

LETTER OF AGREEMENT (LOA#192)

Guidelines for the Formal Peer Observation of Teaching: Process and Templates

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT # 192 KEAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, LOCAL 2187 -and- KEAN UNIVERSITY

WHEREAS, over the course of two years, a group of faculty serving on a Senate "Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Affairs" ("Committee"), along with the University committee on Teaching and Faculty Fellows, drafted a new peer observation process which was piloted and voted forward by the Senate.

WHEREAS, the Committee's central goals were to create a process that required meaningful feedback on observable teaching practice; promote a more equitable system for assigning observers; foster a developmental orientation to peer observation.

WHEREAS, on April 8, 2025, the Senate Approved the Senate Guidelines prepared by the Committee.

WHEREAS, in August 2026, the University and Kean Federation of Teachers (KFT) entered into a Memorandum of Agreement that addressed the guidelines for Peer Observation for faculty at Kean University

IT IS ON THIS DAY OF September 22, 2026, the University and the Kean Federation of Teachers, Local 2187, (the Union) hereby agree to the following guidelines for formal peer observation of teaching:

This Agreement shall remain in full force and effect from this date until June 30, 2028, unless modified by changes in the Master Agreement or unless a new LOA replaces this one. The Agreement shall automatically be renewed from year to year thereafter, unless either party shall give to the other party written notice of its desire to terminate, modify, or amend this Agreement. Said notice shall be given to the other party in writing no later than 90 days prior to June 30, 2028, or 90 days prior to June 30 of any succeeding year for which this Agreement is automatically renewed.

This Letter of Agreement shall not serve to amend, modify, or change the existing terms of the parties' Master Agreement.

In WITNESS HEREOF, the University and the Kean Federation of Teachers, Local 2187 have acknowledged their understanding of this Letter of Agreement and affix their signatures below.

FOR THE UNIVERSITY:

FOR THE UNION:



Zabire D. Estrella-Chambers
Date: 9/22/2026



Catherine Brid Nicholson
Date: 9/22/26

Guidelines for Formal Peer Observation of Teaching: Process and Templates

(Based on Senate Document approved April 8, 2025)

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Overview of Guidelines

Teaching is the primary function of the University, which strives to provide an outstanding education for its students. The university recognizes that high-quality teaching is serious intellectual work grounded in deep knowledge and understanding of the field, and it includes the ability to convey that understanding in clear and engaging ways. Faculty members are expected to examine their teaching practice continuously, seek innovative methods for increasing their impact on student learning, and apply advancements and/or current research on effective teaching in higher education to their course design and delivery.

This document outlines the process and provides the formal Peer Observation of Teaching Protocols. Peer observations of teaching are one of the metrics used to help determine recommendations for reappointment, tenure/promotion, range adjustment or the A328 review (review the [Faculty Forms webpage](#) for a schedule of deadlines).

These guidelines have been developed to ensure this process is meaningful and to help provide a reflective and formative approach to teaching excellence. They are meant to engage faculty in discussing the expectations and process for conducting peer observations and being observed.

Peer feedback on teaching serves three purposes. Its primary purpose is to foster the continued development of the faculty member's teaching and enrich students' learning. This benefit is most marked if the feedback identifies the strengths and areas of refinement and growth of the observed instruction and provides specific suggestions for improvement.

The secondary purpose of peer review of teaching is to inform the department and the College about the effectiveness and quality of the faculty member's teaching when making decisions about reappointment, tenure, range adjustment, and promotion. Candidates for reappointment, promotion, range adjustment and A328 must demonstrate outstanding teaching practices and a commitment to growth as demonstrated by engagement in continuous professional development focused on instructional practices. Examples of Professional Development include programs offered by the Center for Teaching Excellence or faculty members providing workshops on teaching. The feedback in a peer feedback letter provides candidates with evidence and validation of their outstanding teaching practices, suggestions for further refinement of teaching practices, and a framework for growth.

Peer feedback consistently refines and elevates the standards and expectations for effective teaching of a community of scholars. Teaching should evolve in response to new technologies, new media uses, economic and cultural practices, the changing contours of the job market, and/or other factors. While peer evaluation speaks most directly to an individual's performance at a given time, the process is best understood as an effort through peer-review to understand, adapt, and refine our best practices.

Lastly, Kean University reaffirms its commitment to academic freedom in teaching as articulated in Article V of the *Master Agreement* between the State of New Jersey and the Council of New Jersey State College Locals.

