



# The University of Texas at Austin

## Moody College of Communication

### PEER TEACHING OBSERVATIONS MOODY COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

A regular peer teaching observation process is an integral part of faculty evaluation in the Moody College. The promotion and tenure guidelines from The University (included below) stipulate that these observations be carried out periodically and that they include certain key information.

#### Frequency

- Assistant professors undergoing a Third-Year Review must have a minimum of two (2) peer observation reports; those being considered for promotion must have a minimum four (4) peer observation reports in their portfolios, one (1) of which should be conducted in the year preceding the promotion year.
- Associate professors should have peer observations conducted every two (2) years, and not more than two (2) observations preceding the promotion year and at least one (1) the year preceding or the fall during the Comprehensive Periodic Review.
- Associate professors being considered for promotion must have a minimum four (4) peer observation reports in their portfolios, one (1) of which should be conducted in the year preceding the promotion year.
- Full professors should have at least one (1) peer observation as a part of the Comprehensive Periodic Review process.
- All (full-time and part-time) professional track and clinical faculty should have a peer observation conducted during the first semester of their appointment.
- Full-time professional track and clinical faculty should have at least two (2) peer observation as a part of the first Third-Year Review process, ideally in the year preceding the review, or the fall ahead of the review. Subsequent Third-Year Reviews only require one (1) peer observation.
- Full-time professional track and clinical faculty being considered for promotion must have a minimum four (4) peer observation reports in their portfolios, one (1) of which should be conducted in the year preceding the proposed promotion.

#### Responsibility

- These classroom visits are the responsibility of all tenured faculty members in the Moody College. The willingness of faculty to conduct these classroom visits will become part of their own annual merit evaluations; *no* tenured faculty member in the College is exempt from this responsibility.
- Assistant professors should be reviewed by those of higher rank. Associate/Full professors may be reviewed by faculty at the same or a higher rank.

- Full-time associate or full professional track and clinical faculty may be called upon to conduct reviews of full-time assistant-level professional track and clinical faculty. Full-time professional track faculty are defined as individuals with an appointment at least 66.67 percent time or more over the entirety of the academic year.
- On occasion, classroom visits can be conducted by faculty from other departments/schools within Moody or across campus, although it is expected that the visits will be largely a departmental/school responsibility.

### **Process**

- **Selection:** The chair/director will discuss and select the observer with the faculty member to be reviewed. Departmental/school administrators will record/track reviews. It is not mandatory that the same observer conduct subsequent reviews of the faculty member.
- **Observation:** Observations should be scheduled in advance through consultation between the faculty member being reviewed and the faculty designated to conduct the review.
- **Report:** The report should include attention to course syllabus; course organization; course content; methods of engaging students in learning; constructive suggestions; specific improvements from previous observations if relevant; and a review of CIS/CES ratings and comments from previous courses taught while in rank.
- **Discussion:** The observations should be followed by a thoughtful discussion between the evaluator and the individual instructor concerning course objectives, special challenges, teaching methods, and other issues pertinent to pedagogy.
- **Conclusion:** Following this discussion, the faculty member conducting the review should provide the written report to the faculty member being reviewed as well as to the department/school chair/director within a month of the date of observation.
- Copies of observations will be given to the departmental/school administrators to record as complete and upload into UT Box. Coversheets must accompany the observations.

## **University of Texas at Austin Policy from the 2023-24 Promotion and Tenure Guidelines - Peer Classroom Observation Reports**

G.13(c) Peer Teaching Observations (page 27) for tenured and tenure-track guidelines

F.13(c) Peer Teaching Observations (page 26) from the professional-track guidelines

A minimum of three faculty peer observations of classes at UT Austin is required during the candidate's time in rank, ideally in the same classes over the course of multiple semesters in order to provide a longitudinal perspective. Faculty peer observations must take place during at least two different academic years (at a minimum). Candidates who do not have three faculty peer observations in rank at UT Austin across at least two different academic years must wait to seek promotion until that criterion is met.

Faculty should routinely be observed by faculty colleagues in their organized courses. Faculty peer teaching observation reports should record observations by faculty of the candidate's effectiveness as a teacher at the graduate and/or undergraduate levels. The reports should cover such elements as presentation, course content, organization, clarity of written materials, rigor and fairness of written examinations, appropriateness of methodology, student outcomes, etc. Course instructor survey student comments from prior semesters' organized courses should also be reviewed and summarized as part of the observation process. The observation record should also document information describing formal and informal student-faculty interactions and supervision.

Particular attention should be paid to constructive advice offered during earlier peer observations and capturing candidate's progress and responsiveness, then following up with specific progress reports in subsequent semesters observing the same course, where possible.

Note that peer observations conducted from spring 2020 through spring 2022 should be considered in light of the professional impacts of COVID-19.

Each peer observation report must be written by the peer observer and is to include:

- Number and title of observed course(s)
- Date of report(s)
- Date of classroom observation(s)
- Date that the faculty observer discussed the peer observation report with the candidate
- Description of methods used by the instructor to engage students in learning
- Constructive advice from the observer to improve at least one aspect of the course (e.g., instructional interactions with students, assessment of student learning, content of materials, etc.)
- Candidate's responsiveness and any specific improvement(s) linked to recommendations from previous peer observation reports
- Summary of end-of-semester course evaluation results, including overall course and instructor ratings and student response rates. Feedback to the candidate regarding common concerns raised by students on previous course evaluations and recommendations to address those concerns
- Name and signature of observer(s)

UT Austin's [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) has resources regarding peer review of teaching.