

Protocol for Peer Observation of Teaching
Department of Marine Sciences
University of Georgia

Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of peer observations of teaching is twofold: First, it aims to provide actionable feedback to help instructors improve their teaching. Second, peer-evaluations are part of the Department's evaluation of teaching effectiveness (see Academic Affairs Policy No. 23). This protocol aims to promote equity and fairness with regards to our peer evaluation of instruction, and to provide a framework for constructive feedback (formative and summative) on teaching that can be used for professional development, as well as promotion and tenure dossiers and post tenure reviews.

Conducting Peer Observation of Teaching

A peer-observation of teaching within the department should comprise the following steps:

1. Obtain copies of the course syllabus, course learning objectives, and departmental learning objectives (if the course is part of the student learning outcome assessment). Review them so you can assess how the class session you will observe fits into the larger context of the course and curriculum.
2. Prior to the actual observation, meet with the instructor to discuss the content of the class session to be observed, the approach they will take, and any particular teaching practices or issues the instructor would like you to pay particular attention to. Discuss any outstanding questions about the course you have after reviewing the documents.
3. Perform a "fact-based" observation in class: record what the instructor and students do, examples used, etc. You may find it helpful to use a copy of the observation form for reference during the observation.
4. After the observation, meet with the instructor to discuss your observations (ideally within 2 weeks of the observation itself). You may want to use your responses on the observation form to facilitate your conversation with the instructor in this follow-up meeting.
5. If the peer-observation is summative (i.e. to be used for 3rd year review, promotion and tenure, or post tenure review), then provide the instructor and the head of department with a written evaluation following the guidance provided.

**Marine Sciences Peer Observation of Teaching
Classroom Observation Summary Form**

Instructor Name:

Course title:

Class size:

Date Observed:

Observation Completed by:

INSTRUCTIONS: The question prompts provided below in each section may serve as a guide for your notes.

Structure & Context for Observation

- *What contextual details are important for this classroom observation? (e.g., is it a new course, part of a series, a gateway course, is it a lab or lecture course)?*
- *Did you meet with the instructor beforehand and what were **their** goals for this observation?*
- *How long was the observation?*
- *How many students were present?*
- *Is there anything important about the room set-up or other logistics to include?*

Comments:

Format of Instruction & General Organization

- *Characterize the style of instruction. For example, was instruction delivered to students predominantly in a traditional lecture format or a more interactive format that led to substantial class discussion?*
- *Was the course a hybrid/flipped or online course?*
- *Did the instructor use PowerPoint (or some other form of projected slides), write on the board (document camera or project from some other interactive electronic device), or give demonstrations?*
- *How was the time management and general organization of the class?*
- *If this was a lab, what were the students working on and what was the format?*

Comments:

Observation of Teaching Strategies Utilized

- *What teaching strategies did you observe? Examples may include think-pair-share, wait-time (wait after asking a question so more students have a chance to participate), group activities such as worksheets, calling on students by name, using random call or an opt-in random call, using polling tools such as clickers to facilitate peer instruction, incorporating case studies etc.*

Comments:

Observation of Student Engagement & Learning

- *How often were students interacting with each other or with the instructor?*
- *Did students seem engaged and what evidence of the level of engagement was there? For example, if using laptops, were students taking notes or were they otherwise distracted?*
- *Were students working in groups or independently?*
- *Did the instructor utilize strategies to promote student interaction (e.g. think-pair-share)?*
- *Were there opportunities for the instructor to get feedback on student learning (e.g. open-ended questions, report out after discussion, polling systems)?*
- *Could you determine if the students were achieving the learning outcomes for the class? What was the evidence that this was occurring?*

Comments:

Course Alignment

- *Having reviewed the syllabus, was this class session in alignment with the overall goals for the course?*
- *Were the activities observed in alignment with the instructor's objectives for the session?*
- *Were the learning outcomes for the class session made obvious to students?*
- *Were the connections between different topics and concepts clear?*

Comments:

Instructor Strengths & Highlights from the Observation

- *What teaching techniques seemed to be effective for engaging students in the learning?*
- *What did the instructor do well?*
- *What moments of the observation did you enjoy the most and why?*

Comments:

Recommendations for Improvement

- *Are there techniques that the instructor could consider to increase student engagement and make the class more interactive? Are the slides clearly organized or do they need additional work?*
- *How was the time management and clarity of instruction?*
- *What is your general impression of how well the instructor is facilitating student learning?*
- *What should the instructor continue doing?*
- *What are one or two recommendations for now and/or the next time the class is taught?*

Comments:

Guidance for an effective written evaluation

Opening paragraph:

Provide the purpose, context and background on the observation. Highlight the pre-observation discussion and any materials reviewed.

Body paragraphs:

Summarize the observational summary, and for each category provide feedback supported by the observation.

Final summative paragraphs:

Provide an overall summary evaluation, areas for growth and specific plan for growth or improvement, highlighting the post-observation discussion.

Closing paragraph:

Write a statement of appreciation for the experience and a reflection of what was learned.