

Formative Observation of Teaching Guidelines
College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences
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The following guidelines are designed to support *formative* observations of faculty teaching. This is an entirely voluntary process, intended to enrich the teaching practice of the peer observer and the instructor being observed. A formative observation should **not** be used for Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure decisions, but can be used to prepare for a formal teaching evaluation (please see separate guidelines on “Summative Evaluations of Teaching” for RPT). These guidelines were prepared by a group of CEMS faculty and have been reviewed and endorsed by the Pedagogical Innovation Committee and Faculty Council.

Peer observers may be a faculty member in the same program as the person being observed or external to the program. The technical expertise of the observer does not need to match the content of the course unless the person being observed specifically requests feedback on the technical aspects of the course. In general, feedback on formative observations should be constructive and identify opportunities for improvement. Formative observations of teaching are an informal arrangement between faculty and do not require the involvement of the Chair.

Information for Peer Observers: Preparation and Documentation

- *Before the class session*
 - Schedule the observation and discuss with the instructor the goals for the course and the specific class session
 - What are your goals for the class session on this day? What are your goals for the students or your teaching in general?
 - Are there specific components of the class that you’d like my feedback on? (Review the list on the following page and/or add focus areas)
 - Ask the instructor for their preferred mode of observation (silent and out of the way, walking around the room, etc.)
- *During the class session*
 - Attend, observe, and enjoy
 - Record feedback (both positive and negative) for the instructor
 - Try to learn something new by observing the class
 - Students may give valuable and candid feedback to an outside observer. Consider meeting with students for the last 5 minutes of the class in the absence of the instructor, time permitting.
- *After the class session*
 - Share observations with the instructor; a follow-up discussion is encouraged

Course Information

Instructor Name:	Evaluator Name:
Course #:	Course Name:
Date:	Time:
Location:	# Students:

Mode of Instruction (check all that apply)

- ☐ Case- or Project-based ☐ Experiential or Problem-Solving-based ☐ Lecture ☐ Lab
☐ Seminar (Discussion-based) ☐ Workshop ☐ Other (describe)

Qualitative Observations

The following prompts outline aspects of teaching that are reviewed during summative evaluations and could be the focus of your feedback. The observation does not need to address all these points and should be focused primarily on helping the instructor assess their teaching goals.

- What aspects of the class worked well?
- What aspects of the class could be improved?
- **Technical Proficiency**
 - Mastery of the subject area
 - Examples of course content appropriate to the learning goals, program needs, and current state-of-the-art
- **Classroom Management**
 - Organization
 - Vocal volume / clarity of instructions
 - Use of media and classroom technology (slideshow, Doc Cam, whiteboard, worksheets, software, classroom polls)
 - Attentiveness and responsiveness to student questions and classroom distractions
- **Student Engagement**
 - Instructor enthusiasm for subject matter
 - Activities or questions posed to engage students
 - Student attention / responsiveness / participation
 - Student-Instructor rapport
- **Other:**

Written feedback to the instructor: