



Observations of Learning and Teaching (Higher Education) Policy and Template

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Linked policies:	Staff Handbook Enhancing Academic Standards Quality Assurance Policy Academic Management Framework Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy
External reference points	UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 Expectations for Standards, Core Practice 2(p3); <i>...students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold...</i> Expectations for Quality, Core Practice 3 (p3) <i>The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</i> Guiding principles on Teaching and Learning 12.1 – 12.9
Audience:	Academic Staff

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1 Introduction

The following policy provides the key information that academic staff require in order to understand and implement the College's policy on the observation of learning and teaching. This policy explains all the steps taken in order to ensure that the observation process is transparent, fair, supportive and constructive in terms of enhancing the quality of learning and teaching at the College.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to explain the process of observation of learning and teaching at the College. All higher education lecturers will be observed at least two times per annum and possibly more. Familiarity with this policy will allow all lecturers to know what to expect and what is expected of them, so they can be fully prepared and equipped to meet (and exceed) the threshold quality standards expected by a provider of education.

The main purpose of lesson observations is to enable academic staff at the College to gain fair, transparent, and impartial feedback from a trained and experienced observer, in order to help them improve and enhance their learning and teaching practice. Lesson observations also allow senior staff to monitor the quality of learning, teaching and assessments practices so they may identify what additional support or guidance may be needed to enhance quality and achieve optimal student outcomes.

3 Scope

This policy may be referred to for the observation of learning and teaching of all lecturers at the College apart from those who are teaching on programmes delivered in partnership with the University of West London (UWL). For the UWL Observation of Teaching Practice policy go to <https://www.uwl.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-regulations/observation-of-teaching-practice-policy>

All lecturers, apart from those in UWL programmes, can expect to be observed at least twice per year. New lecturers should expect to be observed as soon as possible after they start working at the College. The College may also be subject to observations from external inspectors and visitors.

4 Type of Observation

There will be two types of observation carried out at the College. There are observations carried out by the **Head of Academics, Head of Programme and/or Senior Tutor** or an **Inspector** from an external organisation. Then there are **Peer Observations**, where Tutors observe their colleagues.

5 Aims and Objectives

- To provide all lecturers with clear information and guidance on what to do before, during and after an observation of learning and teaching.
- To provide programme leaders, module leaders and any other members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) who might observe lessons with clear information and guidance on what they are required to do before, during and after the observation.
- To ensure that all observations of learning and teaching are conducted fairly and consistently and that all tutors are provided with the same degree of support and guidance throughout the process
- To ensure monitoring and assessment of the quality of learning and teaching is robust, reliable and valid in terms of measuring standards and enhancing quality for the benefit of students and lecturers.
- To assist the College in implementing and monitoring the effective implementation of its overall strategy and policy on learning, teaching and assessment.
- To provide an opportunity for academic staff to reflect on their teaching practice.
- To identify and disseminate good teaching practice.
- To identify academic staff teaching development needs and link these to strategic improvements in learning and teaching through continuous professional development workshops.
- To provide evidence of the College's commitment to improving the quality of learning opportunities.

6 Before an Observation

6.1 Learning Outcomes

In most observed lessons, tutors will be preparing students to pass assessments when they complete a course unit or module. In most cases, the assessments will be coursework based upon an assignment brief. In a few cases they may be examinations. Tutors will need to demonstrate that the lesson being observed is related to one or more of the learning outcomes that will be assessed for the unit or module they are teaching.

6.2 Scheme of Work

It is usually helpful if the tutor can provide the observer with a scheme of work showing how the individual lesson fits in to the overall syllabus of the unit or module.

6.3 Planning

Lecturers should complete a lesson plan for their lessons when they are being observed using the template provided, which should include the following:

- Learning Objectives
- Timed stages of the lesson (15 minutes)
- Activities of each stage including interactions
- Relevant information on assessment
- Relevant information on differentiation
- Resources used for each stage

The plan should include clear aims linked to the learning outcome(s) and the stages and activities of the lesson should reflect these. If the lesson is being conducted online, the tutor should email the lesson plan to the observer at least one day beforehand. Arrangements for this should be made during the pre-observation meeting (below).

