George Brown College

Faculty Performance Review

Orientation Handbook

For Chairs and Academic Directors

Table of Contents

Introduction: What is the Faculty Performance Review?

This handbook has been created by the Organization and Staff Development Department to support Chairs and Academic Directors as they work with faculty taking part in the faculty performance review process. It is one in a series of ongoing initiatives aimed at assisting academic leaders as they carry out their roles in the performance review process.

Mandate of the Faculty Performance Review Process

One of the nine key recommendations of the George Brown College Academic Strategy was to "Implement a performance management program that involves all teachers and classroom staff and that supports their development as 'dual professionals'". The implementation of this recommendation is seen as key to the College's achievement of its overarching academic priority, "making excellence in teaching and learning the distinguishing hallmark of a George Brown College education". The performance review process will provide faculty with an opportunity to discuss their knowledge and skills and to identify new knowledge or skills they may wish to develop, both as a teacher and in their field of expertise.

> *The quality of teaching has become crucial at colleges and universities today. Swelling pressures… have moved institutions to reconsider the role of teaching and the role of the instructor in the classroom.*

--Peter Seldin

Key Features of the Faculty Performance Review

The model has been based on research and best practices. A literature review of faculty performance review is posted on Insite on the Academic Strategy page.

The model includes four key components:

1. The development of a teaching portfolio. The portfolio will have mandatory and optional components.
2. A choice between participating in Learning Squares or Peer Review/Observation.
3. A class observation by the faculty's chair or academic director, which is preceded by a pre-observation meeting.

4. A post-observation meeting between the faculty member and chair to review the portfolio and discuss a professional development plan. A summary memo will be developed out of this discussion, indicating that the performance review process has been completed and a professional development action plan established. This memo will be placed in the faculty member's file and used for planning staff development activities. Once the review process is completed, academic chairs must complete the professional development plan form with the faculty, and then forward this to Human Resources. A sample of this form is provided in the Appendix.

The process is developmental. The goal is to focus on our teaching and learning practices at George Brown College, enhance our learning community and continuously strive towards teaching and learning excellence.

This faculty performance review program is a professional development process and as such will <u>not</u> be used to determine faculty salary increments.

The process applies to full-time post-probationary teaching faculty at first and will be adapted later for counsellors, librarians and other non-teaching faculty roles. In most cases faculty will participate in the process once every three years.

The success of the Faculty Performance Review is contingent upon the faculty and the academic leaders mutually engaging together in this process towards strengthening individual's excellence in teaching and learning. As will be discussed, the Human Resources department and Staff Development will provide facilitation and information regarding the process and required training.

Faculty will be provided with the equivalent of three teaching contact hours on a SWF for the equivalent of 15 weeks to provide faculty with adequate time to fulfill the requirements of the performance review the first time they participate.

Training, support and feedback opportunities for both academic leaders and faculty are part of the program.

Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to the faculty themselves, there are three key players who play parts in the performance review process. Their roles are outlined below.

Chairs and Academic Directors

The Academic Director or Chair's role is pivotal to the success of the performance review process. Your role includes informing faculty of the process, selecting the faculty who will participate at any given semester, providing constructive feedback to faculty as they develop their portfolios and plans for improving their teaching. This will help to drive the review process and provide important feedback and support for teachers.

> *Knowing and learning are communal acts. They require a continual cycle of discussion, disagreement and consensus over what has been and what it all means.*

--Parker Palmer

In addition, the performance review is a collaborative process. You should try to meet with faculty members regularly to help them assess their progress. While the initial meeting is to confirm their participation, during other meetings, you might discuss any important observations they have made about their own teaching. This is also an important chance for you to gain a clearer understanding of your faculties' roles (official and unofficial) in your department.

