

<b>Title:</b>	Teaching, learning and assessment observation policy 2017-18	
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## 1. Purpose of Teaching and Learning Observations

### 1.1. Purpose of observation of teaching, learning and assessment

1. The purpose of the observation of teaching, learning and assessment is to enable individuals, teams and the College to understand what is happening in teaching, learning and assessment and how it can be developed to best meet the learning needs of students. A sound teaching, learning and assessment observation scheme, which enables the College to identify the strengths and areas for development within its teaching and learning, is viewed as central to an effective college with good QA processes by Ofsted. The College has identified good and better teaching and learning as a key priority and staff invest much time and energy in developing their skills in this area. The teaching and learning observation scheme provides both individual feedback and a range of reports on teaching and learning which can be used in self-assessment and quality improvement. Overall, improving teaching and learning is key to improving learner success. Teaching and learning observations however are only one source of evidence about quality and impact of teaching, learning and assessment. Other sources include: attendance, retention and achievement [showing impact of good TLA practice], marked work and classwork feedback reviews, VLE and ProMonitor reviews, schemes of work and records of student progress.

2. Observations are needed to provide a profile of the quality of teaching and learning, although the College recognises that this represents a snapshot of pre-notified sessions and needs to be triangulated with other evidence such as student feedback and outcomes for a holistic picture. The College's observation processes and assessment of quality of teaching, learning and assessment are based on the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework.

3. Principles of teaching and learning observation 2016/17:

- Assumption that teaching is good and we are aiming for outstanding
- All teachers receive individual constructive feedback on strength and areas for development
- Faculties and Curriculum Areas to have an overall picture of TLA, including focus on stretch and challenge and English and maths
- Teaching and learning observations are of 'business as usual' teaching
- Teachers are encouraged to try new things

### 1.2. Teaching and Learning Observations

4. Teaching and learning observations are ungraded and their focus is to monitor the quality of delivery, and provide evidence / feedback to support further improvements in teaching practice. Feedback forms identify strengths and areas for development focusing on the Ofsted criteria and College characteristics. Feedback will also include discussion of progress on the teacher's identified areas for development and College priorities for development e.g. stretch and challenge. Overall patterns of strengths and areas for development will be reported on by department and whole College, to inform CPD planning, SARs and QIPs. There are three types of lesson observations:

5. **Teaching and Learning observations:** These observations will be carried out throughout the academic year and will focus on a specific lesson / session. A standard teaching and learning observation should usually last at least 40 minutes.

6. **Thematic Teaching and Learning observations (Learning Walks):** Thematic observations will review teaching, learning and assessment across a department / learning area. Thematic observations will usually last between 15 - 20 minutes per learning session and will focus on particular themes. Themes will be discussed with staff in advance with a view to developing practice. Feedback will be

collective and used to inform sharing good practice and departmental level CPD.

7. **Peer observations:** Peer observations form an important aspect of the College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment and Continuous Professional Development policies. All teaching staff are encouraged to complete a peer observation of a colleague and have a colleague observe them every year. The purpose and methodology of the peer observation should be agreed in advance and should support a specific aspect of a teacher's professional development plan. Observers may apply for support from the Quality department and training will be available to support the observation process. The College recognises the need to increase the number of peer observations and this aspect of the policy will be reviewed annually across the newly formed College group.

8. Graded observations using the Ofsted grade descriptors will be completed for staff on probation or staff receiving support through the support and challenge process.

### **1.3. Who is observed?**

9. All staff who deliver learning sessions including tutorial, lessons, practical sessions, assessments and training should be formally observed annually. This includes teaching, training, assessing and learning support staff whether full-time, part-time, permanent or hourly paid, directly employed or agency.

10. The College reserves the right to use external observers and carry out additional observations for particular purposes [e.g. inspection preparation, scrutiny by external funders,] although these will respect the principles and processes of this policy.

### **1.4. Frequency of teaching and learning observations:**

11. Teaching and learning observations, both standard and thematic, may take place at any point during the academic year, in line with the quality cycle. Teaching staff will be given notice of the specific date of their observation five (5) working days in advance. Teaching and learning observations will be scheduled throughout the year; an individual teacher may have up to two (2) standard teaching and learning observations per year as well as up to four (4) thematic observations (learning walks). It will be standard practice for staff for a teacher to complete one teaching and learning observation and 3 learning walks each academic year. For standard teaching and learning observations, detailed oral and written feedback should be given individually: usually within five (5) working days of the observation taking place.

12. In the case of thematic observations (learning walks) departments / teaching teams will be given notice five (5) working days in advance of the date and time slot (morning, afternoon or evening). They will be provided with group feedback, which should include a group action /development plan, usually within five (5) working days of the observations taking place. Learning walks will usually be scheduled across the academic year. Themes will be informed by college/team priorities identified prior to the walks.

