

# Understanding the Purpose and Process of Teaching Observations

## Format and Purpose of Teaching Observations



### Developmental (formative)

*Professional growth and self-reflection*

Confidential observation with CETL staff



### Collaborative

*Shared learning and peer dialogue*

Instructor group using collaborative protocol



### Evaluative (Summative)

*Assessment for personnel or PTR processes*

Review by calibrated colleagues from department, unit or campus

## Observation vs. Material Review

**Both** are forms of **peer review**. When used beyond feedback for **evaluation**, peer review becomes **peer evaluation**. **Asynchronous online classes** cannot be directly observed but can undergo **material review**.

## Importance of Observer Calibration

### **WHY calibration matters:**

- Ensures **consistency** and **fairness** across observers.
- Promotes **shared understanding** of teaching standards and criteria.
- Reduces **bias** in evaluative or developmental feedback.
- Strengthens **validity and reliability** of the observation process.



### **How It's Done:**

- Observers meet to **review criteria and protocols**.
- Discuss **example observations** to align interpretations.
- Periodic **training or peer norming sessions** help maintain calibration over time.

## Benefits of Observation

- Provides **individualized feedback** on teaching.
- Promotes **evidence-based learning and inclusive engagement**.
- Encourages **open-mindedness and reflective teaching practice**.
- supports instructors in **reassessing and enhancing** teaching methods.

For more a consultation, or to schedule a calibration, contact CETL  
[cetl.uconn.edu/contact/](http://cetl.uconn.edu/contact/)

