



Department of Physics - Annual Evaluation Criteria

This document defines the criteria by which the Chair will complete annual faculty evaluations for each area: teaching, professional, and service. It constitutes an agreement by the Chair and the faculty members of the Department of Physics and can be reconsidered at any time at the request of the Chair or the faculty.

This document was ratified by the Chair and faculty members of the department on September 16, 2016 and its use will begin for evaluations beginning with the 2016 – 2017 academic year.

Teaching

The AAUP says this in their Statement on Professional ethics:

As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals, and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit.

As noted in the Teaching and Research Handbook, it is the responsibility of the Department to develop written criteria that reflect the standards and norms appropriate to the discipline. Specific to the area of Teaching, a clear description of what it means to be a successful teacher must be provided. A successful teacher will exhibit the following characteristics.

1) Chooses content wisely

- content covers all course objectives and those objectives are clearly defined to be those on the official course description on file with the Registrar
- is appropriate to the level
- promotes learning and the growth of knowledge, confidence, and interest in the subject matter
- course content follows a logical introduction, so that students can build on skills learned earlier and apply them to new material

2) Presents material well

- clarity of presentation
- sufficient time allowed for each area of content
- appropriate number of well-chosen examples, especially real-world problems relevant to the course and the students enrolled in the course, both for faculty to demonstrate and students to do themselves
- handouts and any other materials provided to students that are clear, concise, and thoroughly organized
- it is recommended that any of these materials also be available to students on the University's learning management system, D2L

- 3) Provides ample opportunity for students to directly engage in the material through assignments. These assignments are the basis of the scaffolding to provide students practice to build their skills before being assessed on exams.
 - assignment content should be directly related to the course objectives
 - at an appropriate level for the course
 - sufficient, but not excessive in quantity
 - provide a range of difficulty for students to gain confidence in early problems and then challenge them as they progress
- 4) Assesses student performance thoroughly and grades assessments/exams fairly.
 - all graded work is clearly related to course material
 - students are assessed thoroughly on the course material
 - sufficient graded assessments/exams to effectively measure student learning - recommended a minimum of two exams and a final exam
 - grading follows the scheme set out directly in the syllabus - any changes in the grading scheme must be provided in writing to the students
 - grading is both fair and honest across the enrolled students
 - academic standards as set forth by the department are maintained
- 5) Provides appropriate support to students.
 - Appropriate student questions about course material are answered, both during and outside of the classroom.
 - Student questions about assignments are answered promptly (within 24 hours at a minimum).
 - Graded assignments are returned within 7 days of submission.
 - At least 30% of the overall grade is determined by the time of mid-term grades.
- 6) Maintains appropriate standards of professionalism.
 - holds classes regularly and as scheduled
 - lab exercises should average to utilize a minimum of 75% of the scheduled lab time
 - comply with all university policies that govern teaching as noted in the Teaching and Research Handbook
 - maintaining at least 6 hours of office hours a week, not all of which can be done during the department's help center hours
 - being on time for classes and using the vast majority of the scheduled time
 - being on time for office hours
 - giving final exams at the scheduled times and locations
 - provides students ample feedback on their progress and grade in the course by using D2L for grades; using D2L to provide grades ensures that faculty advisors can see their students' grades using Starfish and is a campus-wide attempt to work on retention of students
- 7) Continues to develop and refine courses over time
 - keep informed of current developments in the field of study
 - keep informed on pedagogical developments that can be applied to the instruction of courses that improve student learning

- provide continuous assessment of course content and of the specialized needs of the various student groups enrolled in the department's courses and making appropriate changes to courses based on relevant to that assessment, needs, and developments in the field and educational research

Teaching evaluation

The Chair's evaluation of teaching should be based on consideration of all of these items. Student evaluations, both numerical values and comments, will act to inform the Chair on each point as appropriate, but will not be the sole basis used for evaluation. There has been a great deal of evidence showing that student evaluations are not necessarily the best way to evaluate a faculty member's teaching effectiveness. A single example paper, with a list of other studies, can be found here. The Chair may use any information available, but the following template will guide the evaluation of teaching. Instructors may supply comments in any area on the FAR.

In the evaluation of teaching, the Chair should be looking for patterns of behavior, not for minutiae. As an example, a faculty member who fails to cover the entire official syllabus in one course in one semester would not therefore be considered to be not in compliance with this policy, but a faculty member who repeatedly fails to cover the entire syllabus would be.

