



BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

University Policy 4750

Assessment of Faculty Teaching

Effective Date

August 22, 2025

Responsible Party

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, (208) 426-1202

Scope and Audience

This policy applies to all faculty serving as the instructor of record for a course, including full- and part-time faculty, graduate assistants, and adjunct faculty. Teaching assessment is required during performance reviews and, where applicable, for tenure and promotion under Policies 4220, 4290, 4340, 4490, and 4730.

Additional Authority

- Idaho State Board of Education Policy, Section II.G. (Policies Regarding Faculty - Institutional Faculty Only)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Standard 2.B.6
- University Policy 1000 (Policy Development and Authority)
- University Policy 4000 (Faculty Code of Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct)
- University Policy 4215 (Part-Time Tenure-Eligible Faculty)
- University Policy 4290 (Annual Faculty Evaluation)
- University Policy 4220 (Adjunct Faculty)
- University Policy 4250 (Lecturer Faculty)

- University policy 4300 (Student Course Evaluations)
 - University Policy 4340 (Faculty Tenure and Promotion Guidelines)
 - University policy 4490 (Clinical Faculty)
 - University Policy 4690 (Student Survey of Faculty Instruction Comment Redaction Policy)
 - University Policy 4720 (Teaching Faculty)
 - University Policy 5010 (Research Faculty)
 - University Policy 7000 (Position Titles and Definitions) Policy Purpose
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1. Policy Purpose

To establish guidelines for developing college and department-level policy for the assessment of faculty teaching to:

- Ensure consistency and fairness in teaching evaluation across the university.
- Promote continuous improvement and recognized excellence in teaching.
- Provide clarity on how teaching is evaluated.

2. Policy Statement

At Boise State University, excellence in teaching is integral to our academic mission. Both faculty and administrators share the responsibility for supporting effective teaching and learning. Teaching effectiveness will be assessed using multiple forms of Evidence that demonstrate one or more components of effective teaching and capture the complexity of teaching and learning.

Policies for evaluating teaching Assessments must:

- **Be discipline-specific:** Evaluations will align with clearly defined criteria relevant to each discipline.
- **Be multidimensional:** Teaching effectiveness must be evaluated using multiple perspectives (e.g., faculty self-reflection, peer review, student feedback, and course materials).
- **Balance formative and summative evaluation:** Evaluations will support faculty development while ensuring fairness in high-stakes reviews.

- **Be fair and transparent:** Evaluators will be trained to recognize bias, and no single metric (e.g., student evaluations) will determine teaching effectiveness.

The University is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement in teaching, ensuring that faculty are supported in their development as educators and that exceptional teaching is recognized.

3. Definitions

3.1 Assessment

Gathering and analyzing information to evaluate teaching effectiveness and improve learning.

- **Formative Assessment:** An instructor’s ongoing reflective process of gathering information about their teaching; reviewing it within the context of the institution, students’ needs and abilities, course and program learning outcomes, and Evidence-based practices for effective instruction; for the purposes of identifying the instructor’s strengths in teaching as well as areas for growth and development.
- **Summative Assessment:** The evaluative process that occurs for an employee on a predictable basis with the purpose to summarize one’s performance in a particular area of responsibility (teaching, in this case), often in the form of a merit score or a descriptive label (e.g., “Proficient,” “Expert,” etc.). The purpose of a Summative Assessment is not necessarily to improve the effectiveness of teaching and student learning but instead to note an employee’s progress toward certain goals and Criteria.

3.2 Criteria

The specific aspects of teaching effectiveness that are evaluated based on defined expectations. Criteria should be measurable or observable and may address areas such as clarity of learning objectives, alignment of Assessments with outcomes, effectiveness of instructional strategies, responsiveness to student needs, and engagement in reflective practice.

