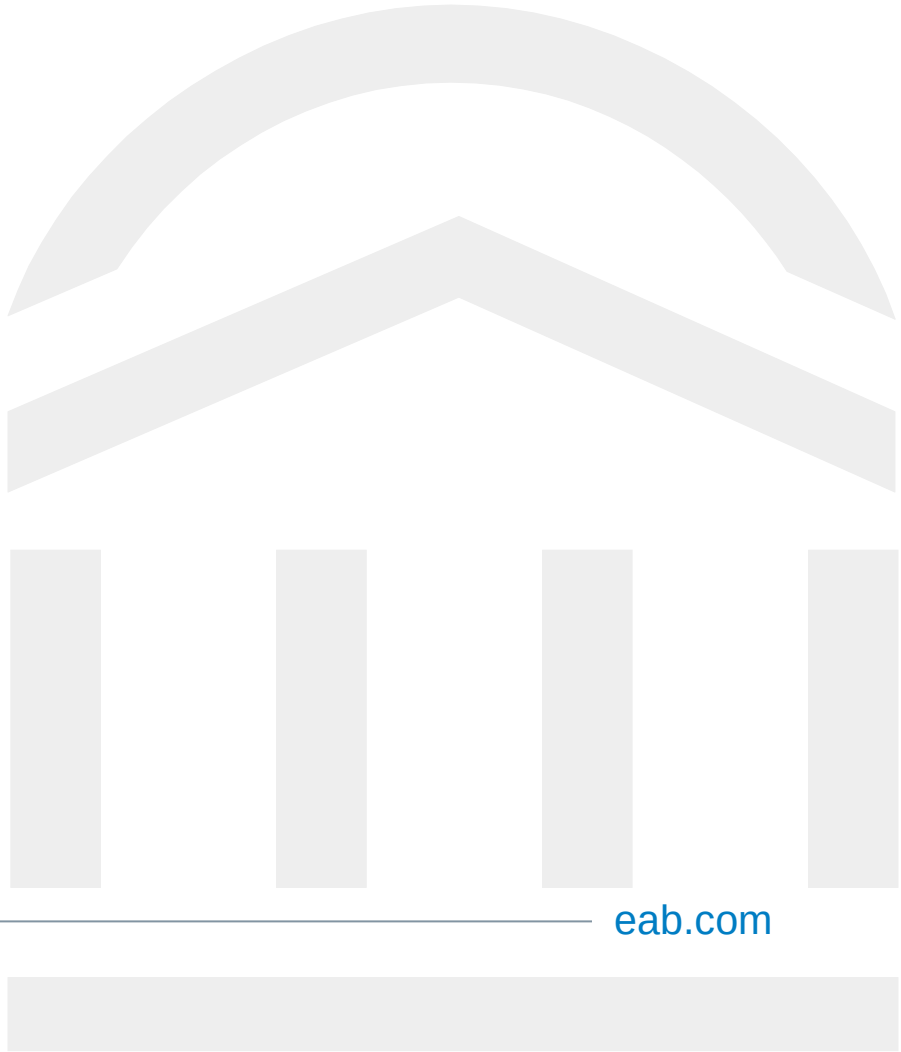
Education Advisory Board | Academic Affairs Forum

Faculty Instructional Quality Assessment Practices

Incorporating Teaching Portfolios and Peer Review with Student Course Evaluations



Custom Research Brief

Academic Affairs Forum

Michael Ray
Research Associate

Lauren Edmonds
Research Manager

LEGAL CAVEAT

The Advisory Board Company has made efforts to verify the accuracy of the information it provides to members. This report relies on data obtained from many sources, however, and The Advisory Board Company cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided or any analysis based thereon. In addition, The Advisory Board Company is not in the business of giving legal, medical, accounting, or other professional advice, and its reports should not be construed as professional advice. In particular, members should not rely on any legal commentary in this report as a basis for action, or assume that any tactics described herein would be permitted by applicable law or appropriate for a given member's situation. Members are advised to consult with appropriate professionals concerning legal, medical, tax, or accounting issues, before implementing any of these tactics. Neither The Advisory Board Company nor its officers, directors, trustees, employees and agents shall be liable for any claims, liabilities, or expenses relating to (a) any errors or omissions in this report, whether caused by The Advisory Board Company or any of its employees or agents, or sources or other third parties, (b) any recommendation or graded ranking by The Advisory Board Company, or (c) failure of member and its employees and agents to abide by the terms set forth herein.

