

Overview

The University of Georgia has a long-term goal of improving the effectiveness and inclusiveness of instruction university-wide. To make progress toward this goal, policies and practices are evolving to reflect current research and effective practices related to teaching, learning, and faculty evaluation. The Appointment, Tenure & Promotion (APT) guidelines for contributions to teaching were revised in 2020 to reflect this evolution. Specifically, the revisions are intended to:

- Broaden and clarify the types of evidence that can be used to document teaching effectiveness and accomplishments;
- Improve the quality of the judgments that can be made about a candidate’s contributions to teaching;
- Apply broadly across disciplines; and
- Serve all students who enroll at UGA, with their diverse abilities and range of skills.

The revisions reflect three main shifts:

Moving away from...	Moving toward...
Referring to teaching excellence without defining it.	1. Providing evidence of effectiveness
Using methods that are subject to bias.	2. Using methods that mitigate bias
Assuming faculty start as excellent teachers.	3. Emphasizing continuous improvement

The revised guidelines were approved by the University Council and are in effect as of Fall 2021.

What has been revised?

The following are descriptions of the changes made to the guidelines, including the number and letter reference to the guidelines, which can be found here: https://provost.uga.edu/faculty-affairs/UGA_Guidelines_for_APT_approved_2_2020.pdf Illustrative examples are included in the associated presentation.

Change 1: Providing evidence of effectiveness. The guidelines now make use of the terms "effective" and "effectiveness," which means that data have been systematically collected and analyzed to support claims about teaching quality and teaching improvement. In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of their teaching, faculty can now include new and different forms of evidence that are indicators of student learning and development. The new/different forms of evidence include:

- Student performance from assessment data collected as part of program outcomes assessment (1e).
- Evidence of student work (1f).
- Evidence of graduate student progress toward degree, retention of students in programs and research group, or student scholarship or creative works (1g).
- Observations of instruction by trained peers over time using established measured of effective teaching (2a).
- Published and/or adopted curriculum and instruction materials (6a, 6b), including materials for online instruction (6b).

Change 2: Reducing bias: The guidelines have been changed to emphasize gathering, reviewing, and presenting evidence in an organized and methodical way to reduce potential for bias. In addition, the guidelines now call for the presentation of multiple forms of evidence to allow for more coherent evaluation of teaching. Specifically:

- Dossiers must now include evidence from **two or more** of the 9 categories of evidence. (See Documentation starting on p. 14 of the guidelines for all of the possible forms of evidence)
- For observations of instruction, observations must be carried out at **multiple timepoints** by peers **trained** in the use of **established measures** of effective teaching (e.g., observation protocols, rubrics, review of instructional materials) (2a).
- Dossiers can include instructor reflection over time on positive **and negative comments** from student end-of-course evaluations and on course assessment data. Reflection should **summarize actions taken to maintain or build on positive course elements and to modify problematic elements** (4b).

Change 3. Emphasizing continuous improvement: The guidelines have been changed to recognize that faculty can and should work to improve their teaching over time. Evidence that can be included in the dossier to show continuous improvement include:

- Systematic observations of instruction at **multiple timepoints** (2a).
- Instructor reflection **over time** on positive and negative comments from student end-of-course evaluations and on course assessment data (4b).
- **Sustained participation** in teaching professional development that aligns with the candidate's efforts to **improve** their teaching, and demonstration of how participation has impacted the candidate's teaching practice (new category #9).

FAQs

1. *The new guidelines require the candidate to present more evidence. How can this additional evidence fit in the page limits?*

The new guidelines ask for multiple forms of evidence in synthesized and summarized form. This makes it possible to fit in the allotted space and also allows evaluators to more easily make sense of teaching effectiveness rather than having to review a lot of raw data and synthesize it themselves.

2. *Our department uses a standard form for peer observations, which is then shared with the candidate along with a cover letter highlighted strengths and areas for improvement. Where should these be included in the dossier?*

It is best **not** to include complete peer observation forms or entire letters from peer observations. Rather, provide a synthesis of these data and what they indicate about the effectiveness of the candidate's teaching over time.

3. *I have reached out to CTL to schedule teaching observations but they are not available to do this. What do I do now?*

CTL cannot feasibly observe every faculty members' instruction. Instead, observations should be conducted by trained peers – meaning individuals with relevant teaching experience and disciplinary expertise who have been trained in how to carry out observations and give feedback on teaching. CTL is compiling resources to support units in establishing their peer observation processes.