3.3 Evidence

The documentation, artifacts, or examples provided by a faculty member to illustrate effectiveness in accordance with the department’s defined Criteria. Evidence may include course materials (e.g., syllabus, assignments, Assessments), instructional artifacts (e.g., lecture recordings, discussion prompts, instructional technology use), student feedback (e.g., course evaluations, mid-course surveys), and reflective analyses (e.g., teaching philosophy statements, self-Assessments, peer observations).

3.4 Instructional Design

The intentional, systematic planning and structuring of course content, learning objectives, Assessments, and instructional methods to create an effective learning experience. This includes course organization, alignment of learning outcomes with Assessments, accessibility considerations, and the purposeful integration of technology to support and enhance student learning. Instructional Design may vary by department/program needs and by discipline, reflecting field-specific pedagogical approaches, professional Standards, and the nature of the knowledge and skills being developed.

3.5 Instructional Strategy

The specific methods and approaches an instructor uses to facilitate student learning within the designed course structure. These strategies may include choices related to: content delivery, engagement techniques, feedback to and/or communication with students, scaffolding of concepts, and Formative Assessment practices. Instructional strategies are inherently adaptable, allowing instructors to respond to student needs in real-time and tailor their approach based on disciplinary norms, course format, and student interactions.

3.6 Standards

The defined levels of achievement or quality expected for each criterion. Standards establish benchmarks for evaluating teaching effectiveness and may be expressed through qualitative measures (e.g., descriptive rubrics, narrative feedback, peer evaluations) and/or quantitative measures (e.g., student evaluation scores, frequency of specific instructional practices). Standards should be defined to ensure consistency in evaluation.

4. General Requirements

- a. Effective teaching is characterized by well-structured Instructional Design, the use of instructional strategies that actively engage students and support learning, and a commitment to continuous improvement through reflective practice. Evaluation Standards must be based on multiple sources of Evidence (e.g., peer reviews, course materials, student learning demonstrations) and must not rely solely on student course evaluations.
- b. Faculty are encouraged to engage in Formative Assessment of their teaching effectiveness by setting personal teaching goals and reflecting on their progress. Formative feedback is intended for professional growth and remains separate from formal evaluations unless voluntarily referenced by the faculty member.

- c. The guidelines in this policy provide flexibility in recognizing diverse faculty contributions, including pedagogical innovation, mentorship, and curriculum development. Units must clearly define expectations for teaching performance and comprehensive evaluations, ensuring that faculty submit appropriate documentation that aligns with the established Criteria and Standards for teaching effectiveness.

4.1 Requirements for College, School, and Department Policies

Each school/college shall develop a policy for evaluating teaching effectiveness during summative evaluations, including performance review, promotion and tenure, and (if required) post-tenure review. Departments or programs may either adopt their college's policy or develop their own, provided it aligns with the college's guidelines and further clarifies departmental expectations. Departments have the discretion to define the regularity and components of evaluating the teaching of adjuncts and GAs, so long as college and department policies comply with university policies (see Policy 4220, Adjunct Faculty, section 9). Department policies require approval from the Dean.

4.2 Minimum Requirements

4.2.1 Key Components of Effective Teaching

- a. Policies for evaluating teaching effectiveness should clarify for faculty which components of effective teaching will be considered during performance evaluations and tenure/promotion reviews, and must include at least:
 - Instructional Design (in cases where the instructor of record designed the course)
 - Instructional Strategy
 - Reflective practice
- b. When different sources of Evidence provide conflicting perspectives on teaching effectiveness (e.g., student feedback suggests challenges, but peer reviews are positive), evaluators should look for patterns over time, examine the context in which the Evidence was gathered, and consider the faculty member's reflective practice to assess how they have responded to and incorporated relevant input.

4.2.2 Clarify the Appropriate Use of Student Course Evaluations

- a. University Policy 4300 (Student Course Evaluation) defines the appropriate use of student course evaluations in summative and formative evaluations of faculty teaching.

“...[I]n no context is student course evaluation data to be employed as the sole measure of a faculty member’s teaching performance, as a threshold or a majority measure for assessing teaching, or as the sole measure of the value/quality of a course. That data is to be used as one element of a multi-faceted, comprehensive faculty evaluation protocol in which multiple measures of teaching performance are reviewed.”

