

**Florida International University
Knight Foundation School of Computing and Information Sciences (KF-SCIS)
Guidelines For Evaluation Of Teaching**

Introduction

The KF-SCIS Guidelines for Evaluation of Teaching have been developed in response to a recent modification to the Tenure and Promotion (T&P) manual, which states that for every department, “a statement should be included describing the department/unit’s procedures for evaluating teaching based on the department/unit’s evaluating teaching guidelines, which includes documenting teaching effectiveness through evidence from students, peer and self.” It is specifically these evaluating teaching guidelines that are contained within this document.

These modifications to the T&P manual were a product of the University-wide Evaluating Teaching (ET) Project, launched by Provost Kenneth Furton in 2018. Part of this initiative included incorporation of multiple sources of evidence (students, peer and self) when evaluating teaching at FIU. This initiative was fueled by two motivating factors: (1) documented limitations of teaching evaluation approaches employed at the time, which were largely limited to the Student Perceptions of Teaching Survey (SPOTs), and (2) providing faculty the opportunity to be recognized for certain efforts in their teaching which would not otherwise be considered with a vision limited to SPOTs. ¹

¹ Guidelines for faculty disputes on teaching evaluation are outlined in the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Context

When it comes to teaching evaluation, KF-SCIS wishes to ensure its process upholds a core set of values, which we define below:

Integrity. Data collection should be conducted in a manner that minimizes conflict of interest, presenting as unbiased a view of the faculty as possible.

Scalability. Our model should accommodate growth in numbers of three interdependent units (students, courses, and faculty) without heavy burden on faculty or other individuals involved in the evaluation.

Continuous Development. Independent of the feedback collected, our model should facilitate feedback loop closure. In summary: We value a system that goes beyond simple data collection and reports, that also assists faculty in learning and growing constructively as teachers.

Coverage. To ensure a comprehensive view of teaching ability, we value feedback from multiple sources, including student, peer and self.

Current Practices

KF-SCIS currently has a discrepancy between how faculty are supposed to be evaluated, and what is actually done. According to KF-SCIS Policies/Procedures, “the factors to measure teaching effectiveness may include: Recognition of teaching effectiveness such as teaching awards, supervision of individual

student projects such as graduate/undergraduate independent studies, course outlines, syllabi and online material demonstrating the organization of courses, development of new courses, student opinion surveys, and peer teaching evaluations.” What in fact is actually done is that most often, SPOTs directly determines the score (0=poor, 1=fair, 2=good, 3=very good, 4=excellent, 5=outstanding). While other factors may sometimes be noted in annual evaluations, rarely, if ever, do they impact faculty scores. Teaching evaluations are currently conducted by two KF-SCIS faculty: the Associate Director (AD) and Director (D). Only these faculty have permission to access teaching evaluation data submitted by faculty. The D/AD conduct the evaluation once at the end of each academic year (AY), which is the end of the spring semester. Faculty are given a single score on the above spectrum (0-5), along with an explanation that includes their SPOTs average, in addition to a summary of all additional data submitted for teaching evaluation. Peer feedback is considered valid for two years in KF-SCIS. The KF-SCIS form for peer evaluation applies to in-person course sections, and KF-SCIS currently only allows faculty teaching 100% online courses to peer evaluate an online course.

Proposed Practices

We propose each faculty member to be evaluated using a rubric, broken down as follows:

1. **Data reported by the student (70%).** This should be quantitative feedback, taken directly from the student. SPOTS is the prototypical example of such feedback, though faculty will have the opportunity to develop alternative methods, as outlined below.
2. **Data reported by the faculty (30%).** For this portion, faculty will be evaluated based on the degree to which they used feedback from multiple sources as tools for growth in their teaching. These sources are defined as: student (10%), peer (10%), and self (10%).
3. **Data reported by the administration (default: +/- 10%).** In this portion, we incorporate material that should also be considered according to our KF-SCIS Policies/Procedures (*cf.* Current Practices), plus some additional metrics. The default will only be exceeded in extreme circumstances.

Teaching Evaluation Committee (TEC). Up to this point, the TEC has been tasked with writing these guidelines and developing the rubric. Upon completion, we propose a redefinition of both the membership and the role of TEC.

- The TEC will in the future consist of an elected body of KF-SCIS faculty.
- Members will undergo routine training from the Center for Advancement of Teaching (CAT) on appropriate teaching practices. Certification opportunities, as they become available, may also be asked of committee members.
- Members will participate in the approval of faculty-submitted cases regarding the invalidity of SPOTS as a teaching evaluation metric.
- Members will work with KF-SCIS faculty in developing teaching evaluation metrics as alternatives to SPOTS.
- Members will maintain a repository of approved alternative teaching evaluation metrics, shared with both KF-SCIS faculty and CAT.

