Policy on Peer Observation of Teaching  
College of Liberal Arts  
Effective Sept. 1, 2015

Peer observation in the classroom provides a vital element in evaluations for 6th year evaluations, and tenure and promotion within the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas at Arlington. The Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP, Subchapter ADM 6-710)\(^1\) explains university policy on the faculty peer review of teaching.

The College of Liberal Arts affirms university policy, particularly that faculty peer review is (1) mandatory for all faculty seeking tenure or promotion, as well as at least once every five years for non tenure stream faculty, (2) may be scheduled during any session of the academic year, (3) is to be scheduled with the assent of the faculty member to be reviewed, regarding not only the time/date of the review, but also the identity of the reviewer (4) to be conducted according to templates provided by the Division of Faculty Affairs. The HOP specifies the time period in which faculty peer reviews of teaching shall be conducted with regard to tenure and promotion decisions.

Recognizing the diversity of instructional formats within the College of Liberal Arts, the college allows evaluations of classes to be conducted not only within lecture and seminar style courses and online courses, but also in studio, rehearsal, performance, individual lesson, and tutorial settings. The College of Liberal Arts underlines university policy stating that class visits must be arranged in consultation with the faculty member being observed, and must conform to university policy about peer observation forms to be completed. Peer observation includes not only the classroom visit itself, but also a pre-observation consultation and a post-observation meeting with the faculty member being evaluated. The faculty member being evaluated shall be consulted with regard to the selection of the evaluator. The faculty member will respond to the observation report using the “Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response” form.

Peer observers should be of equal or higher faculty rank as the faculty member being evaluated, and in most cases will be from within the same academic unit. In certain instances, the immediate supervisor may recommend that an evaluator come from a different academic department. Non-faculty experts cannot substitute for peer observers who are UTA faculty. It is strongly suggested that the evaluator not be the department head or program chair of the person being evaluated. The evaluator should be competent to assess the teaching performance of the faculty member being evaluated, with regard to technical or specialized aspects of the faculty member’s classroom performance—e.g. the evaluator should be trained on a similar instrument or conversant in the language in which the class is taught.

\(^1\) [https://www.uta.edu/policy/hop/adm/6/710?hl=peer+observation](https://www.uta.edu/policy/hop/adm/6/710?hl=peer+observation)
The review is meant to be confidential. In the faculty member’s dossier for promotion, tenure, or 6th year review, the review itself is not included-- only the Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response form, which includes space for the faculty member’s self-reflective statement.

Each faculty member has responsibility for insuring that his/her peer evaluations are done on a timely basis and that the reports of the evaluations appear within her/his dossier.
Appendix A: HOP text on Faculty Peer Review of Teaching

I Title Subchapter ADM 6-710 Faculty Peer Review of Teaching
II Policy
A Preamble Effective teaching is the core of any outstanding university and is essential at every institution in The University of Texas System. At UT Arlington teaching is considered equally important to research, and the University invests significant resources in rewarding outstanding teaching. The University has a center, the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, which supports effective teaching, and many departments work collegially to improve and augment the development of teaching within specific programs. Furthermore, effective teaching, as inferred through student feedback and documented through peer review, is a requirement for the promotion and/or tenure of every Faculty Member. Recognizing that even the best Faculty Members can benefit from constructive feedback, the University requires peer review as a mechanism for providing meaningful feedback and fostering continual improvement, not only for purposes of tenure and promotion, but also as a best practice for professional development. In accordance with a model policy issued by The University of Texas Faculty Advisory Council on January 24, 2014 ("FAC Model Policy"), the teaching of all full-time faculty seeking tenure and promotion shall be peer reviewed, and all promotion and/or tenure dossiers sent to UT System shall show evidence of peer review of teaching.
B Faculty Peer Review of Teaching
  1 Fundamentals of the Review Process (See Section III for definitions applicable for the purposes of this policy.) Basic Institutional Requirements Each department or college shall conduct peer reviews of teaching of all faculty seeking tenure and/or promotion.
    a The review may not be waived.
    b The review may be conducted during any session of the academic year (September 1 - August 31) as chosen by the Faculty Member to be observed.
    c The review for Faculty Members seeking promotion to Full Professor shall be conducted no earlier than two years prior to the date on which the Faculty Member submits his or her dossier for promotion.
    d The review should be conducted in a class officially designated as lecture or seminar in any delivery format (face-to-face, hybrid [or web supported classroom], online) as chosen by the Faculty Member to be observed. Faculty who do not routinely teach in a lecture or seminar format may choose to be observed in
another format as approved by the faculty member’s immediate supervisor.

