



## **College of IST Peer Teaching Review Guidelines**

### **IST\_AC-34 Administrative Guideline**

The peer review of teaching is a widely accepted mechanism for promoting and assuring quality academic work. As per the [University's Senate Special Joint Task Force on the Implementation of the Faculty Teaching Assessment Framework](#):

Peer review of teaching is the process by which a faculty's peers can assess a full range of teaching activities. Two different forms of peer review can take place.

*Formative* peer reviews of teaching focus on improving teaching and are considered part of ongoing professional development. They are designed to help a faculty member improve teaching practice.

*Summative* peer reviews focus on informing personnel decisions, including reappointment, promotion and/or tenure decisions.

[Policy AC-23](#) outlines the University's requirements for peer evaluations as they relate to promotion and tenure, as well as post-tenure reviews.

These guidelines will outline the process taken by the College of IST to ensure consistent, robust peer teaching evaluations, both formative and summative. The peer evaluation process is managed by the dean's office, with oversight from the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.

### **Formative Peer Reviews**

In the College of IST, formative peer reviews are seen only by the faculty member and the peer; they are NOT seen by administrators or staff and are NOT used in any reviews, evaluations or award nominations. They should not be used, either by the faculty member or reviewer, to supplement future reviews. Formative peer reviews are an opportunity for a peer to give honest feedback about their perceptions of the course and its execution, what they observed went well, what could be improved, etc. This is meant to be practical and useful to the instructor. Ideally, it will be a reflective conversation between practitioners.

### **Process**

Formative peer reviews will be optional. Each semester, in week four, instructors will be contacted to ask if they would like to engage in a formative review. If a formative review is requested, the Professor in Charge (PiC) for the instructor's Area will assign, by week six, a peer reviewer or a

teaching/learning expert to complete the review. The instructor and the reviewer can negotiate the exact timing of the formative peer review.

### **Summative Peer Reviews**

In the College of IST, summative peer reviews will be read by administrators, staff, and P&T committees, and used for other evaluative processes as appropriate. They will be used as evidence of teaching achievement for purposes of tenure, promotion, contract renewals, etc. They will not, however, be used for citation on public fora, unless the evaluated faculty member posts the information, and they will not to be made available to teaching award letter writers or for similar nomination processes.

### **Summative Peer Review Schedule**

Tenure line Faculty:

- **Assistant Professors** with less than or equal to 2 years – 1x/semester in which the faculty member teaches (*1x/semester means one time each semester*)
- **Assistant Professors** with greater than 2 years – 1x/year
- **Associate Professors** with less than or equal to 3 years – 1x/year
- **Associate Professors** with greater than 3 years – 1x/3 years
- **Professors** – 1x/5 years

Non-Tenure line Faculty:

- **All non-tenure-line faculty** with less than 2 years – 1x/semester in which the faculty member teaches
- **All non-tenure line-faculty** with 2 or more and less than 5 years – 1x/year
- **Lecturers, Assistant and Associate Teaching Professors** with greater than 5 years – 1x/3 years
- **Teaching Professors and Professors of Practice** with greater than 5 years - 1x/5 years

Note: Years in rank refer to years at Penn State at faculty ranks.

Pre-tenured faculty members cannot conduct a summative review for a tenured faculty member. In all other instances, the PiC has discretion regarding who to assign by rank and by teaching or tenure-line status. Reviewers can be selected from within the Area and outside of the Area, but the Area should justify the need for discipline expertise to the dean's office.

### **Process**

At the start of each semester, the dean's office will determine who is scheduled to be reviewed, based on the criteria listed above.

By default, the PiCs will assign reviewers for their Area. Instructors may suggest reviewers. If instructors have concerns about assigned reviewers, they can communicate these to their PiC, who will take them into consideration for the final reviewer assignments.

The dean's office will then coordinate schedules and provide all information to both reviewers and reviewees, including a link and instructions for filling out the evaluation form using the peer review tool (online form via Smartsheet).

Each evaluation should include a pre-review consultation, one class period observation (virtual or in-person), and a post-visit conversation to discuss the class observation and the final evaluation. A reviewer may examine course materials as well, such as the syllabus and online discussion postings. The reviewer will complete the review via the peer review tool, noting the instructor's strengths and areas for improvement. The content of each evaluation should include only evidence-based observations. That is, the assessment (i.e., evaluations and conclusions) should be based on corresponding evidence. For more information Reviewers should see [Assessment of Teaching - Peer Review of Materials - Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence \(psu.edu\)](https://psu.edu/schreyer/institute/teaching/peer-review)

Peer reviewers are encouraged to include their review activity as service on the FAR and in their own promotion materials.

Completed evaluations will be housed in the dean's office, will be sent to the reviewed faculty member, and will be made available for future promotion and tenure and post-tenure reviews, as appropriate. These evaluations should be reviewed as soon as possible, so that the faculty member has the most time available to make any necessary adjustments to their particular teaching style/approach, if warranted. Questions or concerns about finalized reviews should be directed to the appropriate Professor in Charge or Associate Dean.

Approved with a vote by faculty 12/12/24

Approved by Dean Tapia 12/17/24