

Handbook for Developing a Departmental Peer Review of Teaching Process



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Handbook for Developing a Departmental Peer Review of Teaching Process

What is peer review of teaching and why is it important?

Peer review of teaching is evaluation, by colleagues or peers, of all teaching-related activities. It can be either for formative (for development) or summative (for personnel decision) purposes and should include a variety of teaching materials.

Teaching can be best understood by teachers (peers) who are familiar with the subject matter and context of a course. Peer review results in information not available in students evaluations and should help the instructor see what students are experiencing in their courses, provide avenues for curriculum improvement, and provide mentorship opportunities while participating in a collaborative discussion about teaching that builds understanding.

What NC State REG is associated with peer review of teaching?

At NC State, peer review is governed by [REG 05.20.10](#). Here you will find information on how often your teaching should be peer reviewed and the minimum expectations for what should be included.

About this Handbook

A comprehensive approach to peer review of teaching will include a protocol for the peer review that outlines the process from start to finish, templates for in-person and web-based observation, a template for review of learning materials, and a template for a final report. To make things a bit easier, this handbook includes an example process document and NC State specific templates that you can use in your department's peer review process. These documents were constructed using best practices in teaching and evaluation, with an eye toward reducing bias. While your department does not have to use the process or templates provided, you are welcome to use them as is, alter them to be more specific to your unit, or develop your own documents.

In the following pages you will find instructions on how to develop a robust and effective peer review of teaching program for your department. In each step you will find links to examples of documents you can alter to suit your department's needs. This handbook is designed to present the best case scenario for conducting a peer review of teaching. No one form or template is likely to fit the needs of all departments. Think of this as a starting point for development with the understanding that departmental customization is likely needed.

Building a Comprehensive and Effective Peer Review of Teaching Process

A comprehensive peer review of teaching process includes:

- Assignment of reviewer
- Reviewer/reviewee pre-observation meeting
- Classroom observation
- Review of syllabus/other materials
- Post observation debrief
- Final written report

In order to make the process effective, standardized practices and procedures are needed. This includes development of:

- A departmental protocol for peer review of teaching
- A form to aid in the pre-observation meeting
- A classroom observation form or forms (you may want separate forms for different types of classrooms - Zoom, Moodle, face-to-face, etc.)
- A form to guide in syllabus review
- A template for the peer review letter or report

Departmental Protocol for Peer Review of Teaching

The department protocol outlines the departmental expectations for peer review of teaching and describes guidelines for reviewers and reviewees about how the process works. It should guide reviewers in every step of the process and point out how to implement the review. An example of a departmental protocol for peer review of teaching can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Form for the Pre-observation Meeting

The pre-observation meeting is a time for the reviewer and reviewee to clarify aspects of the peer review. It serves to make sure both parties understand what will be reviewed, when it will be reviewed and by what means. An example of a form that can be used for pre-observation meetings can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Form(s) for Classroom Observations

Classroom observations can be performed for all types of courses including in-person, synchronous web-based (Zoom), asynchronous web-based (Moodle) and labs in both virtual and in-person formats. Your department may decide to have a single form that will work for all of these classroom situations or multiple forms for different situations. What is vital is that there are directions or instructions on how to use any forms

developed. In [Appendix D](#) you will find an example of an observation form designed to work for all types of courses. The instructions for using that form can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Form for Review of Syllabi

The course syllabus is full of vital information that can affect the success of instruction. It is up to the department as to what aspects of the syllabus to review. An example of a form for use in the review of syllabi can be found in [Appendix E](#).

Template for the Final Letter or Report

An oft-overlooked part of a peer review protocol is the inclusion of a template or instructions on how to write up the results of the review. Even if the review is conducted precisely, it can be unsuccessful if the results are not written up properly. The final report should reflect the nature of the review, the results and give constructive feedback to improve instruction. We can always improve our teaching, so inclusion of at least one or two suggestions for improvement should be expected. An example of a template for writing up peer review results can be found in [Appendix F](#).

