



POLICY TITLE: Faculty Development Policy

POLICY CATEGORY: ACADEMIC

POLICY NUMBER:

POLICY OWNER: AVP, Teaching and Learning

POLICY APPROVER: Board of Governors

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REVISED: N/A Click or tap to enter a date.

1. Purpose

George Brown College is committed to academic innovation and excellence and recognizes that Faculty have a direct impact on the quality of course and program delivery, and the overall student experience. Accordingly, GBC will provide the resources, processes, and tools necessary to support continuous improvement, professional growth, and ongoing feedback practice for faculty (or collectively, “Academic Staff”).

While GBC recognizes that employees bear the primary responsibility for maintaining professional currency and undertaking continuous improvement in knowledge and skills, the College supports this endeavour through a variety of programs and tools. Professional development planning is undertaken collaboratively between Academic Staff and their managers, fostering a shared commitment to growth, development, and academic excellence. This collaborative approach ensures that development activities align with individual goals, academic program needs, and broader institutional priorities.

GBC supports the pursuit of professional development activities, both within and outside of the College, to ensure currency of Academic Staff in their industry/discipline knowledge and evidence-based practices.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all faculty positions. This includes: all full-time, part-time, sessional, and partial load employees in Academic Faculties (referred to collectively as “Academic Staff”), as well as counsellors, librarians, and accessibility consultants. All collective agreement clauses that are specific to Academic Staff evaluation and professional development will be aligned with this policy as they apply. Definition of Terms

- **Class Observation Feedback Form:** A standardized tool used by Associate Deans and Teaching Faculty Members to guide class observations, pre-observation planning and discussion, and post-observation reflection and feedback. See Appendix 1.
- **Competencies:** Competencies are collections of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that are needed for effective performance and in alignment with George Brown College’s Professional Teaching Standards.
- **Policy:** A statement of basic principles, rules, regulations and/or guidelines, developed and enforced to direct and/or limit actions and activities.
- **Procedure:** The operational processes required to implement college policy, to be provided as a clear sequence of instructions to be followed
- **Professional Development:** Professional development includes a wide range of learning opportunities and experiences that build skills and deepen professional competency. Professional development activities can be short term and job related or

can be over a longer period and related to a future job opportunity. Professional development activities can include (but are not limited to): specialized training; formal education; professional learning; mentoring; coaching; conferences.

- **Professional development plan (PDP):** PDPs are a tool used to support ongoing professional growth. A PDP outlines career objectives, highlights strengths and areas for improvement, and specifies skills to be developed. A PDP also includes the actions required to achieve these goals, along with timelines and necessary resources, such as training, mentoring, or relevant experiences. Faculty PDPs are developed or updated annually, in collaboration between the faculty member and their Associate Dean/Manager.
- **Business Day:** For the purposes of this policy, business days are Monday to Friday, excluding statutory holidays or any other day in which the college has publicly announced that it is not open for business

3. Policy

3.1. Principles

- 3.1.1. Professional development opportunities will be designed to enhance faculty pedagogical and professional skills, in alignment with GBC's teaching excellence framework (forthcoming) and evidence-based practices. Professional development should support the goal of fostering high-quality, inclusive experiences for all students.
- 3.1.2. Equitable Access and Allocation: Professional development opportunities and resources are distributed equitably, ensuring that all faculty members, regardless of background or position, have opportunities for support and development. Resources should be allocated with consideration for the diverse needs and backgrounds of faculty, in ways that remove barriers to participation and value diverse pedagogies and ways of knowing.

3.2. Reflection and professional development planning

- 3.2.1. Teaching faculty can reflect on and evaluate their teaching effectiveness and/or strengths and areas for development by using a variety of tools and methods including (but not limited to) the following:
 - Feedback on class observations by Academic Managers
 - Data from student feedback questionnaires and other formative feedback (examples might include Classroom Assessment Techniques (CAT's)).
 - Reflections on teaching artifacts contained within Faculty teaching and learning portfolios
 - Peer to peer observations and learning squares.
 - Scholarship of Teaching & Learning.

