



## **EDST Policy on Formative Peer Review of Teaching for Sessional Lecturers**

(approved at the February 17, 2022 department meeting)

### **Preamble**

Peer Review of Teaching (PRT) for sessional lecturers is an important responsibility for two major reasons. First, many sessional lecturers are doctoral students or recent graduates who will benefit from a formative peer review that supports instructor growth and enhances their teaching capacities. Second, undertaking a PRT of sessional lecturers by faculty provides the EDST community an important way to shape and foster a collegial teaching culture based on ongoing reciprocal learning and exchange. *Summative* peer reviews for sessional lecturers are done to meet the requirements of the UBC-UBCFA (2019-2022) collective agreement (Part 7, Article 8.02) that stipulates that teaching effectiveness is to be based on more than student evaluations. Any serious concerns that arise in the course of a formative peer review can prompt a summative peer review.

### **Procedures for Formative Peer Reviews of Teaching for Sessional Lecturers**

**Overview:** A formative peer review of teaching consists in one reviewer assessing the quality of the sessional lecturer’s approach and pedagogy. In the case of *face-to-face and blended teaching*, this includes a review of the course syllabus, an initial meeting with the instructor, observation of one class (either in person or, if applicable, online and synchronous), and a debrief and sharing of a draft report (can be done via email or another format). In the case of *online (asynchronous) teaching*, this includes a review of the course syllabus and online course, an initial meeting with the instructor, a mid-point “observation” of the course as it runs (e.g., looking at student engagement in the online format), and a debrief and sharing of a draft report (can be done via email or another format).

- A formative peer review of teaching should be completed under the following circumstances:
  - for a course at a different level (i.e., undergraduate vs. graduate);
  - if the last time the sessional lecturer taught successfully was a number of years ago.

- EDST has two forms<sup>1</sup> to guide the initial observation of either a class session or how an asynchronous course is unfolding online (mid-way through the course where possible) and provide a scaffolding for the FPRoT report.
- Formative reviews are completed by one faculty member, ideally one who is knowledgeable about the course content and its methods of teaching.
- Sessional lecturers should be given the results of their formative peer review of teaching—in the form of a draft report—as soon as possible. Given that different courses are taught at different intervals of time, it is understood that the turnaround time for feedback may be a bit longer than either the next class (in the case of a F2F or blended course) or after the mid-point “observation” of the course as it runs (in the case of an online, asynchronous course).
- Note that formal student feedback is *not* solicited in the formative review process because, by definition, it is done *before* the term is over (which is when student evaluations are normally available).<sup>2</sup>
- If no concerns are raised in the formative review and student feedback is positive (as indicated by student evaluations), the sessional lecturer should be scheduled for another formative assessment at the instigation of the Deputy Head (e.g., if the last time the sessional lecturer taught successfully was more than 12 months ago; if they are teaching a course in a new area or at a different level; at the request of the sessional lecturer).
- If serious concerns are raised during the formative review, either by the peer reviewer or by other means,<sup>3</sup> the sessional lecturer should be given guidance on how to improve (recommendations for remediation). Once this is done, a second formative peer teaching review should be completed within the same term.
- Low student evaluations or student concerns would also indicate a need for earlier review or—depending on the severity of the concerns—scheduling a more formal **summative** teaching review using an additional peer review by a second faculty member and the relevant Summative Peer Review of Teaching form in the *Faculty of Education Guidelines for Practice*.
- The reviewed sessional lecturer has the option to review the draft report before it is submitted to the Deputy Head, to correct any factual errors or provide contextual response points to the reviewer.
- Copies of all peer reviews are sent to the Deputy Head and are held in the sessional lecturer’s EDST file.

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<sup>1</sup> Appended to this policy are two forms to be used in formative reviews, one for *face-to-face and blended* courses, the other for *online (asynchronous)* courses.

<sup>2</sup> Appended to this policy is a highly recommended process for the sessional lecturer to obtain anonymous, informal, early-in-the-term student feedback via the “Quizzes” feature of Canvas course shells.

<sup>3</sup> Although comparatively rare, students with serious concerns about a sessional lecturer’s teaching performance may bypass the instructor and report their concerns to the Department; such concerns get referred to the Deputy Head and must be handled in accordance with Article 7 of the Collective Agreement.

- In addition, the sessional lecturer being reviewed has the opportunity to submit a written response to the PRT report submitted to the Deputy Head. This written response must normally be submitted within two weeks of the date that the Deputy Head receives the PRT report. In the written response, the sessional lecturer can raise any concerns they have with the reviewer's report.

### **Assignment of Peer Reviewer**

The Deputy Head decides who to ask to serve as a peer reviewer. As part of this process, the DH will make sure that the peer reviewer has not served, or is not serving, as a research supervisor or co-supervisor for the sessional lecturer. The reason for this is to avoid any perceived conflict of interest and to recognize student-supervisor power relations.

All things equal, the Deputy Head will keep in mind whether the peer reviewer has knowledge of the course that the sessional lecturer is teaching, both its subject matter and methods of teaching. It is understood, however, that the reviews are focused on the teaching (for elaboration, see "Focus of the Peer Review," below) rather than the course content, because, in most cases, the sessional lecturers will not have designed the courses they are teaching.