We hope you find this handbook helpful in the development of your peer review protocol. Please contact the Office for Faculty Excellence at faculty-excellence@ncsu.edu if you have any questions or would like assistance. You can also review the peer review of teaching web materials from the Office for Faculty Excellence at <https://ofd.ncsu.edu/teaching-learning/peer-review-of-teaching/>

Appendix A: Example Departmental Protocol for the Peer Review of Teaching

Peer Review of Teaching Process

Department:

Date last revised:

Purpose of Peer Reviews of Teaching

The purpose of a peer review of teaching is twofold, as a summative evaluation of faculty teaching effectiveness that may be used to make personnel decisions. The other purpose is as a tool for enhancing teaching effectiveness.

Responsibility for Reviews

Each faculty member due to have a peer review will be assigned a peer reviewer by the faculty member's department head/chair. Once assigned it is the responsibility of the reviewee to ensure the review is completed in a timely manner.

Assignment of Reviewer

The department chair of the faculty member under review will (in consultation with the faculty member) assign the peer reviewer. The goal is to assign a reviewer with some familiarity with teaching practices common to the discipline, an understanding of appropriate pedagogy, and that the reviewee feels comfortable discussing their course, strategies and areas for improvement. A peer reviewer may be from inside or outside the reviewee's department and may be of any rank as approved by the department head/chair.

Protocol for the Peer Review

The order of events for the peer review is:

1. Reviewer assigned
2. Pre-review meeting of reviewer and reviewee
3. Review of teaching and teaching materials
4. Write up of peer review report
5. Post-meeting of reviewer and reviewee
6. Submission of peer review report to department head

A template for a departmental peer review of teaching protocol can be found in Appendix A.

Pre-Review Meeting of Reviewer and Reviewee

This meeting allows the reviewer to familiarize themselves with the teaching under review. This includes which course or courses will be reviewed and establishing dates for observation of face-to-face or synchronous online class meetings. Reviewers will also want to obtain other materials for review at this meeting including a copy of the syllabus and any other documents pertinent to evaluating the teaching. This meeting also allows the reviewee to gain an understanding of what the reviewer will be considering as part of their evaluation. Both parties should use this time to answer any questions about the process and to schedule a time for review of any synchronous class meetings, either virtual or face-to-face. An example of a pre-review form to be filled out by the reviewee and given to the reviewer can be found in Appendix B.

Review of Teaching and Teaching Materials

The actual review of teaching and learning materials will take several steps. If there is a synchronous component (either in-person or virtual), arrangements will need to be made to observe the teaching. Reviewers are also expected to review any web-based, asynchronous components to the class, such as a Moodle or other web space. The template in Appendix C (and corresponding form in Appendix D) are designed for use with both synchronous and asynchronous classes and both online and courses at a distance. Finally, any pertinent extant materials pertaining to the teaching should be reviewed. At a minimum, this should include the course syllabus.

Post-observation of Reviewer and Reviewee

The purpose of the post review meeting is to make sure that the information in the observation and review is accurate. This usually occurs 7-10 days after the observation. The hope is that both reviewer and reviewee have had time to reflect on the observation. The reviewer should give feedback but also invite reflections from the reviewee. Before wrapping up the meeting the reviewer and reviewee should engage in discussion about next steps or areas of improvement.

Write up of Peer Review Report

Once all the observations and reviews have occurred, it's time to put the findings into a report for the reviewee and department head. The goal of the report is to present the findings of the comprehensive peer review. The template takes a holistic approach to the review and suggests questions that can be answered to accomplish this. The report template focuses on specific actions that can be taken to improve teaching.

Templates for all parts of the peer review process can be found in the appendices of this document.

Appendix B: Instructor Information Form Template (for Pre-Review Meeting)

Complete this form and share it with your assigned peer reviewer in or prior to your pre-review meeting. (Remember to grant your peer reviewer access to any protected courseware such as Moodle sites or Zoom recordings.)

