

For Department Chairs: Peer Observation of Remote Teaching

Several departments need to conduct peer evaluation of teaching for faculty preparing for milestone reviews this fall. Many faculty are doing remote teaching for the first time and with limited time to prepare. Both synchronous Zoom classes and asynchronous courses present new challenges. Please assure both observers and the observed that we are not looking for Golden Paw performance. Peer observations should be “formative,” that is, designed to provide constructive feedback. Please remind your faculty members that any student work that is recorded digitally becomes a student record covered by FERPA. Under FERPA, chairs can designate faculty to have access to those records for the purpose of evaluation, but the designated observers should not download, copy, or comment individually on any student record. Attached find: 1) Guide for Faculty Observing Remote Teaching, 2) Guide for Faculty Being Observed in Remote Teaching, 3) FERPA Reminder, 4) Rubric for Observing Remote Teaching.

For live remote (Zoom or similar) courses (remote scheduled):

- Designate who will observe the class, and ask the instructor to invite those observers to “attend” the class live.
- Remind the designated observers that observations are intended to provide constructive feedback.
- Any remote class brings up student privacy concerns distinct from in-person classes. Ask faculty who are being observed to introduce the observers at the beginning of class and assure students that the observers are UNM faculty who are under the same obligation to respect privacy of student information as is the instructor. Once they’ve been introduced, observers should maintain a low profile during the class, muted and with camera off – out of sight, out of mind.
- Avoid recording Zoom classes because doing so creates a student record covered by FERPA.
- If you must record a Zoom class for later viewing by peer observers, it must be stored in a secure UNM location. Best is to put it in the instructor’s Learn course shell, then have the instructor ask Learn Support to add the faculty peer observers to the class as “students.” Learn Support will send a FERPA reminder to each observer. Please, absolutely no sharing of recorded Zoom sessions via YouTube, Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.

For asynchronous remote courses (remote arranged, hybrid, or OnlineMax):

- You should designate the observers and provide those names to the faculty member who will be observed.
- You should ask the observers to use the rubric for observing remote teaching.
- You should ask the faculty member being observed to contact the Learn Support team to add the observers’ names to their Learn course as “students.” Learn Support will send a FERPA reminder to observers.
- The scope of observation should be comparable to sitting in on one or two classes. The observers should sample course materials and explore modules. It should not take hours.
- In some cases, it may be better for the faculty member to schedule a live Zoom session with the observer(s), log in to Learn, share the screen, and take their colleagues on a tour of the course. In this case, when you designate who will be observing, please send them the FERPA reminder, attached.