

The Ohio State University
College of Education and Human Ecology
School of Physical Activity and Educational Services

Peer Review of Instruction Document
Adopted Spring, 2006

BACKGROUND:

NATIONAL CLIMATE:

During the past decade, there has been a resurgence of interest and increasing focus on teaching within college campuses throughout the country. External demands for accountability have come from private and public sectors, accrediting bodies, and state governing boards. In addition, the public has been critical of teaching within higher education, and there is a widespread belief that teaching is no longer the central mission of higher education (Martsolf et al., 1999). Internally, voices within higher education have focused their attention on teaching, based at least partially on concerns that the academic culture has become focused on research at the expense of quality teaching. Hence, there have been attempts to elevate the status of teaching within the academy, and Centers for Excellence in Teaching have appeared at colleges and universities throughout the country. Other forces, such as changes in information and technology also have impacted teaching. As a result, teaching and learning, which were once considered the private domain of an individual faculty member, have more and more become public territory.

CLIMATE AT THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY:

The academic plan of The Ohio State University states the aspiration to become one of the world's great public research and teaching institutions. It states "we will never be a great university without dramatically enhancing the reality and perception of our teaching and learning as well as our research and scholarship." The academic plan also identifies "being universally recognized for the quality of the learning experience we offer to our students" as one of the four core elements upon which the University seeks to focus (Kalish, 2002; OSU Academic Plan: <http://www.osu.edu/academicplan/index.php>).

CLIMATE AND CULTURE IN THE SCHOOL OF PAES:

The School of PAES has worked, since its inception, to develop a culture that values and supports teaching. In spring of 2000, discussions among PAES faculty and the Director of the School served as an initial impetus to formalize this commitment. During autumn of 2000, the PAES Instructional Enhancement Initiative (PAES-IEI) was formed. School faculty met to determine goals for the Initiative, and in the ensuing years, a culture of teaching has developed within the School. In this culture, there is strong evidence that:

- Teaching is valued;
- School faculty are open to, and excited about, new learning and the scholarship of teaching;
- School faculty use their new learning and experiences to continually evolve their teaching;
- The process of engaging in instructional enhancement is valued, as well as the outcome;
- Teaching is open, public, and shared, and discussions of teaching are part of the culture; and
- School faculty take ownership of their instruction and the PAES-IEI.

RATIONALE FOR PEER REVIEW OF INSTRUCTION:

Peer review of instruction has become more common at colleges and universities around the nation. Within the past ten years, there have been national and local efforts to engage in more formalized methods of peer review within academic units, based on the belief that such methods will ultimately improve teaching. Cosser (1998) notes that “evaluation of one’s academic peers is part of the academic enterprise.” In 1993, the president of the American Association for Higher Education noted “In my mind, [peer review of instruction] is the single most promising trend of all [for the improvement of teaching]” (Edgerton, 1993). At least part of the growing emphasis on peer review is the recognition that student ratings are a necessary, but not sufficient method of evaluating instruction. Further, there is strong evidence that student ratings do not persuade teachers to improve, either because they are too harsh and ultimately discourage faculty from placing emphasis on teaching, or because they are too vague, and faculty are left uncertain about what steps are needed to improve. In a survey of more than 250 professors at diverse institutions, more than 75% of respondents stated they ignored students’ comments and feedback, except for very small changes (e.g., font size on overheads) (McKeachie, 1983). It is within this context that peer review of instruction is intended to supplement student and other evaluative sources of information about instruction, with the ultimate goal of instructional enhancement.

Peer review of instruction, as conceptualized by the American Association for Higher Education (1993), emphasizes self-reflection and an approach that encourages “pedagogical thinking” about courses. In this approach, faculty would consider what they want to accentuate and why, and in what areas they would be receptive to advice, guidance, and input from peers. Thus, peer review is not simply a compilation of all teaching materials for review by another, but an attempt to articulate to others the rationale for various approaches, and in so doing, consider how these approaches may or may not have the intended results (Taylor, 1999).