Your tasks, then, include the following:

- Identify faculty who will be participating in the Performance Review Process by assigning SWF time during the workload preparation periods. **Note:** SWF time will be given to faculty as they participate in the process only for the FIRST time

- Submit a list of faculty names participating in the process to Staff Development one month prior to the beginning of the semester in which the faculty will be participating in the process

- Monitor the involvement of faculty in the process of developing a portfolio and participating in peer observation

- Arrange to observe each faculty member's classroom FOLLOWING the peer observation

- Provide feedback (written or verbal) to faculty in relation to the class observation

- Conduct a summary meeting with each faculty member that summarizes the faculty's performance using the Teaching Portfolio and classroom observations as a basis

- Submit the original "Final Sign-off sheet to the Human Resources Department

- Submit the completed Faculty PD plan to the Staff Development Office

Staff Development

The Staff Development Department offers considerable support for faculty undergoing the review process. Resources for faculty include scholarly articles on teaching and learning and reflective practice. These include a syllabus to help establish guidelines and clarify expectations, a workbook that contains exercises to foster reflection, and a template for the teaching portfolio. These resources are available online through a website set up exclusively for the review process. This website also contains links to other resources. Other tasks performed by the Staff Development Department to assist the program review process are as follows:

- Upon the request of the Division, will meet with Divisional/Departmental faculty to provide a detailed explanation of the Performance Review Process to faculty members

- Conduct an orientation each semester to those faculty participating in the process

- Provide individual support (face to face with individual and groups and electronic) to faculty in the development of the Teaching Portfolio

- Assist faculty in arranging the peer observations either through their participation in Learning Squares or by making other arrangements.

- Track faculty involvement/participation with the supports offered through Staff Development and report this involvement to the Divisions on a monthly basis

- Maintain a current list of faculty (by Division) participating in the Performance Review Process
- Provide support to Chairs in the form of training on classroom observation and providing feedback on those observations
- Support Chairs in relation to Teaching Portfolio content and evaluation
- Collect the Professional Development Plans and assist faculty as requested in the pursuit of their professional development as determined by the plan

Human Resources

The role of the Human Resources Department is to ensure that the Final Sign-off Sheet is placed into the faculty member's employee file. This department will also maintain a list of faculty (by Division) who have participated and completed the process. HR will alert Chairs one month prior to SWF preparation of the names of faculty who are due to engage in the Review Process.

Timeline for the Review Process

The components of the review process should be completed over the course of a regular 15-week semester. However, the names of faculty who will be selected to take part should be determined by the time the SWF for the upcoming semester has to be completed.

As such, there will be two cycles each academic year: September to December and January to June. However, since the SWFs are prepared in May for the September period, it is intended that faculty could commence some of the work in the May-June period towards completion of the process by December.

Guidelines for Reading & Evaluating Teaching Portfolios

The teaching portfolio is a tool for documenting professional achievement in teaching. Teaching portfolios were developed in Canada in the mid-1980s to give faculty more of a voice in the faculty appointment process. It is widely used in the United States where it is a main component of the promotion, tenure process, and awards process.

The teaching portfolio is the centrepiece of the faculty performance review process at George Brown College. It constitutes a significant accomplishment for faculty.

When reading and evaluating a teaching portfolio, it's important to keep in mind that it is a creative and qualitative work that documents teaching achievements in a highly personal way. And faculty have been given a lot of flexibility over what the final product looks like. Also, the context of teaching is different for each department and often for each teacher.

At the same time, while there is some flexibility in how faculty approach the tasks of writing and compiling a portfolio, there are, nevertheless, some components that are standard in any portfolio and that can provide a common basis for evaluation.

Teaching Portfolio Overview

It may help to familiarize yourself with the components of the teaching portfolio by first reviewing the template that has been developed for faculty. (See Appendix.) A teaching portfolio has two distinct components: 1) a narrative component or executive summary in which faculty comment on what appears in 2) the appendices, which contain supporting documents.

Some of the commentary of the executive summary may not be overtly linked to the appendices, such as the statement of teaching philosophy, a discussion of future teaching goals and plans for improvement, and an account of a faculty's currency in their field of expertise (i.e. a faculty's "dual professionalism").

Some of the commentary is directly linked to each supporting appendix, such as course outlines, rubrics and assessments, student feedback evaluations, samples of student work, publications, etc.

The reflective component in the executive summary should *highlight* the faculty's accomplishments and contexts for teaching and *focus* on his or her commitment to developing as a teacher.

> *Reflection is a key component to a teaching portfolio. Without reflection you have a scrapbook, not a teaching portfolio.*

--Barbara J. Millis

As previously mentioned, reflection is a key component to a teaching portfolio. A reflection is written in the first person. It should provide an accurate account of the teacher's experiences and how it has impacted her view of teaching. Thus, it's not enough merely to describe a moment in teaching that stands out. For it to have any value, a teacher must think about how it affected her and what she learned about teaching and herself.