### **Fairness of Selection Process**

All things equal, the Deputy Head will endeavor to select a peer reviewer who has not done a PRT or has not done one recently in comparison to colleagues. The DH, in consultation with the Administrative Manager, will also track who has served on SPRoT committees for faculty members and lecturers, while considering that these service roles differ in a few significant ways from formative peer reviews for sessional lecturers (i.e., formative versus summative, one reviewer doing one observation).

### **Focus of the Peer Review**

UBC's *Collective Agreement* stipulates that, "Evaluation of teaching shall be based on the effectiveness rather than the popularity of the Sessional Lecturer, as indicated by command over subject matter, familiarity with recent developments in the field, preparedness, presentation, accessibility to students and influence on the intellectual and scholarly development of students" (Part 7, Article 8.02). Within EDST, specifically, the formative peer review will focus on (a) setting clear goals for student learning and providing feedback, (b) strategies for student engagement or facilitation of learning, (c) organization and planning of lessons or modules, (d) effective communication with students or online presence and facilitation of community, (e) attention to student intellectual growth, (f) classroom and/or learning platform management, and (g) overall quality of the instructor's approach or pedagogy.

## **PRT Forms and Report Format**

EDST has two versions of a form (one for F2F or blended teaching, the other for online asynchronous teaching) that peer reviewers can use. The form is meant to provide a handy summary of key categories that can inform the review, and it also contains space for narrative comments. The form provides a scaffolding for the FPRoT written report. The reviewer also has the option of writing a narrative report. In any case, *the reviewer should signal in the report's conclusion whether the teaching observed is satisfactory or not*. If concerns are raised, then a second observation will, in all likelihood, need to be scheduled. Please note: if, on the basis of the course observation (either a F2F or synchronous class or a review of an online asynchronous course at its mid-point), the peer reviewer has serious concerns, they should immediately inform the Deputy Head via email. In the case of a face-to-face or blended course, timely communication is important so that an additional observer can be identified and a second observation date can be scheduled before the end of term. In the case of an online asynchronous course, timely communication is important so that an additional reviewer can be identified and given access to the course's learning platform to do an "observation" of the course as it is running before the end of term.

### **Related Background Documents:**

- The current (2019-2022) [Collective Agreement](#), Part 7, Articles 7 (Evaluation of Initial Appointment) and 8 (Performance Evaluation)
- [Summative Peer Review of Teaching: Faculty of Education Guidelines for Practice](#)



## EDST Formative ONLINE Teaching Assessment<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this formative online assessment is to support instructor growth and enhance teaching capacities. For this reason, sessional lecturers will normally be observed in any substantially new course that they teach, or if they request an observation, or if an observation has not been completed in a number of years. The observation is typically completed by a faculty member with knowledge of the course content, and this will require that the observer be given access to the online course. The observer will spend some time looking over the online course and, where feasible, spend time “observing” the course as it runs (or by looking at student engagement in the online format). Results will be shared and discussed with the instructors *as soon as possible following the observation* so that improvements can be made in the same term, if possible.

### ***Part A: Information to be completed by the sessional lecturer***

Course instructor:	Course number & section:
Course title:	
Assessment term/year:	Peer reviewer:

1. *Please describe your role, if any, in design and/or content authorship of this course. Describe any aspects of the course that you have modified.*

2. *Please describe your previous experience with online teaching, as well as how long you have been involved with the current course (e.g., is this your first time teaching it)?*

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to UBC’s Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education for granting us permission to adapt this form.

**Part B: Information to be completed by the peer reviewer**

*Note: Some areas may be marked N/A if the sessional lecturer did not design the course*

**Overall Course Content**

	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>
Course is clearly laid out and easy to navigate			
Content is significant/accurate/relevant			
Readings and materials are appropriate			
Content is consistent with course plan/outline			
Appropriate amount of material is included			
Space for questions and discussion			
Other:			
Other:			
Comments:			

**Structure/Layout**

	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>
Role of instructor & instructor availability are clear			
Student expectations are clear			
Assignments & expectations are clear			
Assignment assessment criteria are clear (e.g., inclusion of rubrics or other explanations as needed)			
Course structure demonstrates knowledge of the topic/content			
Includes examples effectively to communicate implications of content			
Consistently and accurately translates theory into practice			
Uses appropriate online teaching techniques and teaching aids			
Answers questions effectively & in a timely manner			
Overall academic rigor of course			

Other:			
Other:			
Comments:			

### **Instructor-Student Interactions**

	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>
Creates an online learning community for the course			
Elicits active involvement of students			
Shows respect for students (good rapport) in the online space			
Creates an online space where students feel safe to discuss and take risks			
Creates a space for students' ideas, experiences, and contributions			
Maintains student engagement			
Capitalizes on teachable moments			
Monitors student progress			
Encourages deeper thinking			
Other:			
Other:			
Comments:			

### **Overall Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness**

	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>
Overall quality of instructor's approach & pedagogy			

**Overall Comments & Recommendations (can be general or specific)**

Peer Reviewer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

The signature below indicates that the sessional lecturer has been given the completed observation form and FPRoT report and has discussed these results with the peer reviewer. This does not necessarily indicate agreement with the results.