Faculty who use peer review as a method to learn from each other report that it is a simple, effective method to enrich their own teaching (Millis & Kaplan, 1995; Travis, 1995). In addition, peer review can be an opportunity for faculty to deepen their collegial relationships and to mentor junior faculty (Mundy & Grabau, 1999). Effective peer review can enhance relationships within departments and boost departmental morale (Massy, Wilger, & Colbeck, 1994). Peer review can be a source of great learning for the reviewers as well, with all faculty developing more diversified teaching strategies, and increasing their enthusiasm for sharing their knowledge of how to teach effectively (Bernstein & Edwards, 2001). Survey data from Lilly Teaching Fellows finds that ultimately, peer review, when done within the context of a mentoring program, can help junior faculty to achieve tenure, particularly within a culture that values teaching (List, 1997).

In order to develop a successful peer review system that improves teaching and learning, faculty and administrators must support, and believe in the value of, such systems. Mundy & Grabau (1999) argue that the attitudes of faculty and administration toward teaching and peer review are actually more important than the formal design of the peer review program. To be successful, faculty must believe that they can grow in their teaching skills, and that such growth is important and valued. They also must believe that their colleagues can contribute to that growth, and that they, in turn, have something to contribute to others.

At The Ohio State University, The University Senate adopted a policy regarding peer review of instruction in 2000 and mandated that guidelines for peer review must be adopted by each Tenure Initiating Unit.

PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES OF PEER REVIEW WITHIN PAES:

The PAES Peer Review of Instruction is situated within this national, university, and PAES climate around teaching. Peer Review of Instruction also is informed by an overarching philosophy and specific principles regarding peer review, and these are articulated below.

PHILOSOPHY:

Peer Review of Instruction in the School of PAES is a *critically reflective, collaborative, and continuous* activity focused on developing *instructional excellence* among our faculty. The goal of the PAES peer review of instruction process is to generate sustained reflection on one's own teaching and to promote dialogue among faculty concerning insights about teaching and the instructional processes.

As faculty in a School in the College of Education, PAES faculty should embrace, lead, and model actions and critical reflection and activities focusing on excellence in teaching and continuous improvement in the instructional process. A system for peer review of teaching supports and embraces the College of Education's mission to be a leader in instructional expertise across the colleges in the University.

Critical reflection on instructional practices can be heightened through participation in a community of scholars who endeavor to improve instructional practices. While we recognize that reflection can occur on an individual level, we suggest that faculty in PAES can contribute to improving the quality of instruction in the entire academic community as individual members in that community.

Peer review of instruction is an opportunity for faculty to inquire and critically examine how as a community of instructors, we can improve our own practice and the quality of instruction within our sections and the School.

PRINCIPLES:

The Ohio State University Committee on Peer Review of Teaching (CPRT), an Ad Hoc Committee of the University Senate, articulated the following principles for peer review (November 7, 2000):

- Evaluation of the quality of university teaching is a complex, multifaceted process that should include student, peer, administrative and self-evaluation;
- Both the criteria and the appropriate procedures for judging the quality of teaching must be embedded in disciplinary cultures and informed by departmental missions;
- Development and implementation of specific criteria and procedures is a faculty role and responsibility; and
- Models of effective and responsible evaluation plans, both within OSU and in peer and benchmark institutions exist; research on these practices and a scholarly awareness of these models and this body of research can assist Ohio State in designing effective programs of peer review.

To respond to the call to base the peer review on best practices at benchmark institutions and a review of the scholarship of teaching related to the topic, the following principles were gleaned from the research and literature and have been supported by the faculty of the School:

Peer Review of Instruction should:

