



STATEMENT OF PRACTICES FOR THE EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS FOR PROMOTION AND TENURE

I. Introduction

Policy HR-23 requires that the evaluation of teaching effectiveness for purposes of promotion and tenure be based on both peer and student input. This statement outlines the procedures for obtaining and reporting that input as endorsed by the University Faculty Senate.

A. Student Evaluations

1. All units shall use the Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE) survey for student evaluation of teaching. This survey may be supplemented by other forms of student evaluation at the discretion of the faculty of the unit.
2. The SRTE survey is a “cafeteria” system with a fixed pool of items from which departments and individual faculty members select items most appropriate for their courses.
3. The SRTE survey consists of three sets of questions—a University core, a departmental core (the University’s course abbreviation codes serve as a proxy for “department”), and individual faculty items rating the quality of the course and the quality of the instructor.
 - a. The University core consists of two global questions that are included on all survey forms, asking students to give an overall rating of the course and an overall rating of the instructor.
 - b. The departmental core consists of as many as 15 additional items from the pool, selected by the faculty of the academic unit. These items should be selected to reflect the nature of the discipline, type of class, and other factors the department faculty deem to be appropriate. Typically, course abbreviations have a number of different forms, each with questions that reflect the course type and/or instructional methods (e.g., introductory courses, seminars, labs, studios). The faculty of each unit shall be responsible for selecting the items that constitute the departmental forms, subject to the approval of the appropriate academic officer.

- c. Individual faculty members may add up to five additional items from the pool to supplement the two global questions and the departmental core.
4. The Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost will be responsible for coordinating revisions to the SRTE survey. The Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence will be responsible for administrative procedures, scoring and reporting in consultation with the faculty.
5. A pool of items (questions about teaching) was developed by the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost in consultation with faculty members and administrators from each unit and the Committee on Faculty Affairs of the University Faculty Senate. The pool includes both general and specific items about the areas of organization, structure or clarity of the course or course material, teacher-student interaction, teaching skills, instructional environment, and specific instructional settings.
6. A set of demographic questions and information was developed to facilitate the proper interpretation of survey results. The survey includes items about percentage of students in the class completing the survey, whether the course is required or an elective, and expected grade.
7. Items of the survey are rated on a seven-point scale with appropriate descriptors provided for the end points and the mid-point of the scale.
8. Results of the SRTE surveys shall belong to the faculty of the unit which administers them, not to the individual faculty member who was rated. Results shall be accessible to the department head for inclusion in promotion and tenure dossiers. The faculty member shall have access to his/her survey results.
9. Report of results:
 - a. Demographic information
 - (1) Appropriate demographic information is reported for each class completing the survey.
 - b. Survey rating items
 - (1) The reporting of results of the surveys includes the following information:
 - (a) Percent of students selecting each response category;

- (b) Number of students selecting each response category; and
 - (c) Mean for each item.
- c. Appropriate controls for confidentiality of information shall be implemented by all units in distributing and storing the survey results.

10. Administration of the SRTE

- a. Administration of the SRTEs is based on the guidelines listed below.
 - (1) Responses to survey items must remain anonymous.
 - (2) Directions to the students are uniform across administrations.
 - (3) The candidate shall not participate in the administration, collection, or compilation of the survey results.
 - (4) The candidate shall not be present while students complete the evaluation.
 - (5) In a traditional semester-long course, the SRTE offering period begins two weeks before the end of regular instruction and ends the day before the final exams begin. For courses of shorter duration, their offering period is one day per week of regular classes; a four-week course has a four-day offering period.

11. Frequency of reviews

- a. The specific procedures for determining the frequency of reviews for the faculty members within a unit shall be determined by the college. These procedures must be developed in consultation with the faculty of the college. In addition to policy, courses may be reviewed at the request of the faculty member. The following principles about the frequency of reviews apply:
 - (1) Where possible, evaluations should be conducted over a period of years and in a variety of courses.
 - (2) For provisional faculty and fixed term faculty, all sections of all courses shall be evaluated by the SRTE every time it

is taught. The results from each of these evaluations must be included in the candidate's tenure dossier.

