PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING POLICY
AIM

At the University of Essex, we want colleagues to ask their peers regularly for feedback on their teaching practices and in return to give feedback to others. Peer exchanges form part of our commitment to professional development and are central to building our learning community. Listening to feedback on teaching practices and sharing different approaches between colleagues is one of the ways we can consistently improve the quality of our student experience.

The aim of this Peer Review of Teaching policy is to outline, and explain the minimum requirements for Peer Review of Teaching and to be clear about the responsibilities of everyone involved in this process: Deputy Deans (Education); Heads of Departments; Directors of Education; and academic staff engaged in teaching.

CONTENTS

1 SUMMARY
2 SCOPE
3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
4 WORKFLOW
SUMMARY

‘Peer Review of Teaching’ refers to an activity which need not be restricted to classroom observation, and one which can be used to develop educational provision, identify and disseminate good practice in teaching and review new teaching methods (Cox and Ingleby, 1997).¹

At Essex formal Peer Review of Teaching is organised and managed by the Department or School. This includes how reviews will be managed, as well as how good practice will be recorded and disseminated within departments, faculties and beyond. Informal opportunities to ask for feedback from peers or to see how others teach in practice is managed through the University’s Peer Exchange Network.

Feedback might be sought on any aspect of practice including: module design, delivery of lectures, use of technology-enhanced learning; session materials; student evaluations, management of large groups and smaller classrooms, approaches to supervision and personal tutor responsibilities.

For most departments, this policy will be a way of formalising a positive approach towards peer review that already exists.

Our minimum requirement is that:

A. All academic colleagues with a responsibility for teaching will take part in peer review and receive feedback at least once every two years.

B. Newly-appointed colleagues with a responsibility for teaching will take part in peer review and receive feedback; ideally within the first four to five weeks of teaching but as a minimum, in the first three months.

C. Graduate Teachers will take part in peer review and receive feedback; ideally within the first four to five weeks of teaching but as a minimum, in the first three months.

SCOPE

The Policy affects all members of academic staff engaged in teaching and those who have an education leadership role including Deputy Deans Education, Heads of Department and Directors of Education. The roles and responsibilities of these parties are detailed in the next section.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All academic colleagues engaged in teaching

1. All academic colleagues engaged in teaching will take part in peer review and receive feedback at least once every two years as specified by their Head of Department.

2. Graduate Teachers will take part in peer review and receive feedback; ideally within the first four to five weeks of teaching but as a minimum, in the first three months.

3. Newly-appointed colleagues with a responsibility for teaching will take part in peer review and receive feedback; ideally within the first four to five weeks of teaching but as a minimum, in the first three months.

4. All academic colleagues with a responsibility for teaching will be proactive in finding further opportunities for peer review as part of their commitment to professional development and as members of a learning community.

Deputy Deans Education (DDE)

1. Provide updates to Education Committee annually to confirm that peer review of teaching is taking place and is effective.

Heads of Departments (HoDs)

1. HoDs are responsible for making sure that all academic staff with a responsibility for teaching in their department are aware of the minimum requirements for peer review.

2. HoDs are responsible for upholding a consistent and appropriate framework for peer review of teaching; stating as a minimum how peer review of teaching should take place, how it is to be recorded, and how good practice is shared. This approach should be made available to every colleague in the department and also shared with the DDE.

3. Working with the department’s Director of Education, the HoDs will support academic colleagues with a responsibility for teaching in taking up opportunities for cross-departmental peer review of teaching activity.

4. HoDs are responsible for creating a departmental culture where feedback on teaching is valued.

Directors of Education (DoE)

1. DoEs are responsible for designing and managing a consistent framework for peer review. This includes when and how the review of teaching should take place, how it is to be recorded, and how good practice is shared.

2. DoEs are responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the framework annually and reporting this to the HoD and DDE.
PEER REVIEW WORKFLOW

Director of Education and Head of Department agree on suitable peer review of teaching model

Director of Education and Head of Department share agreed model with all colleagues and Faculty Deputy Dean Education

Director of Education asks academic colleagues to take part in a peer review of teaching on a minimum basis of once every two years

Peer review of teaching partnerships are formed and discussion takes place between colleagues to set the framework for the review

Peer review of teaching takes place between colleagues

A feedback conversation takes place between colleagues and any required departmental documentation is completed

Department is notified that peer review of teaching has taken place; departmental records updated

Good practice noted and shared with Director of Education

Faculty Deputy Dean Education shares good practice at Faculty Education Committee

Summary of peer review of teaching considered annually by department