- 3.2.2. A key component of professional development for teaching faculty is classroom observation. Class observations are intended to foster a collaborative environment where faculty and Academic Managers/Associate Deans work together to identify strengths and areas for development.
 - 3.2.2..1. Class observations and follow-up meetings will happen, at a minimum, every five years for non-probationary full-time teaching faculty. Feedback will remain confidential between the faculty member and Associate Deans/Manager and will be used for professional development purposes.
 - 3.2.2..2. All probationary full-time teaching faculty members will have a class observation during their first four months of teaching as well as in their second four months. Observation data and feedback will inform the employee's performance review in alignment with article 27.02D of the academic staff collective agreement.
 - 3.2.2..3. For quality assurance purposes, all contract faculty (including part-time, partial load and sessional) will have a class observation during their first year of teaching at George Brown College and then subsequently receive feedback periodically upon request and/or at the request of the Associate Dean/Academic Manager. This applies to all faculty hired after the date this policy goes into effect.
 - 3.2.2..4. Class observations are guided by discussion between the teaching faculty member and their Associate Dean/Academic Manager, using the criteria outlined in the Class Observation Feedback Form (see Appendix 1). The Class Observation Feedback Form serves as the standardized tool for evaluation and feedback. The faculty and Associate Deans/Manager may choose to focus on only selected portions of the form, depending on the pre-planning conversation.
 - 3.2.2..5. Class observations will adhere to the procedure outlined in Appendix 2 ("Class Observation Procedures").
- 3.2.3. Both formal and informal student feedback will play a significant role in teaching faculty professional development and reflection. Faculty will gather and reflect on student feedback as an integral part of their professional goal setting and professional development planning.
- 3.2.4. As part of ongoing professional development, librarians, counsellors, and accessibility consultants will engage in structured observation and peer mentorship activities. These practices are intended to foster a

collaborative and reflective professional culture. Through observation and mentorship, non-teaching faculty and their managers will work together to identify individual and collective strengths, as well as areas for growth in professional practice, service delivery, and collection assessment (as relevant, depending on role). This process supports continuous improvement and alignment with institutional goals and standards.

3.2.5. Relevant managers will meet annually with FT faculty members (both teaching and non-teaching) to jointly identify professional goals and associated professional development opportunities and plans.

3.2.5..1. During the meeting, artefacts such as faculty portfolios, most recent class observation notes (for teaching faculty), and student feedback questionnaires will be reviewed together in alignment with the college's professional teaching standards and evidence-informed practices. These items will contribute towards the development of a professional development plan.

3.2.5..2. Managers will document the occurrence of the meeting to ensure all faculty are supported in their professional development, engage in a review process, and are provided with developmental feedback.¹

3.3. Support for Professional Development

3.3.1. All academic staff, regardless of status, are eligible to access internally developed professional development activities, such as workshops, conferences, seminars, professional learning programs offered as part of GBC's Teaching and Learning Exchange ("TLX") and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and other internal units, such as the Office of Anti-Racism Equity and Human Rights Services (OAEHRS), Indigenous Initiatives, the Office of Research and Innovation, and Employee Learning and Development.

3.3.2. Academic Staff may be able to access support to participate in external PD opportunities through internal units such as Employee Learning and Development and the Office of Research and Innovation.

3.3.3. GBC will set its academic goals and priorities and will develop and implement a range of strategies, programs and tools to achieve them. This includes offering professional development to enable academic faculty and staff to contribute to the college's goals.

3.3.4. Managers may identify professional development opportunities, credentials, or events that are strategically valuable for academic staff to

¹ See requirement 6.2 of the College Quality Assurance Audit Process for relevant requirements ([CQAAP-Standards-2024-2025.pdf](#))

attend or obtain. Reasons an event or opportunity may be identified as strategically valuable include but are not limited to the following: the event or opportunity would a) inform program or curriculum development b) support wider GBC faculty PD on teaching methodologies or other area of professional excellence c) elevate GBC's profile within the area d) support strategic relationship development. Relevant managers may request that an academic staff attend identified opportunities.

