surveys minimized

<http://cet.usc.edu/resources/instructor-course-evaluation/>

## Appendix B Peer Review of Teaching at Penn State

### *Introduction*

The following guidebook and resources are intended to provide information about the peer review process and examples for potential use by academic units. The Guidebook contains evidence-based practices, suggestions, and ideas surrounding the peer review process and is intended to become accessible as a series of web pages to be housed on the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence website.

This guide has been modeled on the “Peer Review of Teaching” website at Vanderbilt University and modified under a Creative Commons license to represent peer teaching at Penn State University.

Bandy, J. (2015). Peer Review of Teaching. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching. Retrieved March 23, 2023 from <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/peer-review-of-teaching/>. (This teaching guide is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).)

The sample observations forms to accompany this guidebook were constructed by Dr. Annie Taylor, Assistant Dean for Distance Learning, Teaching Professor, and Director of the John A. Dutton Institute for Teaching and Learning Excellence. They have been modified to cross-reference with the *Elements of Effective Teaching (Implementation of Structural Elements, 3/28/2023)*.

Face-to-face and Hybrid teaching:

<https://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/evaluate-revise/peerreviewhybrid>

Online teaching:

<https://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/evaluate-revise/peerreviewonline>

The guidebook begins on the following page.

## Peer Review at Penn State

In higher education, peer review stands as the prime means for ensuring that scholarship is of the highest quality and from it flows consequential assessments that shape careers, disciplines, and entire institutions. Examples of peer review of research or creative accomplishment include journal review panels, editorial boards, conference selection committees, book editors, arts institutions, curators and boards, performance organizations and boards, professional reviewers, etc. While peer review is well established as a means of evaluating scholarship across the disciplines (such as the peer review of scholarly writing for publication), it is also useful in the assessment of teaching as it can improve what Ernest Boyer (1990) has called the “scholarship of teaching and learning” by enhancing instructional and faculty development, by bolstering the integrity of personnel decisions, and by enabling more intentional and mutually supportive communities of scholar teachers.

This guide is intended as an introduction to the basics of peer review, including its purposes, challenges, and common practices. At Penn State University, peer review of teaching is a required and important part of the review process for promotion and tenure and is good practice and throughout the lifespan of teaching faculty members.

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## 1. Elements of Effective Teaching

The peer review of teaching should be based on effective teaching as defined in research. The elements of effective teaching (Implementation of Structural Elements within the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework, Faculty Senate report 3/27, 2023) are:

1. Effective design;
2. Inclusive and ethical pedagogy;
3. Effective instruction; and
4. Reflective and evolving practice.

Importantly, these four elements of effective teaching are not exhaustive. Rather, they are distilled from a substantial literature on effective teaching as those that provide a meaningful throughline in self, peer, and student perspectives on effective teaching. Likewise, these four elements are not mutually exclusive. For example, inclusive and ethical pedagogy permeates course design, instruction, and reflective practice over time.

The four elements are also cast at a fairly high level of abstraction, in recognition that the specific ways they manifest in particular classes is influenced by disciplinary conventions and priorities, structural features of classes, the modality for engaging instruction, and student characteristics. It is imperative to note that the examples provided for each element are intended as expository and ideational. These details are intended to clarify the substance of each element, rather than provide a concrete set of criteria for each. It is not expected that every faculty member will engage in each of the examples displayed below; in fact, it's highly unlikely that they would. They are provided to give further explanation of each of the four elements.

### *1. Effective Design*

Well-designed courses (lessons/modules) provide a variety of student-centered learning and assessment tasks that align with course objectives. Scaffolded and transparent design of learning and assessment tasks as well as clearly structured, accessible, and relevant materials provide appropriate challenge and support for student development and learning.

Examples of effective design:

- Student characteristics (e.g., prior knowledge, background, class standing) and, if available, data on student learning are considered in design and modifications of instruction
- Learning objectives are clear, challenging, measurable, and attainable
- Varied student-centered learning and assessment tasks support the learning objectives

- Learning and assessments tasks are scaffolded and sequenced to support the development of skills and knowledge
- Readily available, coherently organized, and relevant course materials (including syllabi) that establish student workload, learning objectives, performance criteria, grading procedures, and class policies are provided

## ***2. Effective Instruction***

Effective instruction provides a clear structure to students that supports the process of learning. It takes cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning into consideration and focuses on creating positive environments and relationships.

