



Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences

Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences: Peer review of teaching

Stage 2: Conducting a Review

a. Notes
This form can be used by the reviewer to take notes during the review that can later be developed into written feedback. This completed form, like all others, is to remain confidential for all but the reviewee and reviewer.

Descriptive notes <i>(Details of practices and/or resources being reviewed. These should relate to the focal areas as previously established. For example if reviewing a face-to-face teaching session, the reviewee may have arranged for a focus on areas such as effectiveness of communication, questioning techniques, provision of feedback, or use of learning technologies and spaces).</i>	Reflective notes <i>(Strengths, opportunities, potential recommendations and questions for the reviewee)</i>



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b. Written Feedback on the Review

When preparing written feedback for the reviewee, ensure that it is constructive, clear, detailed, and focussed on the reviewee's goals as established. Written feedback should be provided as shortly after the review as possible. For further guidance on providing effective feedback, see the supporting notes below.

Reviewee	Reviewer	Review date, time and location	Subject, year level and course	Teaching practice or resource to be reviewed <i>eg. lecture, LMS site</i>
Feedback				
Reviewee reflection on reviewer feedback				



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Stage 2: Reviewing: Supporting notes

Use the supporting notes below to help you get the most out of your review experience.

1. Attend the review with the right documents

As reviewer, conduct your review with two forms (or close equivalents) at hand. These are the *Stage 1: Preparing for Review* form and the document above, *Conducting a Review: Notes*. These forms are appropriate for any review— of a teaching session, course materials, assessments or other areas.

Reading and discussing with the reviewee a completed *Stage 1: Preparing for Review* form will provide you with valuable contextual information about the subject and the students, the teaching practice or resource and the focal areas for the review. This information will be important in supporting your focus for the review and ensuring you provide relevant feedback.

2. Prepare effective written and spoken feedback

Use the form *Conducting a Review: Notes* (or equivalent) to take notes that can be developed into specific, clear and constructive feedback on the form *Written Feedback on the Review*. Ensure written feedback is timely, constructive, clear, detailed, and focussed on the reviewee's goals as established. When reviewing practices or resources try to keep attention on the agreed focal areas for the review.

Ideally, provide some spoken, if not written, feedback immediately after the review. If not possible, establish a time to exchange feedback that closely follows the review.

Of course, in any review you are likely to encounter several aspects of practice that could be improved. Indeed, drawing attention to these aspects is a key reason to engage in review. But it is vitally important that feedback is constructive and balanced. When providing specific comments (written and spoken), it can be useful to 'sandwich' critical feedback, namely to provide a positive statement, a statement about an opportunity for improvement and then another positive statement. Where you see issues, try to always discuss these with reference to concrete means to address them. Wherever possible, ensure your feedback addresses the focal areas and the goals of the reviewee as identified and discussed beforehand. Your constructive feedback can have powerful impacts on a reviewee's sense of competence, enthusiasm and self-confidence. When receiving feedback, be sensitive to common emotional responses that can be experienced. In relation to this, Farrell's (2011) observations (below) are worth noting.



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*“While it is important for colleagues to provide feedback in a sensitive manner, it is just as important for reviewees to accept criticism graciously. It is a natural response to feel defensive when we are criticised; however it is essential that reviewees allow reviewers the opportunity to properly express their feedback without being interrupted or contradicted. This is not to say a reviewee will – or should – agree with every element of the feedback provided by a peer partner, but simply that, as their colleague has taken the trouble to observe their class or teaching materials and provide feedback, it is fair (and polite) to give them the courtesy of listening to their feedback”
(Farrell, 2011).*

Be specific about practices or aspects of the resources observed and use concrete examples. Be specific about how the reviewee may pursue enhancements. What would excellent practice look like in relation to aspects of the observed practice or resource? Be specific when presenting ideas about good practice or ideas about opportunities for engaging in continuing professional development (eg. a recommendation to contact a peer who excels in the particular area at hand). Your feedback should be clear and specific enough that the reviewee can refer back to it at a later stage.

Feedback should be conversational. It is often worthwhile to commence the discussion by asking the reviewee to share their reflections. What does the reviewee think worked well? What do they think could have been improved? Later, the reviewee should also have opportunity to share their perspectives on your feedback. Reviewers often report they learn as much as reviewees in the process and this is likely to be a great opportunity for both partners to reflect on their practices and develop valuable perspectives and approaches.

3. Reflect upon the feedback provided and discussed

Following the provision of feedback and the review discussion, it can then be valuable for the reviewee to note reflections on the feedback received. Reflections may relate to the suggestions made or feedback on the practices observed. The notes you take, like all other notes for the review, are to stay confidential, so feel free to document the most and least helpful elements of the experience and in a way that best suits you. The form above, *Written Feedback on the Review*, can be used for this purpose.

Questions and Support

If you would like to discuss any aspects of the peer review of teaching please contact either your school’s Director of Learning and Teaching or Tim Beaumont, Learning and Teaching Academic Development Fellow, the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (timothy.beaumont@unimelb.edu.au).