3.3.5. Departments may maintain professional development funds to support academic staff development. Academic staff may initiate requests for support to participate in external professional development through their respective department (see Academic Staff Request for Professional Development Procedure). Preference will be given to requests to access professional development that:

- Build on competencies (core, technical and leadership/business) required to effectively perform in an employee's current role.
- Support an employee's development plan within their current role.
- Build competencies and needs aligned to GBC's Values, Academic Plan, and professional teaching standards.
- Advance talent strategies and programs such as succession by building competencies in readiness for potential succession turns.
- Satisfy agreed development or competency requirements as laid out under a Collective Agreement.
- Consider economic, social, and environmental sustainability in accordance with GBC college values.
- Will impact professional development at GBC broadly. Academic staff requesting external PD opportunities must include a plan to share learnings with peers.
- Support community and relationship building at GBC.

3.3.6. As identified and approved by relevant managers, external learning programs may be supported through a variety of mechanisms including financial educational assistance, release time (with or without payment), direct provision, full tuition or through some combination of these. The determination of the type of support offered is determined through a number of factors.

3.3.7. Relevant Managers will approve or not approve requests, after considering multiple factors, including but not limited to the items outlined in 4.3.5 as

well as eligibility requirements, equity considerations and budgetary allowances to each opportunity accessible by employees for professional development

3.3.8. For full-time academic staff pursuing tuition assistance to pursue credentials from accredited postsecondary institutions, the College's Tuition Assistance Policy applies.

3.3.9. GBC employees, including Academic staff, are eligible for the College's Post Secondary Education Staff Discount Policy

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Academic Staff Request for Professional Development Procedure

Appendix 2: Class Observation Procedure

5. Forms and Templates

Form 1: Academic Staff Request for Professional Development Form

Form 2: Class Observation Feedback Form

6. Related Policies

[Post Secondary Education Staff Discount Policy](#)

[Tuition Assistance Policy](#)

Class Observation Policy

Employee Learning and Development Policy (forthcoming, from employee learning and development team in HRS)

Appendix 1

Academic Staff Request for Professional Development Procedure

- This procedure applies to all academic staff who are interested in an external professional development opportunity and who are requesting support for the opportunity through their department.
 1. Any academic staff interested in accessing an external professional development opportunity should begin by discussing the opportunity with their relevant manager to determine a) alignment with the faculty member's professional development plan b) available budget c) the needs of the department d) access and equity and e) any other considerations.
 2. If the professional development opportunity involves dissemination or mobilization of research findings, the Office of Research and Innovation should be included in the discussion as research specific funds and programs may be available to support the opportunity.
 3. Academic staff complete the "Request for Professional Development" Form and submit the form to their relevant manager.
 4. Relevant managers will review the application for professional development. Managers will consider the extent to which the opportunity satisfies the following when granting approvals:
 - builds on competencies (core, technical and leadership required to effectively perform in an employee's current role).
 - supports an employee's development plan within their current role.
 - builds on competencies and fills needs aligned to GBC's Values, the Strategic and Academic Plans, and professional teaching standards.
 - the opportunity will advance talent strategies and programs such as succession by building competencies in readiness for potential succession turns.
 - fulfills agreed development or competency requirements as laid out under a Collective Agreement.
 - Aligns with economic, social, and environmental sustainability in accordance with GBC college values.

- will impact professional development GBC more broadly. Faculty requesting external PD opportunities must include a plan to share learnings with peers.
 - equitable opportunities for PD across the department
 - available funds
 - involves active participation in the PD opportunity (e.g. funding will usually not be awarded to academic staff who are attending a conference and not presenting).
 - Builds community and relationships at GBC.
5. Relevant managers will notify the applicant of their decision via email within ten business days of receiving the request.
 6. Applications and decisions will be recorded and tracked at the department level. Applications will include optional demographic questions to enable tracking and monitoring of diversity in opportunity access. Aggregate data will be provided to the AVP, Teaching and Learning or the VP, Academic as requested.

