

Self-Directed, Formative Evaluation for VIU Faculty

Guidelines and Ideas

The **New Collective Agreement** between Vancouver Island University and the Vancouver Island Faculty Association (VIUFA) stipulates in Article 7.4 that **“The parties support periodic formative self-directed evaluation of faculty as a means of collecting valuable feedback in order to continue to provide high quality instruction and service.”** The entirety of Article 7.4 is provided for your convenience on page two of this document.

The model for “self-directed evaluation” described in this document is the work of a committee of representatives from VIUFA and VIU Administration, as well as consultants from the Centre for Innovation and Excellence in Learning. The group was convened to develop a framework and process to support VIU faculty members in the **“*design of their own evaluation process*”** (7.4.4), which will vary among Faculties, departments, administrative units, and individuals.

VIU is a “special purpose teaching university,” and faculty members engage in a range of pursuits related to teaching, service, scholarship, research and creative activity. In addition to teaching, faculty members engage in service through committee assignments, community engagement, and governance, to name just a few. Scholarship, research and creative activity are additional focal points of ongoing professional activity. As individuals pass through seasons or career stages, the balance among the spheres of their activity and the nature of their activity can vary significantly.

Because the evaluation process outlined in the New Collective Agreement is intended to be flexible and self-directed, its shape and content will depend on the kind of work an individual is currently doing and where one is in one’s career trajectory. A faculty member’s options for gathering information, getting feedback and engaging in professional reflection will also reflect individual career interests and goals.

The model presented by the committee is intended to be a framework rather than a prescription. Faculty members are invited to choose any of the described practices or tools that seem most relevant to them, or to create new pathways by which to meet the expectations and standards described in the New Collective Agreement.



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How to use the model and embedded tools

The model is designed to serve a range of faculty interests or needs related to “self-directed evaluation,” and can support various professional paths.

- 1) Faculty seeking to meet the expectations set forth in the New Collective Agreement (see bottom of page for full text of Article 7.4) will find a range of ideas and tools in the following pages for gathering information for the purpose of feedback and reflection on their professional work.
- 2) This model also identifies practices for faculty seeking to engage more broadly with peers and other professionals in a community of practice—whether within the university or beyond the university. While this is not an expectation of Article 7.4, it is considered good practice.
- 3) For faculty who are seeking ways to document their work more formally and comprehensively, as might be useful for career advancement, this model also describes relevant practices.

Whatever the focus of a given individual, the practices identified in this model are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive in terms of the possible ways for one to pursue self-directed evaluation. The model provides a menu of practices and tools, as recommended in Article 7.4.4 of the New Collective Agreement. It is hoped that faculty will contribute additional ideas for tools and best practices.

Above all, the model and indicated practices are intended to support and honour the various paths that can lead individuals to professional success and personal satisfaction.

From the New Collective Agreement between VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY and the VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY FACULTY ASSOCIATION (Effective from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2019)

7.4 FACULTY SELF-DIRECTED FORMATIVE EVALUATION

The parties support periodic formative self-directed evaluation of faculty as a means of collecting valuable feedback in order to continue to provide high quality instruction and service. The approaches to periodic faculty self-directed formative evaluation shall be governed by the following general principles, applicable to both instructional and non-instructional faculty;

7.4.1 VIUFA faculty and university administration are committed to formative evaluation and promoting a culture of evaluation in a non-threatening environment.

7.4.2 As this is self-directed formative evaluation, access to and control over information gathered in the evaluation process shall remain with the faculty member.

7.4.3 The evaluation process will follow a minimum 3-5 year cycle.

7.4.4 Faculty members will design their own evaluation process. To accommodate differences in work, program, and discipline, a “menu” of evaluation options, including an “other” category, should be available for each Faculty, department, or administrative unit.

7.4.5 The periodic evaluation should not be onerous.

7.4.6 The faculty member’s conclusions based on information gathered from the evaluation may inform the faculty member in the design of his/her professional development plan for the following cycle.

