

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING TEACHING

The following criteria should be considered by committees and individuals who use faculty evaluations to assess the performance of faculty. They are also designed to help instructors better understand the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching.

Course Modality (face-to-face, hybrid, online)

Online courses might yield lower faculty evaluations than face-to-face courses because of possible difficulties raised by the use of technology (e.g. connection problems).

Course Types (seminar/lecture/lab/studio)

Seminars, labs, and studios have a tendency to be evaluated higher than lecture-based courses because of their relatively small class size and the interactive nature of the course type. In addition, generally speaking, the smaller the class, the higher the variance across terms.

Course Levels (lower division/upper division/MA, MS/ PhD)

Students' motivation may be greater in upper-division (more specific) than lower-division (more general) classes, which may affect the students' evaluation of the instructor.

Class Function (prerequisite/major/elective)

Students' motivation may be greater in elective/major than prerequisite classes, which may affect the students' evaluation of the instructor.

Class Size (e.g., 7/35/150/300/800)

The larger the class size, the more difficult it is to engage students in the course. Engagement inevitably influences the instructor evaluation. Furthermore, small sample size is highly variable and more extreme.

Academic Discipline

Disciplines engage students differently and therefore comparisons across disciplines should be avoided.

Team Taught vs. Single Instructor

Team taught courses may create challenges for coherence and consistency, as well as confusion about evaluation. For example, if three instructors collaborate on the teaching of a course, it may be difficult to sort out which student comments and assessments correspond with which instructor. In addition, if an instructor is in charge of a large class that includes laboratory sections, teaching assistants may be the ones supervising those labs. A distinction should be made in terms of evaluation of the instructor and evaluation of the teaching assistants.

Student Experience with Evaluation Process

Lower-division students and new transfer students have less experience with courses than seniors have and this may affect the students' evaluation of the instructor.

Student Response Rate to Questions

Low response is not necessarily an indicator of bad teaching; it simply does not allow generalizing results reliably to the whole class.

Difficult Issues or Challenging Topics

Faculty who teach courses related to cultural diversity and other challenging subjects often receive low evaluations, as do faculty of color who teach predominately Euro American classes.

These guidelines are based on the recommendations in the University Senate Task Force on Faculty Evaluations Final Report, January 9, 2015. They are designed to standardize some aspects of faculty evaluations across the campus and to provide more detailed guidelines for interpreting student evaluation scores to reflect variations among courses being evaluated.