- b. Other types of feedback from students may include unsolicited letters about the impact of a learning experience on their growth or career development, mid-semester surveys intended to gauge students’ perceptions of their learning and inform changes to course materials, etc.
- c. In contexts where student course evaluations are used, evaluators should look for consistent patterns over multiple semesters and compare them to other relevant Evidence, such as peer observations, course assignments, demonstrations of student learning, etc., as appropriate to the unit's evaluation practices. (See University Policy 4300).

4.2.3 Require Multiple Types of Evidence

- a. Evaluating teaching effectiveness is complex and should not be assessed using a single measure. Evaluation should involve the synthesis of multiple sources of Evidence to ensure a fair and comprehensive evaluation.
- **Evidence aligned with Evaluation Criteria:** Candidates and evaluators are encouraged to consider what sources of information are most appropriate for evaluating different aspects of effective teaching. For example, students may be uniquely positioned to report whether the instructor created a comfortable learning environment or if the instructor began and ended class sessions on time, while peers may be better positioned to evaluate the instructor’s depth of knowledge of the subject area and involvement in teaching-related research.
 - **Evidence Relevant to Discipline and Context:** Units may choose which types of evidence are most relevant for their field. Evidence does not need to be drawn from all perspectives (self, students, peers) in every evaluation. Instead, faculty members are encouraged to select Evidence that best represents their teaching.
 - **Triangulation of Evidence:** Multiple sources can be used to evaluate a single component of effective teaching (e.g., Instructional Design). For example, Instructional Design may be evaluated by consulting peer feedback on course materials, student feedback on course accessibility, and the faculty member’s self-reflection on course revisions. However, this is **not required for all components, and flexibility should be provided based on the review type and faculty role.**

- b. In cases where Evidence conflicts (e.g., student feedback suggests challenges, but peer reviews are positive), evaluators should look for patterns over time, consider the context of the feedback, and consult the faculty member's reflective practice to understand how feedback has been addressed.

4.2.3A Provide Examples of Evidence That Might Demonstrate Effectiveness in Each of the Components

The policy should

- Identify sources of Evidence that can be used to demonstrate each component of effective teaching;
- Specify required types of Evidence for each criterion of effective teaching or ask the faculty member to choose.;
- Clarify how many pieces of Evidence will be expected for a specific type of review. For example, during performance evaluations, one type of Evidence for each criterion might be required, and for tenure/promotion reviews, two or more types might be required.

4.2.3B Example Evidence for Instructional Design

Evidence associated with the Instructional Design component may include, but is not limited to:

- Course syllabus with detailed learning outcomes and course structure (or screenshots from course LMS)
- Course design tables showing the alignment of learning objectives and Assessments
- Demonstrations of student learning (for example, descriptions of class projects submitted by students or summaries of successful student research)
- Feedback on the alignment of the syllabus, course learning outcomes, and course assignments from colleagues (either within the unit or outside it)
- Student feedback via official student course evaluations on their perceptions of the learning activities and environment
- Other forms for gathering student feedback

4.2.3C Example Evidence for Instructional Strategy

Evidence associated with the instructional strategy component may include, but is not limited to:

- Examples of innovative teaching approaches or of teaching methods that effectively promote student engagement
- Peer review reports evaluating instructional methods
- Examples of accessible teaching practices
- Student feedback via official student course evaluations on their perceptions of the learning activities and environment

4.2.3D Example Evidence for Reflective Practice

Evidence associated with reflective practice may include, but is not limited to:

- A statement of teaching philosophy that articulates a particular Instructional Strategy and is supported by Evidence demonstrating its effectiveness.
- Reflection on student course evaluations, peer Assessments, or external reviews, including analysis of trends and areas for growth.
- A narrative description of changes made to teaching in response to feedback or course/program Assessment results.
- A list of professional development activities related to teaching with an explanation of their impact on instruction.
- Descriptions of newly developed courses or substantial modifications to existing courses, including the rationale for changes and their intended impact.