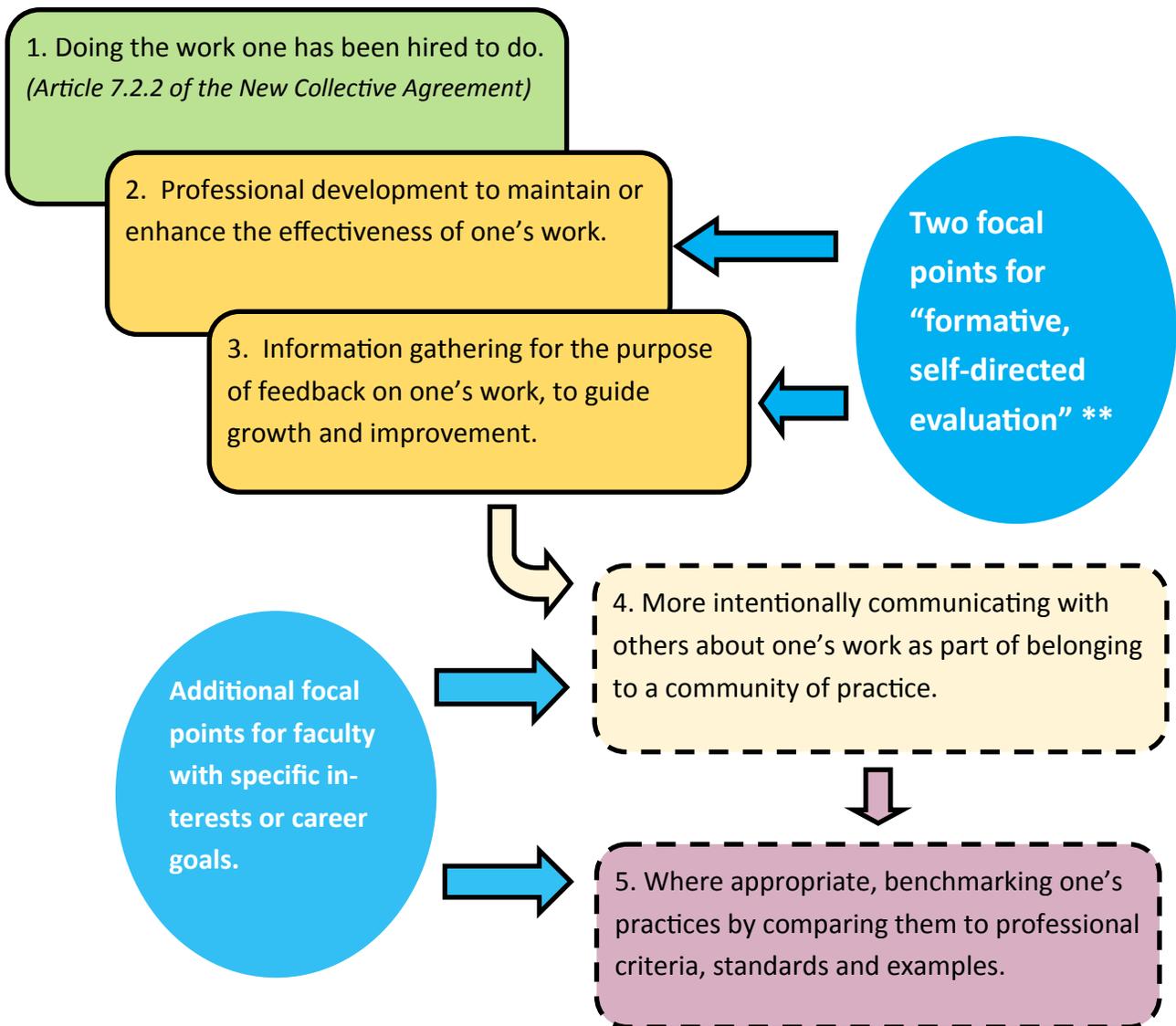
7.4.7 As this is self-directed formative evaluation, access to and control over conclusions drawn or reports to be made shall remain with the faculty member. No adverse inference can be drawn from the failure of the faculty member to report on the results of periodic evaluations.