The review must be conducted using approved templates developed by an elected committee of peer faculty for the Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response, the Peer Observer Report, and assessment forms. The forms are available from the Division of Faculty Affairs.

2 Review Policy
   a Departmental or Unit Policy
      A written policy for faculty peer review of teaching shall be established by the faculty in each college or school, subject to the approval of the dean and the provost. Each unit’s policy shall be consistent with institutional policy described immediately above. In addition, each unit's policy shall:
         i establish discipline-appropriate standards for assessing the teaching performance of each tenure-track or tenured Faculty Member seeking promotion within the college or school;
         ii include the use of forms approved by the faculty and dean of the college or school;
         iii state that class visits will only occur with prior consultation with the Faculty Member being observed;
         iv allow for a variety of teaching methods or approaches;
         v reflect the variety of instructional delivery methods and topics within each department or unit;
         vi be made available, together with the appropriate forms, to each Faculty Member in the college or school.
   b Frequency of Observation
      i Assistant Professors shall be observed at least once before the third year review, and at least once more before being considered for tenure and promotion. Associate Professors shall be reviewed at least once prior to seeking promotion to Professor.
      ii All faculty members (as defined above) who are neither tenured nor tenure-track faculty shall be reviewed at least once every five years as determined by policies established by each school or college.
iii Individuals may also request more frequent observation to the extent that this can be accommodated by the department or unit. Individuals may also request more frequent observation through the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence ("CTLE").

c **Peer Observer Training**
A Peer Observer shall at a minimum receive detailed guidance about peer review, the peer review procedure, and the opportunity for training. The University strongly recommends that Peer Observers take part in training and become Certified CTLE Peer Observers.

3 **Review Materials** For the academic year in which the Faculty Member submits his or her dossier for promotion and/or tenure, he or she will include all Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response forms completed during the probationary period (for cases of tenure) or the previous two years (or cases of promotion to Professor). The Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response form shall include:

a the pre-observation meeting date, time, and location;
b the course observed (prefix, number, and title), date, time, and location;
c the post observation meeting date, time, and location;
d signatures of both Faculty Member and Peer Observer;
e a narrative in which the Faculty Member:
   i explains in what ways the process was helpful (or otherwise); and
   ii indicates any steps taken or changes made towards the enhancement of teaching and/or improvement of student learning, on the basis of the observation process.

The Peer Observer shall complete a college or school approved Peer Observer Report.

4 **Review Procedure** While each academic unit may establish its own procedural guidelines for faculty peer review of teaching, all processes shall conform to the following common standards.

a Initial assessment of each Faculty Member's performance in teaching shall be carried out in accordance with the written policies established by the Faculty Member's department (or equivalent unit), as approved by the dean and provost. In all cases, the Peer Observer responsible for conducting the review shall:
i set up a pre-observation meeting, a class observation, and a post-observation meeting with the Faculty Member;

ii complete a Peer Observer Report and make it available to the Faculty Member within fourteen calendar days of the in-class observation; and

iii acknowledge completion of the Peer Observation Process by signing the Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response form within fourteen calendar days of the in-class observation.

b The Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response form should be provided to the department chair or unit head or equivalent (or to the dean in the event the Faculty Member being observed is the department chair) no later than the last day of classes for the semester in which the observation takes place, or the date by which the tenure and/or promotion dossier must be complete. The department chair, unit head or equivalent, or dean will file the report with the Faculty Member’s record.

5 The recommended timeline is as follows:
   a No later than the third week of a semester, the Faculty Member and his or her immediate supervisor shall identify the Peer Observer.
   b No later than the fifth week of the semester, the Faculty Member and Peer Observer shall meet to discuss teaching materials and set a date for the observation.
   c No later than the twelfth week of the semester, the peer observation shall take place.
   d Within fourteen calendar days of the observation, the Faculty Member and the Peer Observer shall hold the post-observation meeting.
   e No later than the last day of class, the Faculty Member shall provide the Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response form to his or her immediate supervisor.