Critical self-reflection goes still further and demands the teacher ask the question, "What would I do differently?" So, the emphasis and goal of critical self-reflection is self-improvement.

It might also be useful to refer to the relevant sections of the workbook that has been written to assist faculty who are participating in the review process. This document is available through Staff Development.

The Statement of Teaching Philosophy

No other component of the teaching portfolio allows for a greater opportunity for sustained reflection than the Statement of Teaching Philosophy (STP). The STP should be about two pages long.

As professional educators, we have to examine the implicit and explicit assumptions that we hold about teaching. Writing an STP allows a teacher to reflect deeply about teaching, the learning process, and the context of teaching. A faculty writing an STP should try to face the following questions:

1. "What are my beliefs about how people learn?"
2. "What are my beliefs about my role as an educator?"
3. "What are my beliefs about my students?"
4. "What are my beliefs about the relationship between me and my students?"
5. "How do my own instructional goals align with the mission of my department and college and their core values?"

These questions are set forth as separate components in the rubric for writing an effective STP (See the Appendix) that faculty receive at the start of the review process.

Statement of Teaching Effectiveness

The summary statement of teaching effectiveness (about two-three pages long) is another important element in a teaching portfolio. Here, faculty are encouraged to respond or discuss their impact on their learners. In drafting the STP, faculty rely on their own reflections on teaching and learning. In documenting their effectiveness as teachers, however, they will need to work from evidence that they've gleaned from external sources, especially student evaluations.

It is a common practice today to augment these ratings with data from other sources of teaching performance. Thus, teachers have the option of using feedback from peers that is derived from carefully directed, in-class observation of their teaching. In some cases, depending on how recently the teacher has completed probation, s/he will already have received formal feedback from an academic director, which can also be used to write this statement.

The typical sources for documenting teaching effectiveness, then, are

- Comments from peer observations
- Comments from students, either current or former
- Evidence of student success
- Service on teaching-related committees
- Student ratings
- Testimonials from employers, etc.

Some or all of these may be included as sources in a summary statement of teaching effectiveness.

Appendices

Located after the executive summary, the appendices contain the actual artefacts and supporting material of the portfolio. Supporting material usually contained in the appendix includes:

- the results from student feedback questionnaires,
- actual assignments developed by the teacher,
- rubrics and other assessment tools,
- copies of student letters and emails,
- any documentation of professional development, etc.

As mentioned, some elements contained in the executive summary will refer directly to specific appendices; some material in the appendix may not be referenced directly in the executive summary but might provide support for observations and reflections made there. There should also be alignment between what a teacher says he or she does in the executive summary and what he or she actually does as proven in the appendix.

> *It's important to keep in mind that we are never evaluating a portfolio per se; we are evaluating teaching through the portfolio.*

--Nancy Simpson

Guidelines for Peer Observation

The second component of the performance review process is peer observation. This attempts to create a learning community by building connections between faculty from across the college. As mentioned in the "Roles and Responsibilities" section above, this step in the process is coordinated through Staff Development.

To satisfy this requirement, faculty can choose to

1) participate in Learning Squares, which is a college-wide activity that facilitates critical self-reflection by allowing for observation and discussion among participants of classroom teaching behaviour, or
2) allow for observation and discussion of classroom teaching by one internal and one external observer.

Faculty often express a desire to form groups with other participants from their divisions for support and feedback. One of the goals of the project is to develop a learning community of teachers, and this is positive step toward that end.

There are, however some things to keep in mind.

Because the coordination of the Learning Squares activity takes place during the first two weeks of each semester, it's imperative that the names of the participants be forwarded to Staff Development so that teachers can be placed in groups whose meeting times will accommodate their schedules.

If faculty choose the second option, then it's important for both observers to have first taken part in a separate orientation that includes training in providing strength-based feedback. This is to ensure that the type of feedback they receive is consistent, constructive, and appropriate for the purposes of their teaching portfolios and the review process as a whole.

Guidelines for Chair Observation

The role of Chairs and Academic Directors in any teaching review process is crucial. Generally speaking, they can provide the following:

- Aid in understanding the shared criteria for teaching excellence with the department and the College;

- Identify particular teaching contributions expected of the faculty member to the teaching mission and mandates of the department;

- Assist in interpreting external sources of teaching effectiveness, i.e. student evaluation, and providing constructive recommendations.