Form 1

Request for Professional Development Form

Faculty Name

Department Name

Name of Professional Development Event or Opportunity

Date of Professional Development Event or Opportunity

Type of participation at the event or opportunity (e.g. panel member, giving a talk, presenting a poster) (***) Note that funds will not usually be awarded for attending an event without active participation such as, for example, a panel member, a speaker, presenting a poster etc.)

Name of presentation or talk

Abstract of presentation or talk

Type(s) of Support Requested (time, financial etc.)

Amount of Support Requested

Detailed Budget

Item	Description	Total	Amount Requested from Department

Please describe how participation in this professional development opportunity is aligned with and advances GBC's academic plan

Please describe how participation in this professional development opportunity fits with your professional development plan (full time employees) or builds on your teaching competencies.

Explain how you will share learnings from the conference with peers at GBC following the event or opportunity.

Appendix 2

Class Observation Procedures

1. Except in exceptional circumstances, the Academic Manager/ Associate Dean will meet with the faculty member prior to an observation. At the meeting, the faculty member and Academic Manager/ Associate Dean will collaboratively determine areas of focus for the observation and feedback, in alignment with the Observation Feedback Form, the faculty member's reflections on their strengths and areas for development, and professional development plans and goals.
 - The Associate Dean/Academic Manager will share the Class Observation Feedback Form with the faculty member at or in advance of this meeting.
2. The faculty member and Academic Manger/ Associate Dean will schedule observations in advance, at a mutually agreeable time.
 - Faculty may provide lesson plans or other relevant materials to the Associate Dean/Academic Manager prior to the observation.
 - The Associate Dean/Academic Manager will arrive on time and remain in the classroom for the duration of the lesson or for an agreed upon length of time.

- The Associate Dean/Academic Manager will use the Class Observation Feedback Form to document teaching practices, student engagement, and classroom environment.
3. A post-observation meeting will be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time within 5 business days of the observation.
 - During the post-observation meeting, the Associate Dean/Academic Manager and the faculty member will have a conversation about the class Observation. The Academic Manager/ Associated Dean will share their observations and insights as recorded on the completed Class Observation Feedback Form, highlighting strengths and offering actionable suggestions for improvement. Faculty members will provide reflections and input.
 4. Faculty will have the opportunity to reflect on the feedback and ask clarifying questions.
 5. Within 7 working days of the observation, faculty members and the Academic Manger/ Associate Dean will complete a written summary of the observation and conversation using the Class Observation Feedback Form. This will be stored securely in the academic department.
 6. Documentation indicating that the Class Observation took place will be shared with relevant member of the Human Resources/ Talent Management Team. Aggregated observation findings across a School or Centre may also be shared with the AVP, Teaching and Learning and the VPA in the form of a roll-up report.
 7. Faculty and Associate Deans will collaboratively develop a professional development plan based in part on the feedback documented on the Class Observation Feedback Form and in accordance with the Faculty Development policy. Follow-up observations may be scheduled to provide additional support, with the Class Observation Feedback Form used to track development over time.
 8. Associate Deans may invite faculty members with expertise in specific teaching methodologies to share their practices with colleagues through mutually agreed-upon forums such as teaching squares or peer observation.

Form 2

Class Observation Feedback Form

Preamble: The following form is designed to scaffold the feedback process, however feedback does not need to address every criteria listed. Its purpose is to support focused, constructive feedback. Observers should select categories relevant to the context, goals, and instructional method, in accordance with the pre-observation meeting.

