**Focus on Teaching in your career: Teacher Evaluation**

1. **Forms of Feedback to Support Diverse Quality Teaching Activities**

Your academic work related to teaching may encompass many activities, depending on the nature of your role within a faculty or central unit. For example:

- Doctoral, Masters or Honours supervision
- Curriculum development
- Resource development
- Activity design
- Subject design
- Mentoring of others in a teaching team
- Subject coordination
- Lecturing, tutoring, demonstrating (formal feedback: Teacher Evaluation, Peer Observation of Teaching)
- Marking

Each of these generates different forms of evidence. If you are engaged with more individualized and intensive support (such as supervision) or design work you need to identify different ways to gain feedback on your teaching related activities for your academic portfolio. Some will provide feedback for improvement (formative and informal) and others will provide feedback on performance (formal and summative).

Why is this important? Feedback provides evidence that can be used for institutional probation/promotion processes, as well as teaching awards and most significantly your personal career management. Construction of an academic portfolio helps you to reflect and continuously refine your approach to teaching.

**When your role involves student interaction in formal UOW subjects**

(either within lecture/tutorial/laboratory spaces or electronic environments),

the probation and promotion processes at UOW require you to conduct Teacher Evaluations.

2. **Formal (Summative) Student Feedback – Teacher Evaluations**

The formal Teacher Evaluation contains a *standard* set of 8 questions about your teaching activities:

1. This teacher is well prepared for the subject
2. This teacher communicates the subject matter clearly
3. This teacher organizes the subject matter well
4. This teacher presents an appropriate amount of material for the time available
5. This teacher stimulates me to think about the subject
6. This teacher appears to be interested in assisting me to learn
7. This teacher is helpful in responding to questions or problems
8. Because of this teacher I have felt enthusiastic about studying this subject

* Version approved by UEC and Senate October 2006. There are also additional questions that vary across group size and class type (lecture/tutorial/clinical practical). A separate section/page accompanying the Teacher Evaluation asks students open-ended questions about your teaching (positive aspects and areas for improvement), and requests comments directed to the subject coordinator about the subject.

When you require Teacher Evaluation Reports as formal summative evidence for probation/promotion or award purposes, the report displays means for each of the questions for the group you surveyed. Student response to open-ended questions is returned to you for informal formative feedback.

See sample survey forms in the attachments that accompany this document.

2.1 How do I request these Teacher Evaluations?
You can request these evaluations online visiting:


Then select “Teacher Evaluation Request”.

2.2 How many do I require?
Please refer to the probation requirements for fixed term or continuing contracts on the intranet:


2.3 How do I use the results?
Student feedback is one form of evidence of some aspects of your teaching. When you reflect on the Teacher Evaluation results, consider the number of students, feedback across a range of classes, and other forms of feedback to complement the student perspective. Your commentary on student feedback for your probation application is a significant place to discuss the way you develop your approach to teaching and learning. Focus on your response to student feedback.

2.4 How are the Teacher Evaluation results interpreted?
- The Faculty means are calculated on questions 1-8 only. For comparative purposes, you need to ignore the other questions.
- Questions 5 and 8 typically score lower. If someone is getting high scores on these two questions then that is something a probation/promotion committee may acknowledge as an indicator.

There are many reasons why students may not choose to engage with a survey or to reflect their opinions accurately.

Interpreting the scores and deciding the pattern of classes surveyed…
- What is an acceptable score? Check out the Faculty Means first.
- Are all evaluations equal? You need to note details on the top of the report, and the % invalid.
- How much weight should I put on them? That depends on the other evidence you can put forward throughout the application, including the reflective commentary.
- Do I include a mix of classes? Usually people are advised to provide Evaluations from a mix of classes.
• Are they recent? If they are not, you should explain why somewhere in the application.

Why might scores vary naturally?

Faculty averages vary (Remember: calculated from first 8 questions); timing of survey – drop outs etc; Completion rates; Cultural factors; Class make-up (undergrad versus Post Grad; 1st Year versus others; group size, lectures versus tutorials or workshops; service course versus elective; off-shore)

3. FORMAL PEER FEEDBACK – PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING

The formal student feedback via the Teacher Evaluations can be verified or further interpreted by gaining formal feedback from peers via teacher observation. You can integrate these two formal feedback sources with an array of informal evidence within your critical reflection on teaching.

