

SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF MINES & TECHNOLOGY

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: Peer Review of Teaching

NUMBER: Policy II-32

REVISED: March 2024

Peer review of teaching should be available for all faculty at any rank or track. Peer reviews serve to strengthen teaching practices across South Dakota Mines and provide additional evidence in support of teaching performance for annual faculty evaluations, promotion/tenure, and teaching awards.

1. Outline for peer review of teaching

1. The peer review of teaching process is designed to be advisory and constructive in tone. Further, the review process should be developed to minimize the demand and time commitment on both the faculty member and the reviewers while providing a fair, consistent, and useful review of instructional activities.
2. Faculty may request an optional peer review of teaching from their Department Head at any time and should consider such a review for upcoming promotion/tenure applications or for guidance on continuous improvement.
3. Department Heads can initiate a peer review of teaching in the following cases:
 - a. The Department Head observes concerning trends in student opinion survey scores for a faculty member in terms of quantitative and/or qualitative responses from students.
 - b. The Department Head is concerned that a faculty member does not have enough data to evaluate teaching activities in support or their promotion and/or tenure evaluation (i.e., there is a lack of student opinion survey data).
4. The results of the peer review of teaching process are optional for faculty to include in their promotion/tenure dossiers.

2. Peer review of teaching procedure

1. Each academic department may develop a peer review of teaching process as appropriate for their discipline. The process must be such that it can be conducted at any time should either the faculty member or the Department Head choose to do so. All processes must be approved by the Provost before they are implemented.
2. A sample [Peer Review of Teaching](#) process has been developed as part of this policy and is intended to be advisory in nature. It is recommended that for consistency, departments develop rubrics as part of their review processes.

Peer Review of Teaching

The Department Head will identify candidates for review (either by faculty request or at the discretion of the Department Head as outlined in Policy II-32) and in consultation with the instructor to be reviewed, select the course(s) that will be reviewed. A committee consisting of faculty selected by the Department Head will oversee the peer review process.

Class Observation

Each member of the review team will observe at least one class meeting of the instructor under review. This can be done individually or as a group, as preferred by the instructor. Prior to a scheduled class observation, the instructor will provide the review team with an electronic copy of the written materials for the course under review, or access to course materials via D2L¹. These materials could include the course syllabus and schedule, reading lists, assignments, and examinations. Other materials or information the instructor considers relevant to the review may also be submitted and may include a written overview of course objectives.

The lecture/lab to be observed will be arranged in advance by mutual agreement of the faculty member under review and the peer reviewers. Course dynamics and delivery may be observed in person or via video by the review team, though in-person visitation is preferred.

At the conclusion of the observation, reviewers will meet informally with the instructor to provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and thoughts about the teaching philosophy, objectives, and methods for the course reviewed. This meeting should occur shortly after classroom observations occur.

Criteria departments may wish to consider when developing their PRT mechanism:

- Course objectives and their role in the curricula/program assessment plan.
- Subject matter and skills covered, and their timeliness relative to the current state of knowledge.
- Relevance, effectiveness, and appropriateness of course materials.
- Effectiveness of the chosen mechanisms of content delivery.
- Timing or pace of content delivery.
- Assessment of student performance.
- Effectiveness of student engagement.

Written Review

The review team, which should consist of at least two members, will compose one written review, and deliver it to the instructor and department head within two weeks of the informal meeting between the instructor and the peer review team and no later than the end of finals week of the term during which the class was observed. The review will provide the consensus view of the review team regarding strengths and weaknesses of the items evaluated.

¹ An instructor under review can provide guest access to D2L course materials as follows: On D2L course home page go to Edit Course, then Classlist, then Add Participants. Fill in name of peer reviewer, click search icon, choose role and section (Guest Observer), then click enroll and done.

The consensus written review will consist of a summary report covering course material and classroom observation. The written review will also include any recommendations the review team wishes to communicate to the department head and instructor. After the written report is submitted to the instructor and department head, the instructor under review may request a meeting with the department head and peer review team to discuss the review, but this is not required.

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