University of New Hampshire
Policies and Procedures Regarding
the Student Evaluation of Teaching,
and Related Items

Office of Academic Affairs
Thompson Hall
603-862-3290
I. PURPOSE

This document sets forth a policy and procedure for formal University-wide teaching evaluation. Its goal is twofold.

1. To reinforce and promote excellence in teaching throughout the University;

2. To provide input into
   a) Promotion and Tenure decisions, and
   b) Annual performance reviews and salary decisions.

II. POLICY

1. The policy of the University of New Hampshire is to assess the quality of teaching of every course as systematically and objectively as possible, by:

   a) i. Obtaining student reaction to virtually every course and its instructor by means of a standardized questionnaire, which allows both numerical and narrative responses. Departments are encouraged to secure supplemental inputs from students through additional numerical or narrative questions.

      ii. Exception: While consistency in approach across campus is seen as having advantages, it is recognized that for some disciplines and departmental situations an alternative evaluation process, such as an entirely narrative approach, might be desirable. Therefore, a procedure for approval of an alternative means is also established in this document.

   b) Peer Input: Note: This section of the policy related to Peer Input has been deleted because of the collective bargaining agreement, March 25, 1993.

2. The policy of the University is to establish an ongoing Program for Instructional Development. The purpose of the program is to provide support and assistance to faculty members, singly or in groups, on course development and on personal teaching skill development.

III. IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES

1. Student Input:

   a) Student input is to be sought by means of a standardized questionnaire as shown in Exhibit 1. Conditions relative to the administration of this questionnaire are as follows:
1. Every student in every course, except such courses as internships, independent studies and those with enrollments of 5 students or fewer, is to have the opportunity to complete the questionnaire.

11. The questionnaire is to be unsigned and the student’s identity kept anonymous.

The instructor is to allow enough time for the thoughtful completion of the questionnaire.

iv. The instructor is not to be present while the questionnaire is being completed. A student in the class should be made responsible for the collection of the completed questionnaires and their return to the chairperson’s or dean’s office.

v. The instructor is not to have access to the questionnaire results until after he/she has submitted the grades for that particular course.

The responsibility for the questionnaires, including their distribution and collection, is to be assumed by departmental chairpersons.

The results of the questionnaire are to be available for use in improvement of teaching, promotion and tenure decisions, and annual evaluations.

viii. The numerical summary of each course is to be made available in the Library for student use in course selection.

ix. It is to be the chairperson’s/dean’s responsibility to ensure that these procedures are carried out.

x. The following statement shall be included in the student handbook, undergraduate catalog, and the instructions read to students prior to their filling out the mandatory questionnaire:

"Student evaluations are intended to promote excellence in teaching, and are used in tenure, promotion, and salary decisions concerning teaching faculty."

b) Individual departments may supplement the required questionnaire with additional:

i. numerical questions, and/or

ii. narrative questions
A library of possible questions for departmental use will be maintained under the Program for Instructional Development; however, each department is free to develop its own questions for the specific needs of students in its field.

c) Individual departments may also supplement the required questionnaire with input from former students.

d) Exception Procedure

All departments are to utilize the standard questionnaire (Exhibit 1) as the basic device for collecting information, supplementing it as desired. However, University policy allows for exceptional circumstances where a department believes that the use of the basic device would be detrimental. Any department wishing to utilize an alternative device may do so after formal application and approval, as follows:

1. Formal application is to be made by the Department to its College Dean with a copy to the Academic Standards Committee. The application is to a) contain a description of the device indicating how it covers the same general content areas as the standard questionnaire, b) a listing of courses for which it will be used, and c) the rational for needing to use an alternative device.

   Note: All conditions for administration of data collection noted in (la) of implementing procedures, shall apply in administering any alternative method.

2. The College Dean shall approve or disapprove the application after determining that the alternative method covers the same general content areas as the standard device.

3. Each year, all college deans shall report to the Academic Standards Committee of the Senate which, if any, departments of the college are utilizing an alternative method.