Unit 1 of University Learning & Teaching (ULT) provides an introduction to critical reflection on teaching practice. Unit 2 of ULT provides a series of frameworks to support staff conducting informal peer observation within their discipline. This is an excellent introduction to the formal process of peer observation for appraisal.

For more information on Peer Review at UoW, visit the website: http://www.uow.edu.au/cedir/peer_review/index.html

4. LONG-TERM: EVIDENCE OF TEACHING IN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF CAREER PLANNING

The following lists are drawn from material provided by Prof. Denise Chalmers to support Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Awards applicants. ¹ Smith (2008) has now published the research behind this framework. Please consider collecting an array of evidence to support future probation, promotion, award or job applications.

Four sources of evidence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peers</th>
<th>You</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student reaction</td>
<td>Student learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Peers:

• “Classroom” performance – peer observation of teaching
• Course materials – reviewed by… recognised by peers?
• Course content – have you had your curriculum reviewed? Is it perceived as cutting edge? Are other courses modeled on it?
• Assessment practices – do peers adopt these? Have they been reviewed? Are they put up as good practices examples?
• Scholarship of teaching – are your articles accepted in journals?
• Management of teaching – do you coordinate a program, or year or did you establish a program? If you have many tutors, then management is crucial. Your Head of School could write a report. Look at attrition rate.
• Teaching and learning strategies. Have you had them reviewed?
• Leadership roles – have you set up a course or run a committee?
• Are you invited to teach in other courses and overseas? (“I am noted for inspiring student interest as I’m invited to present at a range of events such as…”)
• Publications (peer review process)
• Consider many levels of peer reviewing – your tutors or team members, supervisor, HOD, external reviewers nationally and internationally.

4.2 You:
- Do you write a teaching journal? (Good time to start noting down key events/issues/key concepts to follow, resources to pursue, plans for review…)
- Teaching philosophy – hone this as you go, remembering to note why you change it if/when you do.
- What drives you? What is your passion? Elaborate what is important to you.
- Self-reflections, analysis and evaluation. Demonstrate the journey.
- Reflective course memo to colleagues
- Responsiveness to student feedback – what the feedback was and what you have done in response

4.3 Student reactions:
- Student evaluations of teaching or unit
- Student interviews (not by you)
- Informal student feedback
- CEQ
- Unsolicited student feedback (such as emails)
- Student logs or journals
- On-line feedback

4.4 Student learning:
- Key concepts before and after your course
- Students’ self-reported knowledge and skills
- Rates of attrition, failure, or progression through to honours and postgraduate work
- Course identification and evaluation of generic skills
- Student work (independently marked) – thesis, projects
- Employer workplace feedback
- Approaches to study questionnaire

5. Managing Your Evidence in a Teaching Portfolio
Following are two examples of simple spreadsheet layouts for keeping track of the many activities in which you engage that relate to teaching directly or your academic career in general:

![Spreadsheet layout](promotionactivitytemplate.xls)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Comments and/or outcomes</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Scholarly Activity and Academic Governance Portfolio**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classes</th>
<th>Issues/Improvements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly Activity</td>
<td>Publication/Presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Activity

Conference

Community/Professional Activity

Academic Governance Activity

ULT Status
6. **Writing Reflective Commentary on Your Evidence**

6.1 What surveys should you include?

**Repeats:** If you have reflected, set goals, run the subject again and have comments from the second implementation to indicate you achieved your goals, then that is excellent.

**Diversity:** If you have a number of different subjects (no repeats), you may want to draw similar comments from across them to show a common area of strength, or an area of weakness you are targeting for improvement.

**Role basis:** If you have occupied different roles you might want to target this, particularly contrasting team member with subject coordinator.

**Connection with key referee:** If you are submitting an application for promotion with teaching number one, your key referee is important. Does a Teacher Evaluation add weight here to what they are saying?