4.3 A framework of Evaluation Criteria

The policy should include a detailed framework of evaluation Criteria that provides information about how the materials will be evaluated/assessed in a fair and consistent manner. The framework should include at least the following components: instructional design, Evidence-based practices, and reflective practice. At the department level, the framework should be developed by department faculty. At the college/school level, the framework should be developed in consultation with faculty representatives from across the unit, with an opportunity for input from all faculty.

4.4 Methods for Assessing Teaching Effectiveness During Performance Evaluations and Comprehensive Evaluations

- a. Units must clearly define expectations for the set of materials faculty are required to submit for performance evaluations and comprehensive evaluations (e.g., tenure/promotion reviews). For each type of evaluation, faculty should provide a reflective overview of their teaching activities, supported by Evidence of teaching effectiveness.
- b. The amount and depth of documentation may vary depending on the evaluation's scope and purpose. Performance evaluations may require a minimal set of documentation (e.g., two to three pieces of Evidence such as self-reflections, professional development, and student evaluations), while comprehensive evaluations for tenure or promotion should include multiple pieces of Evidence from varied sources, such as a complete teaching portfolio that addresses multiple components of teaching. [Options for the depth of documentation](#) may include:
 - **Baseline Documentation:** A **minimal set of materials**, such as three pieces of Evidence (e.g., a self-reflection, course design table, and student evaluations). Allows faculty to demonstrate teaching effectiveness with focused documentation suitable for **performance evaluations**. Faculty might provide Evidence for a single course, for example, or specific components of effective teaching (section 4.2.1).
 - **Expanded Documentation:** A **moderate level of Evidence**, such as multiple pieces from different perspectives (e.g., student evaluations, peer reviews, course design table, self-reflection), appropriate for **biennial tenure progress reviews or other types of progress reviews**. Provides a more detailed look at teaching effectiveness with Evidence from multiple sources. Faculty might provide Evidence for a single course, for example, and choose a different course each year; for different types of courses (e.g., entry-level course and advanced course); or a specific component of effective teaching each year, allowing the faculty member to build a portfolio gradually toward a later comprehensive review.
 - **Comprehensive Documentation:** A **comprehensive level of Evidence** for more extensive reviews, documenting teaching across multiple courses or years and providing Evidence from a variety of sources, appropriate for **tenure and/or promotion cases**. Comprehensive documentation can be built gradually during the performance evaluation process using any of the above approaches.

5. Implementation

- a. Per Policy 4290 (Annual Faculty Evaluation), Policy 4215 (Part-Time Tenure-Eligible Faculty), Policy 4220 (Adjunct Faculty), 4250 (Lecturer Faculty), Policy 4340 (Faculty Tenure and Promotion Guidelines), Policy 4490 (Clinical Faculty), Policy 4730 (Teaching Faculty) and Policy 5010 (Research Faculty), faculty with instructional responsibilities will be evaluated on a regular basis (defined in the respective policies) by supervisors and/or personnel committees, as defined by the college and/or the department. Faculty members are responsible for assembling the required documentation for the evaluation of teaching effectiveness in a format defined by the college and/or department and aligned with the guidelines above.
- b. This policy will be implemented across all academic units over a three (3)-year period. Each year, a portion of departments will be required to develop and implement their policies for evaluating teaching effectiveness, including the required framework of evaluation Criteria. The Provost's Office will offer regular training sessions on preparing and evaluating teaching documentation to support departments during the three (3)-year implementation phase.
- c. All department guidelines for evaluating teaching effectiveness must be reviewed and approved by the Dean to ensure alignment with university-wide Standards. This review will focus on ensuring that all units are adhering to the minimum Criteria for effective teaching (e.g., Instructional Design, reflective practice, and Evidence-based practices) and that evaluation frameworks are fair and consistent across units.

Revision History