Examples of effective instruction:

- Learning activities in and out of class are well-structured and managed
- A climate of high expectations, with appropriate challenges and high levels of trust and support, is established to encourage learners to take risks and demonstrate their learning and current challenges
- Critical, analytical, and creative thinking are modeled; Examples are utilized appropriately to help learners deepen their understanding and build connections; New skills or procedures are modeled or demonstrated with appropriate scaffolding and challenges
- Content, instructions, and expectations are communicated clearly
- Timely, actionable, and fair feedback on activities and assignments is tied to performance criteria and learning objectives
- Instructor's content knowledge is evident, and the instructor is able to connect concepts of the discipline to learners' prior knowledge, experiences, and ambitions
- A supportive environment that communicates respect, trust, and care is created by promoting positive interactions and relationships with and among all students
- Understanding of learning principles guides instructional choices
- Throughout the learning experience, a growth mindset is cultivated, emphasizing that abilities are not fixed but can be developed over time.

## ***3. Inclusive and Ethical Instruction***

Inclusive and ethical instruction is the explicit inclusion of all learners, the attention to accessibility, and the removal of barriers to learning. The instructor's ability to understand their own assumptions, critically reflect on their knowledge and practices, and to cultivate a sense of belonging lays the foundation for full participation by all students.

Examples of inclusive and ethical instruction:

- Diverse practitioners, authorities, and applications in the field are presented
- Attention is given to accessibility and removal of barriers to ensure that all students can fully participate in learning. For example, access to content (e.g., use of alt text,

accessible documents) is ensured; affordable course materials are utilized, reasonable accommodations for all students are considered and required accommodations are provided

- The instructor has examined their own assumptions and values and takes an asset/strengths-based approach to diversity
- Integrity and respect for all students is demonstrated; rapport with students has been built, and a sense of belonging for all students is actively cultivated
- A regular review of course policies for equity and learning-centered approach takes place

#### ***4. Reflective and Evolving Practice***

Reflective and evolving practice involves examining one's teaching and learning practices (mentoring and advising, if appropriate) and considering changes based on our experiences and our own learning. Reflective practice and an understanding of research-informed pedagogical techniques guide modifications to course design and instruction. The evolution of instructional practices is informed by feedback from students and enhanced through our interaction with peers and professional development opportunities.

Examples of reflective and evolving practice:

- Content and pedagogical techniques that are current, research-informed, and relevant are regularly reflected upon and implemented
- Participation in teaching development activities and the utilization of peer and student feedback to inform design and teaching practice are apparent
- A learning environment that invites constructive feedback to the instructor has been established
- Instructors continuously explore their identity, including how it affects their own learning and professional growth, as well as how their beliefs intersect with broader cultural, social, and political contexts.

## **2. What Is Peer Review of Teaching?**

Peer review is often identified with peer observations, but it is more broadly a method of assessing a collection of information about the teaching facilitated by the instructor under review. This collection typically includes courses taught, student evaluations, self-evaluative statements (such as self-reflection), peer observations, and other evidence such as syllabi, assignments, student work, and comment or letters solicited from former students.

According to the [university administrative guidelines for promotion and tenure](#) (OVPFA, 2022), peer review is defined as follows:

Peer review is the process by which an individual's peers can evaluate a full range of teaching activities. Most usually it involves class observation. Peer review shall consider a range of teaching activities, including, but not limited to, the development of materials such as case studies and class assignments, advising, research collaboration, and graduate student mentoring. (Some of this evidence might be made available to peers by the candidate via a teaching portfolio.) The specific means and methods employed by a particular unit shall be adopted by that unit to address its own unique standards and practices.

It is also worth noting a common distinction between two different forms of peer review: *formative* and *summative*.

*Formative evaluation* is typically oriented solely towards the improvement of teaching and is part of instructional mentorship and development.

*Summative evaluation*, in contrast, is an evaluation done to inform personnel decisions. The focus is on assessment of teaching and less if, at all, depending on the unit's approach, on making recommendations for improvement.