6.2 How do you structure your Reflective Commentary? …3 possible styles…

**Style example 1: Strengths & Aspects to improve**

Present an overview, then each subject with limited quotes about strengths and areas to improve. Finally a discussion around your strengths, then a discussion of things you have improved either within or across subjects.

```
Subject: vvvvvvvvv (session, year)
Strengths: (quotes)
Areas to improve: (quotes)

All of the surveys indicate positive comments about… This was confirmed by peer review comments in ULT unit 2...

An area that could be improved was... I have addressed this issue by attending a course on b, working with the Faculty support person, consulting the Faculty Librarian… Recent student comments indicate... and student queries about (for example assessment tasks) have reduced from x to y.
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**Style example 2: Subject by subject**

Present an overview of what subjects you are discussing then discuss each one in context. This way you can show evolution of strategies or dramatic changes (often not of your choice).

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All subjects taught were evaluated. They demonstrate a range of class sizes, first and third year classes, and different modes of presentation. Each will be discussed in turn, based on subject level.

JJSS366: Same subject name, Spring 2006
This is a specialist third year elective that required substantial resource re-development in 2006 for inclusion in a new major, increased emphasis on professional contact and greater task flexibility. This created two key issues...

Student response to Q1 (mean x,y) suggests... This was supported by survey comments, focus group feedback and collegial peer review... Based on this feedback, consultation with colleagues at YYYY, and teaching literature (citation, 200x) my strategies to improve student engagement with this learning task will involve:
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Style example 3: Quantitative and Qualitative

Initially overview the array of subjects with details of quantitative results, identify areas to target in discussion then elaborate with details of quotes from student free text comments, peer reviews or other formal/informal means of gathering feedback.

Quantitative comments:
The higher scores relate to x, y and z... and revolve around my ability to... as illustrated in questions 1 and 6.
The lower scores were in first year subjects, and concerned student enthusiasm for the subject...

Qualitative comments:
One of my primary concerns has been... Students recognised this as illustrated:
A further goal has been to... Students have indicated a broad array of outcomes:

6.3 How can you present your accomplishments in a more visual format?

When you are trying to simplify things for an audience that does not necessarily relate to your discipline, visual presentation of material can allow a multi-disciplinary group to identify patterns that are much harder to explain in text alone. You are most likely to use these strategies to present data in support pages of a teaching award application, or in thinking through your case in a probation/promotion application.

Why bother? Its construction helps you to develop your awareness of trends so you can clearly target your best (and worst) areas of performance.

Visual tips for developing your application:

- **Initially when working out** your application, focus on your “whole” academic career, prior to honing in on teaching, research, governance and professional activity, so you are thinking outside a potentially narrow view of “Teaching/Learning”. Think big activities and put them in your spreadsheet. You can tag them later, according to the overall balance of your application.

- **Use of Tables** is strongly encouraged to show patterns of activity over time, as well as roles, subjects and student numbers. Highlight classes for which you have accompanying surveys. This will help you decide which surveys you are going to include. What combination of subjects allows you to tell the story that captures your teaching philosophy?

- **Develop diagrams.** Diagrams show models or patterns of development where tables do not apply. Sometimes a simple Venn diagram can convey a lot. Other times it’s a simple flowchart to capture developments.

- **Analyse your survey results for patterns.** What patterns are you highlighting? Are they developmental progression, are they broad and varied, do they change each year, have you had the opportunity to sustain engagement with some key subjects? Pick subjects that fit with the rest of your application, or pick at least one subject that you can explore in great depth from multiple data sources. Can you chart the change in quantitative data?

- **Use sub-headings in your commentary.** This pushes you to think about the structure/logic flow of this page, and also allows your readers to scan quickly and hone in on the information. Each commentary page is unique so quickly present your structure.

