

Peer Evaluation of Teaching Proposal in College of Engineering

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Overview

College of Engineering (COE) aims to be nationally recognized for engineering education (COE Strategic Plan, Goal #1). To achieve this goal, a comprehensive, inclusive, and effective approach to evaluate teaching is needed. Peer Evaluation of Teaching serves two purposes: (1) create a culture of promoting teaching; (2) ensure a fair process for teaching evaluation.

Per guidance from the Executive Vice Chancellor's Office, COE uses a 3-pronged approach to evaluate teaching, through peer observation, student feedback, and instructor self-reflection. An overview of the Peer Evaluation of Teaching process in COE is presented in Figure 1.

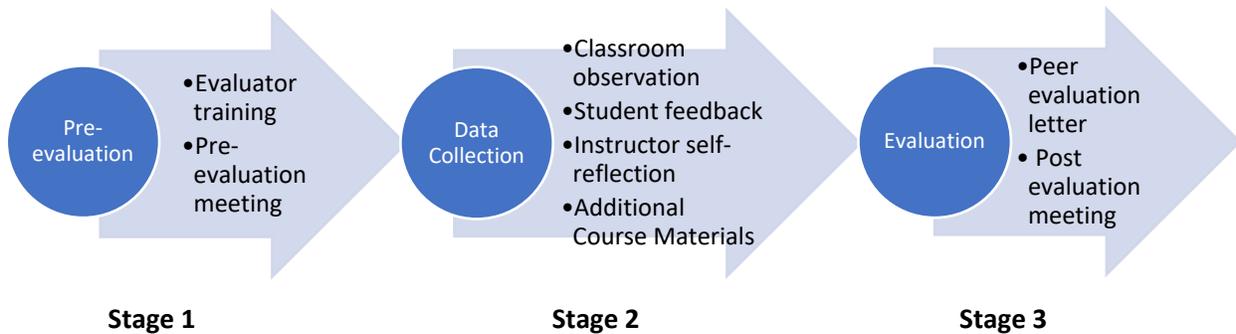


Figure 1. Proposed Peer Evaluation of Teaching Process

Briefly, a pre-trained peer evaluator will be assigned by the unit Promotion and Tenure committee to evaluate a faculty member. In the pre-evaluation stage (stage 1), the faculty and the peer evaluator will meet and discuss the process. In the data collection stage (stage 2), faculty will be responsible for collecting data, including classroom observation data, student feedback data, instructor self-reflection, as well as any additional appropriate course materials. In the evaluation stage (stage 3), the assigned peer evaluator will review data provided by the faculty member and write a peer evaluation letter. A post-evaluation meeting between the faculty and the peer evaluator is recommended.

All faculty members are encouraged to conduct the peer evaluation of teaching. For Assistant Professors, the peer evaluation of teaching process is aligned with the Assistant Professor Third-Year review. For Associate Professors, at least one peer evaluation of review is required when the promotion package is submitted. All full professors are strongly encouraged to periodically conduct peer evaluation of teaching.

Stage 1: Pre-Evaluation

At the beginning of each fall semester, the unit leader and the Associate Dean for Faculty and Inclusion will identify faculty members to conduct peer evaluation of teaching. A trained peer evaluator will be

assigned to each faculty member by the unit Promotion and Tenure committee. The peer evaluator and the faculty should meet within two weeks of the assignment. Example meeting topics include:

- Overview of the peer evaluation of teaching process
- Background of the course
- Instructor's approach to prepare for the course, develop syllabi, establish learning objectives, select materials, design activities, provide feedback to students
- Establish focus areas of the peer evaluation process

Stage 2: Data Collection

Faculty will be responsible for collecting data, including classroom observation data, student feedback data, instructor self-reflection, as well as any additional appropriate course materials. In order to collect such data, faculty members should register for the Peer Observation of Classroom Activities (POCA) program offered by the Engineering and Computing Education Core (ECEC).

Classroom Observation

COE's preferred tool for classroom observation is the Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (COPUS). COPUS is a research-proven tool for systematically documenting student and teacher behaviors as one means of assessing instructor effectiveness in STEM classroom. Student and teacher behaviors are classified into activities such as asking a question or lecturing and are logged in two-minute intervals. The resulting data can be used to reconstruct the nature of instruction on the observed day, and class sessions can be classified according to their predominant activities.

In the ECEC's POCA program, you will observe and be observed using COPUS, and the data will be used to generate a personalized report. More about the ECEC's POCA program can be found from this [link](#).

Student Feedback

UNL's standard end-of-course student survey, the Student Learning Experience (SLE), should be used to provide student feedback. SLE is distributed through Canvas and the online platform [EvaluationKit](#). A video developed by ECEC provides additional information on SLE: https://go.unl.edu/coe_sle

There are two types of SLE reports available to each course, a long report and a short report. The long report is required for the Peer Evaluation of Teaching process. The faculty should submit the long report for the same course observed by the POCA program.

Instructor Self-reflection

Teaching reflection is one of UNL's three recommended inputs for informing teaching excellence, along with peer observation and student feedback. One instructor self-reflection is required for the peer evaluation of teaching process. The reflection should be about the same course observed by the POCA program.

Structured written reflection can help faculty think through different aspect of teaching including strengths, challenges, and steps to be taken to improve students' experiences and learning. The *End of Semester Teaching Reflection Activities* packet is a set of reflection activities ([word doc](#) and [pdf](#))

designed to be used at the end of the semester and in conjunction with SLE survey results. Faculty are encouraged to follow the format provided by ECEC to develop a structured self-reflection on the course.

Additional Course Materials

Additional course materials are not required. The faculty member can choose to submit additional course materials as they see appropriate. Example materials include course syllabus, course portfolio, papers and/or presentations related to innovative teaching.

Stage 3: Evaluation

The peer evaluator should comprehensively review the POCA report, SLE survey and instructor self-reflection, and additional course materials submitted by the instructor. The peer evaluator may sit-in a class to observe teaching by him/herself. A draft letter of evaluation should be written based on multi-dimensional information collected.

At the end, the peer evaluator and the faculty may arrange an optional meeting to discuss the strengths and opportunities for improvement. After the meeting, the peer evaluator will finalize the letter and submit it to the unit P&T committee. The unit leader and the faculty should be copied in the submission.

Training of Peer Evaluators

Each unit should designate at least two faculty members as peer evaluators. Peer evaluators should not have any administrative responsibility in the unit and College. COE teaching fellows are excellent candidates of peer evaluators. In the beginning of fall semester each year, the College will conduct a workshop to train peer evaluators. The workshop will be facilitated by the Associate Dean for Faculty and Inclusion and ECEC. Evaluators need to be trained every three years to be qualified to conduct Peer Evaluation of Teaching.

Training topics include:

- Discuss shared understanding of standards for good teaching and use those to guide peer review. Refer to resources related to peer evaluation of teaching, for example [TEval](#).
- Overview the COE Peer Evaluation of Teaching process and outline the expectations of each step, including pre-evaluation meeting, post-evaluation meeting, and the letter of peer evaluation.
- Prepare peer evaluators to be familiar with POCA classroom activity report, SLE report, and the end of semester teaching reflection.
- Discuss the important components in the final peer evaluation of teaching letter. A recommendation of such letter will be provided by CITL.
- Conduct inclusive training for peer evaluators, recognizing that research has suggested that student evaluations of teaching are often influenced by student's unconscious and unintentional biases. Women and instructors from underrepresented groups are systematically rated lower in their teaching evaluations.