

## USC Aiken - Peer Evaluation of Teaching "Quick Guide"

Purpose: Performance review is intended to be both **formative** (designed to be a supportive process that promotes self-improvement) and **summative** (assesses and judges performance).

- Peer observation provides additional mentoring and professional development for new faculty.
- Peer observation reports augment student evaluations and self-evaluation for a faculty member.

Application of Policy: All full-time faculty must submit peer/unit head reviews of classroom teaching in the years in which they are conducted. (See *Overview and Timing* section.)

- Policy in effect for faculty hired on or after **August 16, 2005**. Revisions pertaining to first year faculty will be applicable to all faculty who begin full-time appointments on or after **August 16, 2008**.

Overview and Timing: Classroom observations of teaching of tenure-track faculty and instructors will be conducted in the first and second years and early in the year of application for tenure and/or promotion or the fifth year (whichever comes first).

Number of Observations: 8 observations should be conducted for tenure-track assistant professors and full-time instructors.

- **First year observations**  
Conducted by: Faculty member's unit head (2 observations) and faculty member's peer mentor (2 observations).
  - At least one by each observer conducted in the fall semester.
- **Second year observations**  
Conducted by: Unit head (1 observation) and tenured faculty member or senior instructor in the same field as the faculty member being observed (1 observation). At least one second year visit should be conducted by the end of November.
  - *Peer observer in second year must be someone who has not observed this faculty member prior.*
- **Subsequent observations** (Should be conducted and reports completed in time to be included in the Promotion and Tenure or Post Tenure Review process).  
Conducted by: Unit head (1 observation) and tenured faculty member or senior instructor in the same or closely related field as the faculty member being observed (1 observation).
  - *Peer observers in subsequent years must not have observed this faculty member prior.*

Scheduling Observations: Each observer will make announced visits to two different courses/labs/field trips on dates that are agreed upon with the faculty member. The observer will remain for the duration of the 50 or 75 minute class or for at least an hour of a longer class period.

Reports: Please note that peer reviews in the first two years are strictly to be formative in nature, and there is no expectation nor requirement that such reviews are shared with the faculty member's supervisor, other than to indicate that the reviews are completed. Each observer will provide a copy to the faculty member and will meet with that faculty member to discuss the report within 2 weeks of the observation. The faculty member has the right to attach a rejoinder or may request an additional observation. The report is part of the faculty member's file that is maintained by the unit head and will be incorporated by the unit head into his/her annual evaluations/recommendations for reappointment and into his/her recommendations for that faculty member for tenure, promotion, and post tenure review.