The Stages of the Formal Peer Observation Process

The peer observation process consists of 4 stages. Faculty members seeking reappointment, tenure, range adjustment, and promotion should follow the guidelines below to receive regular feedback for professional growth and for the Departmental ARTP and College RT committees and the Provost to have ample information for making decisions about reappointment, tenure, range adjustment, and promotion. Any faculty member may request more frequent peer observations of their teaching carried out informally, participate in informal classroom intervisitation, or seek informal feedback on their instruction through observations carried out by the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Differentiated Peer Observation

- First-year faculty on the tenure track participate in informal peer observation and intervisitation without any record of formal evaluation peer feedback. Instead, during their first (Fall) semester, first-year faculty are asked to observe at least one class session (within or outside of their college) of another full-time faculty member (who may be a Lecturer, tenured, or untenured faculty) and invite any full-time faculty colleague to observe their class to provide suggestions for further refinement of their teaching skills. Faculty will be asked to write a teaching self-reflection as part of their holistic statement.
- During the second (Spring) semester of their first-year, faculty are asked to observe one additional class session and have one formal peer observation of a class session conducted by a tenured faculty colleague. This formal peer observation is to be included in their second-year reappointment materials.
- Second to sixth-year faculty members who have yet to be granted tenure should be peer-observed by a tenured faculty member twice per academic year. This will include both pre- and post- observation meetings, as described below. These will result in two formal peer feedback letters per academic year.
- Tenured faculty seeking promotion or range adjustment must have at least two teaching observations distributed over the two full academic years before the application date for promotion or range adjustment.

Stage 1: Setting Up the Peer Observation

To ensure that feedback is most constructive for the candidate, as well as the Department ARTP Committee, College RT Committee, and Provost, the choice of reviewers shall be mutually agreed upon by the Department ARTP Committee, and the candidate, with the department ARTP chair bearing final responsibility for the timeliness of review, scheduling, and submission of evaluation letters. Most teaching observations will be undertaken by the faculty in the candidate's own department. Still, reviews by members of other departments may be more appropriate at times, such as for candidates in interdisciplinary fields. Candidates should be reviewed by a variety of different observers (if possible, given departmental staffing) to ensure that they have the advantage of not relying on a single observer or a limited set during a candidate's career on the tenure track. Departments will seek to equitably distribute the duties of observation among the tenured faculty eligible to serve as observers.

1. Within the first month of the semester, the Department ARTP Committee Chair or a designee (a member of the department ARTP committee) reviews the list of faculty requiring peer observations and distributes them equitably among tenured faculty eligible to serve as reviewers. The Committee Chair and candidate discuss the proposed list of observers prior to observations being scheduled, and they mutually agree to observers. The Committee Chair contacts the eligible faculty to ensure the observer's teaching schedule allows for the ability to attend the observed faculty's classes. All tenured faculty in the college are expected to complete observations, and no individual faculty observer will generally have more than four (4) observations per semester. Faculty in their first year participate in informal peer observation and class intervisitation with no formal peer observation letters or formal peer observations.
2. Second to sixth-year faculty are observed two times per academic year through their tenure-track years. Once tenured, Faculty do not need to be observed unless they apply for promotion or range adjustment or are engaged in A328 review.
3. The Department ARTP Chair confirms with the candidate on the agreed upon peer observers. If a serious concern about impartiality arises, candidates may submit a request for an alternate peer observer to the Departmental ARTP Committee.
4. No later than the last day of the first month of the semester, the Department ARTP Chair notifies the peer observers of the faculty they have agreed to observe for class visitation. Faculty are not observed during winter or summer session courses.
5. The faculty peer observer emails the faculty candidate to be observed to set up a time and date for the observation. Generally, class sessions devoted to activities such as student presentations, research workshops, etc., are not ideal for observation and should be avoided, unless the candidate being observed specifically approves the selection of such a class session.

A peer observation for asynchronous Kean online instruction involves focusing on one unit and reviewing the unique aspects of online modality. Kean online classes consist of previously established units: the instructor only has control over the responses to the Discussion Questions, Announcements, timing of grading, and/or recorded lectures.

Once the class selection has been agreed to, the observer and candidate will plan a pre-observation meeting or email exchange, which should occur during the week prior to the observation, and a date for the post-observation conference, which should occur within four (4) weeks after the class observation. The form in Appendix C, maybe used for planning purposes, but it should not be part of any official record.

6. Ideally, the observation should be scheduled after the completion of the fifth week of the semester to allow the instructor to establish a strong rapport with their students before being observed. In addition, observations should be scheduled no later than the end of the thirteenth week of the semester. If a half-semester class is to be observed, the observation should be scheduled between the half-way point and the end of the course. If the faculty to be observed is teaching two or more classes in online asynchronous or hybrid modalities, one observation must be carried out in that environment.

