



University Policy Statement

UPS 210.080

OBSERVATIONS OF INSTRUCTION

I. Purpose of Observations

“Observations” in this document refers to any peer observations of instruction regardless of modality. The primary goal of observations is to improve teaching and student learning through constructive feedback. These observations can be used informally for professional development or used as part of the personnel process. Each department (or equivalent) shall decide via their normal governance procedures if observations will be used as part of the personnel process (evaluation, retention, promotion, range elevation) and develop the process and procedures in the department’s personnel documents in accordance with UPS 210.000, UPS 210.002, and/or UPS 210.070.

II. Scheduling Observations

Article 15.14 of the 2022-2024 Collective Bargaining Agreement states:

When classroom visits are utilized as part of the evaluation of a faculty unit employee under this Article, the individual faculty unit employee being evaluated shall be provided a notice of at least five (5) days that a classroom visit, online observation, and/or review of online content is to take place. There shall be consultation between the faculty member being evaluated and the individual who visits their class(es) regarding the classes to be visited and the scheduling of such visits.

At CSUF, the individual being observed shall be given notice of the day, time, and class that will be observed at least five business days prior to the visit. These observations and their duration shall be scheduled after consultation between the faculty member being observed and the observer. Consultation need not occur in person. The observations shall also be scheduled during a class session that reflects regular class topics and instruction, e.g., not the first day of class nor when an exam is being administered or returned.

For online classes departments shall determine the most appropriate methodology. Online observations shall be scheduled in the same manner as in-class observations. The duration of online observation for synchronous or hybrid classes shall be consistent with that of in-person classes. For asynchronous courses, evaluation shall be limited to the content equivalent of one class meeting, such as a weekly module, and overall organizational structure.

III. Eligible Observers

For observations that are a required element of the evaluation process for instructional faculty, observations shall be conducted by any full-time CSUF faculty of the same or higher rank. Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP) faculty may perform observations provided they are actively employed during the observation. Informal observations may be conducted by any faculty member. Non tenured/tenure-track faculty shall not be assigned to perform observations unless they are compensated for non-instructional duties.

IV. Best Practices for Observations

- a. The Department Chair, Department Personnel Committee Chair, or another designated faculty member should orient and train faculty who will be conducting observations.
- b. Faculty doing observations should contact faculty being observed to discuss the process and purpose of observations. Faculty being observed should provide their syllabus at or before this discussion.
- c. Observers should review the course syllabus before the observation and compare it with requirements outlined in UPS 300.004. Moreover, observers should consider whether student learning outcomes, assignments and assessments, performance expectations, and grading criteria are included and clear. They should also consider whether expectations, assignments, assessments, and outcomes are in alignment.
- d. Observers should provide written feedback promptly. This feedback should discuss the strength and weaknesses of the faculty member's lesson and the instructional environment as well as constructive comments for improvement. The observer and observed should also have a follow-up meeting to discuss the observation.
- e. The observed faculty will have the right to respond to a required observation in writing and have that response included in future portfolios.
- f. Departments should develop or use an observation instrument or guidelines (e.g., the Faculty Development Center's Peer Observation Process for Professional Development; Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM (Smith et al., 2017). These instruments and guidelines should consider whether the course is hybrid, online, or face to face.

Source: Faculty Affairs Committee

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