2. Peer Input Note: This section of the policy related to Peer Input has been deleted because of the collective bargaining agreement, March 25, 1993.

3. Self Development

Individual instructors are encouraged to seek additional feedback from peers and students, particularly during the semester, for their own self development purposes and improvement of the ongoing course.

Additional copies of the standard questionnaire will be available for individual use. Instructors may also use supplemental questions, invite a peer to observe classes, or have classes videotaped. Guidelines for classroom
observation, guidelines for analysis of video tapes, as well as a library of supplemental questions will be available for individual use.

The use of such additional data generated by individual initiative will be controlled by the instructor (not the department chair or college dean).

IV. FAIR USE OF STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Although a common, numerical student evaluation form has several virtues, these might be offset if the results of such evaluations are misused or misinterpreted when comparing teaching performance for salary, tenure, and promotion purposes. Consequently, the following guidelines should be observed:

1. Student evaluations, whether numerical or not, should be only one source of information on teaching. Other forms of evaluation, should also be taken into account.

2. Although many studies indicate that student evaluations can be reliable indicators of teaching effectiveness, their reliability increases when a pattern of ratings, involving several courses over several semesters, is considered. When available, ratings from several courses should be consulted.

3. One should be very careful not to overemphasize the meaning of small differences in numerical ratings.

4. The proportion of students participating in the evaluation of each class can affect the reliability of the ratings. If more than one third of the class fails to participate, the results may not be representative of the class as a whole. Evaluations based on undersized samples should not be relied upon.

5. Factors such as class size and whether the course is taken for a non-major requirement (e.g., General Education) have been shown to affect ratings. Consequently, such factors should be taken into account when attempting comparisons. On the other hand, the research shows the extraneous characteristics such as the faculty member's "entertainment value" or grading standards do not have a major effect on student evaluations.

PROGRAM FOR INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There is a pressing need to link the evaluation of teaching effectiveness (see section on POLICY) with a mechanism for the maintenance and improvement of teaching at UNH. Toward this end, a Program of Instructional Development will be established. Its goals and approach follow:
1. **Goals and Objectives**

   The goal of the Program is to improve the academic program at UNH. To achieve this goal, it will have such specific objectives as:

   a. To provide individual faculty (defined as anyone who teaches at UNH) and groups of faculty, with assistance in improving their teaching.

   b. To acquire and maintain teaching-related resources

   c. To develop and conduct workshops, seminars, and conferences that deal with a variety of teaching issues, including curriculum development.

   d. To regularly survey the faculty about their needs in the area of teaching.

   e. To encourage faculty, through small grants-in-aid, to attend workshops and conferences in the area of teaching, and to engage in study designed to improve teaching performance.

   f. To conduct research on the teaching/learning process.

2. **(Approach) Means**

   The exact means warrant further discussion and determination, but might involve the establishment of a center for excellence in teaching, the funding of individual projects to develop new teaching methods, or the establishment of organized opportunities for individuals to act as mentors, etc.

3. **NOTE:** This program for instructional development has been established, as of September, 1993, through the UNH Teaching Excellence Program.

/lv
(Passed by Academic Senate on 4/20/87; Approved by President Haaland on 5/5/87) Updated 3/17/94
Every student in every course, except such courses as internships, independent studies, theses and courses with enrollments of 5 or fewer, is to have the opportunity to complete the questionnaire.

Instructions for Form Completion
1. The instructor is not to be present while the questionnaire is being completed. A student (proctor) in the class should be made responsible for the collection of the completed questionnaires and their return in the original envelope back to the department. Forms should not be folded.

   PROCTOR - Please read the following to the class:
   Student evaluations are intended to promote excellence in teaching and are used in tenure, promotion, and salary decisions concerning teaching faculty.

2. The instructor is to allow enough time for the thoughtful completion of the questionnaire. Evaluations should be administered, completed and collected during class time. It is best to administer the forms at the beginning of the class period rather than the end. Evaluations should not be taken home for subsequent return. Forms that are separately returned to Institutional Research after the course packet has been received will not be processed.