Sessional Lecturer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:





## EDST Formative Observational Teaching Assessment<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of this formative observation is to support instructor growth and enhance teaching capacities. For this reason, sessional lecturers will normally be observed in any substantially new course that they teach, or if they request an observation, or if an observation has not been completed in a number of years. The observation is typically completed by a faculty member with knowledge of the course content, and it will be for approximately one hour of class time. Results will be shared and discussed with the instructors *as soon as possible following the observation* so that improvements can be made in the same term, if possible.

### ***Part A: Information to be completed by the sessional lecturer***

Course instructor:	Course number & section:
Course title:	
Observation date:	Peer reviewer:

1. Please indicate below any information about your role in teaching this course that may be especially relevant to the peer review (e.g., Is it your first time teaching it? Feel free to reflect on your own social locations or identity or positionality in relation to students in the class and/or topics being addressed?).

### ***Part B: Information to be completed by the peer reviewer***

#### **Organization**

	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exceptional
Level of preparation			
Timing/pacing			

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Logical progression and effective transitions			
Appropriate amount of material			
Time for questions and discussion			
Other:			
Other:			
Comments:			

## Presentation

	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Exceptional</b>
Communicates clearly and knowledgeably			
Content consistent with course aims & the depth of coverage is appropriate			
Knowledgeable about content (e.g., able to go beyond basic information; able to respond to broader questions and consider applications)			
Uses examples effectively to communicate implications of content			
Consistently and accurately translates theory into practice			
Uses appropriate teaching techniques and teaching aids (e.g., audio-visual)			
Answers questions effectively			
Overall academic rigor of presentation			
Other:			
Other:			
Comments:			

### Instructor-Student Interactions

	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exceptional
Elicits active involvement of students			
Shows respect for students (good rapport)			
Creates a climate where students feel safe to discuss and take risks			
Creates a space for students' ideas, experiences, and contributions			
Maintains student engagement			
Capitalizes on teachable moments			
Monitors student progress			
Encourages deeper thinking			
Other:			
Other:			
Comments:			

### Overall Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness

	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Exceptional
Overall quality of instructor's approach & pedagogy			

### Overall Comments & Recommendations (can be general or specific)

Peer Reviewer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The signature below indicates that the sessional lecturer has been given the completed observation form and FPRoT report and has discussed these results with the peer reviewer. This does not necessarily indicate agreement with the results.

Sessional Lecturer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Formative Peer Review of Teaching for Sessional Lecturers: Recommended Procedure for Obtaining Student Feedback**

Ideally, after the sessional lecturer has been hired but before the term starts:

- The Deputy Head and/or the Administrative Manager are in touch with the Teacher Education Coordinator and the ADHE Course Coordinator about upcoming peer reviews.<sup>1</sup>
- Course Coordinators can contextualize the recommendation that sessional instructors obtain student feedback via Canvas as part of the review process (e.g., that obtaining student comments on teaching early on is good pedagogical practice, that they will control the process and can choose whether and how to share the feedback with the peer reviewer).

Once the Canvas shell for the course is available and the sessional lecturer is adapting it:

- Use the “Quizzes” feature in Canvas to create a short, **anonymous** survey
- Choose a “quiz engine”: Select “classic quiz.”
- Guidelines:
  - DETAILS TAB:
  - Title the quiz:
    - Learner Experience Survey: The First Few Weeks
    - Early Course Check-In
  - Create a preamble (aka “Quiz Instructions”):
    - *“We are a few weeks into the term, and I would value your feedback on what has worked well so far and what might be improved going forward. I have made the “quiz” anonymous. There are 2 open-ended questions. Your responses will not be graded; they will help me think about what I might do to make the course better. This is an optional task for this course.”*
    - Feel free to adapt the above language to fit your particular course.
  - Check off these parameters:
    - Quiz type: Ungraded survey
    - Options: Keep submissions anonymous

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<sup>1</sup> The online MEd in Adult Learning and Global Change (ALGC) uses a learning management system (LMS) at Linköping University in Sweden rather than Canvas and sessional lecturers teach both UBC and non-UBC students. Therefore, soliciting student feedback early in ALGC courses will have to be done through Linköping’s LMS.

- Options: Allow multiple attempts (latest)
- Assign to: Everyone
- Due: Figure out a time before the peer review begins (e.g., week 4) & select a date and time
- Available from: select a date about a week or so before your due date
- QUESTIONS TAB:
- New Question: Select “Essay question”
  - Question 1: What has gone well in the class so far?
  - Question 2: Suggestions for improvement?
- Publish the quiz within Canvas and direct your students to take it during the time period you have set; consider giving them 5 or 10 minutes to do this during class

During the initial meeting between the peer reviewer and the sessional lecturer:

- Come to an agreement on (a) whether the sessional lecturer will solicit student feedback and (b) if so, how to share the results (e.g., sharing survey results, summarizing student feedback).