13. Internal quality reviews (IQR) and Peer Review: Teaching and learning observations form part of Internal Quality Reviews (IQRs). During IQR, consultants and college managers observe classes and give feedback to individuals. Joint lesson observations are conducted to validate observations during an IQR. The Head of Faculty will be given a summary of judgements and feedback highlighting areas for development. Managers will use this information to inform a collective development programme of CPD. Additional individualised feedback will be provided if there is evidence of insufficient learning.

14. In the case of an Internal Quality Review (IQR) curriculum areas will receive five (5) working days' notice of the review period (which is normally 3- 5 days). Teaching and learning observations will take place throughout the Internal Quality Review.

15. Inspection: As part of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) Inspection process, teaching staff may be observed by Ofsted HMI inspectors. In accordance with the Handbook for the Inspection of Further Education and Skills, inspectors give brief feedback to teachers. Inspectors are also likely to moderate internal College observations to validate the grades or judgements awarded and the quality of the

### **1.5 Who observes?**

16. Standard teaching and learning observations and thematic observations will be carried out by either a college manager, an external consultant or an Advanced Practitioner. For training purposes [of observers], joint lesson observations may be carried out. Wherever possible, staff will be informed in advance that an external will be participating in observation and the usual notice periods will apply. In the case of Ofsted, the timing of observations will be within the inspectors' control and is outside this process.

17. Peer observations will be completed between 2 or more teachers by agreement. Staff will have the opportunity to attend training to support their role as a peer observer.

18. Where peers are observing, this will be part of their non-teaching duties, there should not be cover or pay, although of course staff can make local arrangements as long as students are not disadvantaged.

### **1.6 New and agency teachers/trainers**

19. New staff including agency [if likely to be in college for more than 2 weeks] must attend the teaching, learning and assessment induction with the Quality Improvement department.

20. All newly appointed teaching staff (staff on Probation) are observed by their line manager within six weeks of the start of their employment. (See probation procedure particularly 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 5.4). The aim of these teachings and learning observations is to provide support and developmental opportunities for all new staff involved in delivering or facilitating teaching and learning. Teaching and learning observations completed during the probationary period will be graded. For all staff on probation there is an expectation to achieve grade 1 or 2, with other aspects of practice at minimum of satisfactory standard to pass probation.

21. Agency staff should be observed within the first 2 weeks of teaching and should be included in professional development activities. Contracts for agency staff who do not meet expected standards should be terminated and a replacement recruited.

### **1.7. Observation of Assessors**

22. Classroom based sessions delivered by assessors for employer responsive provision will be observed in line with the College's Teaching and learning observation policy. In addition to this, internal

verifiers will conduct observations of assessment in the workplace in line with the College's Assessment, Internal Verification and Moderation policy, and awarding body requirements.

## **1.8. Quality Assurance**

23. To support good practice all observers will undergo refresher training each year. Observers should have curriculum experience and be willing to observe across the college, based on their experience of teaching or curriculum management. Observer training will ensure that the observation process is an effective quality improvement mechanism. There will be a strong emphasis on post observation feedback and the developmental aspects of the observation process.

24. In order to support accurate judgements as well as the supportive nature of lesson observations, all observers will be moderated through a joint teaching and learning observation (JTLO). Moderations will be completed by either another manager, an external consultant or the Head of Quality Improvement. All observers will be moderated on at least one occasion during the academic year. The judgements, feedback and action plans will be subjected to a moderation process.

25. All staff may also wish to be involved in teaching and learning observations as part of continuous development and improvement and the sharing of good practice. Their involvement in observations should be agreed by the Head of Faculty and the staff they will be observing.

26. Lesson observation judgements and reports will be treated with confidentiality but may be shared as part of audits, inspections, moderations and during the support and challenge process. All records are subject to data protection.

## **1.9 Observation of partners**

27. Observation of partner provision will be carried out with a similar notice period by the manager responsible for the partnership, in consultation with the Head of Quality Improvement. Teaching and learning observations will be completed as part of the College's franchise monitoring process. Partners will be given access to support and development from Quality Improvement department. Failure to attain required standards will lead to review of the partnership relationship.

## **1.10 Prior to observation**

28. Regular staff training will be provided by the College so that observed staff are able to be well-prepared for observation. The observer can offer a pre-meeting to support the observation process.

## **2. The Observation Process**

### **2.1 The observation**

29. The observation will focus on learning, but a certain amount of documentation is needed to help evaluate learning and progress. The following should be available:

- Register
- Scheme of work and evidence of planning
- Class profile showing individual needs of students – useful to update before an observation to help inform the observer

- Student work
- Gradebook/assessment records or other evidence to show feedback to students and their progress
- ILPs, trackers where these are used for delivering learning or in a 1:1

30. The observer will aim not to interrupt the learning session, to situate themselves discreetly and safely, and to enable the session to run as normally as possible. It is helpful for the observee to introduce the observer to the class/group/individual. The observer will speak to students and look at their work at points during the session where this is not disruptive.