3. For courses where multiple instructors are being evaluated, separate evaluations for each faculty member should be completed. Indicate instructor name on each form. Do not evaluate more than one instructor on the same form.

4. Students need to use soft (#2) lead pencil only, not pen or felt marker. Stray marks or changed answers should be thoroughly erased.

5. The questionnaire is to be unsigned and the student's identity kept anonymous.

6. In order to ensure student anonymity and the integrity of the process, neither the instructor nor the chair should review the evaluations prior to processing by Institutional Research. The instructor is not to have access to the questionnaire results until after he/she has submitted the final course grades. Students may be identified from written comments, especially in small classes.

7. The responsibility for the questionnaires, including their distribution and collection, is to be assumed by departmental chairpersons. It is advised that departments appoint a contact person (coordinator) other than a faculty member/chair for this process. Most departments currently have this coordinator procedure in place.

8. The results of the questionnaire are to be available for use in improvement of teaching, promotion and tenure decisions, and annual evaluations.

9. The numerical summary of each course is to be made available in the Library for student use in course selection.

10. It is to be the chairperson's/dean's responsibility to ensure that these procedures are carried out.

SEE OTHER SIDE FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS
**Department Responsibilities**

1. Institutional Research will provide evaluation coordinators with a listing of the course packets that have been issued to their department (Fall and Spring terms only). The listing will be mailed with the packets. This checklist can serve as a tracking and reference sheet for the coordinator.

2. Once the class proctor returns the completed evaluations in their original envelopes to the department coordinator, the coordinator can mark their receipt on the checklist. The coordinator should hold on to the course evaluations until all courses have been accounted for. Follow up on course packets that have not been returned to you.

3. We ask that departments send all of the packets to Institutional Research, THall 301 in one shipment. Evaluations should be returned to us in the original labeled envelopes.

4. Packets for courses not evaluated should also be returned to us (original envelopes) with a note indicating a reason for non-evaluation. A list of courses not evaluated is provided to Academic Affairs at the close of semester processing.

**RE: Policy for Official Exemption from Standard Form**

Departments should be aware that the policy in place provides the opportunity for official exemption from using the standard evaluation form, when the department believes the standard form is inappropriate for a course. Any department wishing to utilize an alternative evaluation mechanism may do so after formal application and approval by the Dean's Office. A copy of the letter of approval should be provided to Institutional Research & Assessment, so that the course(s) or entire unit can be purged from our database and from further follow-up.

The document [http://www.unh.edu/ir/StudentEvalTeaching.pdf](http://www.unh.edu/ir/StudentEvalTeaching.pdf) includes full information on the policy for student evaluation of teaching.

Institutional Research & Assessment 10/25/06
The following items reflect some of the ways teachers and courses can be described. For the instructor named above, please blacken the space corresponding to the number which indicates the degree to which you feel each item is descriptive of him or her: (5) if you strongly agree; (1) if you strongly disagree; or (4), (3), or (2) if it falls between these extremes. In some cases, the statement may not apply to this individual or class. In this case, blacken the space corresponding to DOES NOT APPLY for that item. If you do not have sufficient knowledge to answer an item, blacken the space corresponding to DO NOT KNOW for that item.

### Course Content and Structure

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- Objectives for course were clearly presented.
- Content accurately reflected the course objectives.
- Assignments related well to the course objectives.

### Instructor

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- Was well-prepared for class.
- Presented material effectively.
- Encouraged discussion and/or questions.
- Answered questions effectively.
- Seemed enthusiastic about subject matter.
- Was fair in dealings with students.
- Was available to students outside of class.
- Showed respect for students.

### Grading

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- Instructor's grading system was clearly described to students.
- Instructor graded in a fair manner.

### Overall Instructor Rating

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Overall, how would you rate this instructor?
15. Please write below any comments or suggestions related to course content, grading, or structure.

16. Please write below any comments or suggestions related to the instructor of this course.