6.4 Photocopying

We are bound by copyright laws and if tutors copy any published material, they must make sure that they write the **book name** and **author** on the photocopies. They can take a master copy, write the reference details at the top and copy off the numbers needed. The copyright rules we must comply with are provided on the wall by the photocopier.

6.5 Pre-observation meeting

Before an observation, there is a pre-observation meeting arranged by the observer. Typically, this may be an email sent to the tutor to arrange a time and date to carry out the observation, and to get some information about the lesson and students.

7 During the Observation

Tutors can expect to be observed for about 45 minutes, but it may not actually be that long. Some inspectors enter and leave at will and the tutor is supposed to ignore their presence unless called upon for any reason. Make sure there is a spare table and chair for the observer on the day of the observation if it is being conducted in a physical classroom, with a copy of the scheme of work (if available), lesson plan and any hard copies of materials being used. When being observed, it is essential to provide a lesson plan. Tutors should explain to students that the lesson is being observed but should not attempt to engage the observer during the lesson unless this has been agreed beforehand. The tutor should carry on with the lesson as planned regardless of when the observer enters or leaves the lesson.

Generally, the observer will expect to see the lesson proceed according to plan. However, there may be good reasons for the tutor to veer from the lesson plan. For example, students may ask questions that require the tutor to respond with explanations or even by doing some activities that were not predicted in the plan. The observer will take this into consideration when giving feedback and if necessary.

8 Observation Feedback

After the observation the tutor will be given written feedback on the following:

- Evidence of effective planning
- Evidence of independent learning
- Inclusive engagement and participation by students
- Effective teaching of subject knowledge and skills
- Effective teaching of higher-level thinking skills
- Evidence of the effective use of technology where relevant
- Any other criteria the observer and tutor agree upon before the lesson observation

Observers can comment on any other criteria they wish e.g., the use of IT, but this should first be agreed with the tutor before during the pre-observation meeting.

9 Types of Evidence the Observer Looks for

9.1 What evidence is there of effective planning?

- Good alignment of the lesson plan with the scheme of work and assignment brief.
- Logical, well-staged and well-timed plan.
- Good level of detail and clarity provided for the lesson activities and the resources needed.
- Learning objectives integrated and aligned to learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Good consideration of the different needs of students and how they will be accommodated.
- Any other criteria

9.2 What evidence is there of independent learning?

- Students challenged
- Student centered approach used
- Students able to work unassisted
- There has been prior learning beyond the scope of the learning objectives
- Students asking good questions to assist learning
- Any other criteria

9.3 Is there inclusive engagement and participation by students?

- Students are engaged
- Students are given equal opportunities
- The tutor has made the subject interesting
- Teaching methods help to facilitate engagement
- Participation supports achievement of intended learning outcomes
- Any other criteria

9.4 How effective is the teaching of subject knowledge and skills?

- The lecturer is confident about the subject
- The lecturer can answer questions on the topic
- The lecturer provides reliable, up to date information
- Relevant examples are used to explain different aspects of the topic
- Good use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching
- Any other criteria

9.5 How effective is the teaching of higher-level thinking skills?

- Students developing the ability to critically evaluate
- Students developing the ability to apply theory in practice
- Students developing the ability to make effective judgements
- Students developing the ability to analyse and synthesise information
- Students developing employability skills and self-reflection on performance
- Any other criteria

9.6 Any other criteria the observer and tutor agree upon before the lesson observation

10 Feedback on the Lesson

The observer will indicate with a tick ✓ on the lesson observation form (below) which of the agreed criteria have been met by the tutor. The observer may also write comments on any of the areas they wish. The following concluding feedback will be used in order to provide the Tutor with a guide to the outcome of the lesson observation.

Concluding Feedback
A second observation needed in six weeks.
Good
Very Good
Outstanding

Finally, the observer will provide the tutor with an action plan containing some recommendations that will help the tutor to improve their teaching practice.

