

Review guidance from CoFac and CoTAP, Spring 2022

Dear colleagues,

We write with guidance regarding upcoming Reviews in AY 2022-23, keeping in mind **four changes** to the Bylaws that the faculty approved recently. According to the Bylaws, new language approved during the 2021-2022 academic year only goes into effect for the 2022-2023 Reviews III and I; the current Review II cycle (due in a two-month window leading to July 1, 2022) proceeds using the Bylaws in effect between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022 (i.e., Review cycle proceeds in the order III, I, and then II, so the next cycle to which the changes apply is in this order).

There is an option to ask for relief from new language in the Bylaws pertaining to Reviews by September 1 after the new language takes effect; OAFa will initiate this process over the summer.

[See Article 6 of the Bylaws and II.6. in the Faculty Handbook]

Change #1, effective for Reviews II, III, I [SLFFs]:

In April 2021 (2020-2021 academic year, effective 2021-2022 academic year) the faculty voted on a non-binding resolution to replace the Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) with Student Learning Feedback Forms (SLFFs) as an instrument to collect student course feedback at the end of each semester. This change did not specify whether SLFFs count as “student evaluations” to be used for Reviews under the Bylaws; candidates may, but need not, include their SLFFs in their files if they choose.

Should candidates choose to include their SLFFs in their files, SLFFs can be used as narrative evidence of effective teaching in terms of how faculty collect and respond to student feedback; they are not designed to be used as exact equivalents to the SETs in terms of the evaluations gathered from students. For example, SLFFs were not designed for responses to be converted to numbers or treated numerically. For the 2022-2023 Reviews III and I, there are additional requirements, explained below.

Please note that references to “student evaluations” in the language in the Bylaws still stand for SETs completed prior to AY 2021-2022 for all candidates, and beyond AY 2021-2022 for those who opted not to switch to SLFFs (i.e., the SET forms themselves must be included in candidate files, as well as their summaries, etc., as stipulated in the Bylaws, 1.e.3.b.ii.a.2 [RII], 1.e.4.b.ii.a.2 [RIII]; 1.e.2.b.ii.a [RI]).

Change #2, effective for Reviews III and I only [Student review committees]:

In an October 2021 vote (2021-2022 academic year, effective 2022-2023 academic year), the faculty eliminated student review committees from the Review process.

Reviews III and I starting 2022-2023 will therefore no longer have student review committees. This Bylaw amendment neglected to eliminate the paragraph below due to oversight:

The student report shall reflect student opinion on the candidate’s teaching. Specifically, the report shall comment on the student course evaluation form results and student responses to the solicitation letter. [Bylaws, 1.e.3.b.ii.a.2 [RII], 1.e.4.b.ii.a.2 [RIII]; 1.e.2.b.ii.a [RI]).

Since the paragraph is now moot with the elimination of student review committees, CoFac and CoTAP recommend that all parties involved in 2022-2023 RIII and RI dismiss this paragraph until this student committee review language is officially voted out by the faculty.

Please note that a Review II with a May 1 to July 1, 2022 submission window still must have a student review committee.

Change #3, effective for Reviews III and I only [SLFFs]:

When the faculty voted in October 2021 to eliminate the student review committee, we also approved the following statement for inclusion in the Bylaws: “A summary of Student Learning Feedback Forms will be completed for each course taught since the last review.” This statement replaced the language: “A summary of student course evaluation forms shall be completed for each course taught since the last review, either by the student subcommittee or by faculty members of the Review [I/II/III] Committee.”

The new language voted in does not specify whether the candidate or the Review committee is to generate the required summary of SLFFs. If the candidate chooses not to include SLFF summaries in their file, then the candidate must supply the department/program Review committee with the SLFFs so the Review committee can do so. In such cases, all SLFFs must be placed in the file, since the Bylaws stipulate that Review committees may only consider items in the file.

As noted above in Change #1, SLFFs can be used as narrative evidence of effective teaching in terms of how faculty collect and respond to student feedback; they are not designed to be used as exact equivalents to the SETs in terms of the evaluations gathered from students. For example, SLFFs were not designed for responses to be converted to numbers or treated numerically.

Please note that this change does not apply to a Review II with a May 1 to July 1, 2022 submission window. No SLFF summaries are required for those Reviews.

Change #4, effective for Reviews III and I only [classroom observations]

In February 2022 (2021-2022 academic year, effective 2022-2023 academic year), the faculty voted to update the section on classroom observations in the Bylaws.

Classroom observations to be conducted beginning in Fall 2022 for all Reviews must be based on this new procedure, which is found in the February CoFac report, p. 7 – 8 (Classroom Observation Expectations) and reproduced below. For Review III and I starting 2022-2023 and Review II starting 2023-2024, classroom observations conducted prior to Fall 2022 but since the candidate’s last Review (or hire for RI) may be used as long as they were conducted (a) based on the procedure outlined in the Bylaws at the time the observations took place, or (b) based on the version of Bylaws classroom observation language at the time of the candidate’s hire, if the candidate had already requested relief from any amendments.

Please note that a Review II with a May 1 to July 1, 2022 submission window must conduct classroom observation based on the Bylaws in effect during the 2021-2022 (current) academic year.

SAC document updates

SAC documents should reflect the Bylaws; when in conflict, the Bylaws supersede SAC documents. CoFac recommends that you update your SAC document to reflect the recent changes. The Bylaws stipulate that any change to SACs must be approved by CoFac before they go into effect. The current Bylaw language (2021-2022 version) stands for a Review II with a May 1 to July 1, 2022 submission window; the following points apply to all Reviews in every subsequent cycle beyond the current submission window.