Self-directed, Formative Evaluation Process

The process of information-gathering for self-directed evaluation is determined by the nature of the work (item #1, green box below) as a starting point. Faculty members then observe aspects of what they currently do to maintain a high level of professional skill (item #2) related to that work, and gather information that creates opportunities for professional feedback, self-reflection and additional professional development (item #3).

Some faculty members may find it rewarding to participate actively in a community of practice through broader public conversations, presentations and written work (item #4). Many VIU faculty members are already highly engaged in these activities.

Depending on professional goals and interests, some, but not all, faculty members will have an interest in pursuing comparative or benchmarked evaluation (item #5) with respect to professional criteria, standards and examples. Faculty members seeking professional advancement, for example, or a change of appointment or institution, or pursuit of external grants will benefit from taking a more formal approach to documentation and evaluation of their professional practice.



** The 2014-2019 New Collective Agreement stipulates that "The parties support periodic formative self-directed evaluation of faculty as a means of collecting valuable feedback in order to continue to provide high quality instruction and service."

Thinking about Teaching

How information is gathered for reflection on teaching will be related to a faculty member's location in the professional journey. Consider the following practices in boxes one and two as examples of possible entry points in this process. Some of these activities can be individual efforts; others invite interactions with colleagues or students. Over time, and possibly at a different career point, some faculty members seek to become active in a broader community of practice by making their work more public. Box three suggests some common examples of those activities. These lists identify examples, and are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.

Sample activities for professional development in teaching

1. **Reading** books, articles, and web materials on teaching
2. **Interacting** with colleagues to share ideas
3. **Seeking certifications or credentials** as appropriate to one's field
4. **Revising and re-designing** courses or programs
5. Choosing to teach a course known for its challenges, in order to **explore and develop new strategies**
6. Attending **workshops, seminars or course** on teaching practices, methods, technologies or assessment
7. **Attending conferences** on teaching, or sessions on teaching within a disciplinary conference
8. Participating in **program review**
9. **Serving** on committees or task forces for program enhancement (overlaps with service)

Sample activities for collecting information about teaching

1. Observing and **analyzing how students respond** to one's efforts to teach
2. Looking for patterns and trends in **student performance** levels or behaviour
3. Reflecting on one's **interactions with students**
4. Collecting informal **feedback from students**
5. Administering midterm **feedback surveys** of students during a semester
6. Using end-of-term **Surveys of Student Satisfaction**
7. Inviting a colleague to **visit one's class** (see VIU Peer Observation booklet created for this purpose)
8. Holding student **focus groups** conducted by colleagues
9. **Video-recording** a class
10. Using **Alumni survey** data
11. Using Student **placement data**
12. Collecting **letters of appreciation** by former or current students

Sample activities for interacting with a community of practice on teaching

1. **Hallway conversations**; informal brown bag discussions
2. Blogging or creating **web pages** to describe something innovative one has done in his/her teaching
3. Doing **public presentations**, workshops, or conference sessions on one's teaching
4. Developing a **portfolio** to showcase one's teaching to others in the same field or to colleagues at other institutions
5. Writing **articles** or narratives about one's teaching

Thinking about Service

The first list below is a reminder of some of the most common examples of faculty service. To include service in self-directed evaluation, it may be useful to begin by looking at activities that had the most impact, and then reflect on documents or artifacts that might be associated with that impact (see second list). The third list (communicating about one's service) is most likely to contain items related to documenting one's work for career advancement, if that is an individual goal. The practices described here are not prescriptive and are by no means exhaustive.

Sample activities for professional development in service

1. Undertaking roles in **service to the community**, in capacities relevant to areas of expertise (*e.g.*, consultation, advising, design services, research, building relationships with community partners, creative work, etc.) Note that some service activities may overlap with teaching or with research, scholarly or creative activities.
2. Undertaking roles in **professional associations** within a field (*e.g.*, editing of journals; committee work; contributions to national dialogues; etc.)
3. Serving on a University **Committee** or **Council** (*e.g.*, Senate, Department/Program, Faculty).
4. **Mentoring** colleagues; onboarding new faculty
5. **Conducting research** to learn more about a challenge/problem that the university is facing
6. Developing **improvement plans** to address problems related to curricula, programs, departments, or university as a whole
7. Undertaking an **administrative** or **governance** role: project leader; committee head; chair
8. Attending **trainings** to develop skills and knowledge targeting institutional enhancement