To improve the freedom and exploration of individual faculty, formative reviews are not shared with administrators and do not play a role within formal evaluative processes. Summative evaluations are more common since they are tied to decisions related to reappointment, promotion, or tenure (Bernstein et al. 2000). It is important to maintain a clear distinction between these types of evaluation and be transparent with those under review. It is also common to have different faculty involved in each form of assessment.

At Penn State, faculty with teaching duties are encouraged, but not required, to participate in formative peer review unless it is mandated by the academic unit in which they work. See academic unit or college guidelines for more clarity on this subject.

Summative peer review is part of the promotion and tenure process. Information about when a faculty member will be reviewed and by whom is determined by the academic unit head in line with unit guidelines. Summative evaluations are often kept on file by your academic unit head and are utilized at all levels of promotion and tenure for faculty in teaching appointments.

The continuous improvement of teaching quality is valued at Penn State University. In addition to summative evaluations, ideally, all faculty will also have formative peer reviews of their teaching as they evolve as instructors. Striving for improved student engagement and disciplinary pedagogy requires flexible and varied professional development options. All faculty are encouraged to seek formative feedback on their teaching at any point and these efforts should not be held against them. Therefore, formative peer reviews should be for the faculty to act upon, not for the administrator to act upon. At the faculty member's discretion, aspects of formative evaluations may be integrated into a dossier.



### 3. Why Peer Review?

Peer review serves many functions in the process of evaluating faculty, courses, or entire programs.

**It is a vital means of scholarly practice.** What is good for research is good for teaching. As in peer reviews of scholarship, it is a vital means of receiving expert assessments of one important part of scholarly practice: teaching. As with research and creative accomplishment, peer review ensures that faculty internalize, in the words of Pat Hutchings (1996), scholarly “habits of mind” by identifying goals, posing questions for inquiry, exploring alternatives, taking appropriate risks, and assessing the outcomes with learned colleagues.

**It enables teaching to be a community endeavor.** When this process of scholarly engagement and deliberate improvement is part of the institutional expectations for teaching, as it is with research, it can function to support a community of scholarship around teaching. Relatedly, too often in higher education teaching is subject to what Pat Hutchings (1996) has called, “pedagogical isolation,” but peer review provides opportunities for us to open our teaching up to a community of colleagues who can nurture improvement.

**Peer review allows for less exclusive reliance on student evaluations.** Student evaluations have become institutionalized in higher education and provide information for evaluating faculty, courses, and even entire curricula. However, students may not always be the best evaluators since they often have limited disciplinary training, they can have biases against certain faculty unrelated to teaching effectiveness, and they can be less cognizant of institutional goals or values than faculty.

**It provides for greater faculty experimentation and rigor.** Just as importantly, an over-reliance on student evaluations in processes of professional review can cause faculty to become overly concerned about receiving positive student evaluations. In the worst of moments, this can lead faculty to adopt a consumer model of education, shaping our teaching in a manner that prioritizes receiving positive student ratings over students learning (Hutchings, 1996). This, in turn, results in faculty becoming overly cautious by refusing to challenge student expectations by using conventional teaching methods, by becoming less rigorous in their standards, and at worst, by feeling a need to entertain more than educate. Peer review, when done in formative and summative forms alongside student evaluations, can ensure both faculty and students will have a voice in their evaluation, and that faculty have greater autonomy to innovate and to teach rigorously. This can give faculty the opportunity to focus more intentionally on what helps students learn best, and therefore more directly focus on the quality of their teaching.

**It allows for both formative and summative evaluation.** When done well, peer review involves both formative and summative evaluations. The inclusion of greater formative evaluation allows for more significant faculty and instructional development by encouraging more critical reflection on teaching and by providing a safer, less risky, and more collegial setting for assessment.

**Peer reviews improve faculty approaches to teaching.** Daniel Bernstein, Jessica Jonson, and Karen Smith (2000), in their examination of peer review processes found they positively impact faculty attitudes and approaches toward teaching. While their study did not reveal a necessary shift in faculty attitudes towards student learning and grading, it did change several important aspects of teaching practice. First, it dramatically impacted in-class practices, particularly the incorporation of more active and collaborative learning and less reliance on lecturing. Second, it improved faculty willingness to ask students to demonstrate higher order intellectual and critical thinking skills. Third, for some faculty, it increased the quality of feedback they gave their students on assignments, improving student understanding and performance. And lastly, they enjoyed discussing substantive disciplinary and teaching issues with their colleagues, enhancing the scholarly community in their departments and programs. Peer review therefore shows an ability to improve faculty joy in teaching by improving the relations amongst faculty and students, and among faculty themselves.