Instructor: _____

Peer Reviewer: _____

Date of review (month/year): _____

Course Information

Course Name and Number (example - BIO 101): _____

Course Title (example - Introduction to Biology): _____

Additional Course Information (graduate, undergraduate, core, elective, other course components, etc.): _____

Classroom location: _____

Class meeting time/day(s): _____

Number of Students: _____

Teaching Assistants: _____

Which aspect(s) of your teaching would you be particularly interested in receiving feedback? (for example, reliance on lecture, student engagement/active learning, effective use of class time, student assessment, etc.) _____

What constraints, areas of concern, and/or opportunities for improvement would you like your reviewer to know about? _____

Please identify other communications among students and instructors about which the reviewer should be aware but which are not available for observation. _____

Does the course require any supplementary materials (e.g., textbook or software)? If yes, please describe: _____

Online Course Technologies

What are the URLs or locations of materials that the reviewers need to review? This should include the course home page, the course syllabus, course calendar, course lessons, assignments and projects, quizzes and examinations and any other URLs that should be considered in the review? _____

Other Information for reviewer (this may include the instructor's role in course development, course components that cannot be changed, intentional use of UDL, creating community in the course, efforts toward equity and diversity, building global perspectives, student engagement outside of the course/classroom and other aspects of the course that should be taken into consideration): _____

Appendix C: Peer Review Observation Template Guidelines for Asynchronous or Synchronous Classes and Course Materials

Class Types:

Synchronous Class: Class meeting where instructor and students meet at the same time in the same physical or virtual space.

Asynchronous Class: Course where students do not meet at the same time as the instructor.

Category	Required	Description
Course Description	Required	<p><i>For all class types:</i> Describe the class reviewed including title, academic level, number of students, whether it is required or not, GEP, in person/DE, type of course, time period, and timeframe of the review.</p> <p><i>For synchronous class:</i> what date and topic of class meeting were reviewed?</p> <p><i>For asynchronous class:</i> What parts the Moodle (or other LMS) class site did you review (welcome module, home page, syllabus, discussion board, announcements, gradebook, assignments, videos, weekly modules etc.)?</p>
Course Navigation/ Course Design	Required	<p><i>For all class types:</i> Comment on overall course design including the course structure, the course calendar, and the likelihood of students achieving stated learning objectives.</p> <p><i>For asynchronous class:</i> Describe the ease of course navigation and the effectiveness with which students can move through and find course materials.</p>
Teaching Methods	Required	<p><i>For all class types:</i> Describe the teaching methods and comment on their appropriateness to achieve the class learning outcomes/goals. Note any discipline- specific or general types of teaching methods and innovative methods. Describe technologies used by the professor and students as well as comment on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the technology (examples: class management systems; social media; cad/cam software; blogs; clickers, student computing, message boards, videos, simulations, etc.) (See below for examples of teaching methods)</p>
Teaching Effectiveness	Required	<p><i>For all class types:</i> Comment on the instructor's knowledge of the subject matter (e.g., currency and depth of knowledge) as well as their ability to explain things well and respond to questions at an appropriate level.</p>
Student-Teacher Interaction	Required	<p><i>For all class types:</i> Describe the instructor's interaction with the students, including rapport with all students, instructor's ability to promote creative and critical thinking, opportunities for student engagement, and opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement of the lesson objectives. Comment upon the instructor's responsiveness and approachability.</p>

Teaching Materials	Required	<i>For all class types:</i> Comment on the quality and accuracy of course materials (e.g., syllabus, handouts, class notes, course-packs, and other teaching materials). Describe the types of assessments (e.g., class activities, homework, exams, papers, videos, presentations, projects, portfolios), addressing their rigor and appropriateness.
Areas of Strength	Required	<i>For all class types:</i> Describe areas of strength the instructor has demonstrated.
Opportunities for Improvement	Required	<i>For all class types:</i> Describe at least one area for improving student learning or the instructor's teaching effectiveness; if applicable, comment on instructor's actions in response to previous peer reviews.
<i>Innovative/ Interesting Teaching Idea(s)</i>	Optional	<i>For all class types:</i> Describe any innovative techniques, materials, or assignments that could benefit other faculty.
<i>Classroom Behavior</i>	Optional	<i>For all class types:</i> Comment on the instructor's oral and written delivery and presentation effectiveness including tone, voice level, eye contact, mannerism, movement, delivery, and pace.
<i>General Student Feedback</i>	Optional	<i>For all class types:</i> Comment on any student feedback provided to the peer reviewers.
<i>Overall Evaluation</i>	Optional	<i>For all class types:</i> Comment on any other information that will be helpful.

