

GUIDANCE ON THE ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS FOR CALENDAR YEARS 2020 AND 2021

(4.8.21)

This document was substantially updated on April 8, 2021 to reflect guidance for calendar year 2021. Moving forward, updates will be highlighted in yellow.

This document summarizes the university's approach to assessment of teaching effectiveness for calendar year 2020 and 2021. This guidance applies to all faculty members, instructors, and graduate students serving as the instructor-of-record or as a graduate teaching assistant. At the end of the document please find two tables, "Use of Short-form Student Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness for courses taught in calendar years 2020 and 2021" and "Use of alternate assessments for calendar years 2020 and 2021"

ANNUAL REVIEWS

Spring/Summer/Fall 2021

To ensure that student input is included in the assessment of teaching effectiveness, the "university-wide experimental SRTE short-form" (see "Summary of Short-form SRTE modifications made in fall 2020 and calendar year 2021" below) will be administered in all classes taught in spring and fall 2021. The results will be made available to both faculty and administrators at rateteaching.psu.edu and in Activity Insight reports.

In annual reviews, the assessment of teaching effectiveness for courses taught in spring and fall of 2021, should adhere to the following guidelines.

- Short-form SRTEs for all courses taught will be included in faculty annual review materials.
 - If measures of central tendency are referenced by either the administrator or the faculty member/instructor, both the median and mode must be referenced and discussed in the context of the distribution.
 - Administrators are urged to review the [University Faculty Senate Report on Effective Use of SRTE Data](#) to inform their interpretation of results.
- Faculty member/instructors will include one alternate assessment of teaching effectiveness for each academic year (see "Options for Alternate Assessment" below) in their annual review materials.

Fall 2020

In June of 2020, Senate Council passed a resolution asking that SRTEs continue to be utilized only for faculty development. In addition, the situation called for modifying the SRTE (see summary below) practices for using SRTE results in annual reviews and promotion (and tenure) dossiers. SRTE results (both the long- and short-form) were made available only to an individual faculty member and were not included in Activity Insight reports.

In annual reviews, the assessment of teaching effectiveness for courses taught in fall of 2020, should adhere to the following guidelines.

- Peer teaching review was not suspended for fall of 2020 and was expected to occur. Peer review can consist of a wide range of activities that may or may not include class visitation. See the promotion and tenure [FAQs](#) #68 and #69.
- Faculty members/instructors must describe how they made a “good faith effort” to deliver instruction.
- Use of short-form SRTEs is optional and at the faculty member’s discretion (see description of SRTE modifications below). The omission of SRTEs does not provide any evidence relevant to the assessment of teaching effectiveness.
 - If measures of central tendency are referenced by either the administrator or the faculty member/instructor, both the median and mode must be referenced and discussed in the context of the distribution.
- Regardless of whether short-form SRTEs are included, faculty/instructors must include at least one alternate assessment as part of their description of how they made a “good faith effort” to deliver instruction (see comprehensive list below).
 - Part-time/adjunct faculty members can be required to submit an alternate assessment given that submission of SRTE results is not required.
- Faculty/instructors will be asked to address available evidence that suggests the instructor did not make a good faith effort to deliver instruction; this evidence should be presented to the instructor/faculty member well in advance of the annual review meeting.

Spring/summer 2020

For courses taught in spring of 2020, in response to the pandemic and to a resolution issued by the Faculty Senate in March, SRTE results were made available only to an individual faculty member and were not included in Activity Insight reports. Peer teaching observations were suspended.

In annual reviews, the assessment of teaching effectiveness for courses taught in spring/summer 2020 should adhere to the following guidelines.

- Faculty members/instructors must describe how they made a “good faith effort” to deliver instruction.
- SRTEs may not be included in annual reviews, except in rare circumstances.
- Consistent with a request from the University Faculty Senate’s Joint Committee on Faculty Teaching Assessments, faculty/instructors may wish to include one of the alternate assessments outlined in Appendix M of the 2020-2021 Promotion and Tenure Guidelines or one of the self-reflections recommended by the Joint Committee on Faculty Teaching Assessments University Faculty Senate (see comprehensive list below).
- Faculty/instructors will be asked to address available evidence that suggests the instructor did not make a good faith effort to deliver instruction; this evidence should be presented to the instructor/faculty member well in advance of the annual review meeting.