#### 4. **Bias in Peer Review**

Peer review processes must strive to be free from bias while acknowledging that bias is inherent. Recognizing the impossibility of fully eliminating bias in teaching evaluation, peer review processes must work to minimize bias. The following are recommended strategies for doing so:

1. For summative peer reviews that count toward promotion and tenure, faculty completing the peer review must be trained through the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence Peer Review Academy. The training will draw attention to the issue of implicit bias and share strategies for limiting the influence of bias. It will also mandate that each reviewer develop a positionality statement that enables reviewers to reflect on their potential biases.
2. To ensure objectivity, peer review methods used should focus on an evidence-based critique. Evaluations and conclusions should be tied to corresponding evidence.
3. The faculty being reviewed should provide input regarding the selection of their reviewer (this is further explained below). Units may ask faculty to provide a list of suggested reviewers, when possible. Reviewers can be selected from within the unit and outside of the unit, but units should outline the need for discipline expertise across reviewers.
4. Units must have guidelines for reviewing courses for each delivery mode including a variety and core set of assessment sources (instructional materials, student work, observation, etc.) for each delivery mode. Faculty should be able to choose from and include additional forms of sources in their reviews.

#### 5. **How to Select Peer Reviewers**

Peer review usually begins with the selection of peer reviewers drawn most often from within the unit of the instructor being reviewed. The reviewers typically are faculty who have significant expertise in teaching and are more senior than the instructor being reviewed. These faculty may be chosen to undertake all peer teaching reviews for the department or program during a specific

period, or they may be selected specifically because they share expertise with the instructor being reviewed.

Within the formative peer review process, faculty are encouraged to select faculty whom they feel can provide reliable and on-set feedback and with whom they feel comfortable sharing their strengths and challenges. As a reminder, formative peer review should not be shared with administrators or other faculty who are involved in the promotion and tenure process. Faculty may share the outcomes of formative review with their administrator should they choose to, but, generally, these reviews are private and intended to better the teaching practices of the faculty member.

How peer reviewers are chosen to review their colleagues should be clearly outlined in the unit's peer review framework explicitly stating how bias will be minimized. To prevent the inclusion of a reviewer who might bring a personal negative bias against a candidate, the individual being reviewed should provide input regarding the selection of their reviewer(s). As with the selection of external reviewers for tenure-line promotion, it is advised that the faculty under review be given the opportunity to submit names of potential reviewers to be considered.

Reviewers can be selected from within the unit and outside of the unit, but units should outline the need for discipline expertise across reviewers.

In selecting reviewers, one must be mindful of several criteria:

**Institutional Experience.** Reviewers should be highly familiar with the department/program, school, and institutional goals, as well as the processes of peer review and the criteria used to assess the work. This familiarity will increase the effectiveness, consistency, and efficiency of the evaluation process.

**Integrity.** Peer reviews also function best when reviewers have commitments to integrity, fair-mindedness, privacy, and understanding the reasoning behind the teaching choices of the faculty under review.

**Trust.** Peer reviewers, especially in formative reviews, work collaboratively with the faculty under review to establish a clear process of evaluation and reporting, therefore peer reviewers who can establish trust are particularly effective.

**Ability to Mentor.** Those under review are particularly vulnerable and often anxious. Therefore, reviewers who have grace and tact in the process of assessment, can offer feedback with integrity and support, and who can help advise on strategies for faculty development will be most helpful.

**Thoroughness and Practicality.** Peer reviewers should be able to provide summary reports that clearly and thoroughly represent all phases of the process, and for formative reviews, that make recommendations that are specific and practical (Center for Teaching Effectiveness, University of Texas, Austin).

