

CASNR Guidelines for Using Calculated FTE and Student Evaluations Information in Faculty Evaluations

Data provided by the College are always intended to inform the formative and summative evaluations of our faculty. Our goal is commitment to excellence in the academic mission and continuous improvement in instruction and student learning, advising, assessment and service to our students. Our focus is on articulating learning outcomes and developing innovative curricula that align with these outcomes as well as documenting student achieving of the outcomes at the course, curriculum and degree level.

Our effectiveness in guiding student learning may be less evident while the students are pursuing their degrees and more evident as measured by their successes in their professional fields. However, there are quantitative measures of correlated attributes that can be assessed during the academic program which are indicative of an effective learning environment, always taken in the context of qualitative assessment. ***A single parameter to assess teaching effectiveness or student learning does not exist.***

Student Evaluations

Student evaluations of the course and instructor are a valuable insight into the learning environment and the relevance of course content. Student evaluations are important to establish some ownership for the students in their own education. We encourage faculty to review the previous student evaluations as part of the instructor's self-assessment of their teaching as well as share with future classes how student evaluation feedback has led to specific course modifications. Student evaluations also inform the instructor about the learning environment and instructional methodology.

The CASNR Academic Appointment Guidelines (Calculated FTE)

The calculated FTE that the College provides for each faculty member is not a performance-based measure and as such has limited value as a significant element in faculty evaluations. The calculated FTE represents an activity measure and provides useful information for the unit administrator to effectively manage the unit's teaching resources since they are responsible for assigning teaching and advising responsibilities for the faculty in their unit. It also provides reasonable insights into the balance of apportionment in a joint position, as well as the personal life balance of a faculty member.

The quality of the faculty member's efforts should be assessed by the Promotion and Tenure Committees and/or peer teaching evaluation committees. The calculated FTE can serve only as a reference in such deliberations. The real value of the calculation defines the philosophy of the College regarding the inclusiveness of the academic appointment (e.g. what is valued and incorporated into the calculation is more important than the actual number generated). The components of the calculation define a holistic approach to education that sets a standard for our academic programs. Faculty participation in the breadth of factors contributing to the calculated FTE is more important than the calculated FTE in assessing performance.

Accurately defining a faculty member's time committed to her/his academic role is an administrative responsibility. It is essential to account for the variability in effort and time commitment associated with the credit hour (level of course, number of students, etc.) within and across academic units. It is also essential that other components of the academic appointment be converted to a standard to quantify a faculty member's total academic appointment. This is particularly important in a system that has joint appointments and is also useful in establishing CASNR's academic accountability to the university community, governance bodies and Nebraska citizens. It also allows the college and unit administration to evaluate faculty position descriptions for imbalance, allocate GTAs as well as teaching and equipment funds, and better estimate the academic requirements of new positions.