PROMOTION AND/OR TENURE REVIEWS FOR TENURE-LINE AND NON-TENURE-LINE FACULTY MEMBERS

Spring/Summer/Fall 2021

To ensure that student input is included in the assessment of teaching effectiveness for faculty, the university-wide experimental SRTE short-form (see “Summary of Short-form SRTE modifications made in fall 2020 and calendar year 2021” below) will be administered in all classes taught in spring/summer/fall

of 2021. The results will be made available to both faculty and administrators at rateteaching.psu.edu and in Activity Insight reports.

For promotion and tenure reviews, the assessment of teaching effectiveness for courses taught in spring/summer/fall of 2021, will adhere to the following guidelines.

- The short-form SRTEs will be included for all courses taught in faculty promotion and tenure review materials.
 - If measures of central tendency are referenced by either the administrator or the faculty member/instructor, both the median and mode must be referenced and discussed in the context of the distribution.
- Faculty member/instructors will include one alternate assessment of teaching effectiveness for each academic year (see comprehensive list below).

Fall 2020

For promotion and tenure reviews for tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty members, assessment of teaching effectiveness for courses taught in fall 2020 will adhere to the following guidelines.

- At the discretion of the faculty member, fall 2020 short-form SRTEs may be included in dossiers as evidence of teaching effectiveness.
 - If measures of central tendency are referenced by either the faculty member or the administrator, both the median and mode must be referenced and discussed in the context of the distribution.
- Consistent with the [2020-2021 P&T Administrative Guidelines](#) (II C. 2), the omission of SRTEs does not provide any evidence relevant to the assessment of teaching effectiveness.
- Regardless of whether the SRTEs are included, at least one alternate assessment **must** be included (see comprehensive list below).
- Peer teaching review is not suspended for fall of 2020. Peer review can consist of a wide range of activities that may or may not include class visitation. See promotion and tenure [FAQs](#) #68 and #69.
- Once a faculty member determines what data for fall 2020 to include in a formal review, that decision may not be changed in dossiers created for subsequent reviews.
 - For example, relative to assessment of teaching effectiveness for fall 2020, Dr. Z included fall 2020 SRTEs in the 4th year review. Dr. Z must include SRTE scores for fall 2020 in subsequent formal reviews (e.g., 6th year review). **The decision made at the earliest review governs what is included at a later review.**
 - Similarly, if Dr. Z submits “formative feedback from students” for fall 2020, Dr. Z must include this self-reflection on fall 2020 courses in dossiers created for subsequent formal reviews. No additional alternate assessments may be included for fall 2020 in subsequent formal reviews.

Spring/summer 2020

In regard to promotion and tenure reviews for tenure-line and non-tenure-line faculty members, assessment of teaching effectiveness for courses taught in spring/summer 2020 will adhere to the following guidelines.

- For formal reviews that take place in fall 2020 and in subsequent years, inclusion of spring and summer 2020 SRTEs is not required and is discouraged except in rare circumstances. See promotion and tenure [FAQ](#) #67.
- Consistent with the [2020-2021 P&T Administrative Guidelines](#) (II C. 2), the omission of SRTEs does not provide any evidence relevant to the assessment of teaching effectiveness. See promotion and tenure [FAQs](#) #68 and #69.
- Peer teaching reviews were suspended in March of 2020. The omission of a peer teaching observation does not provide any evidence relevant to the assessment of teaching effectiveness. See promotion and tenure [FAQs](#) #68 and #69.
- Inclusion of an alternate assessment is optional; the omission of an alternate assessment does not provide any evidence relevant to the assessment of teaching effectiveness.
- Once a faculty member determines what data to include for spring/summer 2020 in a formal review, that decision may not be changed in dossiers created for subsequent formal reviews.
 - For example, relative to assessment of teaching effectiveness for spring/summer 2020, Dr. X did not include spring or summer 2020 SRTEs in the second-year review. Dr. X may not include SRTE scores for spring or summer 2020 in subsequent reviews (e.g., 4th and 6th year reviews). **The decision made at the earliest review governs what is included at a later review.**
 - Similarly, if Dr. X submits a “lesson learned” self-reflection on teaching for spring or summer 2020, Dr. X must include this self-reflection on spring or summer 2020 courses in dossier created for subsequent formal reviews. No additional alternate assessments may be included for spring/summer 2020 in subsequent formal reviews.

