



University Policy Statement

UPS 210.080

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

I. Purpose of Classroom Observations

The primary goal of classroom 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 classroom 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 Classroom Observations

Article 15.14 of the 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 his/her 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 days prior to the visit. These observations shall be scheduled after consultation between the faculty member being observed and the observer. Consultation need not occur in person. The observations should also be scheduled during a class session that reflects regular class topics and instruction, not the first day of class or when an exam is being administered or returned, etc.

For online classes departments shall determine the most appropriate methodology. Online classroom observations shall be scheduled in the same manner as in-class observations. The duration of the online observation shall be determined after consultation between the faculty observing and the faculty member being observed. Consultation need not occur in person.

III. Eligible Classroom Observers

For classroom observations that are a required element of the evaluation process for instructional faculty, observations shall be conducted by tenured or tenure track faculty. Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP) faculty may perform classroom observations provided they are actively employed during the observation. Informal peer observations may be conducted by any faculty member.

IV. Best Practices for Classroom Observations

- a. The Department Chair, Department Personnel Committee Chair, or another designated faculty member should orient and train faculty who will be conducting classroom observations.
- b. Faculty doing observations should meet with faculty being observed to discuss the process and purpose of classroom observations.
- c. Observers should review the course syllabus. Are there learning outcomes/goals? Are assignments and evaluations clear? Are performance expectations/grading criteria well defined?
- 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. Departments should develop or use a classroom observation instrument or guidelines (e.g., Classroom Observation Protocol for Undergraduate STEM). These should consider whether the course is hybrid, online, or face to face.

Source: Faculty Affairs Committee

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019
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