If there is some reason to explain the results or the absence of results in a particular case, the appropriate academic administrator shall make a note to that effect in the dossier. For example, in advance of a course being taught for the first time in an experimental way, an administrator and a faculty member might agree not to administer the SRTE. Such agreements should be in writing.

- (3) For all other faculty, each college must develop clear and specific guidelines for the frequency of the use of SRTEs, whether the college requires all courses to be reviewed or not. The guidelines must require frequent enough reviews to accomplish the purpose outlined in this Statement of Practices.

Since students now expect to have the opportunity to evaluate their instructors and their courses and since such evaluations continue to have value for many purposes, it is recommended that all sections of all courses shall be evaluated. College Guidelines will be reviewed by the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost to ensure that they are consistent with these principles.

- (4) Faculty being reviewed for promotion, even when it is not coupled with a tenure review, should be able to demonstrate their teaching achievements in part through student evaluations that have been done over time and in a variety of courses.

B. Peer Review of Teaching

1. In addition to student evaluation of teaching, there shall also be evaluation of a candidate's teaching by peers from the candidate's unit and campus.
2. The methods of peer evaluation to be used by a unit or a campus, as well as the manner in which the results are presented in the dossier, shall be selected by the faculty of the unit or the campus. The procedures must be developed by or selected by the faculty of the unit (or campus) for purposes of evaluating teaching for promotion and tenure. The Executive Vice President and Provost shall give final approval to peer review of teaching procedures.

C. Review Committee Reports

1. It is the responsibility of the first level review committee (i.e., campus, department, division, or school) to make a judgment of the candidate's teaching effectiveness based on both peer and student reviews in terms of the following classifications: Excellent, very good, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory. For faculty at non-University Park locations whose locus of tenure resides in a University Park college, the campus review committee shall also make a judgment of the candidate's teaching effectiveness in terms of the same four-category classification. Reviewers should understand that unsatisfactory carries a negative connotation; satisfactory conveys a neutral evaluation; very good, a positive one; and excellent, a highly positive evaluation. The review committee must provide appropriate documentation for its judgment.

D. Summary of Research on Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

1. There is an abundance of research on all aspects of student evaluation of teaching effectiveness. The consensus in the literature is that while student evaluations are the most common strategy of evaluation, by themselves they are not sufficient to provide a complete evaluation of teaching.
2. Students, however, are in a unique position to make evaluations and are an appropriate source of information when they are judging student-instructor relationships, organization of the course, their views of the instructor's professional and ethical behavior, their workload, what they have learned in the course, fairness of grading, and the instructor's ability to communicate. They are not good sources from which to judge relevance and recency of course content, and knowledge and scholarship of the instructor.
3. Items found on student rating surveys are based on commonly identified characteristics of effective teaching and generally fall into three groups:
 - a. Organization, structure or clarity of course, and course material;
 - b. Teacher-student interaction; and,
 - c. Teaching skill.

Other subjects of evaluation include evaluation of workload in the course, grading and examinations, student outcomes, and global questions. For promotion and tenure purposes, the global or general questions have been found to be the most stable. In addition to instructional quality and student learning, several factors have been found to have some relation to

student ratings: class size, subject matter, and expected grade. Whether a course is in a student's major, is being used to fulfill a requirement outside the major, or is an elective has also been found to have some relation to student ratings.

4. Student ratings have limitations.
 - a. Because student evaluations commonly elicit numerical responses, it is easy to assign them a precision that they do not possess; i.e., it is easy to over interpret small differences in average scores.
 - b. When such data are used for personnel decisions, the possibility of faculty influencing the ratings must be taken into consideration. Standardized and systematic procedures for administering student evaluations are essential to ensuring the usefulness of ratings.
 - c. Student evaluations alone are not sufficient for either personnel decisions or for improvement of teaching.