31. An observer will only intervene during a learning session if there are Health & Safety issues. Observers record the observation on a standard college form, using evaluative judgements.

32. Further Ofsted information on lesson observations is available in Appendix 1 and the Ofsted Handbook for Inspection of Colleges (commencing September 2015) which can be found on the College Intranet or obtained from your line manager. During any observation observers follow the Handbook as guidance.

## 2.2 Lesson observation descriptors

Observers will record judgements against the criteria listed below

	<b>Outstanding Characteristics</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Areas for Development</b>
<b>Planning for Learning</b> (Individual needs, aims & objectives, expectations, & resources)			
<b>Learning objectives</b>			
<b>AfL – Range of activities &amp; differentiation</b>			
<b>AfL - Checks on learning</b>			
<b>Stretch and challenge</b>			
<b>Developing skills</b>			

<b>Using technology to promote learning</b>			
<b>Promote E&amp;D</b>			
<b>Developing English, mathematics and employability skills</b>			
<b>Session end review of learning</b>			

### **2.3 Observation of tutorial**

33. Group tutorials will be observed within the cycle in the same way as other learning sessions. 1:1 tutorial observation requires the consent of the student [through discussion with the tutor] prior to the observation, and awareness of sensitivities on the part of the observer.

## **3 Judgements and feedback**

### **3.1 Feedback**

34. Post observation feedback is an essential stage of the observation process, feedback should be constructive, and evidence based and provide the observee with a summary of key strengths and areas for development.

35. Initial verbal feedback should be provided as soon as possible and written feedback should be provided within 5 working days of the observation.

36. During the feedback the observer should ask the observee how they thought the session went, what they thought were the strengths and areas for development, and provide feedback using coaching techniques and ensure that the feedback is a two-way process.

37. Adequate time [not usually less than 20 minutes] should be allowed for feedback and it should take place in a suitably quiet and private environment. During the feedback session the observer should lead a professional and reflective dialogue between themselves and the observee. Feedback must be developmental, constructive and clear, and supported by evidence.

38. The feedback discussion should result in the completion of the development plan and feed into teachers' individual plans and appraisal. This plan will be further developed subsequently by the observee and their manager as part of management supervision and appraisal. Development activities can include sharing of observee's good practice.

39. All scheduled observations should be recorded on the college observation form. Following an observation and feedback the observer should give a copy of the observation form to the Head of Faculty, the Quality Improvement department and the observee. The Head of Quality Improvement will then compile a breakdown of strengths and areas for development and any key messages for the department.

### **3.2 Appeals**

40. Where a member of staff is not content with the judgements awarded or with some other aspect of the observation, they may appeal in writing giving reasons. In the first instance this should be addressed to the observing manager. If the issues cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties, the Head of Quality Improvement will appoint an independent observer to undertake an observation. If this satisfies all parties, the matter rests. If the matter is not resolved, either party will have recourse to the



college grievance procedure.

### **3.3. Reporting on observation outcomes**

41. After staff in a curriculum area have been observed a summary will be produced. The report will also provide judgements on wider evidence including VLE, ProMonitor, and feedback to students on marked work. A profile of outcomes is reported to curriculum managers, College Management Team and College Governors. Observation outcomes, in particular areas of good practice and areas for development will be discussed in appraisals and form evidence for self-assessment.

### **3.4 Attendance and punctuality**

42. Attendance and punctuality form part of the judgement of teaching, learning and assessment. Approaches to dealing with lateness should be noted.

43. It is usual practice to review the register to establish the normal attendance pattern. If attendance is very low and for unexpected reasons beyond the teacher's control, e.g., transport strike, the observer would either choose not to observe or would observe taking into account how well the teacher adapted to a smaller number of learners.

44. Judgements will take into account the overall learning including strategies to support and challenge late and absent learners. Observers should identify and feed back to the manager and Quality Improvement good practice identified in promoting good attendance and punctuality.

### **3.5 Stretch and challenge**

45. Stretch and challenge is a key development area for the College in 2016/17 and will be reported on following observations to share good practice. Teachers are encouraged to draw observers' attention to stretch and challenge activities which they are using.

### **3.6 English and maths**

46. Embedding and developing English and maths within lessons is essential and will be reported on following observations to share good practice.

## **4. Actions following observation feedback**

### **4.1 Further development**

47. Following the observation and feedback discussion, the observer will recommend developmental follow up from the choice of:

- Effective characteristics, practice to share,
- Support as part of individual action plan
- In the case of insufficient learning, a development review as part of an improvement action plan.