The table below lists evidence that the Chair needs in order to complete the evaluation of teaching. In specific areas not listed the Chair may presume that instructors are performing adequately unless there are indications to the contrary.

The Chair may request some or all of these materials from an instructor to complete the evaluation. The Chair will do so at least once every 3 times a course is taught at the minimum. Any materials requested should be provided by July 1 to provide adequate time for the Chair to complete the annual evaluation.

An instructor who performs well in all categories included in the definition above will receive a minimum teaching rating of "Meets expectations." The Chair may adjust that evaluation upward from that point based on a faculty member who has gone above those base performance goals. A partial list of examples that would satisfy this.

- teaching overloads
- supervising independent studies
- attending teaching related workshops
- developing new courses or new teaching materials for existing courses

An instructor who does not perform well in all categories included in the definition of good teaching is not guaranteed any particular score.

Area	Necessary Evidence
Choice of materials	Course syllabus Textbook name, sections covered Student evaluations
Course order	Course syllabus Material on exams Student evaluations
Presentation	Materials distributed to students Student comments Student evaluations Chair observations
Use of assignments	List or copies of assignments Student comments Student evaluations
Testing and grading	Copies of tests, final exam, other graded assignments Student comments Student evaluations
Support	Course syllabus Student comments Student evaluations Course D2L or web page
Professionalism	Course syllabus Student comments Student evaluations Course D2L or web page Chair observations

Table 1: Table of evidence that supports the determination of a faculty member's teaching effectiveness

Professional

The professional development of faculty members is essential to their growth and to the contribution to the Department, the College, and the University. This development should expand the opportunities for Radford University students and should enhance the reputation of the Department and its faculty both within and outside the University.

Specific guidelines to be considered include:

1) Involvement in research

- research in the discipline which contributes to the faculty member's development as a scholar and a teacher
- encouraging students to play an active role in the development of research projects and to be an integral part of the research where possible
- writing grant proposals to support the research
- obtaining financial support for research projects
- publication or other dissemination of results

2) Submission of proposals to support Department goals

- submitting proposals for the purchase of research equipment

- submitting proposals for stipends for faculty and/or student pay to support research activities
 - submitting proposals to utilize new equipment and technology
- 3) Participation in professional organizations
- presentations at professional meetings
 - holding office in professional organizations
 - chairing sessions professional meetings
 - attending professional meetings
- 4) Published works that enhance the reputation of the author, Department, and University
- writing or revising textbooks
 - writing or revising laboratory manuals
 - publishing and presenting results of research
 - contributing to review articles
 - reviewing textbooks
 - contributing to test banks, solution manuals, and other publisher projects

Professional evaluation

The Chair may request copies of materials or other evidence from the above list to review to complete the annual evaluation. A faculty member found to be maintaining appropriate professional contributions will receive a minimum evaluation of “Meets Expectations.” Additional efforts by a faculty member in this area will have their evaluation in this area increased beyond this level.

University Service

Participation in College and University activities is important. Every faculty must make some contributions in this area. Specific guidelines to be considered include:

- 1) Participation in University, College, and Departmental governance
- serving on councils, standing committees, and ad hoc committees
 - chairing councils, standing committees, and ad hoc committees
 - serving on the Faculty Senate
 - serving on Departmental committees
 - chairing Departmental committees
 - providing leadership for constructive change in policies or procedures
 - providing appropriate feedback to Departmental, College, and University requests
- 2) Contributions to University and College programs
- participation in campus-wide programs such as UNIV 100, Quest, etc.
 - participation in activities leading to interdisciplinary courses or programs
 - support of Departmental and campus-wide student groups
 - advising student groups
 - sponsoring student activities

- participation in efforts to improve effectiveness in recruiting, retention, advising, program assessment, career planning and placement

3) Contributions that enhance the reputation of the University

- development of programs with industry, schools, and governmental agencies
- providing community service related to academic expertise
- awards that bring recognition to the University or its departments

University service evaluation

The Chair may request copies of materials or other evidence from the above list to review to complete the annual evaluation. A faculty member found to be maintaining appropriate service to the department, college, and university will receive a minimum evaluation of “Meets Expectations.” Additional efforts by a faculty member in this area will have their evaluation in this area increased beyond this level.