**Trained.** For summative peer reviews that count toward promotion and tenure, it is recommended that faculty completing the peer review completed the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence Peer Review Academy. The training will draw attention to the issue of

implicit bias and share strategies for limiting the influence of bias. It will also entail that each reviewer develop a positionality statement that entails reviewers reflecting on their potential biases.

## 6. How to Conduct a Summative Peer Review

Peer review itself usually focuses on several aspects of teaching through a process that usually has a series of activities. The following list of summative peer review evaluation activities represents a sequential, reasonably thorough, and maximal model for peer review, but not all are necessary. Individual academic units or colleges or campuses should create their own summative evaluation guidelines, techniques, and materials and these expectations for peer review should be made clear to faculty before the review process begins.

**Develop Departmental Standards for Teaching.** Without a clear set of learning goals for all departmental programs, it is difficult to assess teaching with any validity or reliability, and it can leave departments open to biases, inconsistencies, and miscommunications in peer evaluation processes. One of the greatest benefits of peer reviews of teaching is that it provides an occasion for departments and programs, if not entire schools and universities, to be more intentional, specific, and clear about quality teaching and learning, and the various means to achieve it. This may be the work of an entire department or a special teaching committee that researches disciplinary and institutional benchmarks and proposes guidelines for review.

**Preliminary Consultation.** Peer review processes usually begin with a consultation, sometimes framed as a conversation, between the peer reviewer and the faculty being reviewed. The prime purpose of this is to provide the faculty being reviewed with an understanding of the process of a peer review, and to offer them the opportunity to provide their input on the process. The conversation also allows the peer reviewer to begin collecting information about the course(s) the faculty is instructing and which one[s] will be part of the evaluation. This context helps to provide better understanding of the faculty's goals and teaching choices. (Fink 2005).

The following are a list of questions a reviewer may want to ask of the faculty member to begin collecting information about the faculty and their course(s):

**Logistical contexts.** How many students are enrolled? Is the course(s) lower division, upper division, a graduate class, etcetera? How frequent and long are the class meetings? What is the delivery mode? What are the physical, online, and remote elements of the learning environment? What learning management system is being used? What engagement outside of class time (if synchronous or F2F) are provided?

**Learning objectives.** How have the learning objectives of the course(s) been shaped by the department, college, university, or discipline? Are the courses required or electives? What are the intellectual and skill outcomes of the course(s)? What are the specific goals of the classes being observed or information being assessed?

**Characteristics of the students.** What are the students' ages and other demographic factors that may affect learning? What is the student body's prior experience in the subject? What are the students' interests and goals? What are the students' life situations?

**Characteristics of the faculty.** What expertise does the faculty have in the subject areas? What are their own assessments of their strengths and weaknesses? What models of impactful teaching did they encounter as a student? What theoretical or practical orientations ground their approach to teaching and learning? What from the teaching and learning scholarship has been influential on their teaching? How do these influences take shape in their own teaching?

**Teaching Activities to be reviewed.** Peer review shall consider a range of teaching activities, including, but not limited to in-class activities (see outline below of how to conduct a class observation), the development of materials such as case studies and class assignments, student work, online discussion rooms, advising, research collaboration, and graduate student mentoring. (Some of this evidence might be made available to peers by the candidate via a teaching portfolio.) The specific means and methods employed by a particular unit shall be adopted by that unit to address its own unique standards and practices. **See below for a more extensive list of additional teaching activities to assess.**

### **Follow-Up Questions**

Given that summative reviews are used for personnel actions, we are not recommending that peer reviews entail a post review conversation as those conversations can entail academic bias that the faculty under review will be unduly burdened with. We also acknowledge that a follow-up conversation may put pressure on the reviewer to avoid providing any criticism. A peer reviewer may have follow-up questions for the instructor being reviewed to better understand the sources of assessment. A follow up meeting is not required nor necessary. During the formative peer review process, a follow-up meeting is a chance to discuss recommendations for improving instruction. However, a summative peer review does not entail such recommendations.

### **7. Assessing Teaching Through Class Observation**

A class observation's goal is to collect a sample of information about teaching and learning practices. They typically include two to four class visits to gain reliable data. If the teacher being reviewed teaches multiple courses, the process may involve fewer observations per course (e.g., one or two).