7. Additional informal observations may be scheduled only at the candidate's request. No written record is created in the conducting of any informal observations.
8. The faculty candidate is responsible for ensuring that all Peer Feedback Letters are included in their application materials for reappointment, tenure, range adjustment, promotion and A328 packages.

Stage 2: Engaging in the Pre-Observation

A brief, informal pre-observation meeting (in person or via video conference) or an email exchange between the peer evaluator and faculty to be observed should occur to determine the focus of the peer review that is the most relevant and appropriate to the course and identify the faculty member's instructional goals. ([Appendix C](#)) provides an optional template for this pre-observation exchange. The discussions can serve as a reference for assessing the effectiveness of teaching, what to expect in the classroom, and for conversations at the post-observation meeting.

Before the pre-observation meeting, the faculty member to be observed prepares materials for the observer to review. These should be made available far enough before the pre-observation meeting to allow the observer to review them. The observer should review all documentation before the classroom visit. These materials include the syllabus of the course to be observed, any handouts or assignments relevant to that observed class, and a summary of the class session to be observed including the goals and objectives of the class session.

If the course session is an asynchronous or synchronous online modality, the observer must be granted temporary access to the Canvas LMS for the course.

Stage 3: Class Observation

It is recommended that the observer stay at least one hour or more to assess the classroom dynamics and teaching practice. The observer should not interact with the students or instructor during the classroom observation.

Stage 4: Engaging in Post-Observation and Writing the Peer Feedback Letter

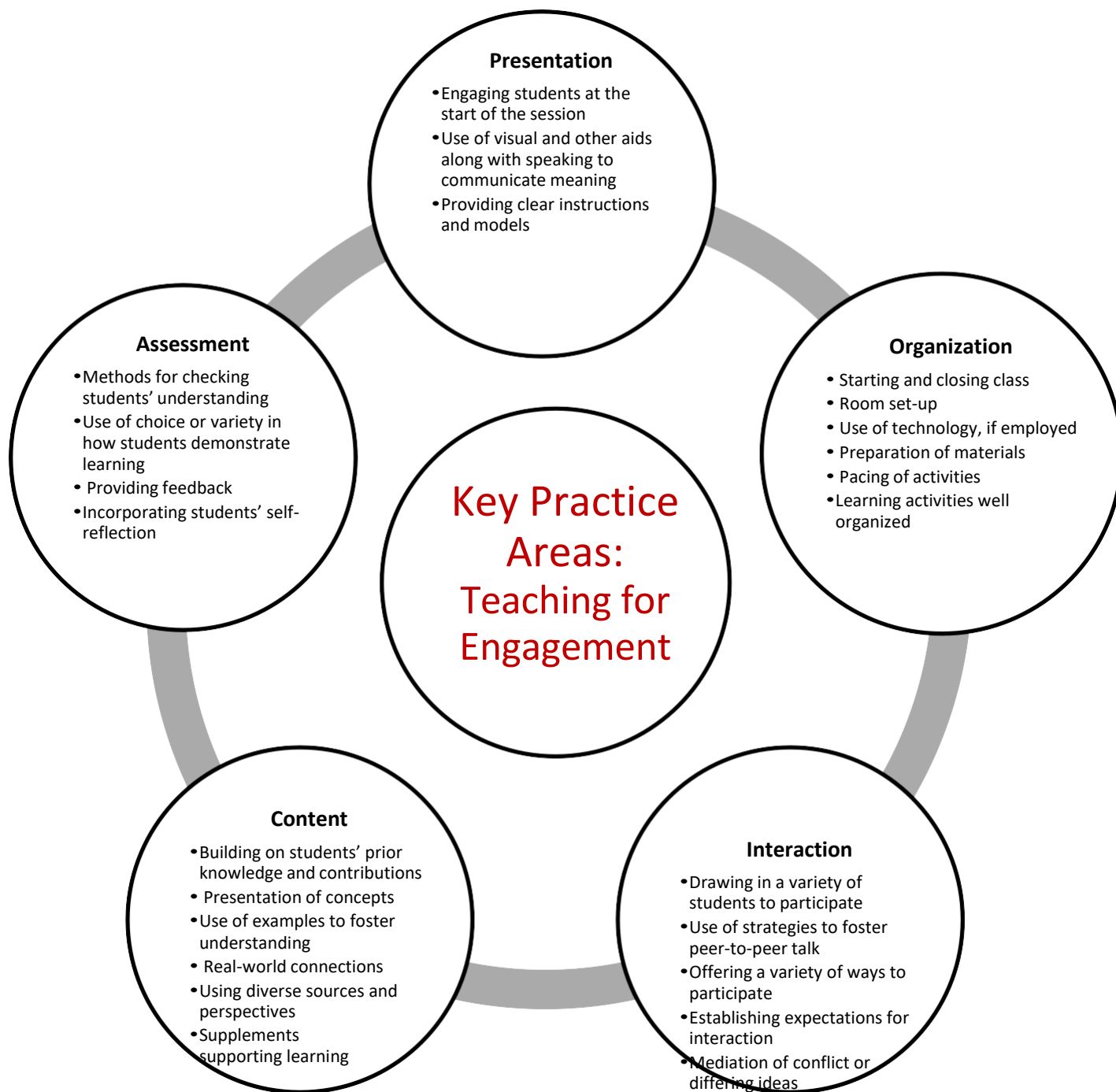
1. **Optional:** Before the post-observation meeting, the observed faculty may engage in a process of self-reflection aligned with the areas of focus previously identified in the pre-observation phase and about the Possible Observation Foci ([Appendix A](#))
2. The peer observer should reflect on their class observations and prioritize feedback for the strengths and suggestions for growth and refinement. The post-observation Peer Feedback Report in [Appendix D](#) should be drafted and provided to the candidate at least one day prior to the post-observation meeting. The feedback should be manageable, focus on 2-3 areas, and balance strengths and praise with recommended areas for growth and refinement. It should focus on actions observed in a descriptive rather than judgmental manner.
3. A post-observation meeting (in person or via video conference) between the peer evaluator and faculty should occur within three (3) weeks after the observed class. The meeting should allow for a conversation about the peer observation experience, review of the draft feedback report, address questions the observed faculty member may have.