Sample activities for collecting information about service

1. Observing **examples of one's participation and impact**, for example, policies drafted; documents created for an organization; research/reports conducted for a project; recommendations made to a community partner
2. Collecting **letters or memos** where one's work has been observed and/or praised (*e.g.*, by students, community partners, colleagues, organizations, etc.)
3. Reflecting on one's work by **applying a rubric** (agreed upon by a faculty or by the university as a whole) to highlight effective service
4. Reflecting on **awards or other recognitions** received for service

Sample activities for interacting with a community of practice on service

1. Written **narratives** to explain and share one's work with colleagues
2. Public **presentations** of new policies or practices; or presentations of projects and plans
3. An updated **CV** that includes all of one's work in the above areas
4. **Web resources** that describe publicly the projects one has engaged in
5. **Articles, reports** written for community partners or professional associations

Thinking about Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity (SRCA)

Scholarship at VIU encompasses not only discovery, integration of knowledge, application, engagement (with community, civil society, etc.) and teaching and learning (Boyer, E.L., *Scholarship Reconsidered*, 1990), but also creative activity in its many forms. If one or more of these will be the subject of self-directed evaluation, this page points to several common practices associated with collecting information and getting feedback. SRCA includes highly individual, local activities such as reading to expand one's knowledge, or mentoring students in research. It also includes public activities, such as writing articles, consulting on a community project, conducting performances, or exhibiting one's work for a broader community. This list below is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive.

Sample activities for professional development in SRCA

1. **Reading** books, articles, and web materials related to subject areas
2. **Interacting with colleagues** to share ideas within one's department and across faculties
3. Seeking **certifications and other learning** at conferences and seminars within a disciplinary area
4. Revising and **re-designing courses** or programs to reflect changes in the field
5. Choosing to teach a course known for its challenges, in order to **develop new understandings**
6. **Mentoring students** in research (course-based activities, paid assistantships, thesis-writing)
7. Using expertise to **aid the community** or society such as by addressing pressing issues or raising funds
8. Leading or participating in a funded or unfunded **research activity, project, centre or lab**
9. **Inquiring** into one's teaching practices (*i.e.*, "scholarship of teaching and learning")
10. Using one's disciplinary expertise in creative outputs such as a **writing, performance, exhibition**
11. Applying for **external funding** to undertake basic or applied research, or a creative endeavour.

Sample activities for collecting information about SRCA

1. Observing the **impact** of one's scholarship, research and creative activity outputs.
2. Reflecting on the **impact** one's community engagement has had
3. Reflecting on one's own discipline as it relates to and is **influenced by other disciplines**
4. Reflecting on **students we have mentored/supervised** in research or creative projects
5. **Receiving reviews** on scholarly or creative outputs
6. Using existing **metrics** (e.g., reads, downloads, impact scores) to determine the impact of one's outputs
7. Highlighting **awards** received for one's scholarly or creative work
8. Retaining **letters of support** on the impact of one's scholarly outputs on public life, community organizations, etc.
9. Using results of **grant and contract competitions** to highlight success in obtaining funding and managing projects.
10. Noting **patents, copyrights** or commercialization resulting from one's research, scholarship or creative work

Sample activities for communicating work in SRCA

1. **Hallway conversations**; informal brown bag discussions
2. Seeking and pursuing opportunities for **interdisciplinary collaboration**
3. **Informally sharing** books, articles web materials with students, faculty and community members
4. Bringing new research and knowledge **into the classroom**, applied settings or the community
5. Uploading scholarly outputs onto **VIU's online repository**
6. Using **webpages, social media** or **VIU Space** to share scholarly and creative activity
7. Maintaining a **CV** or a **portfolio** that includes all forms of scholarly, creative or community outputs
8. **Publications**, conference sessions within the discipline for academic as well as for non-academic audiences