As stated previously in the introduction, peer review at Penn State is broadly defined and may or may not include class observation. By and large, class observation is part of the peer review process in most units.

The Penn State Elements of Effective Teaching (2023), which have been described in detail above, are listed below and can serve as a means for organizing thinking around class observation as part of the peer review process.

1. Effective Design
2. Effective Instruction
3. Inclusive and Ethical Instruction
4. Reflective and Evolving Practice

Sample peer review templates utilizing these elements can be found at the end of this document.

### **Pre-Observation Consultation and the Observation**

The university encourages a two-part observation process that includes a pre-observation meeting and the observation itself.

**The pre-observation meeting.** This meeting gives the observed faculty member an opportunity to inform the observer about the course's specific features and the lessons, activities, and elements planned for the session in which they will be observed. The observed faculty member should clearly share what course content has already been covered prior to the class being observed, the learning outcomes for that particular class, and the teaching strategies they will be using for that class.

During this meeting, the reviewer will share what observations they will focus on and basing their assessment on (see “Observation Form” section below). It is important for the observer to take notes to minimize biases from poor recollection. The observer will also share during the pre-observation meeting how their observations and assessment will be documented and if and how the assessment will be made available to the faculty member. For formative reviews, the peer review is purely for the faculty member. For summative reviews, the peer review should be, at a minimum, shared with the administrator who requested the review, if not also with the faculty being reviewed.

**The observation.** Formative reviews are most useful when they recognize strengths and suggest areas for attention or alternative approaches. Summative reviews are most helpful when they document strengths and areas for improvement. Both types of peer review require a judgement to be made based on evidence observed. To elaborate, Martin & Double’s (2005) study suggested the following items guide observation:

1. Use a systematic approach in taking observation notes at fixed intervals (e.g., two or three minutes)
2. To be effective, the observations must be of both the teacher and the students; dividing the page vertically can help to keep a clear record of both and to emphasize the importance of the interplay between teacher and student
3. Beware the ‘expert’ in all of us: it is a well-known psychological phenomenon that when a person is observed performing a familiar task, the observer can be inclined to take on

the role as expert, irrespective of their actual level of competence (e.g., think behavior of a sports crowd towards a referee).

## **What to Observe**

The following elements are typically included in observations, but will vary depending on the nature of the course environment (e.g., face-to-face, remote synchronous, remote asynchronous):

### **Content knowledge**

- Selection of content worth knowing and appropriate to the course
- Provided appropriate context and background
- Proficiency in class content
- Citation of relevant scholarship Presented divergent viewpoints

### **Clear and effective class organization**

- Clear statement of learning goals
- Relationship of lesson to course goals, and past and future lessons
- Logical sequence
- Appropriate pace for student understanding
- Summary

### **Varied methods for engagement, which may include...**

- In-class writing
- Analysis of quotes, video, artifacts
- Group discussions
- Student-led discussions
- Debates
- Case studies
- Concept maps
- Role playing
- Student presentations
- Brainstorming

### **Faculty Presentation**

- Clarity in projection
- Varied intonation
- Clarity of explanation
- Eye contact
- Listened effectively
- Defined difficult terms, concepts, principles
- Use of examples

- Varied explanations for difficult material
- Used humor appropriately

### **Teacher-Student Interactions**

- Effective questioning
- Warm and welcoming rapport
- Use of student names
- Encouraging of questions
- Encouraging of discussion
- Engaged student attention
- Answered students effectively
- Responsive to student communications
- Restating questions, comments
- Suggestion of further questions, resources
- Concern for individual student needs
- Emotional awareness of student interests, needs

### **Appropriateness of instructional materials**

- Content that matches course goals
- Content that is rigorous, challenging
- Content that is appropriate to student experience, knowledge
- Adequate preparation required
- Handouts and other materials are thorough and facilitated learning
- Audio/visual materials effective
- Written assignments

### **Student engagement**

- Student interest
- Enthusiasm
- Participation
- Student-to-student interaction

### **In-class, formative assessment practices**

- Background knowledge probes, muddiest point exercises, defining features matrix and other “[classroom assessment techniques](#)”
- Ungraded in-class writing exercises, such as minute papers
- Discussions
- Questioning



**Use of observation forms.** To make the process more transparent, reliable, and valid, observation forms can be useful, constructed from items like those listed above, to help peer evaluators track and evaluate teaching and learning practices. These may include nothing more than checklists of activities; they may provide rating scales (e.g., Likert scales) to assist the evaluation; they may have open-ended prompts that provide space for general commentary and analysis; or they may involve some combination of all three. The most thorough forms guide the observer in what they should observe and prompt them to provide synthesis and evaluation of their observations.