4. To provide an entrée into a sincere dialogue about teaching, the observed faculty member should be invited to begin the conference by speaking about their perspective on the class and the elements of the Peer Feedback Letter. In turn, the observer should share their observations with the faculty member. The meeting is an excellent opportunity to discuss continued development/refinement in teaching.
5. After the post-observation meeting, the faculty observer will revise, if needed, and finalize the peer feedback report. As noted in the introduction to this document, the primary benefit of peer feedback is to foster the continued growth and refinement of the candidate's teaching. The candidate's reflection on this feedback, especially the suggestions for growth and refinement in teaching, will allow the candidate to demonstrate the ability and willingness to continue to grow as a teacher. This is recognizing that teaching is a journey of continuous learning and growth requiring refinement of teaching skills to effectively support students.
6. The completed peer feedback letter should be emailed to the faculty candidate for their review and signature. At this point, if the faculty candidate wishes to add any commentary to the peer feedback letter, they may append a response. The signed letter, with response if included, is then returned to the peer observer, signed by the peer observer, and forwarded to the ARTP Chair. The letter's return must occur within two (2) weeks of the post-observation meeting. No peer feedback letter may be included in an Interfolio portfolio without the signature of both the observer and the candidate.

Appendices

A. Possible Observation Foci for an In-Person, Synchronous Remote, and Hybrid Session.

This Appendix provides a list of possible foci. It is not an exhaustive list that does not cover all pedagogical approaches. It would be inappropriate for an observation to include all or most of these foci. Rather, a candidate and their observer should jointly decide on which handful of these are appropriate to employ for the given class being observed.



B. Practice Areas for Observation of an Asynchronous Kean Online Instruction

A peer observation for asynchronous Kean online instruction involves focusing on the unique aspects of online modality. Kean online classes consist of previously established units: the instructor only has control over the responses to the Discussion Questions, Announcements, timing of grading, and recorded lectures. For this reason, any observation agreed to must be limited to the following areas:

- The Observer must be granted access to the course online. The observer and faculty person agree to looking at one particular unit which is equivalent to one class period in a half a semester course.
- The Observer can view a lecture live or a recorded lecture; vitally the observer must be aware that as Kean online does not require students to attend any live session, therefore the professor cannot be graded on professor/student interaction during the lecture.
- The Observer can take into account the interaction between the professor and students in the Discussion Questions for a particular unit (not everyone), and any questions asked to the professor in the online “inbox.” Observer must be aware that sometimes students send questions to the professors email.