Summary of Short-form SRTE modifications made in fall 2020 and Calendar Year 2021

The short-form SRTE as currently configured was not well-suited to the conditions in place during fall 2020. There is value, however, in having a tool that systematically collects data from large numbers of students, provides useful feedback for faculty and administrators, and can help to establish trajectory in development of teaching skills.

- Summary of changes to the SRTE
 - Four University mandatory items will be administered.
 - A1:** Are you taking this course as an elective?
 - A2:** What grade do you expect to earn in this course?
 - A3:** Rate how well this course increased your understanding of the course topics.
(Prior wording: Rate the overall quality of this course.)
 - A4:** Rate how well the instructor promoted a meaningful learning experience for you.
(Prior wording: Rate the overall quality of the instructor.)
 - Two revised open-ended questions will be administered.
 - Open 1:** What aspects of this course helped you learn? *(Prior wording: What helped you learn in this course?)*
 - Open 2:** What changes to this course could improve your learning? *(Prior wording: What changes would improve your learning?)*
 - No items from the Academic Unit or Instructor section will be administered.
 - The mean for the two items will not be reported in any SRTE report, given that the mean is not the best measure of central tendency for a skewed distribution.
 - The distribution of scores (count and percent) across the 7-point scale will be provided.
 - The mean will be replaced with two measures of central tendency that are more appropriate for skewed distributions: Median and Mode.
 - If measures of central tendency are referenced, both the median and mode must be referenced and discussed in the context of the distribution.

Options for alternate assessment

The alternate assessments listed below were either described in Appendix M of the [2020-2021 Administrative Guidelines for AC23 Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Guidelines](#) and/or recommended by the University Faculty Senate's Joint Committee on Faculty Teaching Assessments.

Options for self-reflection

Lessons Learned. The candidate's statement may emphasize what they learned about their own teaching or students' learning during the spring 2020 semester. This reflection should not belabor what went wrong, but instead could describe what went well and/or what the faculty member plans to integrate in future face-to-face or remote teaching. Faculty might reflect on how their teaching changed to maintain student engagement in their learning, effectively monitor student progress, effectively assess student learning, and/or integrate greater flexibility into their courses.

Course Objectives. Faculty may choose to reflect on how course objectives were met despite the shift to remote instruction. This reflection might include adaptations of assignments linked to specific course objectives, revision of exam or quiz items linked to course objectives, revision of objectives to provide additional options for demonstrating learning, analysis of grades and grading rubrics as evidence of student learning, and/or examples of student work (by grade level or quality rank).

Student Interactions. The abrupt shift to remote teaching and learning created challenges that involved additional invisible and emotional labor on the part of many faculty. Faculty may reflect on what they did to support students during this time of disruption, such as mentoring students and reducing student apprehension and anxiety. Below are questions faculty may wish to answer as part of a self-reflection.

- What actions did you take as an instructor to reduce student apprehension and anxiety during this time of disruption?
- What might you do differently next time?
- How might you use what you learned about the importance of faculty-student connections in future courses?
- What unexpected student needs arose and how did you respond?

Professional Development for Teaching (instructional improvement). Reflection on the abrupt change to remote instruction. Examples might include a discussion of activities or the benefits of participating in a faculty teaching community; consulting with college instructional designers, Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence faculty, Teaching and Learning with Technology (TLT) assistants, or multimedia staff; collaborating with librarians; and/or independent work through readings, webinars, or virtual teaching conferences.