Breaking down each category in more detail:

Data reported by the student (70%). This feedback should ideally be conducted in an environment without the faculty present and should be quantitative in nature, directly associated with a numerical score.

SPOTS will continue to be collected every year, and be the default method assumed for this portion. However, if upon completion of an AY, faculty believe their SPOTS score is not statistically relevant and therefore not an accurate reflection of their teaching capabilities, they have the option of presenting a case to the TEC.

This case should contain documented evidence and statistical analysis that presents a compelling argument demonstrating their SPOTS score cannot be used as a reliable metric for evaluating their teaching. All cases will be reviewed by the TEC.

If the TEC disagrees with the faculty member, the faculty member will be granted one subsequent meeting with the TEC to further discuss their case, unless the TEC explicitly decides to have more. The TEC will then make a final decision after this meeting, assuming it takes place.

If the final decision is disagreement with the faculty, SPOTS will be used for this portion of the evaluation. If the final decision is agreement with the faculty as to the statistical irrelevance of SPOTS, the faculty member must develop a pedagogically relevant and statistically compelling alternative to SPOTS during the same AY. This method must be quantitative, and taken directly from the student. The TEC will be available to assist the faculty member, as necessary, with this development. Upon completion, assuming the alternative method is approved by the TEC, scores produced by the alternative method will replace SPOTS as the evaluation method for student feedback for that AY.

Faculty are discouraged from offering extra credit to students for completing this portion and to take other means of ensuring an adequate amount of data is collected. Faculty are encouraged to mention examples of how they have taken into account feedback from students in the past. Regardless of the method chosen by the faculty member, per current state mandate, students will still receive a link to complete SPOTS every semester. It is generally expected that the faculty member will schedule 15 minutes at the end of one of their sessions for a KF-SCIS staff member to visit their classroom and conduct the SPOTS evaluation with the students with the faculty not present. A faculty member may also choose to schedule time to conduct their choice method of evaluation, and staff will be available to administer and collect data without their presence if they choose. We recommend faculty not disclose to students the date where their evaluations will be administered.

Note that scheduling this time will operate differently depending on course modality. In-person and hybrid course evaluations will be conducted during an in-person session. The state's definition of an online course structure is 80% or more asynchronous with up to 20% of synchronous meeting time for supplemental activities such as help sessions, group assignments, content reviews, guest lectures, or proctored exams with a specified time frame. For online asynchronous courses, we will develop a guest lecture on the importance of SPOTS and it is suggested that the faculty member schedule this lecture as part of the 20% of allocated synchronous meeting time. Faculty are recommended to schedule more than one synchronous session to accommodate a wider range of availabilities.

Data reported by the faculty (30%). Data collected and reported by the faculty must be from three sources: students, peer and self. For this component, faculty will be evaluated based on the degree to which they collected feedback, took it into account, and used it to improve and grow as a faculty member.

For each source, faculty will choose their method for collecting feedback. If desired, SPOTS may be used again here for student feedback. We also have a KF-SCIS Peer Evaluation Form as an option for peer feedback. Finally, a number of resources can be found for each source at the following location: [FIU Evaluating Teaching Project](#).

Each source (student, peer and self) will count equally towards this portion of the evaluation (10% each). The same rubric will be used to evaluate each of these three components. An unsatisfactory (1) evaluation for any of these components implies no feedback was collected. A fair rating involves just the bare minimum requirement of collecting feedback. To achieve at least a good (3) rating, faculty must demonstrate they are taking into account the feedback, with very good (4) involving creation of a plan to incorporate this feedback into their strategies for the next AY. To achieve excellent (5), faculty should demonstrate evidence they have put into practice their plan from the previous AY, in addition to having a plan for the next AY (for the first AY of this policy, a 4 will be equal to 5). Note when developing a plan, a grand transformation is not necessary. The recommendation is to think in terms of simple and targeted modifications with measurable outcomes.

Methods chosen by the faculty will be evaluated by the TEC as to their relevancy. The method will be scalable assuming most faculty use default methods (i.e. SPOTS or the KF-SCIS Peer Evaluation Form), methods available on the above site, or methods in the repository of approved teaching methods. Assuming that is the case, the evaluation will be to the extent of whether or not the method was properly implemented, but not statistical relevance.