- Be openly discussed among faculty, and faculty should determine the range of teaching practices they wish to include in the evaluations and the specific criteria that will be used for evaluation;
- Include both formative and summative reviews, with clear criteria that differentiates the review process for both and in which reviews are used only for the purpose stated;
- Include multiple sources of data that are collected over time, are integrated within the context of the discipline and the school;
- Include self-assessment that allows individual faculty members to explain the goals and intentions of their courses and teaching, the philosophy of their teaching that informs their practice, and encourages self-reflection to improve their teaching;
- Allow for different teaching styles that are appropriate and effective for the courses and students under consideration;
- Be part of an overall, on-going process to continually improve teaching at all ranks and levels of the professoriate;
- Be rigorous and relevant, and based on the belief that teaching as scholarship implies that knowledge must be transmitted to, and understood by, a new generation of scholars;
- Be open to the person being reviewed. Faculty being reviewed must understand the criteria for evaluation and must be given access to the evaluations written about their teaching;
- Be situated within the culture of the School of PAES that values and supports instruction, with faculty and administrators who value the importance of teaching and articulate this value in School documents as well as practices related to the faculty review and reward system;
- Have, as its ultimate goal, instructional enhancement. Thus, “closing the loop” is a critical concept to peer review. Faculty should use what they learn through the multiple sources of feedback (self, student, peer, administrator) to make informed decisions to improve their teaching, and then seek on-going input and feedback about these changes.

COMPONENTS OF PEER REVIEW

In the PAES Promotion and Tenure document (originally adopted by the School of PAES in March 1997, updated in Spring, 2005), teaching is defined as comprising five components, with teaching university courses being given the greatest weight in evaluation. Each of these components is eligible for peer review of instruction.

1. Teaching university courses – both credit and non-credit – in lecture halls, laboratories, physical performance venues, and internship supervision venues, both on and off campus. Instruction offered by electronic technology is to be included in this category
2. Producing scholarly textbooks, chapters in books used as texts, literature reviews, position papers, book reviews, and other publications designed primarily for classroom and other instructional settings
3. Advising and mentoring undergraduate and graduate students. Substantive contributions to undergraduate and graduate student committees

4. Generating external funding (e.g., training grants) and/or other resources to support students
5. Developing instructional materials, courses, and curricula for use in university and non-university settings.

DEFINITIONS:

Peer: a faculty colleague, of any rank, who can be located within PAES, the College of Education, The Ohio State University, or at another Institution.

Interdisciplinary peers: faculty colleagues within OSU who can comment upon and give guidance and input regarding a faculty member's pedagogy, including philosophy and approach to teaching, presentation skills, facilitation skills, assessment methods, curriculum design, and organization.

Intradisciplinary peers: faculty colleagues within a faculty member's area of expertise (may be housed at OSU or at another Institution) who can comment upon and give guidance and input regarding a faculty member's course content, including course objectives, materials and resources.

Formative Evaluation: designed to contribute to the development of teaching. The purpose of formative evaluation is to validate or ensure that the goals of the instruction are being achieved and to improve the instruction, if necessary, by means of identification and subsequent remediation of problematic aspects.

Summative Evaluation: evaluation whose goal is to assess the quality of teaching performance/effectiveness. A summative review results in documentation that can be reviewed by others.

Teaching Portfolio: "A coherent set of materials including work samples and reflective commentary on them compiled by a faculty member to represent his or her teaching practice as related to student learning and development." (Center for Instructional Development and Research).

PROCESS OF PEER REVIEW:

From the OSU OAA Handbook (section IV):

"Periodic peer evaluation is required for both probationary and tenured faculty (at all ranks). Peer review of instruction is "the responsibility of the faculty of the TIU, not the individual faculty member being reviewed. The faculty must determine the methods of peer review that work best for the particular department, and apply them consistently. Peer evaluation should focus on those aspects of teaching that students cannot validly assess, such as appropriateness of curricular choices, implicit and explicit goals of instruction, choice of examination/evaluation materials by the faculty member, and consistency with highest standards of disciplinary knowledge. Literature on the evaluation of instruction suggests that there is no single best instructional method. Peer evaluation should have clear goals, be informed by student opinion, and be grounded in a department culture that values good teaching. Classroom observations should not serve as the sole method for peer assessment of teaching effectiveness."

PROCESS: FORMATIVE REVIEW FOR PROBATIONARY FACULTY

The faculty of the School of PAES, by adopting this document, take responsibility for determining the method and timing of peer review, as required by the OAA handbook.

For probationary faculty, the following process shall be in place.

At the end of each calendar year, with the completion of the annual review, PAES probationary faculty members shall select 3 of the 14 options from the list below to complete during the following calendar year. The Director of the School and the Chair of the Personnel Committee may give feedback and input regarding the selections, and may require individual faculty to complete specific items from the list below. During the probationary period, faculty are *strongly encouraged* to select option #9 (FTAD observation) at least twice.