Intellectual Work of Teaching. Faculty may reflect on the expertise involved in teaching their spring 2020 courses, citing specific examples. Example topics that may guide this reflection include course planning that includes content knowledge, selection of sources, anticipation of students' prior learning or misconceptions; creating connections to research in the field or professional practice; course design that links assignments, readings, lectures, discussions, and/or other course elements; and course changes in response to pedagogic innovation, student learning needs, or remote learning modes.

Student input

Formative Feedback from Students. The faculty member may summarize the results of this feedback and how that feedback was used to adjust or improve the course. Many faculty members regularly use Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) to gather feedback from students during the semester. Student feedback may serve to quickly assess, without grading, students' learning related to the course

content such as Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, Concept Mapping, 3-2-1 (3 ideas, 2 examples, 1 question), or a Minute Paper. Other feedback is more general including open-ended questions (what helps you learn/what could be changed), Critical Incident Questionnaire, Midterm Class Interview, or exit surveys.

Student Work. The faculty member could summarize what the student work represents relative to course goals or objectives. Many faculty members already collect examples of student work for professional accreditation or degree program assessment. Examples of students' work can provide evidence of students' learning or achievement relative to a grading rubric/matrix.

Formative feedback from course assistants. This option is written by student(s) who have firsthand knowledge of how enrolled students are engaged in the course. For example, teaching assistants could comment on the instructor's planning and delivery of a course as well as guidance provided for TAs. Undergraduate learning assistants (or teaching interns) could comment on the instructional environment created by the faculty member and how that helped students learn. Feedback from others can be coupled with a commentary from the faculty member about why and how they integrate TAs or learning assistants into the course.

Analysis of a course based on real-time adjustments

Provide specific examples of how you modified instruction given changes in context (e.g., in-person vs. remote) and technology. Describe the resulting positive and negative short- and long-term impacts of such changes. Describe the resulting positive and negative short- and long-term impacts of such changes.

Comparisons to previous year assessments and goals, if applicable

Review previous annual reviews, including the available evidence and resulting goals. Given the available evidence, compare how this year compared to previous years' assessments. Delineate new goals that build upon your assessment.

Use of Student Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness for courses taught in calendar years 2020 and 2021

	Spring/summer 2020 SRTEs	Fall 2020 SRTEs	Spring/summer/fall 2021
Annual review	Not allowed; for instructors' eyes only.	Optional.	Required
Two-year review	Not allowed, except in rare circumstances.	Optional; at the faculty member's discretion*	Required
Four-year review	Not allowed, except in rare circumstances.	Optional; at the faculty member's discretion*	Required
Six-year review	Not allowed, except in rare circumstances.	Optional: at the faculty member's discretion*	Required
Promotion to Full Professor	Not allowed, except in rare circumstances.	Optional: at the faculty member's discretion*	Required
Non-tenure-line promotions	Not allowed, except in rare circumstances.	Optional; at the faculty member's discretion*	Required

*Consistent with standard practice, evidence of teaching effectiveness may not be submitted once the dossier has been submitted for review. For example, SRTE results for courses taught in fall 2020 may not be included in 2nd, 4th or 6th year or promotion-to-full reviews that take place in fall 2020. Fall 2020 SRTEs may be included in dossiers for formal reviews that take place in spring 2021 or later.

Use of alternate assessments for calendar years 2020 and 2021*

	Spring/summer 2020	Fall 2020	Spring/summer/fall 2021
Annual review	Establish that a “good faith effort” was made to deliver instruction.	Establish that a “good faith effort” was made to deliver instruction; alternate assessment required	Required
Two-year review	Optional	Required	Required
Four-year review	Optional	Required*	Required
Six-year review	Optional	Required*	Required
Promotion to Full Professor	Optional	Required*	Required
Non-tenure-line promotions	Optional	Required*	Required

*Consistent with standard practice, evidence of teaching effectiveness may not be submitted once the dossier has been submitted for review. For example, alternate assessments for courses taught in fall 2020 may not be included in 2nd, 4th or 6th year or promotion-to-full reviews that take place in fall 2020. Alternate assessments for courses taught in fall 2020 may be include in 2nd, 4th, or 6th year or promotion-to-full reviews that take in place spring 2021 or later.