The following guidelines provide advice on engaging in peer observation and peer review of teaching in your context. Some Faculties and Units have their own peer observation or review programs. Contact your Associate Dean Learning and Teaching for more information about peer observation or review programs in your area.

**GUIDELINE 1 – CHOOSING PEER OBSERVATION OR PEER REVIEW**

Peer observation is a process in which you observe a colleague or peer to learn from watching your colleague. Peer review is a process in which you are observed by a colleague or peer and receive their feedback. The purpose of both processes is to enhance your teaching, while peer review can also be used to document your teaching.

**GUIDELINE 2 – CHOOSING A COLLEAGUE**

**Peer observation:** Choose a colleague who is interested in teaching well and is similar to you in teaching context (e.g., teaches similar class sizes in a similar discipline area).

**Peer review:** Teaching, particularly face-to-face teaching is often a very private affair, so letting a colleague observe your teaching for the first time can be disconcerting. Choose a colleague who you trust and have rapport with.

For both, ideally choose a colleague who is successful teaching in the way(s) that you are most interested in improving. You can judge whether a colleague is successful by their reputation and student feedback, and/or whether they have been recognised through a teaching award.

**GUIDELINE 3 – STEPS IN THE PROCESS**

**Peer observation:** During your observation note students’ reactions and their level of engagement. Note the steps involved in your colleague’s teaching strategies. Reflect on any aspects of your own approach that are affirmed and new teaching strategies you feel confident about trying as a result of your observation. It is optional whether you meet with your colleague afterwards for a conversation about your experience of the observation.

**Peer review:** Meet with your colleague beforehand to talk about the context of your teaching and the specific aspects of your teaching you want to improve, and would like your colleague to observe and give feedback on. Decide whether you would prefer your colleague to provide a personal narrative of their observation experience, or make judgements against a set of criteria that you negotiate. Try to arrange the post-observation meeting as soon as possible after the observation. During the observation you may wish to introduce your students to the ‘new’ person in the class.

For both, ‘observation’ can include analysis of curriculum, assessment and/or website design.

**GUIDELINE 4 – GIVING FEEDBACK**

**Peer observation:** It is not necessary for you to give formal feedback to your colleague. In an informal meeting afterwards you may wish to share what you found most interesting and useful about their approach and/or the strategies they used.

**Peer review:** Start the post-observation meeting by relating your experience of teaching in the session. It is important for your observer to provide constructive comments, including practical suggestions for how to improve a particular aspect of teaching. It is also important for your observer to be encouraging and persuade you that you can be successful in using a particular strategy. It can be helpful for the observer to organise their written feedback using a proforma (e.g., see http://www.ilit.usyd.edu.au/news/pdfs/bell_proforma.pdf), Feedback from a peer complements feedback from student evaluations of your teaching, and can be used as evidence for promotion or teaching award applications. All feedback should remain confidential.

“Teaching Insights” should be read in conjunction with Academic Board Policies: http://sydney.edu.au/policies/