# Context

Peer observation may be adopted for online instruction at UNL. Typically, in in-person environments, a single session provides an adequate opportunity to observe. Asynchronous online instruction requires observations of how instructors engage or create opportunities for engagement with students —discussions, peer review activities, wikis, and group assignments are examples of asynchronous instructional interactions. Instructors also may wish to share assignment feedback, email exchanges with students, and other relevant materials that contribute to an environment that is conducive to student learning. This document is intended to be shared only between the observer and the faculty member being observed; it should not be a tool for summative evaluations by supervisors without the consent of the observed faculty member.

# Peer Observation Section 1

## Guidance Notes

1. The Observation is designed for anyone teaching at the University of Nebraska Lincoln in any contracted capacity. Observations may be requested by individuals, and/or recommended by schools, colleges, or departments. Access to Part 1 of the form should be entirely at the discretion of the individual being observed. Any request to view the part 1 form should be conveyed in writing.
2. Section 1 is designed to facilitate reflection on an online instructors’ teaching and will be undertaken significantly by the instructors themselves with support from the observer. Section 1 is, thus, formative. Section 2 is designed to be summative and may include any information from Section 1 the instructor wishes to bring to any review. The observer needs merely to read and sign off on Section 2. It is important to stress that Section 2 is optional. It is also designed in such a way that it would be hard for departments to rank individuals using this material, nor to aggregate it in any way.
3. ‘Peer’ in this context of this observation can mean an instructor of similar experience within the instructor’s department, or a suitably experienced and qualified person from outside the department. The forms have been designed to include as much self-reflection as possible. They are not intended as tools to enforce particular styles or practices. The various sections direct the observer to look for particular activities/strategies/behaviors in the session/module. These are based on best practice in higher education and also the areas of teaching and learning that UNL deems strategically important. There are many ways to help students learn effectively and, given this is a form that is intended to be used University-wide, we recommend adaptation in departments. For a more directive approach consider incorporating [Campbell’s approach to academic rigor](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/016146811812000503), or the [Community of Inquiry Model](https://coi.athabascau.ca/coi-model/) for online courses.
4. The observation is designed so the observer does not require subject matter expertise to facilitate successful reflection of the instructors. If an observer with subject expertise is deemed necessary or desirable, the observation does not preclude this.
5. The process is intended to be iterative. The evidence suggests that reflection is most effective where instructors are observed annually.
6. In the online context, a selection of materials should be picked that allows for assessment of instructor-student interactions (e.g. announcements/email communications, feedback on student work, and instructions/rubrics when applicable) and, in some situations, assessment of the design/setup of student-student interactions may also be included (e.g. the way the instructor introduces students to a discussion board and/or their community standards that help the student-student interactions run smoothly). This selection of materials will be referred to as a “module” for the purposes of the observation. (Could/Should the instructor as participant in the discussion thread be included as well?)
7. The instructor under observation should consider whether their peer could provide the best feedback as a “mock student” or if their peer should view the course from a broader vantage point (such as a TA) to see multiple examples of interactions.

## Timeline

1. Before meeting with the observer, the instructor should reflect on what type of feedback they would consider most beneficial.
2. At least a week before the observation, the observer and instructor should meet to discuss timing of the observation and expectations. Online courses should be observed in the smallest selection of materials possible. If the online course materials are in weekly modules as its smallest measurement, the observation is a week. If the materials are in days, the observation is a day. The objective in picking the smallest selection of coursework is to give the observer an adequate understanding of teacher-student interactions that take place in the course while keeping the burden of review for the observer as low as possible.
3. Within two weeks of the observation observer and instructor should meet to reflect on the observation.

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| **Part 1** **Pre-observation**  **to be completed by the instructor** | |
| **Instructor’s Name** | **Instructor’s Position**  **School/College/Department** |
| **Observer’s name** | **Observer’s Position**  **School/College/Department** |
| **Dates of observation**  **Time period of content to observe** (i.e. week or day of the module):  **Nature of the content observed**  **Activities** (discussion, group activity, assignment/quiz): | |
| **Course title** | **Nature of the online Instruction**  Please describe key details of this instruction. Provide applicable details, such as course, class size, level, delivery method, audience, and anything else that would help the observer to understand the educational context. |
| **Learning outcomes/pedagogic context**   1. Please describe what will happen during this observed module. What is the nature of the content, and what is the sequence of activities? 2. How would you describe the learning outcomes you are trying to achieve in this module? | |
| **What areas of your teaching would you find most useful to receive feedback on for this portion of the course?** | |

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| **Part 2 Post-observation**  **to be completed by the instructor** | |
| **What went well during the module? Remember that online teaching is being observed to identify use of practices that are known (or not) to impact student outcomes** | **Were there any challenges in the module?**  **What could have been improved?** |

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| **Part 3 Post-observation**  **to be completed by the observer** | |
| **Please provide feedback on the areas identified by the instructor** (see above) | |
| **Comment on the following aspects of the asynchronous module**  Please note that these whilst all these sections are of great importance in teaching and learning, it may not be possible to address them all in the time allotted. | |
| **Planning, organisation and structure.**  *Consider aspects such as: clarity of structure, pedagogic context, links with relevant previous activities, learning outcomes and how these were communicated to the students.* | |
| **Delivery**  *Consider aspects such as: selection of appropriate methods and approaches, presentation, pace, timing, use of language and the choice of learning resources.* | |
| **Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity**  *Consider aspects such as:* *appropriate strategies for including all students in conversation; incorporation of auditory, visual, and kinaesthetic styles; modelling respectful language; encouraging divergent views; creating an environment in which all feel able to participate.* | |
| **Technology**  *Consider aspects such as: use of visual and auditory technology to support learning, deployment of technology to enhance and/or encourage participation.* | |
| **Student engagement and interaction**  *Consider aspects such as: use of questioning, determining student comprehension, management of student interactions/questions, rapport, feedback (automatic or hand-completed), and/or email communications.* | |
| **Instructor Reflection and Actions**  *Instructor should use this section to record their reflections and detail any actions that emerge from this process.* | |
| **Instructor**  Name  Signature  Date | **Observer**  Name  Signature  Date |

# Draft Peer Observation Form 2

## Guidance Notes

1. The purpose of the Peer Observation Form 2 is to allow instructors to bring evidence to promotion and tenure review, and to anywhere else such material might be relevant, that demonstrates that their teaching has been recently observed by a peer. The summary in the section below should include material from the observation that shows evidence of achievement in the categories outlined on the form. The observed instructor should quote material from the observer that demonstrates of high achievement. If the observation is one of a series it is important that improvement and development is noted in this section.
2. The information included in this section of the form should be determined exclusively by the instructor but signed off by the observer.
3. The person who is conducting the review is at liberty to file this material to be used for any purpose relevant to teaching and learning.

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| **Summary for Promotion and or Tenure Purposes**  *This section should be determined exclusively by the instructor but signed off by the observer. It should contain material that assists the instructor to discuss their teaching in relevant reviews. This may be important where the instructor may not wish to share parts of the main observation that contains significant reflective and formative material.* | |
| **Instructor**  Name  Signature  Date | **Observer**  Name  Signature  Date |