

E3. Faculty Instructional Effectiveness

The school ensures that systems, policies and procedures are in place to document that all faculty (full-time and part-time) are current in their areas of instructional responsibility and in pedagogical methods.

The school establishes and consistently applies procedures for evaluating faculty competence and performance in instruction.

The school supports professional development and advancement in instructional effectiveness.

- 1) Describe the means through which the school ensures that faculty are informed and maintain currency in their areas of instructional responsibility. The description must address both primary instructional and non-primary instructional faculty and should provide examples as relevant.**

Annual performance evaluations: Each faculty member, including primary and non-primary instructional faculty, has an annual evaluation meeting with the chair of the department to review progress and identify plans and assignments for attainment of academic goals in research, teaching and service. Departments and programs can elect to have more frequent meetings or set interim reviews for individual faculty or faculty groups.

Teaching Peer Reviews: Faculty with primary teaching responsibilities are expected to engage in a minimum of one instructional peer review each year. This typically involves a peer reviewer from either the college instructional design team (see E3-3 below) or from the department observing the live classroom or online instruction. Detailed feedback is provided in writing to the faculty member, who then has the opportunity to develop an action plan regarding instructional enhancement.

Mentors: Each new faculty member is assigned a mentor or a mentorship team, who provide(s) feedback and advice on professional development in teaching, as appropriate. Faculty have input into the selection of their mentor(s).

Associate dean for educational affairs: This associate dean participates in university level committees related to instructional policy and procedures and has responsibility for informing college leadership of relevant changes affecting faculty teaching and instruction. College personnel are informed of relevant changes primarily through the Executive Leadership Committee and email updates. In addition, the associate dean leads the instructional design team; members meet with faculty either individually or in groups to discuss instructional responsibility and service.

Faculty Enhancement Opportunity (FEO): FEOs are short-term sabbaticals supported by the university and the college to advance the academic/professional/scholarly abilities of faculty members. They are intended to be more flexible in nature and duration than traditional sabbaticals and can be used to enhance teaching skills or knowledge. FEO funds are used primarily for short-term salary/benefit offset, travel costs and/or fees for conferences or similar learning experiences.

- 2) Describe the school's procedures for evaluating faculty instructional effectiveness. Include a description of the processes used for student course evaluations and peer evaluations, if applicable.**

The university requires student evaluations of faculty and courses near the end of each semester. UF uses an online course evaluation system entitled GatorEvals, which is integrated with the Canvas learning management system. For courses with multiple instructors, each instructor is evaluated separately. Faculty are encouraged to discuss the importance of the evaluations with their students and to encourage them to complete the evaluation. The GatorEvals [site](#) provides recommended language to faculty to solicit student participation. Results are available to faculty the day after grades

are posted, and quantitative results are also publicly available. The department chair incorporates the results into the faculty member's annual evaluation.

There are specific courses that are excluded from the course evaluation system. They include:

- Courses involving individual instruction such as independent study, internship, practicum, thesis and dissertation supervision;
- Courses or class sections involving types of instruction that occur outside of traditional classroom and/or laboratory settings for which the assessment questions would not be appropriate; and
- Class sections for which the number of possible respondents to the instrument is so small as to make the results of limited statistical usefulness, such as any course where the number enrolled is less than or equal to 10.

UF revised its course evaluation questions in 2019 to focus questions toward direct instructor actions and student outcomes. The revised system includes the following three categories: student self-evaluation (why he or she took the course, rating of own participation in the course), instructor evaluation and course evaluation. Supplemental questions were included specifically for online and lab instruction. The instructor, course evaluation and online questions are shown below and are rated from strongly disagree to strongly agree on a five-point scale.

Instructor Evaluation Questions

- The instructor was enthusiastic about the course.
- The instructor explained material clearly and in a way that enhanced my understanding.
- The instructor maintained clear standards for response and availability (e.g., turnaround time for email, office hours, etc.)
- The instructor fostered a positive learning environment that engaged students.
- The instructor provided prompt and meaningful feedback on my work and performance in the course.
- The instructor was instrumental to my learning in the course.