Data reported by the administration (default: +/- 10%). KF-SCIS currently has a number of criteria that should be taken into account when evaluating teaching. It is in this portion where we enforce this requirement. This criteria includes but is not limited to (if applicable/available): Teaching awards, documented success in supporting graduate/undergraduate students through independent studies, performing peer evaluations, providing peer feedback to other faculty member(s), course outlines, syllabi, online material, new courses, additional student/peer feedback, biases due to academic misconduct, etc. Faculty reliability may also be considered, in terms of submitting grades on time, providing timely feedback to students, communicating with students in an appropriate and/or timely manner, etc. Reliability will be based on an overall pattern, rather than a single instance. This portion allows the teaching evaluation score to be raised or lowered by 10% (with exceptions only in extreme cases), depending on this additional criteria. The Director and Associate Director have control over this portion. Note the overall score cannot exceed 5.

Rationale

The strength of the current KF-SCIS approach is that it guarantees uniformity across all faculty members, by using the exact same uniform metric (SPOTs) to evaluate faculty. The problem is the localization of feedback to a single source (SPOTs), which has documented problems in accurately and adequately capturing teaching performance, acting in opposition to one of our core values (coverage).

Our approach instead expands feedback to include additional student, peer and self as sources. Additionally, faculty are given plenty of opportunities to propose and use alternative methods of evaluation to SPOTS. With this approach the type of feedback and score from the additional student, peer and self feedback will be ultimately under control of the faculty member. When it comes to student and peer feedback, faculty have an implicit conflict of interest, placing data collection at a risk of bias. Thus ensuring data integrity, another one of our core values, requires a review process in place to ensure appropriate checks and balances.

An underlying assumption we make is that ultimately, no one knows the ideal method of teaching evaluation and that having a repository of teaching evaluation methods developed by faculty and evaluated as relevant by a committee of faculty will ultimately produce the best set of evaluation resources. Legitimate efforts to incorporate new methods of evaluation will be counted as service to our department, even if the approach is discounted by the TEC. In this way, even our teaching evaluation methods uphold a core value we desire for our faculty, namely, “continuous improvement”.

Our model also facilitates an environment with multiple faculty helping each other with teaching evaluation, compared to a one way process involving only the faculty member and Director and Associate Director. This provides faculty the opportunity to include more perspectives and opinions when developing teaching evaluation methods, by a group already deemed by the faculty as qualified to provide helpful feedback.

Finally, our self-evaluation encourages faculty to think holistically about their teaching, taking into accounting many sources of feedback in building their unique philosophies (coverage), which should be growing and improving in response (continuous development). With part of the evaluation devoted to continuous development, as opposed to raw quantitative score, this should reduce the reluctance of submitting negative feedback from student or peer (which, for improving teaching, is typically more valuable than positive). Faculty may very well receive a positive score in this portion despite negative feedback from a student or peer, as long as they take proper steps to address this negative feedback.

Rubric

Source	TEACHING EVALUATION RUBRIC - FIU-KFSCIS COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT		Points	%
Student	Quantitative	Student Perceptions of Teaching Survey (SPOTs) or Alternative (Verified by TEC)		70%*
Faculty	Student	SPOTs OR Method of Choice		10%*
	Peer	KF-SCIS Peer Evaluation Form+ OR Method of Choice		10%*
	Self	P180 Self Reflection OR Method of Choice		10%*
Admin	Additional+	Points resulting from the following considerations, including but not limited to (if applicable/available): Teaching awards, documented success in supporting graduate/undergraduate independent studies, KF-SCIS peer evaluation form, performing peer evaluations, providing peer feedback to other faculty member(s), course outlines, syllabi, online material, new courses, other student/peer feedback, biases due to academic misconduct, faculty reliability, etc.		+/- 10%#
TOTAL				100%

+ The total score accounting for additional feedback will not be allowed to above 100%.

* The TEC will reevaluate these percentages annually and propose changes as necessary (subject to faculty and administrative approval)

This should be used as the default percentage, exceeded in only exceptional cases.

Note that regardless of the method(s) used for a faculty’s teaching evaluation, SPOTS (one per semester), the KF-SCIS Peer Evaluation form (every two years) and P180 self-reflection (end of every academic year) will continue to be conducted at their normal frequencies.

Rubric Used for Three Faculty Sources (Student 10%, Peer 10%, Self 10%):

	Unsatisfactory (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Very Good (4)	Outstanding (5)*
Student, Peer, Self Feedback	No feedback collected.	Feedback collected.	Feedback collected, taken into account.	Feedback collected, taken into account, developed a plan for next academic year.	Feedback collected, taken into account, developed a plan for next academic year, provided evidence that prior year plan was followed through

* For the first year, 4 will equal 5 in this portion.