

TEACHER EVALUATION

IN UTK'S FRESHMAN COMPOSITION PROGRAM

The Freshman English Program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is proud of the intellectual integrity and commitment of its teachers. While striving to maintain consistency in the expectations and goals of all Freshman English courses, it also encourages continued growth by helping teachers keep abreast of new developments in composition. The program for the evaluation of Freshman English teachers has been established to serve both ends by enabling teachers to receive some response to their teaching each year. This program offers two different kinds of departmental teaching appraisal: the Formal Evaluation and the less formal Classroom Observation. (These are in addition to SAIS, the Student Assessment of Instruction System, which distributes forms each term for **student evaluation** of teaching and publishes the results in the student guide, *Tennessee 101*.)

The **Formal Evaluation** appraises all aspects of teaching: course design and policies, grading standards and methods, student evaluations (optional), and classroom effectiveness. The Composition Committee appoints formal evaluators based on their teaching experience and seniority to the teacher being evaluated. After completing their review, the evaluator meets with the teacher to discuss strengths and weaknesses. Finally, the evaluator submits a formal letter of evaluation and the Teacher Evaluation checklist both to the teacher being evaluated and to the Director of Composition. Typically, a teacher may expect a formal evaluation the first year teaching, and every third year following. However, a teacher may choose to request a formal evaluation at any time, particularly if he or she needs a recommendation letter for the job market. Teachers also have the option to ask for a second evaluation in any one year if they so wish.

In the years between formal evaluations, teachers will be asked to participate in a less formal **Classroom Observation**. Freshman English teachers will be asked to choose another teacher as an observation partner and arrange a time when they may sit in on each other's class. Each teacher then writes a response letter to the peer they have observed, identifying strong points and sharing alternative methods. Each teacher gives a copy of the letter to the observation partner and to the Director of Composition. Classroom Observations are then kept in the teaching file to aid the Director of Composition when preparing job search letters or making other determinations regarding staffing and award selection.

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