The Advisory Board is a registered trademark of The Advisory Board Company in the United States and other countries. Members are not permitted to use this trademark, or any other Advisory Board trademark, product name, service name, trade name, and logo, without the prior written consent of The Advisory Board Company. All other trademarks, product names, service names, trade names, and logos used within these pages are the property of their respective holders. Use of other company trademarks, product names, service names, trade names and logos or images of the same does not necessarily constitute (a) an endorsement by such company of The Advisory Board Company and its products and services, or (b) an endorsement of the company or its products or services by The Advisory Board Company. The Advisory Board Company is not affiliated with any such company.

IMPORTANT: Please read the following.

The Advisory Board Company has prepared this report for the exclusive use of its members. Each member acknowledges and agrees that this report and the information contained herein (collectively, the "Report") are confidential and proprietary to The Advisory Board Company. By accepting delivery of this Report, each member agrees to abide by the terms as stated herein, including the following:

1. The Advisory Board Company owns all right, title and interest in and to this Report. Except as stated herein, no right, license, permission or interest of any kind in this Report is intended to be given, transferred to or acquired by a member. Each member is authorized to use this Report only to the extent expressly authorized herein.

2. Each member shall not sell, license, or republish this Report. Each member shall not disseminate or permit the use of, and shall take reasonable precautions to prevent such dissemination or use of, this Report by (a) any of its employees and agents (except as stated below), or (b) any third party.

3. Each member may make this Report available solely to those of its employees and agents who (a) are registered for the workshop or membership program of which this Report is a part, (b) require access to this Report in order to learn from the information described herein, and (c) agree not to disclose this Report to other employees or agents or any third party. Each member shall use, and shall ensure that its employees and agents use, this Report for its internal use only. Each member may make a limited number of copies, solely as adequate for use by its employees and agents in accordance with the terms herein.

4. Each member shall not remove from this Report any confidential markings, copyright notices, and other similar indicia herein.

5. Each member is responsible for any breach of its obligations as stated herein by any of its employees or agents.

6. If a member is unwilling to abide by any of the foregoing obligations, then such member shall promptly return this Report and all copies thereof to The Advisory Board Company.

Table of Contents

1) Executive Overview 4

Key Observations 4

2) Faculty Assessment Models 5

Assessment Overview 5

Committee Composition 5

Scholarship Assessment 6

Service Assessment 6

3) Faculty Teaching Assessment Components 7

Teaching Assessment 7

Teaching Portfolios 7

Peer Review 7

Student Evaluations 8

Professional Licensure Exams 8

4) Faculty Assessment Operations 9

Tenure Review Timeline 9

IT Infrastructure 10

Assessment Process Implementation 10

6) Research Methodology 12

Project Challenge 12

Project Sources 12

Research Parameters 13

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

1) Executive Overview

Key Observations

Program directors and faculty review committees annually evaluate faculty members on a one to nine scale in teaching, research, and service. Committees rate adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty in teaching only. Tenure-track faculty in non-research positions do not receive research evaluations.

Faculty members submit teaching portfolios that include examples of assignments and service learning opportunities provided to students. A three-person subcommittee of the faulty review committee examines and grades the portfolio to identify teaching philosophy, creative lesson planning, and effectiveness of the course content; the subcommittee comprises two in-department faculty and one faculty member outside of the department.

Committees also assess faculty teaching quality through peer reviews. Tenured faculty members observe a class of the reviewed faculty member's choosing. The same faculty member reviews the same course each year it is offered to determine how tenure-track faculty members incorporate new learning and the previous year's peer evaluation feedback into the course.