Course Evaluation Questions

- Course content (e.g., readings, activities, assignments) was relevant and useful.
- The course fostered regular interaction between student and instructor.
- Course activities and assignments improved my ability to analyze, solve problems and/or think critically.
- Overall, this course was a valuable educational experience.

Supplemental Online Questions

- The online environment of this course contributed to my ability to learn the material.
- Student learning objectives were connected to course activities and assignments.
- Course content is presented and structured in a logical, consistent and organized manner
- There were a variety of assignments appropriate for an online course.

Supplemental Lab Questions

- Expectations about specific lab procedures are clearly stated in advance.
- Lab content (e.g., readings, activities, assignments) was relevant and useful.
- Lab safety procedures were adequately enforced.
- The instructor explained material clearly and in a way that enhanced my understanding.

In addition to quantitative ratings, students are asked to provide written comments for the instructor's review and consideration on the following items:

- Please identify the instructor's strengths that contributed to your learning in the course.
- What additional constructive feedback can you offer the instructor that might help improve the course?
- What constructive suggestion(s) do you have for improving the course materials, organization and assignments?
- Please identify the topics and/or skills you learned in the course that you believe will have the highest application for future courses or professional growth.

Because of the college's commitment to excellence in teaching and in order for faculty to receive feedback to enhance their teaching, the college has procedures (in addition to the university's course evaluation system) to evaluate the process of teaching via peer reviews that include classroom observations. A peer evaluation form is available in the Faculty-Staff Resource Guide and can also be found in ERF E3. Peer evaluations are considered in faculty annual evaluations.

3) Describe available university and programmatic support for continuous improvement in faculty's instructional roles. Provide three to five examples of school involvement in or use of these resources. The description must address both primary instructional faculty and non-primary instructional faculty.

Teaching quality is a high priority and the college and university provide a number of opportunities that support professional development in instruction. All of these resources are available to both primary instructional faculty and non-primary instructional faculty. Four examples are provided below.

- As previously described, the College established the Blended Learning Task Force in the spring of 2013 to oversee a multi-year process to effectively incorporate the use of technology into the college's curricula to maximize student learning. An experienced instructional designer was hired in January 2014 as a primary resource regarding evolving technology, assessment of outcomes and other areas related to instructional design and implementation. Since that time, the college has expanded its instructional design team to include the associate dean for educational affairs (hired as the original instructional designer), two additional instructional designers, and two multimedia specialists. The instructional designers work directly with faculty on diverse aspects of course design, development and delivery. The team also offers individual and group consultation and peer review services. The work of this team is complemented by the college's [Instructional Design and Educational Technology website](#). This site hosts a number of instructional resources available for faculty and teaching assistants and is maintained by the instructional design team.
- As an extension of the original Blended Learning Task Force, the college established a Teaching Excellence Task Force, whose purpose was to develop online instructional modules for instructors that address core teaching components. Each module includes self-assessment questions as well as both video and text illustrations of instructional content. Thus far, six teaching excellence modules have been launched within the Canvas platform and include the following topics: Learning Objectives, The Syllabus, Teaching Methods and

Learning Activities, Educational Technology, Classroom Communications and Classroom Management.

- The [Office of the Associate Provost for Teaching and Technology](#) promotes teaching excellence through its Faculty and Teaching Excellence resource center. Services are available online, via specific topical workshops and through consultation for all faculty, regardless of appointment.
- Resources are also accessible via the [UF Center for Instructional Technology and Training \(CITT\)](#). CITT's mission is to support faculty in the implementation of technology to enhance and improve teaching and research. The center has equipment, training and staff to assist faculty with multimedia instructional materials for both web-based and live classes. Services include course design, an extensive toolbox of techniques, sample syllabi and a recording studio.

In addition to the above resources, two years ago the college established the Dean's Citation Award for the Scholarship of Teaching. This award was designed to complement a citation award that already existed within the college for empirical research. It recognizes faculty engaged in the enhancement of instructional processes, such as instructional assessment, student perceptions of instruction and course delivery.

