

The Class Observation

The class observation allows the reviewer to gather meaningful information that supports the goals of the review. The date, time, and location of the class observation should be mutually agreed on ahead of time by the reviewer and instructor. Surprise visits to an instructor's class are not recommended. Use the guidelines below to maximize your time during the observation.

Take Descriptive Notes

Use the following strategies to document helpful notes during the class observation:

- Arrive early and remain after class to document pre- and post-class observations.
- Take notice of both instructor and student behaviors.
- Focus on concrete elements, actions, and behaviors that occur in the class.
- Avoid using interpretive and evaluative language in your observation notes. For example:

Do (Make observations)	Don't (Make judgments)
"Most students participated in the small group discussions when prompted by the instructor."	"Students enjoyed the discussion topic."
"The instructor walked back and forth at the front of the class."	"The instructor paced nervously in front of the students."

It is important to document objective information during the observation. Later, you will use your descriptive notes to make interpretations and develop evaluative statements.

Stay Focused

Use the following tips to ensure a productive and meaningful observation:

- Remain actively engaged and observant throughout the class session.
- Pay particular attention to elements of importance to the instructor.
- Before the class observation, review the pre-observation meeting notes for reminders about the particular aspect(s) of teaching and learning that the instructor is seeking to enhance.