It is recommended that Chairs follow the process outlined below when conducting a classroom observation:

- Contact each faculty member to arrange a time and date for the observation to take place

- Conduct a pre-observation meeting (30 minutes to 1 hour max) with each faculty member to do the following:

    - Discuss the context of the particular class in relation to the entire course
    - Ask that the faculty member introduce you to the class at the beginning of the lesson.
    - Ask the faculty member if there are any specific things on which s/he would like specific feedback
    - Identify to the faculty member what role you will assume in the classroom. I.e. will you quietly observe or actively participate?
    - Ask the faculty member to discuss his/her teaching philosophy and how that teaching philosophy will be manifested behaviorally in the classroom (what things will you see that support his or her teaching philosophy?)
    - Ask for a copy of the lesson plan for the particular class to be submitted to you at least 3 days in advance of the class
    - Identify things to which you will be paying particular attention i.e. activity in the classroom, student engagement, adherence to the Adult Learning Cycle, management of inappropriate student behaviour, etc
    - Re-assure the faculty that the purpose of this visit is NOT to find fault with his/her performance; rather it is meant to help them further identify their strengths and to leverage those strengths to improve classroom teaching.
    - Ask when the faculty member would like to receive your feedback. (Many people like some form of immediate feedback following the class followed by more comprehensive feedback within a week or so of the class.) Schedule the follow-up meeting immediately.

- Conduct the Observation (2-3 hours depending on the length of the class)

    - Stay for the entire class – it is important for the faculty member that you see the entire flow of the class
    - When the faculty introduces you to the class, tell the students why you are observing the class
    - If you need to take notes during the class, do so subtly and make sure that you maintain active eye contact with the faculty.
    - DO NOT answer your email or respond to phone messages during the class.
    - If possible, during the break spend a few moments talking with students
    - Return from the break 5 minutes before the class resumes and have a quick positive conversation with the faculty member
    - At the end of the class, thank the students for allowing you to observe their learning environment.

- Conduct the Post-observation Feedback Session (30 min to 1 hour).

    - Ask the faculty how he/she felt the class went
    - Ask what s/he felt was particularly strong and where things might have been weaker
    - Provide the faculty member with a general overall comment about the class based upon your observations
    - Identify 3-4 things that you saw as strengths in the classroom delivery
    - Provide the faculty member with feedback on the issues they identified (above)
    - Provide the faculty member with feedback in relation to their Teaching Philosophy and how it was manifested in the class
    - Provide feedback to the faculty member on the issues you identified in the per-observation conversation
    - Using the strengths that you identified, help the faculty leverage those strengths to deal with weaker areas. For example, "I could tell by your enthusiasm and animation that you are totally committed to and passionate about the content of this lesson and that it is very important to you. But I also noticed that about 50% of the students were not so involved – they were passing notes, talking, and engaged in non-task behaviours. I wonder if we can think of some ways that you can get those students to feel as passionately about the material as you feel?"

- End the meeting on a positive note emphasizing the faculty member's strengths.

Final Meeting

- Schedule a one-hour meeting with the faculty member towards the end of the semester
- Ask that the faculty member submit his/her portfolio to you one week prior to that meeting so that you can review it.
- Ask the faculty member to summarize their involvement in the process: what did they find most useful, what new things did they learn, what was most difficult for them etc.
- During the meeting, draw together the information from the Teaching Portfolio and the Classroom observations and incorporate the faculty's comments (above). Structure this so that it focuses on the strengths of the instructor and helps the instructor leverage those strengths to deal with weaker areas.
- Based on your feedback and their reflections, ask the faculty what areas s/he would like to concentrate upon for the next 3 years. Discuss this with the faculty and come to agreement so that their needs are addressed and any issues relevant to their performance from your perspective are addressed.
- Fill out the PD form (see Appendix)
- Ask the faculty to sign the Final Sign-off sheet
- Send the PD form to Staff Development
- Send the Final sign-off Form to Human Resources (Judy Csaszar)

Appendix

Teaching Portfolio Template

Rubric for Evaluating a Statement of Teaching Philosophy

Verification of Completion Form

Professional Development Plan