



Guidance on IDEA Course Ratings

Advice on Selecting Objectives

Each term, before IDEA Course Ratings are administered to students, instructors are able to choose from 13 different Objectives for each course. The most important global measure of teaching effectiveness provided by the IDEA system is student Progress on Relevant Objectives (PRO). Progress on Relevant Objectives is the weighted average of student ratings on those Objectives chosen by the instructor as “Important” (weighted once) or “Essential” (weighted doubly).

How many Objectives should be selected?

IDEA recommends that no more than three to five Objectives be chosen as “Important” or “Essential” on the grounds that, if a total of more than five are selected, instructional efforts are likely to be spread too thinly. No more than two Objectives are recommended to be selected as “Essential.” You will receive an email prompting you to log in and select Objectives. Some departments have collaborated to agree upon and pre-select Objectives, which may already be designated when you log in.

Which Objectives are the best to choose for your course’s student ratings?

Some Objectives are closely aligned with certain disciplines, others with certain skills common in certain types of classes, while others may be more appropriate for higher-level or lower-level courses. Objectives should be selected primarily with consideration for the Course Goals published in your course syllabus. You can read descriptions or view short video explanations of each of the 13 IDEA Objectives here:

[IDEA Notes on Learning - Choosing Learning Objectives](#)

For more help lining up your Course Goals with IDEA Learning Objectives, feel free to request a consultation from the CLTE [here](#), by emailing Nathan Cox at ncox@andersonuniversity.edu, or by calling the CLTE at (864) 231-5676.

Teaching to Your Objectives

Which actual Teaching Methods have the most impact on your selected IDEA Objectives?

In addition to question about progress on Objectives, course ratings will ask student to rate the frequency and effectiveness of several teaching methods and strategies. Not all strategies will result in progress on every possible objective. Some objectives are not significantly impacted one way or another by certain strategies.

Find out which methods impact which objectives here:

[Teaching Methods Significantly Related with Progress on Learning Objectives](#)

This can greatly inform your approach to instruction.

A bit more on Teaching Methods...

Students are asked to rate faculty on the item "Explained course material clearly and concisely," which IDEA considers a measure of teacher clarity. This item has consistently been the teaching method most highly correlated with student ratings of "Overall, I rate this instructor an excellent teacher." (The "Excellent Teacher" item is one of three individual items on the IDEA student rating form that provide "global" indices of teaching effectiveness. The other two are "As a result of taking this course, I have more positive feelings toward this field of study," and "Overall, I rate this course as excellent.") Instructors who use the following teaching methods frequently tend to receive higher ratings on this important teacher clarity item:

The instructor...

- Found ways to help students answer their own questions
- Helped students to interpret subject matter from diverse perspectives (e.g., different cultures, religions, genders, political views)
- Made it clear how each topic fit into the course
- Provided meaningful feedback on students' academic performance
- Introduced stimulating ideas about the subject

Although these relationships are not cause-effect, they provide insight into teacher behaviors that are associated with explaining subject matter in clear and concise ways.

The diagnostic information in your Ratings results will point you to relevant white papers and resources on teaching methods.

Use of Results, Planning Annual Teaching & Learning PDP Goals

What role do IDEA Course Ratings play in Annual Performance Evaluations, and how are they related to annual Professional Development Plan (PDP) documents and PDP goals?

All full-time faculty (Tenure-Track, Professional-Path, and Annual Appointment faculty) are evaluated in the areas of Teaching & Learning, and Mission Fit. (Additionally, Professional-Path Faculty are evaluated annually in the area of Service, and Tenure-Track Faculty are evaluated annually in the additional areas of Service and Scholarship.)

In the area of Teaching & Learning, Deans and Associate Deans are encouraged to use IDEA Course Ratings results as *no more than 1/3 of the evidence* to be considered when determining if teaching performance Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, or Does Not Meet Expectations. Evidence to consider for the other 2/3s of evaluation in this area is meant to come from Teaching Observations and/or Online Course Evaluations, and from progress on the agreed-upon written Teaching Goals in the annual Professional Development Plan (PDP).

Annual Performance Reviews are frequently centered on discussions of goals established in the PDP by each faculty member at the beginning of the year. Incomplete lists of the types of activities that Meet Expectations and Exceed Expectations are published in the [Employee Handbook](#) (password: employee), in section 5.6: Evaluation of Faculty Performance. *Consulting these lists is highly encouraged when writing Annual PDP Goals. Referencing results from IDEA Course Ratings when writing PDP Goals is also encouraged.*

Find more [Teaching and Learning Guides and Resource Documents](#) under Teaching at [aucfte.com](#).

It may be especially appropriate to write specific Goals in Teaching & Learning if IDEA results reveal opportunities for improvement in one or more classes. IDEA Course Ratings are not only meant to serve as one of many instruments for performance review. *Arguable, their more important function is to provide a feedback loop based on reliable data that enables continuous improvement* for faculty in the area of Teaching & Learning.

What role do IDEA Course Ratings play in Portfolio Reviews by the Faculty Status Committee?

For Tenure-Track or Professional Path Faculty, the Faculty Status Committee (FDC) will also review IDEA Course Ratings as evidence of effective teaching during your Year 3 Formative Review Feedback and in Year 6, if you apply for Tenure or a Multi-Year Contract, and when faculty of any employment track apply for promotion. The FDC expects the most recent five semesters of course ratings to be included within your portfolio. (For more details on expected Portfolio contents, consult the appropriate Portfolio Checklists in the [Faculty Status Committee folder](#) on SharePoint.) Faculty are expected to write responses to results, also to be included in the Portfolio. The standard form used to compose such responses can be found also in the [Faculty Status Committee folder](#) on SharePoint.

CLTE Workshops and Consultations on Interpreting IDEA results

What's next?

For more info. on how to interpret IDEA Course Ratings results and how they can inform your annual Teaching & Learning PDP Goals, or how to respond to ratings results for the Faculty Status Committee in your Annual Reappointment Portfolio, please consult with the CLTE. **Workshops on interpreting IDEA results are offered every January, and individual consultations can be requested at any time [here](#)**, or by emailing Nathan Cox at ncox@andersonuniversity.edu, or by calling the CLTE at (864) 231-5676.