

Peer Review of Teaching: Implementation Framework at GSSR

Peer review of PhD-level instruction complements administration and student evaluations of courses to enhance the quality of doctoral education at the [Graduate School for Social Research, GSSR](#). Through classroom visits, review of course materials and fostered peer discussions of best practices in teaching, this process provides targeted, formative peer feedback on how effectively instructors facilitate students' development of **knowledge, skills, and social competences** expected at PQF8 ([Polish Qualifications Framework](#) Level 8).

Strategy

GSSR administration matches faculty members from the same or a closely related disciplines into pairs, to serve the roles of peer reviewers. When feasible, paired faculty both teach at GSSR and serve as each other's reviewer. In the process of assigning reviewers, GSSR administration takes into account suggestions for reviewers made by GSSR instructors themselves, potential reviewers' record of PhD-level teaching experience, and the absence of conflict of interest.

Faculty who will provide peer feedback to teaching receive guidelines designed to foster their reflection on teaching practices and encourage an exchange of teaching experiences. This reflection involves (i) feedback to the course syllabus, (ii) a **one-hour** classroom visit (to each other's course, when both faculty are teaching), (iii) post-visit discussion of in-class observations, and (iv) preparation of a peer review report to GSSR administration (based on the peer feedback form).

Peer review of teaching uses PQF8 as the guiding framework and involves the following steps:

1. The reviewer assesses the course syllabus for clarity of objectives and alignment with PQF8 learning outcomes, requirements and assessment methods, using the peer review form provided by GSSR.
2. The reviewer and the instructor meet prior to the classroom visit to discuss the course, including the instructor's vision of the course objectives, requirements, and methods for assessing learning outcomes.
3. Class visitation (virtually or in-person), on a session agreed beforehand with the instructor.

The reviewer observes class flow and group dynamics, noting strengths and areas for improvement in conveying PQF8 knowledge, skills, and social competences. The reviewer also observes, as applicable for the visited class, how the teaching includes recent research, important theories, or current topics in the discipline, and how it helps students build skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, ethics, teamwork, and respecting different viewpoints. Attention is paid to inclusivity, classroom climate and practices that

promote an equitable, dynamic and welcoming environment where all students can participate fully.

4. Following the classroom visit, the paired faculty meet again, to exchange feedback on merits and possible improvements of the course's ability to contribute the planned PQF8 learning outcomes. This includes reflection on e.g., the course topics, requirements, assessment methods, teaching practices and class dynamics.
5. After the post-observation meeting, the reviewer finalizes the peer review form provided by GSSR. The report should reflect insights gathered from the discussion between the reviewer and instructor.
6. GSSR administration reviews the completed peer review form to ensure procedural compliance and to identify areas where further discussion or support may be beneficial. If additional insights or recommendations are needed, GSSR administration may organize a follow-up meeting with both faculty members, to promote further discussion of effective teaching practices.

Driving Quality Improvement

Peer review is primarily a tool for **quality enhancement of teaching practice** that frames constructive feedback as an opportunity for professional growth, rather than judgment. Clear guidelines, a structured process (pre- and post-observation meetings), and a supportive environment foster transparency and honest conversations about teaching practice.

The review remains confidential with GSSR administration. This ensures open dialogue without compromising individual privacy. Individual results are not shared with other faculty members. Only aggregated findings and examples of effective practice may be shared at the school level, allowing the institution to benefit from collective insights while preserving confidentiality.

By using PQF8 as the lens for review, GSSR ensures accountability for key competencies while embracing inclusivity. This reflective culture leads to meaningful improvements in classroom instruction, ultimately benefiting teachers, students, and the wider goals of higher education at GSSR.

Guidelines for Reviewers

These guidelines are intended to help reviewers provide constructive peer feedback to teaching at GSSR, aligned with the PQF8 framework. You are encouraged to approach the process with professionalism, objectivity, and respect for colleagues' teaching practices.

1. Purpose

- The peer review process is intended to provide formative feedback aimed at improving teaching practices, not to serve as a punitive assessment.
- Please focus on identifying strengths and suggesting improvements rather than making conclusive judgments.
- The review process is guided by the PQF8 competencies: knowledge, skills, and social competences.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- The reviewer reviews the syllabus, meets with the instructor prior to the classroom visit, observes a full class section (approximately one hour), participates in post-observation discussions, and completes the peer review form.
- The instructor is expected to provide the syllabus and relevant materials, participate in the pre-and post-class visit discussions, and reflect on feedback for improvement.
- Both parties should engage in the process with mutual respect, openness, and a commitment to professional growth.

3. Structure of the review

- Syllabus: The reviewer assesses the syllabus following the GSSR Peer Review Form, focusing on clarity of objectives, alignment with PQF8 competencies, quality of resources, inclusivity, and accessibility.
- Pre-Observation Meeting: The reviewer and instructor meet to discuss the course's objectives, structure, requirements, and assessment methods, to agree on a specific class session to be observed, and the date and time of the post-observation meeting. The pre-observation meeting helps set expectations and clarifies the instructor's approach.
- Classroom visit: The reviewer observes the agreed-upon class session in person or on line, following the GSSR Peer Review Form. Please identify specific examples that illustrate strengths and areas for improvement, pay attention to class flow, group dynamics, inclusivity practices, and effective use of technology (if applicable), and take objective notes during the observation.
- Completion of Peer Review Form: The reviewer fills out the GSSR Peer Review Form, providing specific ratings, comments, and recommendations. This form guides the reviewer through the assessment process and facilitates a structured post-observation discussion.

- Post-Observation Meeting: Within 10 days of the classroom visit, the reviewer and instructor discuss the session, exchange feedback, and reflect on areas of strength and improvement.
- Finalizing & Submitting the Peer Review Form: After the post-observation meeting, the reviewer finalizes the Peer Review Form and submits it to GSSR administration (see point 5).

4. Providing feedback

- Reviewers are expected to provide feedback in a professional and respectful tone, with practical steps or suggestions for enhancement wherever applicable.
- We encourage you to offer actionable recommendations that the instructor can consider implementing to enhance their teaching practices.
- Throughout the process, please remain mindful of the goal: to foster improvement and facilitate a constructive exchange of ideas aimed at enhancing teaching practices.

5. Form submission and follow-up

- Reviewers finalize the Peer Review Form after the post-observation meeting, reflecting insights gathered from discussion with the instructor, and submit it to GSSR administration within one week after the post-observation meeting.
- Both the reviewer and the faculty shall be open to participating in follow-up meetings or discussions organized by GSSR administration to promote effective teaching practices.

6. Confidentiality

- Peer feedback to teaching will only be shared with the instructor and GSSR administration (through the Peer Review Form).
- Individual results will not be disclosed to other faculty members. Aggregated insights from the peer review process may be used to inform GSSR workshops, training sessions, or teaching resources.