Learning Environment/Climate The faculty member creates a learning climate in which students feel valued, engaged, included, and motivated to learn. Principles of equity, collegiality, and honesty are evident through interactions and practices.	
Area of Focus/Checkpoints	Observations/Feedback
Classroom Atmosphere <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Establishes a classroom environment that is positive, inclusive and welcoming-Has developed a positive rapport with students-Uses students' preferred names and pronouns and has learned the correct pronunciation of their names-Conveys to students that they are approachable and welcome questions	
Professionalism <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Arrives on time and prepared with materials/equipment-Materials are shared within the LMS (if relevant)-Uses class time effectively-Organization and preparation are apparent-Where applicable, dress (e.g., uniform, footwear) and conduct are in accordance with industry-related health and safety standards-Knowledge of the topic is evident; Able to respond to student queries effectively	

Learning Environment/Climate

The faculty member creates a learning climate in which students feel valued, engaged, included, and motivated to learn. Principles of equity, collegiality, and honesty are evident through interactions and practices.

Area of Focus/Checkpoints	Observations/Feedback
<p>Classroom Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Sets and maintains appropriate standards of behaviour/conduct, both in person and online-Organizes and facilitates class to encourage appropriate focus and intervenes if necessary to redirect students-Manages disruptive behaviour in a timely and respectful manner-Manages class flow and interactions to ensure equitable opportunity for participation-Adapts class as needed to respond to learning gaps, student response, technical difficulties, disruptions, etc.	

Learning Facilitation

The learning experience reflects principles of adult learning and inclusive practices

Areas of Focus/Checkpoints	Observations/Feedback
<p>Andragogy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Effort has been made to support learning that is relevant and meaningful; it is clear why they need to learn the current topic-Purposefully integrates learner-centered approaches to ensure students are co-creators of their learning and are actively engaged during lessons (e.g., questioning, discussing, presenting)-Lesson incorporates learners' existing knowledge, lived experience, cultural considerations, etc.-Learning is applied and/or problem-focused, where possible and relevant-Instructional approaches are appropriate for the context (e.g., considering class size, curriculum, learning modality, learners' readiness)	

Learning Facilitation

The learning experience reflects principles of adult learning and inclusive practices

Areas of Focus/Checkpoints	Observations/Feedback
<p>Learning Design/Lesson Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Learning objectives for the lesson are clear and are appropriate for the amount of class time– Begins the lesson with an entry point to spark curiosity and engagement– Lesson bridges new topics with previous curriculum– A variety of instructional approaches are used; regular opportunities are provided for learners to process and consolidate information in different ways – Opportunity is provided for application and/or formative assessment of learning (might be provided as an action item following the lesson - e.g., homework, assessment)– Provides multiple options for action/expression of student learning (e.g., presentations, skill demonstrations, simulations, interactive web tools, project-based learning)– Formative assessment is used to gauge learning and comprehension during class (e.g., to check-in with baseline knowledge at the beginning; check on learning during class; monitor comprehension at the end of class)	
<p>Use of Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Technology is integrated as appropriate to augment and support the pedagogy-Technology is accessible for all learners; resources to familiarize students with technology have been shared	

Learning Facilitation

The learning experience reflects principles of adult learning and inclusive practices

Areas of Focus/Checkpoints	Observations/Feedback
<p>Student Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Where applicable, provides opportunities for some anonymous/low-stakes participation to encourage engagement (e.g., polling, questions)-Creates opportunities for interaction among classmates-Thoughtfully supports collaborative learning activities (e.g., group formation, team dynamics, and peer evaluation)-Students with accommodations are supported appropriately and when possible, proactively	

Learning Materials

The learning materials are thoughtfully curated and incorporated into the lesson in a way that reflects Universal Design for Learning, inclusive practices, and align with the principles of adult learning.

Areas of Focus/Checkpoints	Observations/Feedback
<p>Learning Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Learning materials are current, relevant, appropriate- Learning materials incorporate real-world applications, where relevant-Learning materials include a diversity of perspectives, voices, identities-Instructor incorporates multiple forms of representation (e.g., visual aids, videos, audio recordings, readings, demonstrations, experiential learning)- Materials are accessible and comply with AODA standards (e.g., videos are captioned, colour contrast is sufficient)	