4) Describe the role of evaluations of instructional effectiveness in decisions about faculty advancement.

Each faculty member submits an annual Faculty Activity Report (FAR) to the department chair. This report, which is compiled electronically, includes all teaching, research and service activities in the preceding year. The teaching section of the FAR includes the results of course evaluations completed by students and peers. These quantitative results become a component of the annual faculty evaluation conducted by the department chair each summer and are considered in decisions regarding annual incentives and tenure and promotion. Performance expectations for teaching, as appropriate to the faculty member's assignments, are part of the goals set during the annual evaluation.

As part of the university's revised course evaluation process, faculty can also opt in to receive feedback from students at the semester mid-point. These comments are not used as part of tenure and promotion but rather, are meant to provide instructors with the opportunity to enhance or adjust their course(s) in real time.

5) Select at least three indicators, with one from each of the listed categories that are meaningful to the school and relate to instructional quality. Describe the school's approach and progress over the last three years for each of the chosen indicators. In addition to at least three from the lists in the criteria, the school may add indicators that are significant to its own mission and context.

Faculty Currency

Annual or other regular reviews of faculty productivity, relation of scholarship to instruction

- After the conclusion of each academic year, each faculty member in the college meets with their departmental chair/supervisor to go through their accomplishments during the year. This is called the Faculty Annual Review. As a part of the review process, faculty reflect upon the achievement of goals set at the beginning of the year, including goals pertaining to classroom performance, curricular development, scholarship, advising and service to the academic mission of the department, college and university. Among the metrics that are addressed during the review process are student course and instructor evaluations, peer reviews of teaching, new courses developed, the number of students advised, and the academic committees on which the faculty served. If any gaps or deficiencies are identified during the

review process, the chair directs the faculty member to instructional development resources such as workshops, instructional design consultations, instructional mentors and online resources to further develop the faculty's instructional performance. These development activities are typically reflected in the goals that the chair sets for faculty for the new year.

Faculty Instructional Technique

Student satisfaction with instructional quality

- The college actively participates in the university's course evaluation system. At the end of each semester, students are encouraged to evaluate the instructional quality of courses based upon a five-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Typically, the target for faculty performance on the evaluation is an average of 4.0 or higher.

School or Program-level Outcomes

Courses that employ active learning techniques

- In January of 2014, the college piloted six fully blended courses as a part of the Blended Learning Initiative. Fully blended is defined as strategically using a mixture of online and face-to-face delivery modes throughout the course to promote active engagement, higher levels of learning, clinical reasoning and enhanced problem solving.
- In January of 2015, the college had grown to 29 fully blended courses and six partially blended courses, where "partially" is defined as a course having one or two components or modules being delivered in a strategic mixture of online and face-to-face modes. Partially does not include courses that only use a Course Management System to host reading materials (PDFs of articles, class notes, syllabi, etc.) in a repository manner, publish grades, publish lecture PowerPoints, deliver one-way communications such as announcements, or utilize the system for students to submit completed work such as writing assignments.
- In January of 2016, the college had grown to 66 fully blended courses and 16 partially blended courses.
- In January of 2017, the college had grown to 93 fully blended courses and 29 partially blended courses.
- In January of 2018, the college had grown to 115 fully blended courses and 42 partially blended courses.
- In January of 2019, the college had grown to 120 fully blended courses and 45 partially blended courses.

6) If applicable, assess strengths and weaknesses related to this criterion and plans for improvement in this area.

Strengths:

- Excellent faculty participation in transition to blended course designs
- The college has prioritized instructional development as a core goal
- There are broad opportunities for faculty participation in instructional professional development
- All departments have accessed resources of the instructional design team

Weaknesses:

- While many faculty provide peer reviews of teaching, few have received training in how to conduct such reviews and how to provide meaningful feedback to the instructor.

Plans for improvement:

- Revise and expand the college peer review system to include training on how to conduct peer reviews of teaching
- Complete teaching module development
- Create college specific course evaluation questions