C. Optional Template for Pre-Observation Meeting

Pre-Observation Notes
Name of Instructor: [First Name Last Name] [Department / School] [College]
Title of Instructor: [Lecturer / Assistant/Associate/Professor / Instructor/Adjunct]
Name of Evaluator: [First Name Last Name] [Department / School] [College]
Course Name and #: [Course Number and Section]
Number of students enrolled: [Enrolled]
Class Modality: [Face-to-face / Synchronous online / Hybrid/ Asynchronous online]

Issues which can form part of the pre-observation planning meeting/exchange:

1. **The Class:** Where in the sequence of classes within this course does this particular course session occur? What are your goals for this particular class session?
2. **The students:** What are some of the strengths you are building on? What would you like them to know/be more aware of at the end of this session?
3. **Your teaching:** Is this the first time you are teaching this course? Is there something you have found challenging? Is there any aspect of teaching you would like feedback on? How can I help you refine and grow in your teaching?

D. Post-Observation Peer Feedback Letter

Post-Observation Peer Feedback Report
Date of Observation: [Day / Date/ Time]
Name of Instructor: [First Name Last Name] [Department / School] [College]
Title of Instructor: [Lecturer / Assistant/Associate/Professor/ Instructor]
Name of Observer: [First Name Last Name] [Department / School] [College]
Name of Class Observed: [Course Number and section]
Course Catalog Description: [Include the course catalog description and any pre/co-requisites and if this course is required and/or restricted to a specific major and/or student classification]
Number of students enrolled and present at time of observation: Enrolled / Present]
Mode of Class Observed: [Face-to-Face / Synchronous online / Hybrid /Asynchronous online]

Dear Professor [Last Name]:

Thank you so much for the opportunity to observe your class this semester.

Please find my observations of both strengths and areas for growth and refinement as you continue to develop your teaching practice.

[Observer provides a narrative of strengths with specific examples from the class observation and may also provide suggestions for growth and refinement]

In conclusion, [summary statement of the overall impression of the teaching observation.

[First and Last Name]

Signature:

[Date]

I have received this observation feedback on [Date]

[First and Last Name]

Signature:

[Date]

Note: Candidate may append a response to the peer feedback, if they so wish.

E.

Course Modality Descriptors at Kean University

Course Modality Descriptors

MODALITY	REGISTRAR CODE	DESCRIPTION
In-Person	(F2F) On campus: In-Person	Face-to-face courses require <u>all</u> contact hours to take place on campus or at a designated location during scheduled times. Contact includes instruction, learning activities, and interactions (both student-student and/or student-instructor). An In-Person class where material is provided online, via a learning management system or website, does not displace any of the required contact hours that would normally occur in a scheduled In-Person class. It is understood that if an in-person class scheduled session must be unexpectedly missed due to faculty absence, the work would be made up via the learning management system. All class meeting days/times must be listed in the schedule of classes for students at the time of enrollment.
Online	(KON) Kean Online: Online Asynchronous	Online Asynchronous courses require all contact hours be held online asynchronously. Instruction takes place online asynchronously. The modality allows students to access materials and assignments on a flexible schedule in accordance with deadlines set by the professor. All required instructional contact hours take place through asynchronous engagement. Contact includes instruction, learning activities, and interactions (both student-student and/or student-instructor). All the class work, examinations, quizzes, writing assignments, lab work etc. are fully online. If assessment activities/exams are conducted in-person, this information must be made available to the students in the schedule of classes at the time of enrollment. Class must be tagged with In Person Exam Only attribute for students. This modality is reserved exclusively for Kean Online.
	(REM) Remote: Online Synchronous	Online Synchronous courses require students to be (virtually) present at the same time, and all required instructional hours are carried out via remote synchronous interaction on a live video-conferencing platform). Contact includes instruction, learning activities, and interactions (both student-student and/or student-

		instructor). All the class work, examinations, quizzes, writing assignments, lab work, etc. are fully online. If assessment activities/exams are conducted in-person, this information must be made available to the students in the schedule of classes at the time of enrollment. Class must be tagged with In Person Exam Only attribute for students.
Hybrid	(HYR) Hybrid: May combine In-person, Asynchronous and/or Synchronous Online Instruction	Hybrid courses offer any combination of in-person, online synchronous meetings and asynchronous online work. All In-Person and Online Synchronous Class meeting days/times must be listed in the schedule of classes for students at the time of enrollment. It is recommended that at least 25% of contact time in Hybrid courses require students to meet at a set time in-person or synchronously online. If assessment activities/exams are conducted in-person, this information must be made available to the students in the schedule of classes at the time of enrollment. Class must be tagged with In Person Exam Only attribute for students.

Course Modality Approvals:

Distance Learning Committee approval 1/24/2025

University Senate approval 2/18/2025