Response rates and students' performance on licensure exams determine the weight of student course evaluations in faculty assessment. Many program directors consider student course evaluation feedback unreliable due to low response rates and potential student biases. Program administrators at one profiled institution only consider student course evaluation data if at least 70 percent of course participants complete evaluations. Administrators of programs that require professional licensure tests often compare the feedback from student course evaluations to students' performance on professional licensure exams (e.g., NCLEX examination). Program administrators dismiss negative reviews of faculty members when that cohort of students performs at above average levels on professional licensure exams. Program administrators also dismiss positive reviews of faculty members when that cohort of students performs at below average levels on professional licensure exams.

Deans pilot new faculty assessment policies in departments with a high proportion of tenured faculty to minimize untested assessments' impact on departments. Pilot programs allow deans to identify potential problems in the review process and to build faculty support. Tenured faculty depend less on annual performance reviews compared to tenure-track and adjunct faculty. Thus, unexpected negative consequences of new assessment policies impact tenured faculty less severely than non-tenured faculty. Faculty members more readily accept programs that have demonstrable results from pilot programs compared to untested programs. Deans also include faculty members from programs in each college on faculty assessment policy committees to ensure fair representation of faculty interests. Administrators in the dean's office record and document committee meetings and distribute recordings and minutes to faculty members over the faculty listserv.

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

2) Faculty Assessment Models

Assessment Overview

Weight Faculty Evaluation in Teaching, Scholarship, and Service by Workload Proportion

Program directors weight teaching, scholarship, and services within faculty evaluations based on workload assignment. For example, faculty members teaching two three-credit courses both semesters have the teaching component weighted at 50 percent to reflect the workload assignment.

Teaching performance composes between 50 and 80 percent of overall evaluation for faculty members in teaching positions.

Non-research track faculty do not receive research performance assessments. Reviews of faculty in research positions, however, more strongly consider research performance. Due to the limited opportunities and resources for adjunct faculty to perform research or participate in university service opportunities, adjunct faculty members do not receive research or service assessments.

Review committees assign a numerical score between one and nine to each of the three categories. Program directors write a narrative letter assessing the performance of the faculty member in each of the three areas; directors deliver letters to the dean of the college.

Narrative Letters Facilitate Qualitative Reflection in Faculty Assessment

Faculty express concern that assessments performed strictly with a standardized grading form do not effectively capture the entire teaching experience. A narrative letter component requires program directors to reflect actively on faculty members' performance.

Committee Composition

Committees of Nine Peers Review Faculty Effectiveness

Faculty review committees include tenured faculty from the college and from outside the college, as well as the program director, for nine members total. Institutions with few tenured faculty members assign annual faculty review responsibilities to tenure review committees.

Spectrum of Faculty Size and Review Committee Composition

Few Tenured Faculty ⟷ *Many Tenured Faculty*

Combined Tenure and Annual Performance Review Committees

Tenure review committees also perform annual performance reviews.

Separate Annual Review and Tenure Committees

Institutions with many tenured faculty appoint two different sets of faculty members to each committee.

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

Scholarship Assessment

Require Tenure-Track Faculty in Research Positions to Submit a Dossier with Examples of Completed Research

Tenure-track faculty members submit research dossiers to review committees. Faculty members include all examples of research contributions from the previous year including:

- Grant applications submitted,
- Documentation of awarded grants,
- Published peer-reviewed articles,
- Invitations to present at conferences, and
- Attendance at conferences.

Review committees assign the dossier a score of one to nine based on a rubric reviewed by the dean and distributed to faculty members before the review date.

Service Assessment

Divide Service Review into Three Categories: Program Service, College Service, Institutional Service

Faculty members submit dossiers illustrating all the service roles and at what institutional level. Review committees assess tenure-track faculty members' participation in service opportunities at the program, college, and institution level.

Faculty Service Assessment Service Categories

Program Level	College Level	Institutional Level
▪ Curriculum development committee ▪ Program advisory board ▪ Ad hoc committees	▪ Policy and procedure committees ▪ Faculty search committees	▪ Admissions committees ▪ Faculty senate

Institutions with Large Health Sciences Programs Emphasize Community Service in Faculty Assessments

Health sciences program faculty, especially nursing program faculty, have skills in-demand in local communities. Faculty offer professional consultations (e.g., diabetes diet consultations) or services such as flu-shot clinics to help the surrounding community. Community service often replaces or supplements institutional level service requirements.

