Student Evaluations of Course and Instruction

Student evaluations help provide information necessary for documenting excellent or effective teaching, and can be critical to the individual case in a promotion or tenure dossier. Teaching can be evaluated in several areas, including subject matter mastery, curriculum development, course design, delivery of instruction, assessment of instruction, and availability to students. Student comments, and the numerical ratings on key issues (e.g., “Overall, I rate this instructor as outstanding;” “Overall, I rate this course as outstanding;” The instructor is effective in teaching the subject matter of this course;” The instructor encourages active thinking/participating”) are important tools for the Promotion and Tenure Committees’ assessments of a candidate’s teaching quality.

Using forms developed by BEST (Bureau of Evaluative Studies and Testing), the School of Optometry formally conducts evaluations of teaching for each course at the completion of each semester. Forms are provided by the Dean’s Office for distribution by faculty to their respective classes. The completed forms are collected and returned to the Dean’s Office by the class representative. The evaluative analysis is conducted by BEST and the results are returned to the Dean’s Office and the faculty member.

Quality of Teaching as Evaluated by the Peer Review Committee

The School of Optometry’s Peer Review Committee is advisory to the dean. The committee is to: assess the performance in teaching, research/creative activities and service; provide feedback / constructive criticism to the faculty members.

The written review produced by the committee will be based on the annual faculty summary report, faculty statement of effort, student teaching evaluations, (possibly patient evaluations), letters from other faculty and past evaluations when available.

The Associate Deans will review the committee’s reports and add any comments based on their interactions with the faculty throughout the year. The Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will review each report and add any comments. The Dean and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will convey the report to each faculty member.

Quality of Teaching as a Factor in Salary Setting and Reappointments

When considering salary setting and reappointment the Dean will work with the Peer Review/Merit Consultative Committee in its consultative role to set the annual merit raises. Input from the associate deans helps ensure that the information and scores provided are properly interpreted for merit.
considerations. Tenure track faculty are evaluated on teaching, research and service, clinical rank faculty on the basis of teaching and service, and lecturers on the basis of teaching.

**Quality of Teaching in Promotion and Tenure Recommendations**

The dossier should contain objective evidence of the candidate’s performance as a teacher, including a complete description of the characteristics and quality of the candidate’s teaching. If teaching is identified as the area of excellence, it is expected that the candidate will demonstrate a reputation for teaching that extends beyond the campus and University.

Course outlines/syllabi and similar material and activities in class preparation may be included as evidence of teaching quality. Other evidence can include descriptions of curricular innovations and course changes, new course development efforts, summaries of teaching and course evaluations by students, student comments from in-class evaluations, evaluations and observations by peers, unsolicited letters from former students, continuing education presentations, textbooks, articles on teaching, handouts, CDs, videos, and distributed learning on the Internet.

Evaluations of the candidate by former students and comments from School alumni assist in documenting the impact of the candidate’s teaching on student learning and outcomes. Solicited evaluations from former students help provide judgments about the value of the educational experience to “real world” performance in a professional, academic and/or research setting. Unsolicited comments often provide testimony to the quality of the candidate’s teaching and/or the relationship of the candidate’s teaching to alumni successes.

Peer evaluations complement student evaluations and contribute to the assessment of the candidate’s educational strategies and effectiveness as a teacher. Evaluations can occur through direct observations of teaching in the classroom, laboratory and/or clinic. An important aspect of peer evaluations is the review of specific course materials, including notes, textbooks and other teaching publications, outlines, syllabi, videos, cases, and lab manuals. Course portfolios can help document the intellectual work of teaching and provide evidence of teaching effectiveness and excellence. According to the IU Course Portfolio Initiative, a course portfolio can provide a comprehensive account of approaches to teaching from classroom pedagogy to learning outcomes and provide access for independent review. Evaluations by peers also help assess the impact of the candidate’s teaching on faculty and institutions outside Indiana University.

Additional information on how teaching is evaluated in the promotion and tenure process may be found in the *Promotion and Tenure Guidebook for Optometry* and the *Clinical Rank Promotion Guide for Optometry*.

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