

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING
University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine

1) Peer Review Teams and Process – Guiding Principles

- a) Review by peers is an important part of the overall evaluation of instructional activities and complements student assessments of instruction, portfolios, student outcomes and other evidence used to document teaching effectiveness and improve the college teaching mission. Good peer review programs are built on collegiality and trust, and foster an open and encouraging, constructive dialogue about teaching. Participation in the peer review process is a service expectation of UTCVM faculty, and the process is expected to benefit both the faculty member under review and members of the peer assessment team.
- b) Formation of peer review teams or selection of external reviewers will be based on UTCVM and UTK guidelines. Department heads are responsible for team assignments, appointment of a team leader, clarifying the team charge, and completion of timely reviews.
- c) Peer reviews conducted for promotional purposes must be planned well in advance of dossier submission in order to provide appropriate opportunities for review. Candidate dossiers for initial promotional consideration or for consideration of tenure must minimally have two peer teaching reviews completed during the probationary period. Candidates at the associate rank and under consideration for promotion must have at least one peer teaching review completed since the last promotion within the UT academic system. Department bylaws may specify more specific intervals for peer assessment, as well as whether full professors are reviewed. Where special circumstances arise, a faculty member has the right to request reconvening of a peer assessment team or formation of a new peer assessment team in the interval between scheduled peer reviews.
- d) Dossiers lacking peer teaching review will not be considered for promotion and/or tenure.
- e) Within the UTCVM, non-tenure track faculty members are full participants in the educational program and participate in the peer review process as reviewers and reviewees. The peer assessment team will consist of ideally 3 but no less than 2 faculty members and may include tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track faculty of any rank. One peer reviewer is selected by the faculty member under review and the remaining member(s) are appointed by the department head. Departments are encouraged to consider faculty from outside the department on peer assessment teams. External peer review of teaching is required for all associate professors with teaching efforts of 85% or greater. Faculty with teaching effort assignments of 60-84% (preclinical and clinical combined) may be required to undergo external peer review at the discretion of the supervising department head or the associate dean for academic and student affairs should either deem it important to the health of the academic program. External reviewers may be selected from appropriate faculty external to the CVM and may be selected from any UT or non-UT college.
- f) The team leader (chair) of the peer assessment team is assigned by the department head; the team leader should ideally be an individual with teaching experience well beyond that of the faculty member under review.
- g) Note that peer colleagues are considered the best judge of the following aspects of teaching: subject matter expertise, currency and appropriateness of teaching materials, appropriateness of assessment and grading approaches, and professionalism of the instructor.
- h) Those selected as “peers” should be comfortable enough with the reviewee’s teaching content and educational practices to provide useful review on teaching material or methods. Peer review teams of the same instructor will ideally maintain at least one common reviewer for continuity but may be expected to change based on available personnel and other reasons. Changes in teams should be made with collaboration of the department head and reviewee as described above.

2) Preparation for Peer Review – Reviewers

- a) Reviewers and reviewees should familiarize themselves with these guidelines, [current templates for classroom or other instructional review](#), and periodically participate in training materials or sessions as available.
- b) The team leader should contact the reviewee and set an initial meeting. The review team should meet with the instructor (reviewee) to discuss his/her teaching goals and strategies and to determine if the instructor has particular questions, needs, or goals which may be met by peer review.
- c) The charge to the team must clearly define whether the review is a formal teaching assessment (promotion, tenure, merit consideration) or an informal developmental assessment (early career informal feedback, informal improvement, not included in a candidate's dossier) which should be noted in the final report.
- d) The team should:
 - i) Review the instructor's written teaching philosophy, as well as written goals/objectives for current courses or lectures/laboratories as applicable.
 - ii) Compare the instructor's teaching philosophy and goals with reviewer's for potential bias (conflict in philosophy does not necessarily preclude effective review).
 - iii) Identify any other potential bias or conflict of interest; resolve or withdraw.

3) Preparation for Peer Review – Reviewees

- a) Prepare or update your teaching philosophy and establish your teaching goals for review.
- b) Gather appropriate teaching materials and provide them to the peer review team prior to any classroom observations (ideally in the form of a teaching portfolio and access to online course platforms). Summaries of student feedback may be shared if relevant to your goals for the review.
- c) Meet with the review team as described in Section 2.
- d) Well in advance, provide the appropriate times and locations for the peer review team to observe your teaching. Choose the settings that will best reflect your efforts and goals.

4) Review of Teaching Materials by Team

- a) The peer review team assesses teaching effectiveness in its broadest scope. Supporting materials for a comprehensive review may include:
 - i) Course syllabus, course site and course reports, or orientation materials (for course coordinators)
 - ii) Course, clinical rotation, and/or lecture/laboratory objectives
 - iii) Recommended text(s) or readings
 - iv) Notes or handouts
 - v) Presentation slides, lecture capture links, videos, or other teaching aids
 - vi) Exercises or assignments, including grading methods and examples of graded material
 - vii) Examinations, including grading methods
 - viii) Continuing education materials (if applicable)
 - ix) Articles, grants, proposals, or documentation of other innovative strategies related to teaching (teaching portfolio if available)
- b) Note that quantitative results of student ratings of teaching should not be reviewed prior to the observational peer review (in order to minimize bias).

5) Classroom Observation

- a) Solicit invitations for classroom observation opportunities from reviewee, and announce visits ahead of time.
- b) Attempt to observe classroom setting at multiple points in time and in multiple courses (if applicable), including different types of classroom performance (e.g. lecture, laboratory, case discussion), as much as possible.
- c) Discuss with instructor the particular purpose(s) of the class you will be observing.
- d) Take sufficient notes to prepare a useful report. Specific observations, as well as conclusions and recommendations, should be included.
- e) Selected captured presentations may be used for external review of teaching or to expand local review, although some elements of classroom environment and engagement may be lost.

6) Clinical, Laboratory, or Small Group Observation

- a) Clinical and small group teaching experiences should be reviewed when possible, especially for reviewees with significant clinical responsibilities.
- b) Clinical teaching takes a variety of forms and should be evaluated based on how well the instructor achieves the general principles that enhance clinical learning; guidance is provided in the [clinical peer review template document](#).
- c) Materials and etiquette for review are similar to those in Sections 4 and 5 above. Opportunities for peer observation include orientation, rounds, patient receiving, procedures, and shadowing.

7) Preparing a Peer Review Report

- a) Peer review team members provide written feedback to team leader.
- b) Peer review team leader ensures completion of the review, accumulates reviewer responses, prepares a written summary report, and provides other team members an opportunity to respond to the final draft of the report.
- c) Team leader provides a copy of the written summary report to the reviewee and sets a meeting to discuss the results and recommendations.
- d) Team leader revises report if needed and forwards the final copy to the department head.
- e) The faculty member under review has the right to provide a written rebuttal/response to his/her department head.

Other Resources for UTCVM Faculty:

See https://vetmed.tennessee.edu/academics/Pages/Curriculum_Assessment.aspx or teaching.utk.edu (Teaching Evaluation Toolbox) for additional resources and templates to aid reviews.

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