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

3) Faculty Teaching Assessment Components

Teaching Assessment

Portfolios, Peer Reviews, Student Evaluations, and Student Test Performance Demonstrate Teaching Quality

Faculty assessment committees rely on a variety of metrics to generate a comprehensive understanding of a faculty member's teaching performance. Program directors have the discretion to weigh each component of the teaching review differently. Health sciences program directors place a greater emphasis on student performance on professional licensure exams than student course evaluations because health sciences program rankings depend on licensure exam pass rates.

Teaching Portfolios

Require Faculty Members to Submit Portfolios that Demonstrate Teaching Effectiveness

Teaching portfolios contain samples of course materials from all the courses taught by a faculty member from the previous year up to the time of the review. The course work demonstrates faculty members' approach to teaching, the outside resources faculty members use, and incorporation of service learning. Samples of course work include:

- **PowerPoint slides** from guest speakers,
- **Handouts**,
- **Assignments**, and
- **Lecture slides**.

Due to the time intensive nature of reviewing teaching portfolios, three-person subcommittees of the faculty assessment committee review teaching portfolios. Multiple subcommittees review portfolios simultaneously for multiple faculty members to hasten the speed of reviews.

Subcommittees ideally include two tenured faculty members from the department and one tenured faculty member from outside the program to provide an outside perspective without influence from personal relationships. Subcommittees seek to identify how effectively faculty members maximize classroom time, how effectively faculty members complete learning objectives, and if faculty members incorporate curriculum updates and previous feedback.

Peer Review

Require a Dual Peer Review by a Tenured Faculty Member within the Academic Unit and an External Tenured Faculty Member

Intra-department tenured faculty members perform longitudinal peer reviews; the same faculty member attends a course of the tenure-track faculty member's choosing every year. A longitudinal peer review helps the review committee track changes in teaching style and updates to the curriculum.

Additionally, tenured faculty from another academic unit provide perspective on the clarity of the lecture that more closely resembles students' perspective.

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

The longitudinal peer review and the external peer review employ identical grading metrics that include:

- Command of material,
- Relevance to course objectives,
- Teaching techniques' appropriateness for the goals of the course, and
- Application of theory to solve problems.

Include Peer Review Evaluations in Tenure Review Portfolio

Peer reviews provide a general overview of a faculty member's instructional quality compared to content- and context-specific annual reviews. If faculty members teach traditional face-to-face courses and online courses, the faculty member selects one course from each format for review. The differences in traditional and online course formats require different instructional approaches, thus program directors request that faculty members undergo peer review in each medium. Online course reviews use a similar format, with the exception that the faculty member actually completes online assignments in addition to watching the recorded lecture.

Student Evaluations

Allow Program Directors Discretionary Power to Determine the Weight of Student Evaluations in Faculty Assessments

Many program directors find student course evaluations unreliable and subject to biases depending on the students' academic performance. However, few program directors employ alternative measures to collect student feedback on courses and faculty members.

Programs that transition to online course evaluations experience dramatic decreases in participation rates and yield biased data since only students motivated negatively or positively completed the evaluations. To increase participation rates, some program directors withhold students' access to view grades online until the student completes all course evaluations.

Program administrators at **Institution E** exclude student course evaluation data in faculty assessments if the response rate is below 70 percent.