48. In the case of an observation resulting in a judgement of insufficient learning, this will trigger the College's policy for managing consistently poor teaching. Following a period of support, a re-observation will be completed. This observation will be a joint observation and will be graded.

49. After a standard observation, the observee will be expected to complete a post observation action plan and engage with support. Where an area for development is identified, the observee will be required to engage with a development plan which may include peer support, mentoring or additional training.

50. Excellent practice to share will be identified in the TLA review report. Managers should ensure that excellent or good practice is shared in team meetings, peer observations and mentoring.

51. Where mentoring is identified, mentors will usually be Advanced Practitioners, managers or trained teaching staff. Mentors will support the observee to improve the aspects for development identified in the development plan. A further lesson observation/review of assessment and learning will take (please see Policy for Managing Consistently Poor Teaching).

#### **4.2. Support and challenge process for teachers where insufficient learning is identified at an observation by a manager, or IQT member**

52. Where the teaching and learning in the lesson observed [by a manager or Quality team member] is not of the quality or a sufficient standard to meet the College expectations, and insufficient learning has taken place, this will be recorded. A judgement of insufficient learning will be reached, if during the observation process, evidence raises serious concerns in relation to teaching practice and / or the progress of learners. A judgement of insufficient learning relates to the Ofsted criteria for inadequate teaching, learning and assessment.

53. Immediate action to improve the quality of the teaching and learning is imperative both in the interests of the students on that course, and for the continuation of the provision, which cannot be offered by the College if it is of poor quality.

### **5. Student feedback and reflective practice**

#### **5.1. Student feedback and reflective practice to build shared knowledge of quality of TLA**

54. The purpose of the observation of teaching, learning and assessment is to enable individuals, teams and the College to understand what is happening in teaching, learning and assessment and how it can be developed to best meet the learning needs of the students. In addition to lesson observations, teachers as professional practitioners build up knowledge about Teaching, learning and assessment through feedback from students and reflective practice.

#### **5.2. Feedback from students – departmental feedback**

55. Each department/faculty will carry out a collection of student views of TLA at least once per year using student leaders and collecting both quantitative and qualitative information for discussion at team meetings, with individual staff and to contribute to self-assessment and quality improvement planning.

Faculties can agree the exact methodology provided it meets the following criteria:

- All students are included
- All teaching, learning and assessment activities are included
- Class reps are trained and lead the feedback collection
- The activity is appropriate and develops students' skills e.g. reflection, evaluation, communication, presentation
- Feedback is discussed with student leaders at a staff meeting
- A report is produced for staff and students
- Outcomes are used in SARs and QIPs

### 5.3. Feedback from students - in class feedback and complaints

56. Teaching and learning activities will include regular collection of feedback on learning by teachers and trainers from students. This will be used by the individual to develop practice but will also be shared in team meetings and in reflection on individual performance and development needs/good practices for sharing.

57. Where managers receive complaints about teaching, learning and assessment these should be investigated including discussion with the member of staff and appropriate action taken to address the issues, e.g. mentoring, organisational changes, provision of resources or referral to other College procedures.

### 5.4. Professional reflection on teaching, learning and assessment

58. Key sources of evidence for reflection on professional practice can come from management led observations, peer observations, and student feedback. These form part of a teacher's professional reflection which should inform professional development reviews. The review should consider evidence from observations and feedback as central to setting developmental goals and identifying CPD needs.

## 6. Peer Observation Process

### 1. Identify area for development and peer

*In discussion with either the Line Manager, advanced practitioner or chosen peer, teacher identifies an area for development. He/she also identifies a peer, they compare timetables and identify lessons to observe. Fill in FO1.*

### 2. Line manager guidance

Teacher informs Line Manager of chosen area of development and preferred peer.

Line Manager may offer guidance as to choice of area for development, referring to previous observations or reviews. May offer guidance on choice of peer. Teacher gives manager a copy of FO1.

### 3. Pre-observation meeting between peers no more than ONE week before observation

Peers meet and use FO2 to discuss lesson / context of class etc.

15 minute meeting.

### 4. The observation

If either peer needs to postpone observation, 24hrs notice should be given.

Observer fills in FO3 during observation. Comments should be constructive and developmental.

Peers arrange a time for feedback meeting.

### 5. Feedback

At feedback meeting, peers discuss both lessons, using FO3 to give constructive, developmental feedback. FO3 is confidential – to be returned to peer at feedback meeting.

## **6 Reflection and sharing outcomes**

Following feedback, teachers use FO4 to reflect on what they had learned and points they want to develop further. FO4 is then handed in to the Line Manager. FO4s are discussed in team meeting and evidence used in SARs and by managers to plan development and CPD and share best practice.