



Ask Your Union – Evaluation

October 2014

Relevant parts of the Collective Agreement are Article 10 and Appendices I and II

I've been asked to meet with my evaluation committee. Should I be concerned?

If you are a new instructor, or in your second year of term or regular contracts, or newly-appointed to a Regular contract, then the committee is supposed to meet with you near the beginning of the semester to discuss how you will be evaluated. The committee is then supposed to meet with you again after the evaluation to review the results. On that committee, an LFA representative ensures that the process being followed is fair and reasonable – i.e. that LFA rep is not there to represent *you*, but the *process*. Also at any time the committee identifies some concerns, then the committee will ask to meet with you to discuss how to address the concerns. (See Article 10)

I feel like I'm being evaluated constantly. What is the usual evaluation protocol?

New Term faculty are evaluated in their first semester, and then (usually) once a year after that. An “evaluation” means that the documentation is pulled together and a report submitted, and it is possible that the evaluation may include classroom visits and student evaluations (“SRIs”) from more than one class in more than one semester. So you might have classroom visits and/or SRIs done every semester, with formal meetings and reports done in your first semester, possibly again in the second semester, and then again part-way through your second year.

Faculty on EMERGENCY contracts are not usually formally evaluated, though you can arrange to get some sort of feedback through an informal formative process, and some departments carry out a less formal version of evaluation just to make sure things are going well.

The usual components of a Term instructional faculty member’s evaluation package include classroom visit(s) reports, student surveys (SRIs), self-evaluation, and a summary from the committee. The evaluation of a Regular instructional faculty member also includes a review of the non-instructional duties (Professional Development, contributions to the department/college, etc.).

Communicate with your department and/or committee to make sure that you and your evaluators are on the same page in terms of style, pace, content, rigour, etc. Some committees will set up a classroom visit early in the semester, with a follow-up later. Evaluation reports are due about 6 weeks before the end of your first Term contract.

After you get a Regular contract (Regular-ongoing or Reg-in-Temp), you will normally be evaluated in the first year and in the third year. Again, each evaluation may be an accumulation of information from more than one semester. An evaluation report will be submitted in the first year of your Regular contract, and then again near the beginning of the third year.



How are student evaluations used?

Student evaluations carry a lot of weight at Langara College. Most departments use the generic form (SRI) found in the Collective Agreement appendix; several departments have developed SRIs that are specific to their department. The SRI results are tabulated and the student comments typed up.

A member of the committee (or their delegate) will administer the SRI to your class for purposes of your formal evaluation. You may hear from your committee if they wish to address some of the SRI results.

Separately from the official committee evaluative process, many faculty use the generic SRI form to get their own informal feedback from their classes. If you do this, you will not receive the results until after you have handed in your final grades. The committee does not have access to SRIs that you do for your own purposes, but you can certainly choose to share those results with the committee. Your own personal SRIs will not replace the committee's SRIs.

Someone visited my classroom and wrote up a negative report. What should I do?

Don't panic, don't over-react, don't get defensive, and definitely don't start a paper war with members of the committee! If the person who visited your class has concerns about what he/she observed, then the committee has the responsibility to promptly alert you, and then to assist you. (see 10.4.2.4.1) It is not at all unusual for an instructor who is relatively new to Langara to receive a less-than-perfect review. Usually the reviewer and the committee are trying to suggest ways to improve, and sometimes they do not communicate this in the most sensitive way. So take a breath, and talk to the reviewer and other committee members about their suggestions. You might ask the committee to appoint a mentor, so that you can work with the mentor to meet the committee's expectations.

Part of what the committee wants to assess is how you will fit within the existing department, and you may need to do some research as to the culture of the department – what worked well for you at another institution may not be desirable here. Also, keep in mind that sometimes the evaluators are doing this off the side of their desk, and they may not have taken time to adopt a helpful tone in their evaluation write-up.

What are the possible outcomes to an evaluation?

The committee will rate your evaluation on a scale of 1 to 4, as follows:

1 = satisfactory

2 = satisfactory at this time – faculty member is required to improve as specified; evaluation committee is expected to assist and may conduct further evaluation

3= not satisfactory at this time – faculty member is required to improve as specified; additional evaluation is required

4= unsatisfactory – unsuitable for further appointments

See the Faculty Evaluation Summary form in the college intranet.



I got a 2 on my evaluation – should I be worried?

A “2” means that your committee has identified things for you to work on and they will want to see improvement in those areas. They consider these things to be important enough that your next evaluation should show improvement. Do not treat a 2 lightly. You need to get a sense from the committee about their level of concern – some committees just want to send the message “it’s your first term here and there are some things we’d like you to think about” and other committees may be saying “you need to fix these things because otherwise you just may not be a good fit for our department”.

A “3” means that the committee is very concerned and needs to see substantial improvement. You need to be sure that you clearly understand the committee’s concerns, and that you put into place a plan with the committee, including clear guidelines about how and when you will be evaluated. Consider finding a mentor.

Future work will be offered based on contract type and qualifications, so having good evaluations are important.