

AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT'S PEER-REVIEW POLICY

1. Purpose of Peer Review

Faculty peer review process is introduced as part of the commitment to the improvement of teaching and learning. It is seen as an opportunity for faculty members to enrich their pedagogical toolkit, share innovative teaching methods and benefit from constructive suggestions and advices from colleagues. The results of peer review will be shared among participating faculty members only, and thus, is not a formal assessment of faculty members.

2. Peer Review Process

Faculty peer review takes place in the form of a class observation. All full-time faculty members, including the program chair, are expected to participate in the process at least once during an academic year. Part-time faculty members are encouraged to participate. The peer observation shall be scheduled no earlier than 5th week of the semester and should be completed before the 14th week of study in either Fall or Spring semesters.

The program chair is responsible for organizing faculty members into peer-review groups and helping each group schedule class observations. Pre-observation and post-observation activities are as important as the actual observation of the class. All these stages are described in the following sections.

3. Outcomes

The peer review process produces narrative feedback for the instructor who was reviewed. Confidentiality is important. Therefore, all subsequent comments and discussions remain strictly within the program, and are not shared with university administration or other academic offices or programs. Each faculty member is expected to consider constructive feedback from colleagues and use it for further professional development.

PEER REVIEW GUIDELINES

1. Pre-observation

Participating faculty members meet one week before the scheduled classroom observation. The purpose of the pre-observation meeting is to familiarize the reviewers with the course objectives, learning outcomes, teaching philosophy and particular details of the class to be reviewed. Faculty members will examine the syllabi and other teaching materials important for the review.

Some questions that could be discussed at the pre-observation meeting include:

- What is the main goal of your course?
- What is the main goal of the course session that I will observe?
- What do you expect the students to know and do by the end of your session?
- What strategies will you use to help the students reach this objective?
- Do you have any specific issues that you would like the observer to address/look out for?

2. Observation

Following the pre-observation meeting, two faculty members from the group attend the class of the teacher to be observed and fill out peer observation forms. The observers should arrive at least 5 minutes before class. They shall not participate in the classroom and ask any questions from either the teacher or the students.

During and immediately after classroom observation, the observers fill out the form below with utmost accuracy and clarity.

3. Post-observation

Within a week after the classroom observation, the reviewers prepare a narrative report, summarizing their observation and recommendations for each faculty whom he/she had observed. The narrative report should address the following questions:

- What will be covered in the class that day: Does the faculty member convey to the students early in the session what is going to be covered that day?
- Does the teacher check student understanding?
- Does the teacher encourage student thought and constructively respond to student opinions?
- Does the teacher promote student participation? Are the teaching methods used appropriate to achieve learning objectives and tasks?
- Does the faculty member announce and remind students what they covered in class and what they will cover, discuss in the next class?
- Is the teaching 100% in English?
- Additional Remarks: (not covered by any of the above but significant and relevant)

The report must be shared with the faculty who was observed in an informal meeting with the presence of the program chair. The program chair is the only person who keeps all observation checklists and narrative reports.