For observations taking place during summer sessions, an analogous timeline shall be followed.

6 Uses of the Review Results
   a The Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response form shall be included in the Faculty Member’s tenure and/or promotion dossier as evidence of having undergone the review process.
b The Peer Observer Report is given to the Faculty Member only and is not included in the Faculty Member's file.

C **Recognition of Time and Effort Involved in Peer Observation Process** The peer observation process involves significant time and effort on the part of the Peer Observer. This important service contribution should be recognized and reflected in the annual review of the Peer Observer.

D **Implementation** The Faculty Peer Review of Teaching described in the immediately preceding sections shall be implemented beginning no later than September 1, 2014 such that any faculty member being considered for Promotion and/or Tenure beginning in Academic Year 2015-16 will include at least one "Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response" in his or her dossier.

E **Notification** No formal notification of this process is required. Each Faculty Member is responsible for ensuring that his or her dossier for promotion and/or tenure includes the required minimum number of reports.

F **Oversight** This policy will be reviewed every five years after initial implementation by UT Arlington's chief academic officer in consultation with the Faculty Senate's Executive Committee.

G **Intent** Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted or applied to infringe on the tenure or system, academic freedom, due process or other protected rights, nor to establish new term-tenure systems or to require faculty to reestablish their credentials for tenure.

III **Definitions** For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **Faculty Member**: All full-time faculty. This Policy also applies to individual Faculty Members who hold administrative appointments of 50% or less.
- **Peer Observer**: A person who has a primary appointment in the college or school of the Faculty Member being reviewed. The Peer Observer is of equal or higher rank than the Faculty Member being reviewed. The Faculty Member's immediate supervisor, in conjunction with the chair of the unit's Advisory Committee Tenure and Promotion (ACTP), and in agreement with the Faculty Member, chooses the Peer Observer. The immediate supervisor may not serve as the Peer Observer. If a Peer Observer in one's own department is not available or appropriate for the observation, the immediate supervisor can extend a request to a person of equal or higher rank in a related department, again in agreement with the Faculty Member. The Faculty Member being observed should have considerable input into who will serve as his or her Peer Observer. Observations by non-faculty experts cannot substitute for those by Peer Observers. **Peer Observation Process**: a four-step process consisting of a pre-observation meeting, a class observation, a post-observation meeting, and a reporting procedure, to include a written "Peer Observer Report" and a written "Record of Peer
Review and Faculty Response.” **Peer Observer Report:** a written report given by the Peer Observer to the Faculty Member. In accordance with the FAC Model Policy, the Peer Observer Report shall not be included in the Faculty Member’s personnel file nor in any tenure and promotion dossier. **Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response:** a report, described below in this Policy, written by the Faculty Member whose teaching is being observed. This document is included in the faculty member’s personnel file and should be included in any promotion and tenure dossier. **Forms:** templates, developed by an elected committee of peer faculty, for the Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response and the Peer Observer Report, including assessment forms, available from the Division of Faculty Affairs. **Department or Unit Faculty:** For purposes of this Policy, department faculty includes full-time voting members of the department or unit.

IV Relevant Federal and State Statutes N/A
V Relevant UT System Policies, Procedures and Forms University of Texas Faculty Advisory Council Model Policy Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response Peer Observer Report
VI Who Should Know All faculty.
VII UT Arlington Office(s) Responsible for Policy N/A
VIII Dates Approved or Amended August 5, 2014
IX Contact Information
All questions concerning this Policy should be directed to Provost and Chief Academic Officer.
Appendix B: Forms for peer evaluation of teaching

**Forms used in the assessment process that are NOT part of the faculty member’s tenure or promotion file:**

Document 1.1
UT Arlington Faculty Peer Review of Teaching Pre-Observation Meeting for Online Courses

Document 1.2
UT Arlington Peer Observation Report and Assessment Form for Online Courses

Document 2.1
UT Arlington Faculty Peer review of Teaching Pre-Observation Meeting (Face-to-Face Courses)

Document 2.2
Peer Observer Report and Assessment Form (Face-to-Face Courses), Format option #1

Document 2.3
Peer Observer Report and Assessment Form (for Face-to-Face Courses), Format option #2

**Form that IS included in the faculty member’s personnel file and/or in tenure or promotion dossier, and the 6th year review file:**

Document 3
Record of Peer Review and Faculty Response