11 Tutor Feedback

After feedback by the observer, tutors must complete a form expressing their views about the process and outcomes of the observation.

12 Lesson Observation Feedback Form (LOF)

Tutor		Observer	
Date		Time	
Programme		Class	
Unit/Module		Lesson Topic	
Mode (Online or In-person)		Number enrolled	
Number attending		If online, number with video on	

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Lesson Observation Feedback Form (LOF).....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
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2. Feedback Form	Error! Bookmark not defined.
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2.2 Evidence of independent learning	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.3 Evidence of effective engagement and participation by students.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.4 Evidence of effective teaching of subject knowledge and skills.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.5 Evidence of effective teaching of higher level thinking skills	Error! Bookmark not defined.
2.6 Any other criteria	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3. Development Plan Agreed.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1. General Comments

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2. Feedback Form

2.1 Evidence of effective planning					
Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.1.1	Good alignment of the lesson plan with the scheme of work and assignment brief.				
2.1.2	Logical, well-staged and well-timed plan.				
2.1.3	Good level of detail and clarity provided for the lesson activities and the resources needed.				
2.1.4	Learning objectives integrated and aligned to learning outcomes and assessment criteria.				
2.1.5	Good consideration of the different needs of students and how they will be accommodated.				
2.1.6	Any other criteria				

2.2 Evidence of independent learning					
Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.2.1	Students challenged				
2.2.2	Student centred approach used				
2.2.3	Students able to work unassisted				
2.2.4	Students asking good questions to assist learning				
2.2.5	There has been prior learning beyond the scope of the learning objectives				
2.2.6	Any other criteria				

2.3 Evidence of effective engagement and participation by students					
Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.3.1	Students are engaged				
2.3.2	Students are given equal opportunities				
2.3.3	The tutor has made the subject interesting				
2.3.4	Teaching methods help to facilitate engagement				
2.3.5	Participation supports achievement of intended learning outcomes				
2.3.6	Any other criteria				

2.4 Evidence of effective teaching of subject knowledge and skills					
Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.4.1	The lecturer is confident about the subject				
2.4.2	The lecturer can answer questions on the topic				
2.4.3	The lecturer provides reliable, up to date information				
2.4.4	Relevant examples are used to explain different aspects of the topic				
2.4.5	Good use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching				
2.4.6	Any other criteria				

2.5 Evidence of effective teaching of higher level thinking skills					
Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.5.1	Students developing the ability to critically evaluate				
2.5.2	Students developing the ability to apply theory in practice				
2.5.3	Students developing the ability to make effective judgements				
2.5.4	Students developing the ability to analyse and synthesise information				
2.5.5	Students developing employability skills and self-reflection				
2.5.6	Any other criteria				

2.6 Any other criteria					
Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.6.1					

Concluding Feedback
A second observation needed in six weeks.
Satisfactory
Good
Outstanding

3. Development Plan Agreed

Recommendations for the Tutor	Date to be implemented by	Outcome

13 Oxford Business College HE Lesson Plan

Course:		Subject:	Level:		
Course Week No:		Date:	Time:	Duration:	
Module Lecturer:		Number on register:		Room:	
Topic of lesson:			Lesson Aims:		
Materials, equipment and resources required:					
Class Profile:					
Lesson Outline					
Duration	Subject matter/content	Activities	Assessment (how learning will be recognised)	Differentiation (addressing all learners' needs)	Resources
Homework / Tasks:			Evaluation / Review:		

14 Tutor's Feedback to the Observer (TFO)

Tutor's Feedback to the Observer (TFO)	
Thank you for your cooperation with the lesson observation procedures at the College. Please provide your comments below and then email this to the observer.	
Tutor's Name	
Date of Observation	
Observer's Name	
Observer's email	
Do you feel that the observer's feedback is fair?	
YES/NO Please say why	
Do you think that you will change any of your teaching practices as a result of the feedback?	
YES/NO Please say explain	

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Tutor			
Observer			