- **Connect all the parts of your probation/promotion application.** Make sure if you are making a huge statement about a key aspect of your contribution to teaching in your statement of case that you have backed this up consistently throughout your application, giving different levels/kinds of detail in appropriate sections.
**Document structure: Probation or promotion**

You make top level statements about teaching in your statement of case, elaborate further in your three pages of current academic activity, reinforce key points through your selection of Teacher Evaluation reports and tie the key ideas together in your Reflective Commentary.

**Non-visual tips:**

- **Present your teaching philosophy.** Have you already discussed your fundamental approach to teaching? Perhaps it is incorporated in the current academic activity. If not, a few lines in your commentary page can then use the student voice to back what you are saying. (I am not saying a philosophy cannot be portrayed visually - some use metaphors)

- **Think about referees** and be strategic. How do they relate to your teaching activities? Have you included a subject that your key teaching referee can discuss (if relevant)? Have you sent them something to peer review (informally)? Have they guest lectured? Were they a mentor?

- **Ask those not close to you** (personally or in a disciplinary sense) to read your application. Do they understand what you have accomplished? This is additional support to that provided by your supervisor and Head of School.

**6.4 How can the teaching award criteria help you identify your strengths?**

UOW Faculty and Vice-Chancellor’s Teaching Awards use the same criteria as the national awards run by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC):

- Approaches to teaching and (to) learning support that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn
- Development of curricula and resources that reflect a command of the field
- Approaches to assessment, feedback and learning support that foster independent learning
- Respect and support for the development of students as individuals
- Scholarly activities and service innovations that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching

Look back through the criteria, and consider where your strengths lie. They will vary with your natural aptitude, your teaching experience and ongoing professional development. Remember “teaching” is not just about your interactions with students.

For those in a sessional staff position, or those who are very early career, the criteria for sessional staff awards acknowledge that you will have less chance to influence curriculum and resource development, design assessment activities or engage in substantial scholarly activity. Hence, the award criteria for sessional staff are:

- Approaches to teaching that influence, motivate and inspire students to learn
- Respect and support for the development of students as individuals
- Demonstrated reflective practice and development of teaching informed by feedback from a variety of sources

Next we consider how others may interpret your evidence…
7. **INTERPRETING YOUR EVIDENCE**

Both quantitative and qualitative evidence is valid. Most applicants can document experience and interest but very few understand how to show evidence of quality. Both teaching and teaching outcomes can be peer reviewed like research. Teaching grants, awards and publications are peer reviewed and are strong indicators of quality.

7.1 **Experience**

- Teaching portfolio – which subjects, how many students, list of materials developed

7.2 **Interest**

- Teaching qualifications – ULT or GSM...
- Publications on teaching & learning including reviews
- Conference presentations
- Positions eg Chair FEC, member UEC, Subject Coordinator, Course Coordinator
- Member of a Learning & Teaching research group or quality circle
- Examples of ongoing professional development
- Statement of teaching principles & practice
- Reflective practice
- Mentoring new staff, tutor training
- ESDF/CAUT/CUTSD/AUTC/Carrick/ALTC submissions
- Examples of materials developed (not reviewed)

7.3 **Quality**

- Teacher Evaluations (surveys)
- Unsolicited student/parent/employer letters
- Student examination results
- Case study evaluations of innovations – “external” evaluator
- ESDF/AUTC/Carrick/ALTC grants
- Peer review of teaching materials
- Peer observation of teaching (appraisal process)
- Fellowships
- Faculty Teaching Award
- Success in the Faculty or VC’s OCTAL Award
- Nomination and/or success in a State and/or National Teaching Award (e.g. ALTC Citation, Award)
- Invitations to other universities for teaching, selection panels, curriculum reviews
- Teaching related consultancies & contracts to DEST, industry training bodies & other universities
- Refereed papers for conferences and journals about teaching
- Referee for positions, grants, journals, conferences

7.4 **For inexperienced Teachers**

- Interest in student learning
- Openness to self development
- Tutoring, demonstrating
- Postgraduate student mentor, peer support, coach

8. **THE “MIX OF EVIDENCE” AT UOW FOR PROBATION (CONTINUING APPOINTMENT)… OR PROMOTION**


9. **INQUIRIES**

If you have any inquiries about this handout, please don’t hesitate to contact:
- Dr Christine Brown, Head, Academic Development Unit, ph: 4221 3849, email: cbrown@uow.edu.au