

University of California, Merced

Evaluation of Instruction

1. UC Merced Senate Draft Evaluation of Instruction Policy
2. UC Merced Draft Policy and Procedures for Student Evaluation of Instruction, 2005-06

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DRAFT POLICIES ON EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION

I. Criteria for advancement and promotion

The University community believes that excellence in teaching and excellence in scholarship go hand in hand, and that both are essential duties of every faculty member. Promotion depends upon the demonstration of excellence in both areas.

The essential question in the evaluation of teaching is whether the candidate contributes in an effective, creative, and appropriate way to the teaching mission of the institution. Attention should be paid to the varieties of demands placed on instructors and the range of teaching activities called for in various disciplines and at various levels. Clear documentation of ability in teaching must be included in all advancement and promotion cases. While no two cases will be alike, there are several recurring themes which may be addressed in the preparation of the teaching component and several useful techniques for verifying performance in these areas.

II. Aspects of teaching to be evaluated

The following components of teaching may be evaluated in a personnel review decision.

Design and redesign of courses. Does the course "work"? Are the course objectives reasonable? Are course requirements clearly stated and communicated to students? Is the course continuously updated to reflect recent developments in the field?

Presentation of material. Does the instructor convey enthusiasm for the subject matter? Does the instructor present material with logic and force, arousing curiosity in beginning students and stimulating advanced students to creative work?

Command of the subject. Is the instructor knowledgeable in the subject matter of the courses he or she teaches? Does the instructor engage in reading or research in the subject matter of the course in order to keep up to date with current developments?

Contributions to curriculum and instruction. Has the instructor developed instructional materials, such as textbooks, videotapes, computer courseware, slides, publications related to teaching, or the like? In what ways has the instructor participated in school or campus curriculum design or development efforts?

Directing student research. How active is the instructor in guiding the research projects of graduate and undergraduate students?

Advising. What formal advising duties or informal advising has the instructor undertaken? How much time does the instructor spend consulting with students?

Guiding and supervising graduate student instructors. To what extent has the instructor prepared, trained, and supervised graduate student instructors?

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III. Sources and methods for evaluating teaching

Each school can be expected to have a unique culture which supports and encourages teaching excellence and which will have its own traditions of teaching evaluation that serve to define and reinforce that culture. Schools should work to improve their evaluation methods and seek to make them supportive and encouraging rather than investigative or punitive. The following is a list of sources of information for evaluating teaching; schools will choose those most appropriate for the particular case.

The candidate's **faculty colleagues** who have appropriate expertise in the discipline are best able to evaluate the scholarship that informs the design and organization of courses and curriculum, the choice or development of texts and other instructional materials (syllabus, handouts, etc.), the nature of examinations and assignments, and so on.

Current students can comment on an instructor's ability to communicate clearly, the extent and level of the instructor's course preparation, whether the instructor makes effective use of class time, how sensitive and responsive the instructor is to difficulties students may be having in the course, the workload, and so on. Students should not be used to judge the adequacy, relevance, and timeliness of the course content nor the breadth of the instructor's knowledge and scholarship.

Former students can comment on the long-term effectiveness of the candidate's teaching: for example, the role of the instructor's courses in preparing the student for advanced study or work in the discipline.

If the candidate teaches with **graduate student instructors**, these students can often comment on the teachers role and effectiveness in the classroom and in preparing, training, supervising and evaluating GSIs.

Self-evaluations can be both descriptive and evaluative and may address such issues as teaching goals and philosophy, involvement in curriculum projects, efforts to improve teaching, and so on.

Various methods can be used to gather data from these sources: rating forms or detailed questionnaires, written appraisals (letters or responses to open-ended questions on rating forms), interviews, observations, and so on. For example, colleagues can evaluate instructional materials or observe an instructor's classroom teaching. Students can complete evaluation forms at the end of a course, participate in individual or group interviews, or fill out surveys when they graduate.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADMINISTERING AND ANALYZING STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

Schools may use any type of evaluation form to obtain student opinion. It is recommended that school evaluation forms give students the opportunity both to numerically rate instructors and to comment narratively on instructors' performance.

Frequency of administration. Every course should be evaluated by students each time it is offered. Evaluation data from each course should be included in the dossier for personnel review, with the following exceptions: New assistant professors may choose not to have data from their first year of teaching reported, and experienced faculty members teaching a new or experimental course for the first time may decide to omit evaluation data from their review.

Procedures for administering student evaluation forms. Schools have the prerogative to determine the nature of their questionnaire, but procedures for administering forms should be fair and standardized across campus. Sufficient class time, at some time during the last two weeks of the term, should be allowed for students to fill out questionnaires. Students should be informed about the purpose of the evaluation. The instructor should designate a student from the class, or a staff person, to supervise the evaluation. Students should complete the questionnaires while the faculty member is absent from the room. The designated student or departmental staff person should collect the evaluation forms, place them in an envelope, and file it with the school. The responses should be summarized by designated school staff and made available to the instructor only after final grades have been submitted.

Schools should retain raw student evaluation data for three years for all faculty; summary information (including statistical data and syntheses of open ended responses) should become a permanent part of the instructor's file.

School deans or chairs should meet with faculty members whose ratings are significantly below school norms to discuss ways in which they might improve their teaching.