Upon completion of these activities, and with the submission of the following year's annual review, the faculty member shall provide evidence that these activities were completed and a written narrative that provides evidence of changes to teaching practice, course content, or other teaching-related endeavors based on the activities, thereby "closing the loop." Unless otherwise specified, evidence provided should be in the form of a brief (one-two paragraph) narrative summary.

The same categories may be selected each year, or faculty may alternate activities. This method will allow faculty to choose peer review that is most relevant and appropriate to their developmental needs. The evidence required in formative reviews is primarily in the form of self-reflective narratives with documentation of changes made as a result of the process. This method will allow faculty to choose peer review options *and peer reviewers* that have the greatest potential to maximize professional development.

Faculty members are responsible for completing the required peer review of instruction process. Faculty members determine (with consultation, as noted) who will engage with them in the process of peer review. To initiate #10, a faculty member must request, in writing to the Chair of the PAES Personnel Committee, that s/he has selected this option as part of the annual peer review and would like the Chair to select a PAES faculty peer reviewer.

Options for formative review (must select 3 each calendar year during the probationary period)

CATEGORY ONE – Teaching University Courses

1. Attend workshop on some aspect of teaching (either within the university or at a professional society) and demonstrate changes or new ideas that have been/will be incorporated into teaching based on the ideas presented in the workshop.
 - a. Evidence required: Date, topic, and sponsor of the workshop. Summary of aspects of teaching learned at the workshop and how they have been/will be incorporated into teaching.

2. Have a faculty member with a similar area of content expertise (either within OSU or at another institution) review syllabus, including description of course goals and major instructional materials for a course. Whenever possible, this review should occur face-to-face and provide specific and concrete feedback to the faculty member being evaluated. *Note:* when an off-campus reviewer is selected, the selection of the reviewer must be done in conjunction with the faculty member's PAES faculty mentor.
 - a. Evidence required: Name, rank, institution, and subject area of reviewer.
Summary and analysis of strengths identified, areas for improvement, and changes made as a result and reflections on the process of the review.
3. Review of course-related website materials. When website or distance-learning materials have been developed for a course, these can be reviewed by interprofessional or intraprofessional faculty peers. Whenever possible, this review should occur face-to-face and provide specific and concrete feedback to the faculty member being evaluated. *Note:* when an off-campus reviewer is selected, the selection of the reviewer must be done in conjunction with the faculty member's PAES faculty mentor.
 - a. Evidence required: Name, rank, institution, and subject area of reviewer.
Summary and analysis of strengths identified, areas for improvement, and changes made as a result and reflections on the process of the review.
4. Review of course materials. When materials (e.g., grading rubrics, assignments, projects) have been developed for a course, these can be reviewed by interprofessional or intraprofessional faculty peers. This review also can be done with a consultation from the Office of Faculty & TA Development. Whenever possible, this review should occur face-to-face and provide specific and concrete feedback to the faculty member being evaluated. *Note:* when an off-campus reviewer is selected, the selection of the reviewer must be done in conjunction with the faculty member's PAES faculty mentor.
 - a. Evidence required: Name, rank, institution, and subject area of reviewer.
Summary and analysis of strengths identified, areas for improvement, and changes made as a result and reflections on the process of the review.
5. Development/refinement of philosophy of pedagogy.
 - a. Evidence required: Report of activities engaged in (e.g., workshops attended, books or articles read, consultations with experts) to support the process, reflections on how the experience enhanced the philosophy of teaching, and the completed product.
6. Observe an expert teacher. Make arrangements to watch another faculty member teach a class. The faculty member should be selected either because s/he has received distinction for teaching or because s/he has more experience in instruction. Make arrangements to meet with that faculty member prior to the class period to gain an understanding of the goals, purposes, and proposed teaching methods. Meet again after the completion of the class for debriefing.
 - a. Evidence required: Name, rank, institution, and subject area of expert teacher.
Summary and analysis of what was learned and what changes were made/will be made as a result, and reflections on the process.

