**Peer Evaluation of Courses/Teaching in [DEPT]**

[TEMPLATE][[1]](#footnote-0)

[NOTE THAT ALL HIGHLIGHTED TEXT IS INTENDED TO BE MODIFIED OR DELETED. ALL OTHER TEXT MAY BE LEFT AS IS OR MODIFIED AS NEEDED TO FIT THE DEPARTMENTAL TEACHING EVALUATION PLAN. TABLE 1 SHOULD BE FILLED IN BY COMPARING EACH ITEM IN THE PEER OBSERVATION PROTOCOL TO THE TQF RUBRIC AND DETERMINING WHICH COMPONENT THE ITEM BEST ALIGNS WITH].

**Purpose**

This document provides background information about peer classroom observation and proposes a system and peer observation protocol whereby faculty can be evaluated on their courses and teaching. A copy of this document should be attached to peer observation reports submitted for reappointment, promotion, and tenure review.

**Background**

Unstructured peer classroom observations, i.e., those that are not based on a set of core criteria, can result in inconsistency and do not always address teaching practices that are valued by a department (AAAS, 2012). For this reason, scholarly literature on teaching evaluation recommends that academic units articulate the best teaching practices for their field and define core criteria to use in the observation process (AAAS, 2012, [Cornell](https://teaching.cornell.edu/teaching-resources/assessment-evaluation/peer-review-teaching)). Feedback on teaching can be more effective in promoting growth and improvement when it focuses on specific issues, contains concrete information, and is based on specific data (rather than general impressions) (Brinko, 1993). To that end, a group of [#] instructors, faculty, and staff from [DEPT], partnering with facilitators from the NSF-funded Teaching Quality Framework ([TQF](https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/)) Initiative, have developed a new standardized protocol for peer classroom observation that aligns with the TQF Initiative and is based on an established measure, the UTeach Observation Protocol ([UTOP](https://wikis.utexas.edu/display/physed/UTeach%2BObservation%2BProtocol)), developed at the University of Texas at Austin [REVISE IF THE PROTOCOL IS BASED ON THE OTOP OR A DIFFERENT MODEL]. Similar protocols are also in development/use in other CU Boulder departments (e.g., Germanic & Slavic Languages & Literatures, Mechanical Engineering, Mathematics, Integrative Physiology, and Molecular, Cellular, & Developmental Biology).

**How the protocol will be used for evaluation of teaching in [DEPT]**

[REVISE TO FIT DEPT PLAN, IN PARTICULAR, IF THE PROTOCOLS WILL BE SUBMITTED INSTEAD OF WRITING A SEPARATE REPORT, REVISE TO REFLECT THIS].

The standardized protocol will be used as a way to focus the observation on the set of observation criteria and will serve as the primary source of evidence on which the observer will base their official report upon. While the protocol(s) will not be submitted (they will be retained by the observer), they may be shared with the observed instructor, who will have the opportunity to reflect on this feedback when writing their teaching statements for reappointment, promotion, and tenure review, and in writing their self-reflection for annual merit review.

This protocol is embedded in a broader plan of course evaluation that includes review of other course materials and pre- and post-consultations between the observer and observed instructor. The use of the standardized protocol as part of this broader plan will contribute to the consistency and rigor of our evaluation of teaching, our comparison of teaching practices over time, and our development of a shared vision for teaching practice in [DEPT]. In addition, it is our hope that the structured form will better enable more formative assessment and self-reflection on teaching practices.

Table 1. Alignment of [DEPT] Peer Classroom Observation protocol items with components of effective classroom teaching from the [TQF rubric](https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/TQF_Assessment_Rubric_Draft).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Component of effective classroom teaching** | **Corresponding items in the Peer Observation Protocol** |
| **Goals, Content, and Alignment***What are students expected to learn from the courses taught? Are course goals appropriately challenging? Is content aligned with the curriculum and integrate other topics and/or courses?* |  |
| **Preparation for Teaching***Did the instructor demonstrate sufficient content, background, and pedagogical knowledge? Was the instructor well-prepared in terms of classroom mechanics (e.g. grading, prepping activities, materials, tech use, etc.)?* |  |
| **Methods and Teaching Practices***What assignments, assessments, and activities are implemented? Are methods appropriate for and aligned with the learning environment, the student population (inclusive ed, course level) and departmental, course, and student goals?* |  |
| **Presentation and Student Interaction***Are methods from above implemented effectively? Are students supported (e.g. student/teacher interaction)?* |  |
| **Student outcomes***What impact do these courses have on learners? What evidence shows the level of student understanding? Are measures of learning (shift in student performance as a result of class/instruction) aligned with goals?* |  |

**References Cited**

American Association for the Advancement of Science. 2012. *Describing and Measuring Undergraduate STEM Practices*.

A Report from a National Meeting on the Measurement of Undergraduate Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Teaching. <https://live-ccliconference.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Measuring-STEM-Teaching-Practices.pdf>

Brinko, K.T. 1993. The practice of giving feedback to improve teaching: What is effective? *The Journal of Higher Education* 64(5): 574-593. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2959994>

1. Developed by the Teaching Quality Framework Initiative (<https://www.colorado.edu/teaching-quality-framework/>) in collaboration with partnering departments at the University of Colorado Boulder. This work was sponsored by the National Science Foundation (DUE-1725959) - any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)