

Key Steps in the Process for Peer Observation

1. Plan the Peer Observation

- Select who will be doing the peer observation. This may vary by departments. Examples include:
 - a. Peer observer chosen by the Chair,
 - b. By the faculty member being reviewed, or,
 - c. A combination of the two.
- Coordinate to determine the date of the classroom visit and arrange a pre-observation meeting between the instructor and observer.
- Determine which instrument is most appropriate for assessing the classroom session.
 - a. What type of course is this?
 - b. Does the department have a specific peer observation form?

2. The Pre-Observation Meeting

- Must take place prior to the classroom visit and preferably within 48 hours of the visit (if possible).
- At this meeting, the *instructor* should:
 - a. Confirm when and where the class meets.
 - b. Mention any preference regarding where the observer should be seated.
 - c. Provide the observer with a copy of the syllabus and/or other pertinent materials relevant for this particular class.
 - d. Indicate the instructional goals (learning outcomes) for the class to be observed.
 - e. Describe what is planned for the class, including teaching strategies or issues.
 - f. Explain what students have been asked to do in preparation for the class.
 - g. Indicate anything to which the observer may want to pay special attention.
 - h. Discuss expectations regarding student interaction during the observed class.
 - i. Recommend the time needed for a meaningful observation (i.e., how long does the observer need to remain in the classroom).
- At this meeting, the *observer* should:
 - a. Review the observational instrument with the instructor.
 - b. Review the department's teaching standards.
 - c. Ask the instructor if there is anything to which he/she should pay special attention, if not previously identified by the instructor.
 - d. Ask the instructor about prior observations and feedback from those sessions as a way to connect the current observation with previous ones (if any).
 - e. Schedule a post-observation meeting.

3. The Classroom Observation

- During the classroom observation, the *instructor* should:
 - a. Introduce the reviewer to the students and briefly explain the purpose of the visit.
 - b. Answer any questions the students may have regarding the visit.
- During the classroom observation, the *observer* should:
 - a. Observe the class using the instrument chosen in (1).

- b. Record any impressions, thoughts, or questions to be discussed with the instructor at the post-observation meeting.
- c. Refrain from participating directly in the course unless asked to do so.

4. The Post-Observation Meeting

- This meeting should take place within one week following the classroom observation.
- At this meeting, the *instructor* should:
 - a. Describe what went well with the class and what may need to be changed in order to improve.
 - b. Indicate anything that was unusual about the class.
- At this meeting, the *observer* should:
 - a. Discuss with the instructor what she or he thought went well and what, if anything, could have been improved.
 - b. Describe (not evaluate) what was observed during class.
 - c. Provide any other useful feedback to the instructor.

5. Writing the Letter

- Following the post-observation meeting, the observer writes the letter.
- The observer provides a copy of the letter to the instructor.
- The observer submits a copy of the letter to the department Chair.

The process laid out in this document is largely meant for summative evaluation purposes, though there are elements that can also be used in a formative evaluation process as well. Please be clear that formative and summative evaluation have different aims and should be conducted separately. More information on a process which is more directly related to formative evaluation of teaching is forthcoming from LMU's Committee on the Comprehensive Evaluation of Teaching.