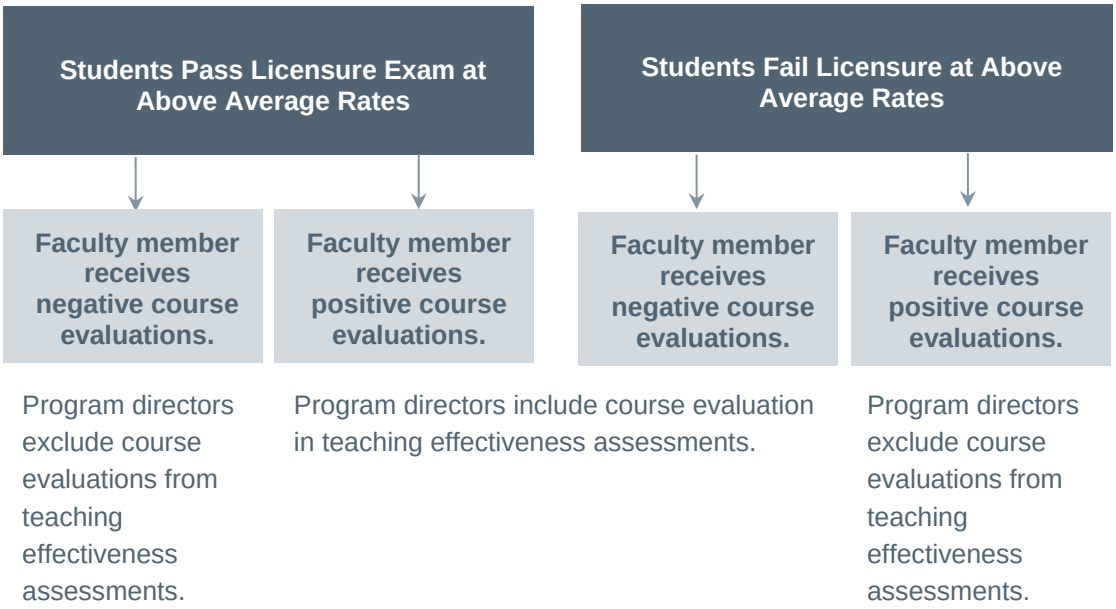
Professional Licensure Exams

Compare Student Cohort Performance on Professional Licensure Exams to Cohort Course Evaluations to Determine Evaluation Validity

Directors of health sciences programs that prepare students to take professional licensure exams compare student cohort performance on licensure exams to cohort course evaluations to determine the weight given to course examinations.

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

Decision Process for Inclusion of Student Course Evaluations in Teaching Effectiveness Reviews



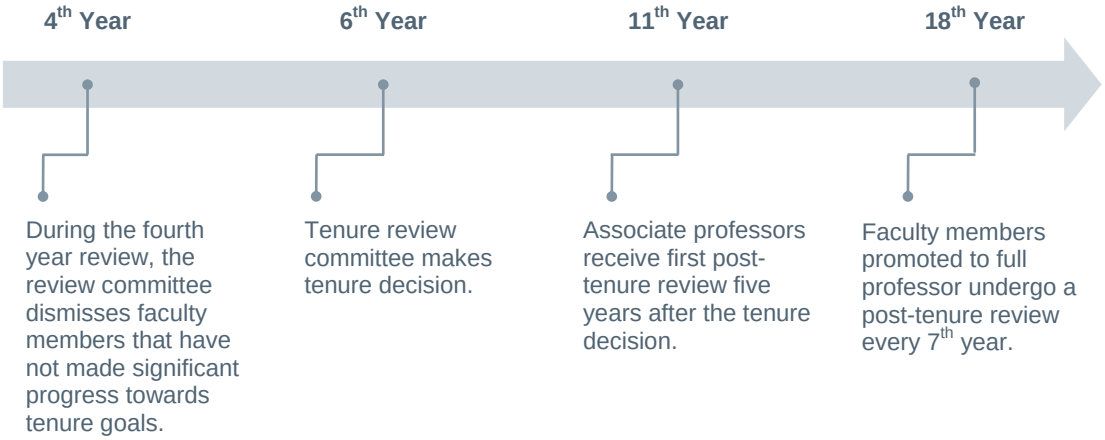
4) Faculty Assessment Operations

Tenure Review Timeline

Review Tenure-Track Faculty Candidates' Progress towards Tenure Every Two Years

Tenure-track faculty meet with tenure review committees every two years to discuss candidates' progress towards tenure eligibility. Administrators determine tenure status in the sixth year of employment, with tenure review meetings in the second and fourth year of employment. Tenure review committees request access to tenure-track faculty members' annual review during the second and fourth year meetings, but most tenure review committees only include annual peer review in final tenure assessments.

Tenure Review Timeline



© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

IT Infrastructure

Outsource Student Evaluation Data Systems to Third Party Vendors to Ensure Evaluation Standardization and Reliability

College deans outsource student evaluation data systems to online providers to ensure a uniform and reliable delivery system that reduces paper waste and provides robust data. Paper forms require additional work such as scanning or purchasing a Scantron reading machine to create usable and storable digital data.

