

Chapter 6: Evaluating Peer Educators

Importance/Relevance

- Determining evaluation criteria prior to the Peer Educator's start date will ensure that there are clear standards set for them when they begin their role.
- It is important that the evaluation criteria directly connect to the Peer Educator's job description and responsibilities.
- How you evaluate and when Peer Educators will be evaluated should be made clear as soon as the Peer Educator starts their position as evaluation is not intended to be a surprise.
- Supervisors should have a comprehensive evaluation system and timeline. Knowing your limits is an essential part of the evaluation process.

Questions to Answer/Things to Consider

- How will you evaluate your Peer Educators? On what criteria will they be evaluated?
- At what point in their role will they be evaluated?
- Are you the only person evaluating them or will others be able to give feedback for their evaluation?
- What feedback will be given informally and what will be given formally?
- How will you hold your Peer Educators accountable to their job duties?
 - If there are accountability measures taken, what are the steps?
- Will everyone be re-appointed their position automatically or will re-appointment be based on job performance (if positions last more than one term)?
- How will the evaluation measures be communicated with the Peer Educators?

Informational Content

Evaluation

There are many ways to evaluate Peer Educators. Once a job description is in place, creating a formal evaluation form and process is simple. You should use the job description to create evaluation mechanisms that will be easy to assess.

- For instance, one evaluative measure may be that the Peer Educator reports to work on time and stays on task while at work. The response for this question can be "Always, Sometimes, Never".
 - Each evaluation measure should have options for the supervisor to distinguish his or her response.
 - In addition, each evaluation measure should have a place for the supervisor to write comments.
 - Note: If thorough, writing performance evaluations can take a significant amount of time. Be aware prior to starting this process.

You will need to determine how often the evaluation will take place. Generally speaking, it is best practice to evaluate employees at least once a semester (at a minimum). If at all possible, give the Peer Educator informal feedback or do an informal evaluation 6-weeks into their role, so they have time to adjust their performance prior to being formally evaluated.

There are several other ways that Peer Educators can be evaluated. Some of these include:

- Direct observation of the Peer Educator performing their job duties
- Assessment results from Peer Educators clients/mentees

Chapter 6: Evaluating Peer Educators

Accountability measures are also important when evaluating Peer Educators. If a Peer Educator has been under-performing in their role, it is vital that the supervisor is managing and documenting those conversations.

360 Evaluations

360 Evaluations or reviews are extremely valuable and can add insight to a Peer Educators performance from a variety of sources.

- Generally, 360 evaluations include information from the Peer Educators clients/mentees, peers (co-workers who most closely interact with them), the supervisor, and their own self-evaluation.
- 360 Evaluations are most commonly used for developmental purposes. It allows for multiple perspectives and gives the Peer Educator feedback from all facets of their position.
- If you determine this is how you would like to assess the performance of your Peer Educators, make sure that you leave enough time to solicit all feedback from invested parties and can analyze that feedback prior to giving the formal performance evaluation.

Elements of Effective Feedback*

- Goal-Referenced
 - Feedback should reference where the Peer Educator is trying to go. How much progress have they made toward the goals you have set for them/they have set for themselves?
- Tangible and Transparent
 - Peer Educators should understand how to utilize the feedback immediately to improve performance.
- Actionable
 - Feedback should reference what steps the Peer Educator can take to make improvements, as well as measure if and how they have made those improvements.
- User-Friendly
 - Two or three pieces of concrete feedback is ideal and leads to productive conversations. It should be specific and personalized.
- Timely
 - The sooner you are able to give the feedback, the better. Waiting weeks to offer feedback is not ideal.
- On-Going
 - Ideally, formative performance assessment precedes summative performance assessments. The Peer Educator should have opportunities, if performance is less than optimal, to reshape the performance to better achieve the goal. In summative assessment, the feedback comes too late; the job performance is over.
- Consistent
 - Feedback should be stable, accurate, and trustworthy. It should concentrate on job performance, not on personality or things unrelated to the job.

*Elements of Effective Feedback adapted from [Seven Keys to Effective Feedback](#) by Grant Wiggins

Chapter 6: Evaluating Peer Educators

Current Implementation Example

To provide you with an example of what the Peer Educator performance review looks like in a current, well-established peer education program, we are going to look at the Peer Leader Program with First Year Experience & Learning Communities.

- Peer Leaders are evaluated by both their students in the Learning Community, as well as their supervisors (Peer Leader Coordinators).
- Students evaluate their Peer Leaders at two points in the semester.
 - One is through an “early term evaluation,” approximately 4 weeks into a semester. This is a centralized service through course evaluations/UCIT.
 - The other is at the end of the semester.
 - Both are on-line evaluation measures.
- Peer Leader Coordinators evaluate their subset of Peer Leaders informally throughout the semester and formally at the end of each semester.
 - The informal evaluation process takes place during individual one-on-one meetings, as well as through accountability conversations if Peer Leaders are not meeting their minimum job responsibilities.
 - The formal evaluation example is below. Each Peer Leader Coordinator completes the performance evaluation form and has an individual meeting with their Peer Leader to go over the form.
- In addition to evaluating the Peer Leaders, the Associate Director of First Year Experience and Learning Communities evaluates the Peer Leader Coordinators twice throughout a given semester. Both are 360 evaluations.
 - The Associate Director gives each set of Peer Leaders the opportunity to give feedback regarding the performance of their Peer Leader Coordinator.
 - The peers of the Peer Leader Coordinators give feedback.
 - The Associate Director gives feedback.
 - The Associate Director meets individually with each Peer Leader Coordinator to go over the feedback given by PLs and other PLCs (anonymously), as well as her own performance evaluation.

Supplemental Documents/Common Forms

- [Peer Leader Accountability Policies Chart](#)
- [Peer Leader Accountability Form](#)
- [Early Term Feedback Questions](#)
- [Peer Leader Formal Performance Evaluation](#)
- [Peer Leader Coordinator Formal Performance Evaluation](#)
- [End-of-Semester Evaluation Questions](#) (from Student Evaluation of Peer Leaders)