Examples of Teaching Methods

Examples: Teaching methods (check as appropriate if used)

- Traditional lecture (large or small class)
- Interactive lecture
- Discussion (Think/Pair/Share, debate)
- Cooperative or Collaborative Learning
- Group work or teamwork
- Role play / drama /skits
- Lab teaching
- Clinical teaching
- Experiential learning and field work
- Projects (indiv. or group)
- Interdisciplinary discussion
- Service-learning
- Case-based
- Inquiry-based / problem-solving
- Problem sets
- Presentations / microteaching
- Flipped course
- Research

Appendix D: Peer Review Observation Template for Asynchronous or Synchronous Classes and Course Materials

Class Types:

Synchronous Class: Class meeting where instructor and students meet at the same time in the same physical or virtual space.

Asynchronous Class: Course where students do not meet at the same time as the instructor.

Category	Description
Course Description	
Course Navigation/ Course Design	
Teaching Methods	
Teaching Effectiveness	

Student- Teacher Interaction	
Teaching Materials	
Areas of Strength	
Opportunities for Improvement	
<i>Innovative/ Interesting Teaching Idea(s)</i>	
<i>Classroom Behavior</i>	
<i>General Student Feedback</i>	
<i>Overall Evaluation</i>	

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- Service-learning
- Case-based
- Inquiry-based / problem-solving
- Problem sets
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- Flipped course
- Research

Appendix E - Peer Review Template for Review of a Syllabus

Associated Regulations: <https://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-07/>

Syllabus Tool: http://delta.ncsu.edu/apps/syllabus_tool/

Online Course Syllabus Template:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rSNizCuNANt6rutHLa0mwrZZfxLKChv1dSaTg3j6wzQ/edit>

Required Components of the syllabus are listed below. Please mark whether or not each component is satisfactorily listed in the syllabus and any notes. This form is for the reviewer's use only and not included in the letter to the department head.

Syllabus Component	In Syllabus?		Notes
	Yes	No	
Instructor name, office address, phone #, email address			
Course prefix, number and section, title, credit hours, and semester			
Regularly scheduled class meeting times, and office hours for out-of-class consultation			
Course Description (Must include catalog description. Additional descriptions may be included.)			
Student learning outcomes for the course			
Course structure (e.g., group activities, lectures, discussion, labs, field trips, studio, etc.). The syllabus should explain how the course will operate.			
Detailed grade determination information			

<p>The relative value of the various evaluation components of the course (the proportion of the grade that is derived from quizzes, tests, final exam, projects, attendance, participation, etc.)the expectations for each and any penalties.</p>			
<p>The conversion system from numerical to letter grading should be explained and the requirements for obtaining a grade of "Satisfactory" in the case of an S/U.</p>			
<p>Course schedule. The course schedule must include the following: List of major topics and approximate time allocated to each. Projected schedule of readings, assignments, quizzes, and tests. Required field trips and other out-of-class activities, if any. Laboratory, studio, problem session, or other component meetings, if any.</p>			
<p>Student expenses. All required textbook(s) and other instructional material For each required textbook, include the author, title, and date or edition.</p>			
<p>Late Assignments. Instructor's policy on late assignments, including the impact of late assignments on the grading of the assignment and the course grade for that element.</p>			
<p>Attendance policy including procedures for submitting excuses and for scheduling makeup work when the excuses are accepted.</p>			
<p>Academic Integrity statement. List the instructor's expectations concerning academic integrity in the completion of tests, assignments, and course requirements. Include reference to the Code of Student Conduct Student Discipline Procedures regulations.</p>			
<p>Statement for students with Disabilities</p>			