Third Party Student Evaluation Data Systems[1]

Instrument	Characteristics
OnlineCourseEvalutions.com	▪ Guarantees minimum response rate of 72 percent ▪ Tracks and surveys students who drop the course ▪ Compatible with Blackboard
CoursEval 3.0	▪ Provides simple, easy-to-understand result reports ▪ Compatible with online information environment (Jenzabar); single log-in for students ▪ Easily customizable to different courses ▪ Allows students who complete evaluations to see grades immediately after posted rather than waiting until a designated date
IDEA Center Survey	▪ Allows ratings of faculty members based on students' perception of the number of course objectives completed ▪ Customizable to different departments' learning objectives ▪ Data comparable with national database

Assessment Process Implementation

Survey Faculty Members' Attitudes on Potential Assessment Policies before Implementation

Deans survey faculty members about potential changes to assessment policies to demonstrate the importance of faculty feedback on assessment policies and increase faculty support. Deans administer online surveys through simple survey websites such as Surveymonkey.com that:

- Include examples of assessment policies at other institutions and the rationale behind the assessment policy,
- Ask faculty to identify worthwhile and problematic components of the example assessments, and
- Provide space for narrative comments from faculty.

1) Education Advisory Board (2010), "Gathering and Applying Meaningful Data from Student Course Evaluations" accessed December 10th, 2013 EAB.com

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

Increase Faculty Support for New Assessment Policies through a Transparent Committee Review Process

Colleges with fewer than 10 programs include faculty representatives from each program on the assessment review committee. Assessment review committees also include the college dean and the division chairs of each program.

> Send notes from assessment committee meetings to all college faculty members over the faculty listserv.

In colleges with 10 or more programs, faculty members volunteer to represent a grouping of similar programs (e.g., natural sciences) on the committee. Faculty members that volunteer to serve on the committee receive college-level service credit.

Pilot New Assessment Policies in Programs with High Percentages of Tenured Faculty

Potential adverse effects of assessment policies have less impact on tenured faculty members compared to adjunct faculty and tenure-track faculty; tenured faculty rely less on annual performance reviews. Potential adverse effects include:

- Review biases,
- Miscommunication of the interpretation of quantitative measurements, and
- Improper weighting.

Pilot programs increases faculty support since college administrators can provide demonstrable results of the assessment in practice and incorporate the feedback of faculty participants.

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

6) Research Methodology

Project Challenge

Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum with the following questions:

- Besides student course evaluations, what other strategies assess faculty instructional performance?
- How do contacts choose faculty assessment strategies?
- What weight do contacts assign for assessment types?
- How many courses do contacts include in instructional effectiveness assessments?
- How do faculty instructional assessments differ by teaching and research tracks?
- What IT infrastructure do contacts require for faculty assessments?
- What role do peers contribute to faculty instructional evaluations?
- How do contacts measure of the outcomes of faculty instructional assessments?
- What challenges do contacts face implementing new assessment models? How do contacts overcome those challenges?
- How do contacts report data to deans and program administrators?

Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- Education Advisory Board's internal and online research libraries (eab.com)
- Education Advisory Board (2010), "Gathering and Applying Meaningful Data from Student Course Evaluations" accessed December 10th, 2013. (eab.com)
- Education Advisory Board (2010), "Faculty Workload: A Review of Nine Institutions" accessed December 10th, 2013. (eab.com)
- The Chronicle of Higher Education (http://chronicle.com)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (http://nces.ed.gov/)

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company

Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed program directors of health and science programs at public institutions.

A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief

Institution	Location	Approximate Institutional Enrollment (Undergraduate/Total)	Classification
Institution A	Pacific	10,700/11,200	Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)
Institution B	Midwest	11,800/17,200	Research Universities (high research activity)
Institution C	Midwest	10,300/10,700	Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)
Institution D	Mid-Atlantic	18,200/21,900	Research Universities (very high research activity)
Institution E	South	13,000/15,600	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
Institution F	Mid-Atlantic	19,600/24,700	Research Universities (high research activity)

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (http://nces.ed.gov/)

© 2013 The Advisory Board Company