

# LOU 15 Assessment of Teaching In-Class Peer Observation: Selecting a Peer Observer: Resource for Faculty Members and Deans

This supplementary resource is intended for Faculty Members and Deans engaged in the Peer Observation of Teaching process, in accordance with the [LOU 15 Assessment of Teaching](#). This document outlines the LOU 15 required steps and provides some suggested best practices for the identification and selection of Peer Observers.

## LOU 15 Guidelines: Identification and Selection of Peer Observers

The [LOU 15 Assessment of Teaching](#) outlines the following guidelines for Faculty Members and Deans in relation to the selection of a Peer Observer for the Peer Observation process.

### Identification of Potential Peer Observers (Faculty Member)

17. For an In-Class Peer Observation, the Faculty Member
  - a. Submits to the Dean a list of six (6) potential Peer Observers, and
  - b. Chooses the course and lecture that the Peer Observer will visit.
18. Any Faculty Member who was assessed as being “Good” or better in Teaching in the most recent biennial review is an eligible choice as a potential Peer Observer.
19. While a Faculty Member may recommend and/or choose a Peer Observer with discipline-specific expertise, the observation of teaching and teaching practices does not require this. The choice of Peer Observer shall play no role in a negative assessment of teaching.
20. A Faculty Member seeking advice on the names of potential Peer Observers may, of course, consult with their colleagues, including their Chair; their Dean; the Division of Teaching and Learning; and/or the Association.
39. A Peer Observer selected by the Dean for a Member in the first year of a biennial review period may also serve as a Peer Observer for that Member in the second year of that biennial review period.

### Selection of Peer Observer (Dean)

21. The Dean shall select one of the potential Peer Observers to be the Peer Observer.



## Best Practice Considerations when Identifying and Selecting Peer Observers

When identifying and selecting a Peer Observer, the following characteristics may be considered:

1. **Teaching context familiarity:** It's often useful for the Peer Observer to have knowledge or experience teaching in similar teaching contexts (e.g., large classroom, online, seminar, etc.), and knowledge of teaching techniques and pedagogies suitable to the teaching context.
2. **Content familiarity:** It's often useful for the Peer Observer to have familiarity with the subject area for the class that will be observed. Cross-disciplinary observations can be very fruitful, but an observer should understand the basic context of the class they are entering into. This context can be provided in the pre-observation meeting.
3. **Respect and trust:** Select a Peer Observer who is genuine in their interactions and is someone you trust to give honest, constructive, and helpful feedback.
4. **Support and mentoring:** Select an individual who you feel will help you develop as a teacher.
5. **Eligibility:** According to the LOU 15, a potential Peer Observer must have been assessed as being "Good" or better in Teaching in the most recent biennial review.

*Adapted from: Peer Observation of Teaching: Effective Practices, The Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation, University of Toronto, and Selecting a Peer Observer, Center for Faculty Excellence, Purdue University Northwest.*

### Consider the Potential for Bias in the Peer Observation Process

There is potential for bias in the identification and selection of Peer Observers. Research has demonstrated that perceptions of who would be a capable, qualified, or competent Peer Observer can be impacted by biases and perceptions with respect to race, ethnicity, age, gender, sex, sexual orientation, disability, etc. (see Peer Observation of Teaching Guidelines, Centre for Teaching & Learning, Yale NUS College, p. 13-16). Faculty Members, Peer Observers, and Deans can utilize the UofG resources below as tools for reflection about possible implicit biases, especially ones that may surface when identifying or selecting potential Peer Observers.

- **Tenure and Promotion Committee Training, Module 2: Unconscious Bias Training** (CourseLink Training Module, University of Guelph Faculty Association, the Office of Diversity & Human Rights, the Office of Teaching and Learning) – Email [otl@uoguelph.ca](mailto:otl@uoguelph.ca) for access
- **Principles of Belonging: Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racism** (CourseLink Training Module, Office of Diversity and Human Rights, University of Guelph)