List of digitally-hosted course components, if any, such as Moodle and Zoom, or other posting sites, forums or digital technologies. This should include software to detect originality of student submissions.			
Safety/Transportation statement (if applicable). Students must be informed whenever they must provide their own transportation to a field trip or internship site. Statement on safety and risk assumption, where applicable, in courses requiring a laboratory, physical activity, field trips, studios and other special activities.			
Student Identifiable information statement (see below)			
Other (add as needed)			
Other (add as needed)			

Student Identifiable Information

One of the following statements is required:

For use in courses with online exchanges among students and the instructor, but NOT persons outside the course (e.g., wrapped):

“Students may be required to disclose personally identifiable information to other students in the course, via digital tools, such as email or web-postings, where relevant to the course. Examples include online discussions of class topics, and posting of student coursework. All students are expected to respect the privacy of each other by not sharing or using such information outside the course.”

For use in courses where student information may be accessible to persons beyond the instructor and students in the course (e.g., not wrapped):

“This course may involve digital sharing or posting of personally identifiable student work or other information with persons not taking or administering the course. Students will be asked to sign a consent form allowing disclosure of their personally identifiable work. No student is required to sign the consent form as a condition of taking the course. If a student does not want to sign the consent form, s/he has the right to ask the instructor for an alternative, private means of completing the coursework.”

Appendix F: Peer Review Template for Peer Review Letter/Report

Date:

To: [Department Head]

From: [Peer Reviewer]

Subject: Peer Review of Teaching for [Reviewee]

General Instruction Information

Reviewed Course(s) - Number and Title

Month & Year of Review, Dates of any formal meetings and/or observations

Mode of Instruction: online only, face-to-face only, hybrid

Number of Students Enrolled in the Course

Level of Course (graduate, undergraduate, freshman, etc.)

Teaching Assistants

Course Navigation and Design

What was presented and how the content was organized. What was the content and how was the content organized?

Teaching Methods and Effectiveness

If you observed a synchronous course session (either online or face-to-face), describe [using examples as appropriate] the events that occurred within the class. To the best of your ability, describe the instructor's knowledge of subject matter and ability to communicate that knowledge. (If you observed an asynchronous course, describe [using examples as appropriate] the online course environment, To the best of your ability, describe the instructor's knowledge of subject matter and ability to communicate that knowledge in the asynchronous environment.

Teaching Methods

Describe, using examples as appropriate, the teaching methods and strategies used by the instructor to meet the particular goals for the session.

Course/Teaching Materials

Comment on the course materials [e.g., syllabus, assignments, examinations, handouts, electronic documents, etc.] that you examined as part of this review process.

Student Engagement and Interaction with Instructor and Content

Describe, (using examples as appropriate), the classroom environment and the level of student engagement, in particular how the students responded to the class session and the techniques used by the instructor to engage students. How were students communicating, how did the instructor engage the students, etc. For asynchronous courses, describe evidence of study participation and engagement with course materials and the instructor.

Additional Observations Concerning Class Session or Website

Make any additional comments regarding your observation that may not fit under any of the other headings.

Instructor Strengths and Recommendations for Instructional Improvement

Describe the strengths of the instructor and the course, providing examples as appropriate. Describe, (using examples as appropriate) specific suggestions for improvement based on your observations of classroom instruction and review of course materials. Describe teaching innovations and interesting ideas.

Summary of Observations

Provide a brief summary of your observations and recommendations.

Resources for Reviewers and Reviewees

- “[How to Document Effective Teaching](#)” for those being evaluated,
- “[Peer Evaluation of Teaching](#)” for those doing the evaluations.

Videos:

Reviewer's first steps <https://youtu.be/fhmkHtm375w>

How to prepare for a pre-observation meeting <https://youtu.be/9mn55C8WmCg>

The pre-observation meeting <https://youtu.be/djGrYALBjXw>

The classroom observation <https://youtu.be/TqshQJ2SkRc>

The post-observation meeting <https://youtu.be/Ot3VyTVd5yE>