

Department of Food Science and Technology

Peer Evaluation of Teaching

Approved November 22, 2019

Background and rationale: The plan outlined in this document is to provide high-quality education and training to individuals preparing for careers in food science and technology in the food industry, academia, or government. With this vision in mind, excellence in teaching and learning is a high priority and could be achieved by continuous instructional improvement. Therefore, the goal of a peer evaluation of teaching within the Department of Food Science and Technology is to encourage faculty to improve teaching and learning methods, while providing guidance and suggestions for possible improvement.

Each instructor is encouraged to use available resources through IANR, CASNR, and the University. This would include participating in activities of on-campus organizations such as the CASNR Teaching, Learning, and Improvement Council and the UNL Center for Transformative Teaching. Some of the tools available are described at the following link: <https://casnr.unl.edu/teaching-improvement-reflection>. Additionally, IANR Professional Development Funds are available through the Department for support of off-campus instructional improvement training and continuing education.

Scope: This process of peer evaluation of teaching should be completed by all faculty with any level of teaching appointment associated with the Food Science and Technology Department.

Teaching Plan Development: The instructor develops a teaching plan consisting of course documents (i.e. syllabus, learning goals and objectives, assessment of learning such as exams, quizzes, homework, etc.) and a letter in which the instructor identifies the steps that are implemented to achieve the desired learning objectives.

Review Requests and Reviewer Definition:

For Faculty teaching in Lincoln, NE- All faculty within the Department of Food Science and Technology who have taught a minimum of 3 semesters would qualify as peer-review faculty. Each instructor seeking a review will select one to two reviewers from the list of peer review faculty. Reviewers external to the Department can be solicited. The selection of the reviewers should be approved by the Chair of the Department to create an efficient and fair process across the Department.

For Faculty teaching in China - The 3+1 faculty whose teaching is being conducted at Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University will undergo peer review on the same schedule, and using the same criteria, as faculty teaching at UNL. Ideally, their peer reviews can be conducted in one of three ways: (1) during one of the many annual visits by Lincoln-based faculty to NWAUFU; (2) by video-recording of lectures that are

submitted for review at UNL; or (3) by a peer review process among 3+1 faculty at NWAUFU.

Review frequency

New (non-tenured) tenure-track faculty: Peer teaching assessment should be completed at least twice before submitting tenure and promotion packet. For faculty who are near standing for promotion at the time of adoption of this document, exception will be made and alternative means of evaluation will be allowed to stand for the peer review(s).

Tenured faculty: A minimum of two peer teaching assessments should be completed within each seven year period after being tenured.

Non-tenure-track faculty: For professor of practice and other non-tenure-track teaching faculty, a minimum of two peer teaching assessments should be completed within the period before or between promotions.

Reviews may be requested as often as once a year. The peer teaching assessment can be carried out on face to face or online courses; as well as on other forms of transfer of knowledge such as workshops, guest lectures, and other outreach activities.

Review Procedure:

a. Initial Meeting:

For knowledge transfer activities/instructors under evaluation for the first time: The instructor should develop a plan where he/she describes the steps to transfer knowledge and the method(s) by which that might be assessed. Goals and outcomes should be defined. The reviewer(s) and instructor should have an initial meeting prior to the start of the activity to communicate these goals and discuss the implementation of the plan.

For knowledge transfer activities (i.e. courses or workshops) under ongoing evaluation: The instructor should develop a plan where he/she describes the steps for improving teaching and the method(s) by which those improvements might be assessed. Goals and outcomes should be defined. The reviewer(s) and instructor should have an initial meeting prior to the start of the activity to communicate these goals and discuss the implementation of the improvement plan.

b. During the Semester: The reviewers should visit the classroom, view recordings of the lectures or be engaged in the online course modules as necessary to assess teaching and/or the implementation of the teaching improvement plan. The instructor and reviewer(s) should constructively discuss the outcome of the new or improved teaching plan and the assessment tools used to measure student learning. The reviewer should attend at least 1-3 lectures over the course of the activity. The

Department will provide samples of evaluation tools to the reviewers to facilitate their discussion with the candidate.

c. After the Course is Completed: The instructor completes an action plan that describes the steps, procedures, improvements, and complications to improve teaching and learning in consultation with the reviewer(s).

Reporting and Reflection:

a. Verbal Debrief: The reviewer(s) and instructor discuss the teaching videos, materials and outcomes together to encourage introspection and self-evaluation on teaching style, teaching methods and possible areas for improvements. To encourage honest dialogue, this should be confidential and not shared with others.

b. Action Plan: With input from the reviewer(s), the instructor creates an action plan in writing to enhance and improve teaching performance. This should be recorded in Activity Insight and included in files for promotion and tenure. This plan should be focused on the improvement goals chosen by the instructor and his/her steps to meet it.

c. Department validation of the review for promotion and/or tenure: The chair of the Department shall receive a confidential summary of the review signed by both the reviewer and the reviewee. The chair of the Department shall provide a letter addressed to the candidate for promotion and/or tenure limited to the following components: date of the reviews, activity(ies) reviewed, number of reviewers for each activity (without name of the reviewer(s)). The letter will be provided as an attachment by the candidate.

Appellate Process:

a. Reviewee disagrees with summary letter: Following efforts to resolve the disagreement between the reviewer and the reviewee, if disagreement persists, the reviewee has the right to refuse to sign. The summary still moves on to the Department Chair, who agrees that the peer review has been completed for this activity.