Sample peer review templates utilizing these elements:

Face-to-face and Hybrid: <https://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/evaluate-revise/peerreviewhybrid>

Online teaching: <https://facdev.e-education.psu.edu/evaluate-revise/peerreviewonline>

## 8. Other Teaching Activities to Assess

### Evidence of Student Learning.

**End-of-course student work.** To assess instruction effectiveness more thoroughly, peer reviewers may collect evidence of student learning in the form of examinations, written assignments, and other projects from the teacher under review. Collecting this evidence may be helpful in assessing core competencies expected from the course.

**Student work throughout the course.** Evidence of student learning may be more thoroughly assessed by collecting examples of student work at various times during a course so as to gain perspective on student growth and development. To do this requires some preparation and lead-time to ensure the teacher under review is sure to collect work from students and gain their consent for sharing it.

**Grades.** Student grades also may be used as an indicator of student performance, if they are accompanied by contextual information such as grade distribution, the criteria used to assign those grades, and samples of student work at A, B, C, D, and failing levels.

**Engagement with online materials.** Online discussion posts, uploaded student work, and other [online student activities may also be reviewed to evaluate evidence of teaching and learning.](#)

**Student Evaluations.** In addition to reviewing standard end-of-course evaluations, peer reviewers may choose to solicit letters of evaluation from a sample of students, current or alumni, who have had at least one course with the teacher in question, preferably two or more. Requesting these from graduates who have a more mature perspective on the effectiveness and impact of the teacher under review can be especially useful. The request for evaluation letters can be more or less specific in its prompts, but at a minimum typically introduce the importance of the evaluation process for the individual and the institution and ask

for them to assess how effective the teacher was as an instructor, what limitations they may have, and what impacts they made on their education.

**Engagement with Teaching Professional Development.** If the person under review has attended consultations, workshops, or other programs offered by a campus center for teaching and learning, the evaluation process may consider this to be part of the analysis.

**Advising Activity.** Peer evaluators may wish to note the advising activities and load of the faculty being reviewed, along with any special service to the department, school, or institution's teaching mission. This may involve some data collection from students the faculty has advised and peers with whom the faculty has collaborated in their advising. For some faculty, this kind of teaching through advising outside typical course structures can be a substantial contribution to the teaching mission of the department.

**Professional Publications, Presentations, and Recognitions.** Peer reviewers also may wish to collect evidence of the scholarly activities in teaching and learning by the faculty being reviewed, such as professional publications, presentations, or awards for their teaching.

**Teaching Portfolio or Access to Course Learning Management System.** Class design (if designed by the faculty) and student work may be presented as a portfolio for reviewers to evaluate. Faculty may decide to give their reviewer complete or partial access to the learning management system (for example, Canvas) or may decide to cull certain aspects of their course materials and student work to create a more focused portfolio for the reviewer.

## 9. The Peer Review Report

Typically, the written evaluation includes an outline of the process, the methods, what was observed/reviewed, and, of course, the assessment. While a formative review may include suggested improvements for teaching and a plan for instructional or curricular development that could include ongoing mentorship, the use of professional development resources, and further peer review, a summative review does not entail suggestions for improvement.

Peer reviewers are encouraged to note this work as administrative support service (not including the actual review) in annual review reports and dossiers for promotion so that the work can be acknowledged and valued.

## 10. Possible Limitations of Peer Review

The following is a list of areas where the peer review processes can be prone to limitations. These limitations illustrate the need for units to clearly outline the process and conduct the process with rigor, transparency and integrity and care for those being reviewed.

**Relying Solely on Peer Review to Assess Teaching.** While peer review may be a process that allows for a more rigorous evaluation of a teaching portfolio, it is worth noting that peer reviews alone are often insufficient to base an entire teacher's assessment on. Peer reviews represent merely a snapshot of teaching, and thus must be only one component of a fuller assessment that should also include student evaluations, evidence of student learning, course materials, and self-evaluations, just to name a few.

**Bias.** All methods of teaching evaluation entail biases. Racial, gender and other biases against minoritized faculty can easily be engaged in and not identified in the assessment. The peer review process may invite bias if it involves limited or unprofessional approaches to material collection/observation and assessment. Personal relationships between reviewers and those being reviewed can create either hyper- or hypo-critical approaches to evaluation. Standards of excellence or their application can be highly subjective and individual teaching styles may vary widely. Therefore, evaluations can be contentious if standards are not defined in advance through rigorous research and open, collaborative processes. Power relations in departments or programs also can unduly influence open and thorough evaluation. To minimize all these possibilities, administrators and peer reviewers must reflect on these potential biases and proactively work to avoid them. Administrators must insist on reviewers following procedures decided upon by the unit, completing the Peer Reviewer training (and further training if biases are detrimentally engaged with), and iteratively addressing biases as they surface in peer reviews.

**Collegiality Issues.** Under the best of circumstances, peer review can shape a dialogue about teaching that fosters a teaching community among educators and can lead to more growth-oriented forms of professional development. However, when it is implemented in less collaborative and more adversarial forms, or when it involves unavoidable consequences such as promotion or job security, anxieties and frustrations can be triggered for both reviewers and those being reviewed. The peer reviewer must always model professional collegiality as they mentor the future senior faculty to become mentors themselves.

**Time and Effort.** Peer reviews require considerable time and effort. Departmental and campus administrators must define the process, establish standards, and train and prepare reviewers. Peers must perform observations, review portfolios, draft assessments, and have multiple dialogues with those under review. Each step requires preparation if it is to be fair, transparent, and professional. Any shortcut may compromise the rigor, care, or goals of the evaluation.

**Predefined standards of teaching and learning.** Rather than spend significant time adjudicating which learning and teaching goals are appropriate, department or program leaders may decide to use existing language in university or departmental missions, course catalogs, accreditation reports, and other constituting documents. However, vague, and imprecise learning goals that sometimes characterize constitutional documents (e.g., "critical thinking") may be of little help in benchmarking a specific set of courses or teaching strategies. Likewise, departments and programs may have teaching challenges that broad standards may not take into consideration. The above Elements of Effective Teaching may serve a unit well in defining effective teaching, but they may also want to adjust it for their specific field and needs.

**Limited Teaching Activities Reviewed.** One of the more time-consuming tasks of peer review is combing through all facets of a teaching portfolio, particularly if it includes samples of student work. In efforts to save time, some peer review processes rely largely upon peer observation, in addition to student evaluations of teaching, and do not collect teaching portfolios or examples of student work. Others collect only limited samples of student work, such as grade distributions and examples of student work at A, B, C and D levels to evaluate an instructor's assessment and grading strategies. Each activity assessed is only part of a more encompassing possible assessment of all parts of teaching, and reviewers should acknowledge those limitations in their assessment.

**Templates for written peer evaluation reports.** Final written reports need not be highly expansive assessments but may represent more of a thorough checklist with brief sections of commentary on challenges and successes that become points of discussion between peer reviewers and the instructor under review. A form or report can save valuable time, but it also may provide limited formative feedback to the instructor under review, possibly affording them less useful guidance on where to improve their teaching.

**Relying too heavily on formative reviews.** A department or program may limit peer evaluation to only summative and not formative assessments of teaching. This would limit opportunities for faculty development, create more tensions between reviewers and those being evaluated, and thwart the formation of collegial cultures that improve teaching for entire departments and programs. Formative evaluations for faculty are highly encouraged so that they may succeed in the classroom, ultimately receiving more positive summative reviews.

## 11. Concluding Thoughts

Peer review of teaching, when done well, has many benefits in fostering teaching excellence, creating collegial communities of scholarly teachers, and more fair and transparent cultures of professional development. By contrast, the challenges of peer review, while not insignificant, are small by comparison. Peer review of teaching, as in research, enhances the integrity and innovation of teaching.

## Resources Consulted

This guide has been modeled on the “Peer Review of Teaching” website at Vanderbilt University.

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