7. Videotape yourself teaching. Make arrangements to have a class period videotaped. Identify a faculty peer or professional from the Office of Faculty & TA Development to watch the videotape with, and use both self-reflection and the process of watching with another, to identify strengths and areas for growth.
 - a. Evidence required: Name, rank, institution, and subject area of selected peer. Date, course number, and topic of selected class period. Summary and analysis of strengths identified, areas for improvement, and changes made as a result and reflections on the process.
8. Classroom observation by a non-PAES faculty peer (either at OSU or another institution).
 - a. Evidence required: Name of reviewer, course observed, date. Summary of changes made as a result and reflections on the process of the observation.
9. Classroom observation by professional from the Office of Faculty & TA Development
 - a. Evidence required: Name of FTAD professional, course observed, date. Summary of changes made as a result and reflections on the process of the observation.
10. Classroom observation by a PAES faculty peer. The selection of a PAES peer reviewer should be done in conjunction with the School of PAES Chair of the Personnel Committee. Prior to the review, supply the reviewer with an overview of the class period to help the reviewer gain an understanding of the goals, purposes, and proposed teaching methods. Meet after the completion of the class for debriefing.
 - a. Evidence required: Name of reviewer, course observed, date. Summary of changes made as a result and reflections on the process of the observation.

CATEGORY TWO: Producing Scholarly Publications for Instructional Use

11. Scholarly textbooks, chapters in books used as texts, and other publications designed primarily for classroom and instructional settings are the object(s) of review in this category. Faculty members who select this option can use feedback and reviews generated externally or internally to reflect upon their publications or can use their own experience with the material in classroom use to reflect upon the publications
 - a. Evidence required: Summary and analysis of strengths and limitations of the material for classroom use, garnered either from external comments or reviews (e.g., publisher reviews, feedback from faculty members who use the material in their courses), or from internal reviews (e.g., comments and feedback from students, from other OSU faculty, from a self-reflection). What changes have been made to teaching based on this material? How has this material helped improve student learning? What are some changes or improvements that could be made in future editions, or what additional material would be helpful?

CATEGORY THREE: Advising and Mentoring Undergraduate and Graduate Students

12. Faculty engage in formal and informal mentoring of advisees and other students. The annual review documents list “noteworthy accomplishments of students” (Item #2b), and faculty members choosing this option will discuss their role in the mentoring of students. They may articulate a philosophy of mentoring and discuss methods they use to bring that philosophy to action. Thus, this should not be a listing of “noteworthy accomplishments” by students, but an analysis of the role the faculty member plays in the formal and informal mentoring of students.

- a. Evidence required: Faculty who choose this option should articulate a rationale for the types of mentoring they engage in, provide some examples of the types of activities that support this mentoring, and engage in a self-reflective activity regarding their strengths and limitations in this area, with a plan for enhancement. Feedback from students (current and former) can be solicited to improve a faculty member's self-awareness, but should not be included as part of the evidence provided.

CATEGORY FOUR: Generating External Funding (e.g., Training Grants) and/or Other Resources to Support Students

13. Funding to support students is the fourth component of teaching, as defined by the School of PAES. Faculty who have training grants or other methods of financial support for students can consider how these monies enhance the learning environment for students.
 - a. Evidence required: Funding amount, source, and the number of students affected. In addition, faculty should engage in a brief narrative about the types of learning that this funding allows and how it enhances the environment for the students affected. When applicable, a self-reflection component that demonstrates how funding has enhanced instruction also can be included.

CATEGORY FIVE: Developing Instructional Materials, Courses, and Curricula for Use in University and Non-University Settings

14. When materials (e.g., tests, rubrics, written information, websites) have been developed for University or Non-University courses, or when new or updated courses or curricula have been developed, these can be reviewed by interprofessional or intraprofessional faculty peers. This review also can be done with a consultation from the Office of Faculty & TA Development. Whenever possible, this review should occur face-to-face and provide specific and concrete feedback to the faculty member being evaluated. *Note:* when an off-campus reviewer is selected, the selection of the reviewer must be done in conjunction with the faculty member's PAES faculty mentor.
 - a. Evidence required: Name, rank, institution, and subject area of reviewer. Summary and analysis of strengths identified, areas for improvement, and changes made as a result and reflections on the process of the review.