Draft Teaching Evaluation Policies and Procedures For Use During 2005-2006

Frequency of administration. Every course is to be evaluated by students each time it is offered. Evaluation data from each course will be included in the file for personnel review.

Procedures for administering student evaluation forms.

In order to ensure there is a fair and standardized procedure for obtaining student evaluations across campus the following procedure is described below:

Sufficient class time is designated for students to fill out questionnaires (evaluations are best not distributed at the final exam, when students have other things on their minds, but rather during the last two weeks of the term).

Students are informed about the purpose of the evaluation.

The School works with instructor to designate who will supervise the evaluation.

Students complete the questionnaires while the faculty member is absent from the room.

The designated individual collects the evaluation forms and places them in an envelope, noting on the outside the instructor's name, the course number, the total number of students present, the total number of forms collected and the date. The designated individual then signs the envelope and returns it to the School office.

The quantitative and qualitative responses are summarized and placed in the secured files in the School. The report and evaluations are made available to the instructor only after final grades have been submitted.

Procedures for analyzing student evaluation forms.

The summary must include the number of completed questionnaires upon which the summary data are based and the percentage of class enrollment represented by the data. If summaries indicate less than two-thirds return of student evaluations, an explanation for the missing data must be included.

Data will be summarized separately for each offering of each course. (Aggregating data for several different courses may obscure differences in teaching effectiveness for various kinds of instruction and may raise questions of proper weighting of the responses in each course. Aggregating data for several offerings of the same course may obscure long-term trends toward increased or decreased student satisfaction.)

The summary of student questionnaires with questions that are quantifiable, should include:

- a. frequency distribution of student ratings for each item;
- b. average response, specified as either the mean, mode, or median;
- c. norms (averages) or comparison norms on key items for courses of a similar size, level, and kind of instruction (e.g., laboratory seminar, lecture, studio) will need to be developed as UC Merced has more semesters of instruction in order to create the norms.

For questions that are qualitative, the responses (or a representative sample in large classes) should be summarized by the designated individual in such a way that the full range of comments as well as their preponderance is accurately represented.

Course Evaluation Instructions for Fall 2005

I. Evaluation Form For Instructors

Please print the name of your instructor and the course title and number.

Instructor: _____ Course title and number: _____

Use the scale below to rate the Instructor on the following statements:

Not at all *Moderately* *Extremely*
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Statements

Rating

| |
|---|
| 1. This class is well organized. |
| 2. I know what is expected of me in this class. |
| 3. The instructor seems well prepared for class. |
| 4. The instructor explains clearly. |
| 5. There is sufficient time in class for questions and discussion. |
| 6. The instructor answers student questions well. |
| 7. The instructor displays enthusiasm for the subject matter. |
| 8. Gives interesting and stimulating assignments that are valuable components of this course. |
| 9. Gives exams that permit students to show their understanding. |
| 10. Grading practices in this course are fair. |
| 11. The instructor is available for consultation outside of class. |
| 12. In this class, I am treated equitably and with respect. |
| 13. I learned a great deal in this course. |
| 14. Overall effectiveness of this instructor. |
| 15. How worthwhile was this course compared with others at UC Merced? |

II. Evaluation Form For Instructors- General written comments

Please answer the following questions:

1. What do you appreciate most about the course or instructor?
2. Please identify what you perceive to be the greatest strengths and weaknesses of this instructor's teaching.
3. What could the instructor do to improve this course?
4. Other comments or suggestions.

Course Evaluation For Teaching Assistants Fall 2005

Please print the name of your TA, the course title, and section you are evaluating.

TA Name: _____

Course: _____ Section Number: _____

Use the scale below to rate the TA on the following statements:

*Not at all
effective*

*Moderately
effective*

*Extremely
effective*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Statements

Rating

| |
|---|
| 1. Conducts well organized class sessions. |
| 2. Appears knowledgeable about the subject material. |
| 3. Appears enthusiastic for the subject matter. |
| 4. Helps me understand and learn what is expected in the course. |
| 5. Encourages questions from students. |
| 6. Gives clear explanations. |
| 7. Recognizes when we are confused and tries to reduce the confusion. |
| 8. Is helpful out of class or during office hours. |
| 9. Treats me equitably and with respect. |
| 10. Overall effectiveness of the TA. |

Evaluation Form – Laboratory Instruction

Lab Course: _____ Instructor's Name: _____

Use the scale below to rate your instructor on the following statements.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| <i>Not at all effective</i> | | <i>Moderately effective</i> | | <i>Extremely effective</i> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | | | 6 | 7 |

Statements

Rating

| |
|---|
| 1. The instructor introduces labs well. |
| 2. The rationale for the lab exercises is clear to me. |
| 3. Lab sessions are well organized. |
| 4. Lab procedures are explained clearly. |
| 5. There is sufficient time in class for questions and discussions. |
| 6. The facilities for this lab are good. |
| 7. Lab assignments are reasonable in length and difficulty. |
| 8. I had sufficient opportunity to use the lab facilities. |
| 9. Assistance is available throughout the lab sessions. |
| 10. My instructor returns lab assignments quickly enough for me to benefit. |
| 11. Grades are assigned fairly and impartially. |
| 12. I learned a great deal in this lab. |
| 13. In this class, I am treated equitably and with respect. |
| 14. Overall effectiveness of this instructor. |