

Policy and Procedures for Peer Review of Instruction
Department of Crop and Soil Sciences

The Department of Crop and Soil Sciences instituted a system for peer review of instruction in 1994. To date, most of these reviews have been made for faculty members applying for promotion and have been made on a sporadic basis. The policy of the University of Georgia, however, is that all faculty activities be peer reviewed. Thus, the Department intends to formalize the instructional review process and institute a system to ensure that all faculty members with an instruction appointment undergo regular peer review of their classroom instruction activities.

Instructional review schedule:

The Department Head will determine which of the faculty should have a peer instructional review during the upcoming semester or academic year. Only those faculty members who have an instruction appointment and teach formal classes should be evaluated. The following schedule is suggested for each faculty rank to ensure that all faculty members involved in the instructional program are regularly evaluated.

Assistant Professors and other non-tenured tenure-track faculty: The evaluation should be made during the fourth or fifth year after the initial appointment to UGA and/or at least one year prior to application for promotion and/or tenure.

Associate Professors: The evaluation should be made during the third or fourth year after promotion to the present rank and at least one year prior to application for promotion to Professor.

Professors: The peer evaluation of instruction should be in the year prior to or during the year the faculty member is scheduled for post-tenure review.

At current staffing numbers, four faculty members should be evaluated each year assuming a five-year rotation.

Instructional review process:

There are two separate and equal components of the review process. The first is the course content and materials presented to students, and the second is the instructor's teaching methods and effectiveness in the classroom.

At least one month prior to the beginning of the semester during which the class/instructor will be reviewed, the instructor will provide the Department Head with names of five potential committee members. The Department head will select three members to form the instructional review committee, and will designate one as committee chair. All committee members should be actively teaching and at least one must be from a campus other than that of the faculty member being reviewed. Membership on this committee is open to all tenured and tenure-track in the University regardless of location, departmental affiliation, or instructional appointment. The

faculty member can choose which class will be evaluated if he/she will be teaching multiple courses during the semester or year during which the review is scheduled.

The committee chair will request that the faculty member being review submit a copy of 1) the class syllabus, 2) the topical outline of the class if separate from the syllabus, 3) materials made available to students (class handouts, etc.), 4) homework assignments, and 5) all exams from the most recent semester during which the class was taught. An electronic copy, a link to the class web page, or a mixture of formats is acceptable. These materials will be the basis for the review of course content and materials presented to students. They will be made available to the other two committee members for their evaluation. Because the subject matter may be outside the expertise of the review committee, these materials will also be sent to a three external faculty members who teach a similar course at other universities. The external reviewers of course materials will be asked to provide a blind evaluation of 1) the subject matter included in the course, i.e. are all important topics being addressed and are all topics covered needed 2) the appropriateness of the text if a text is required, 3) adequacy, need, and clarity of materials made available to students, 4) adequacy and level of difficulty of homework assignments and required readings, 5) level of difficulty and completeness of exams. Members of the review committee will be expected to provide a similar critique if they feel qualified to do so.

Each of the three committee members will be expected to attend a minimum of one class lecture to provide the basis for evaluation of the instructor's teaching methods and effectiveness in the classroom. These classroom observations should be coordinated with the instructor to ensure the visit will be during an appropriate class meeting, i.e. an exam or other atypical activity is not scheduled. At the discretion of the committee chair, committee members may review "in-class" instruction using videotape, video conferencing or teleconferencing; however, at least one committee member must attend a classroom lecture.

Within one month after the end of the semester during which the evaluation was done, the committee chair should transmit a written report of the evaluation to the Department Head. The method used to solicit committee input and to summarize committee and external reviewer comments will be at the discretion of the committee chair. In most cases, a one- to two-page report should be sufficient to summarize the findings and recommendations of the committee. The Department Head should provide a copy of this report to the faculty member who was evaluated and subsequently meet with the faculty member (with or without the review committee) to discuss the committee report. At his or her discretion, the Department Head may wish to meet with the review committee chair to discuss findings and recommendations of the committee prior to meeting with the faculty member being reviewed.

Last Updated: 6/4/2008