PROCESS: SUMMATIVE REVIEW FOR PROBATIONARY FACULTY

Formative reviews of Peer Review of Instruction must occur every year prior to consideration for promotion and tenure. When documentation is developed for fourth year review and for tenure, the following summative review information will be completed *in addition to* that year's formative review.

A capstone narrative (no more than 1-2 pages) will be included in the annual review documentation that provides an overall summary of the candidate's professional development as an instructor during his/her status as a faculty member at The Ohio State University. This narrative should include, at a minimum, a description and reflection on the following:

- What have you learned about yourself as an instructor?
- How have you changed as an instructor?
- What new teaching skills and pedagogical strategies have you developed?
- In what ways have you enhanced the courses you have taught?
- In what ways have you promoted student engagement?
- What are your plans for future professional development as an instructor?

PROCESS: POST-TENURE FACULTY

ANNUAL REVIEWS:

As noted in the OSU OAA handbook, periodic peer evaluation is required for tenured faculty at all ranks. In accordance with this mandate, and in recognition of the necessity of on-going personal and professional development in the area of instruction, all PAES faculty engage in annual peer review of instruction activities. Each year, every tenured PAES faculty member shall select one (1) of the options presented above and shall complete the activities described. The PAES faculty recognize that engagement in instructional enhancement of any type can improve instruction. Thus, *in addition to* the choices listed above, tenured PAES faculty also may select from the following list:

15. Review the course materials of another faculty member (As directed in options #2, #3, & #4 above).
16. Be observed by another faculty member (As directed in option #6 above)
17. Watch a videotape of another faculty member's teaching and provide input and reflections (As directed in option #7 above)
18. Observe another faculty members teaching and engage in the process of peer observation of instruction (As directed in options #8 and #10 above)

Tenured faculty members should provide as evidence a brief description of the activity engaged in, with identifying dates, names, and courses and a brief narrative of how the activity enhanced their own instruction.

SUMMATIVE REVIEWS:

The selection and completion of one element of Peer Review of Instruction must be completed every year prior to consideration for promotion to full professor. When documentation is submitted for consideration for promotion, a capstone narrative (no more than 1-2 pages) will be

included in the annual review documentation that provides an overall summary of the candidate's professional development as an instructor during his/her status as a faculty member at The Ohio State University. This narrative should include, at a minimum, a description and reflection on the following:

- What have you learned about yourself as an instructor?
- How have you changed as an instructor?
- What new teaching skills and pedagogical strategies have you developed?
- In what ways have you enhanced the courses you have taught?
- In what ways have you promoted student engagement?
- What are your plans for future professional development as an instructor?

RELATIONSHIP OF PEER REVIEW OF INSTRUCTION TO PROMOTION & TENURE & OTHER MANDATED REVIEWS:

Peer review of instruction should occur every year of employment as a faculty member in the School of PAES, as outlined above. Having at least two reviews during that time period by the Office of Faculty and TA Development is strongly encouraged, but not required. The Director, in collaboration with the PAES Personnel Committee, will work together to assure appropriate evaluation of instruction for the purposes for consideration for promotion and tenure.

WHAT IS GOOD TEACHING?

Ramsden (1992) identified 13 characteristics of good teaching from an individual instructors point of view:

1. a desire to share your love of the subject
2. an ability to make the material stimulating and interesting
3. a facility for engaging with students at their level of understanding
4. a capacity to explain the material plainly and helpfully
5. a commitment to making it absolutely clear what has to be understood, at what level, and why
6. demonstration of concern and respect for students
7. a commitment to encouraging student independence and experiment
8. an ability to improvise and adapt to new demands
9. use of teaching methods and academic tasks that require students to learn actively, responsibly, and through cooperative endeavor
10. use of valid and fair assessment methods
11. a focus on key concepts and students' current and future understanding of them, rather than just covering the ground
12. a commitment to give high quality feedback on students' work
13. a desire to learn from students and others about the effects of your teaching and how it can be improved