- Starting with RIII (and then RI and RII) in 2022-2023, language referring to student review committees should be struck, and any language that conflicts with the classroom observation

policy should be amended for all observations conducted from Fall 2022 onward.

- Starting with RIII (and then RI and RII) in 2022-2023, we recommend adding the requirement for SLFF summaries to SAC documents to make this change apparent to Review candidates.

Instructions regarding how to submit SAC document changes

- Please amend SAC document in MS Word with Track Changes enabled.
- Send amended documents to the CoFac email address: CoFac@hws.edu
- Please amend only the portions of SAC documents noted above. CoFac is happy to entertain more significant updates at another time.
- For departments and programs with candidates undergoing Review III in 2022-2023 (candidate submission deadline: October 1, 2022), please submit to CoFac updated SAC documents by Friday September 2, 2022.
- For departments and programs with candidates undergoing Review I in 2022-2023 or Review II in 2023-2024 (candidate submission deadline: January 15, 2023 for Review I; and July 1, 2023 for Review II), please submit to CoFac updated SAC documents by Friday October 21, 2022.
- For all other departments/programs: please submit to CoFac updated SAC documents by Friday December 2, 2022.

Best,

Justin and David

On behalf of CoFac and CoTAP

Classroom Observation Expectations

[~~Deletions in red strikethrough~~, additions in yellow highlight]

~~By the beginning of the second year of service, formal classroom observations for Review purposes must commence. A completed classroom observation regimen consists of 2 visits to the same class in one semester by the same faculty member. At least two faculty members will have completed a classroom observation regimen for the candidate by the end of the first semester of the third year of service (in other words, the last semester before Review 1).~~

A completed classroom observation regimen consists of two visits to the same course in one semester by the same faculty member. At least two faculty members will have completed a classroom observation regimen prior to a Review. These observations will begin, at the latest, a calendar year before a candidate submits their materials for Review. The following expectations are the minimum requirements for a formal classroom observation. It is the responsibility of the department or program chair to ensure that observations are scheduled and completed in a timely manner.

In general, these observations should be conducted by faculty members of the observed faculty member's department or program. In rare circumstances, observations for Review purposes may be conducted by faculty outside of an observed faculty member's department or program; however, observations conducted by outside faculty must be approved by COTAP prior to the observation. All faculty who have completed a classroom observation regimen should include comments on those classroom visits in their departmental letters, or write a separate letter based on those classroom observations. (Rare circumstances include those in which there is no faculty member in the department or program who has the expertise

required to evaluate the classroom performance of the observed faculty member, e.g., in an area studies program where no one in the program is sufficiently fluent in the language in which the observed faculty member is teaching, or where there are not at least two colleagues additional to the candidate in the department/program.) ~~In general, classroom observation procedures and documentation should follow the classroom observation guidelines set out in the Faculty Handbook, Section VIII.2~~ [REVISED May 2012]

Classroom Observation Expectations

1. Scheduling: The observation will be scheduled in advance. When the date for the observation is set, the time for pre-and post-observation meetings are also arranged. The post-observation meeting should be within one week of the observed class. The candidate should share the course syllabus with the observer prior to the pre-observation conversation.
2. Pre-Observation Conversation: The goals of the pre-observation conversation are to establish shared expectations for the observation, discuss the focus and nature of the class to be observed, and identify ways in which the feedback will be provided.
3. Role of the Observer: It is important to note that the observation should be based on the pre-observation conversation, expectations in the Bylaws, and the departmental/program SAC.
4. Classroom Observation: The observer is not to ask questions or interject or participate in the class, unless invited to do so by the faculty member being observed. The observation should occur for the entire class period.
5. Post-Observation Conversation: The faculty member and observer shall discuss their observations and feedback. The observer should provide constructive feedback and offer suggestions for improvements.
6. Observer's Letter: The observer shall use their notes from both observations, oral reflections provided to the candidate, and any other relevant information to write a letter specifically about the observations that will be included in the candidate's file.

Note: This amendment strikes the following sentence from the Bylaws, as indicated on the previous page, but also in other locations for Review II and Review III: ~~"In general, classroom observation procedures and documentation should follow the classroom observation guidelines set out in the Faculty Handbook, Section VIII.2"~~

(The language in the Faculty Handbook, Section VIII.2 referring to classroom observation procedures should presumably be struck from that document.)

Eliminating the Student Review Committee

Page numbers below refer to the 2021 version of the Bylaws.

[Deletions in red strikethrough, additions in yellow highlight]

Eliminate this passage, which appears on the following pages for each review respectively:

Review I, p. 13

Review II, p. 21-22

Review III, p. 31

~~Each Review I Committee will have a sub-committee of three students, elected by majors and minors from among themselves, with representation of both Hobart and William Smith. (If this dual representation poses an undue burden, the department/program must receive an exemption from COTAP.) The role of this sub-committee will be to summarize student input on the candidate's teaching in a short report to the Review I Committee. The students will present their findings to the Committee, and these findings will be reflected in the Review I Committee report. The students' signed report will become part of the candidate's file.~~

Eliminate this statement, which appears on the following pages for each review respectively:

Review I, p. 17

Review II, p. 27

Review III, p. 37

~~Report of the student sub-committee~~

Modify this statement on these pages as follows:

Review I, p. 16

Review II, p. 25

Review III, p. 35

~~A summary of student course evaluation forms will be completed for each course taught since the last review either by the student sub-committee or by faculty members of the Review II Committee.~~

A summary of Student Learning Feedback Forms will be completed for each course taught since the last review.