

Observations of Learning and Teaching Policy

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External reference points	UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 May 2018 Expectations for Standards, Core Practice 2(p3); ...students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold... Expectations for Quality, Core Practice 3 (p3) The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
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 once per academic year or in line with partner institution's policy where applicable. 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, develop and enhance their learning and teaching practice. Lesson observations also allow senior Academic staff to monitor the quality of learning, teaching and assessments practices so they may identify what additional support, development 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.

All Lecturers can expect to be observed at least once per year or in line with partner institution's expectations and policies where applicable, with the exception of new lecturers who should expect to be observed within the first semester of their probationary period, as well as a formal teaching observation in the same academic year. The College may also be subject to observations from external inspectors and visitors which may fall beyond the scope of this policy.

4. Aims and Objectives

The policy aims to establish a comprehensive and transparent observation framework that ensures all lecturers and observers (including Head of Academics, Programme Leaders, Module Leaders, and SMT members) are provided with clear, consistent information and guidance before, during, and after teaching observations. This framework also aims to ensure fairness, support, and uniformity in the evaluation process across all campuses and programmes by maintaining high and equivalent teaching quality standards.

- 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 Lecturers are provided with the same degree of support and guidance throughout the process.
- To ensure the standard and quality of learning and teaching is equivalent in all campuses and for all programmes.
- 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.

5. Types of Observation

The College utilises two primary types of observation to ensure and enhance the quality of teaching and learning:

1. Peer Observation:

- **Conducted by:** Lecturers observing their colleagues.
- **Purpose:**
 - To provide constructive feedback and share best practices among faculty.
 - To foster a collaborative learning environment for lecturers.
 - To identify areas for improvement and professional growth.

2. Formal Lesson Observations:

- **Conducted by:** Senior academics at the College, including the Campus Principal, Head of Academics, Head of Programmes, or Programme Leaders.
- **Purpose:**

- To evaluate teaching effectiveness and ensure adherence to quality standards.
- To identify strengths and areas for development for individual lecturers.
- To provide formal feedback and inform professional development plans.

6. Peer Observation

Peer observation is a valuable tool for Academic staff as it provides an opportunity to receive feedback from a trusted colleague on their teaching methods and classroom management. Through peer observation, Academic staff can identify areas for improvement and gain new insights into their teaching practices. It can also foster a sense of community and collaboration within the academic department and promote professional development. The college has adopted this approach to lead to a more effective and engaging learning experience for students, as Academic staff continuously strive to enhance their teaching skills.

At the start of the academic year the Heads of Programme or their delegate create a schedule of peer observations for staff they are responsible for. This will be submitted to the Head of Academics and Quality before the start of the academic year. Lecturers should observe each other for 45 minutes and give feedback to colleagues they observe using the College's Peer Observation Form in Appendix 5. The Heads of Programme in consultation with the Head of Academics and Quality will review the comments in Peer Observation feedback forms and develop CPD workshops based upon themes that emerge.

7. Formal Teachings Observation

The formal teaching observation process is a useful tool for evaluating and improving teaching practices. By following this structured process, both the observer and the teacher can identify strengths and areas for improvement in the lesson. It provides an opportunity for feedback and discussion, which can lead to reflection and professional development for the lecturer. The observation process also ensures consistency and fairness in evaluating teaching across the institution, and it can help to identify any trends or issues that need to be addressed. Ultimately, a formal teaching observation process can contribute to improving the quality of teaching and learning in the institution.

8. The Formal Teaching Observation Process

8.1. 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 Lecturer to arrange a time and date to carry out the observation, and to get some information about the lesson and students.

8.2. Learning Outcomes

In most observed teaching sessions, Lecturers 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.

8.3. Scheme of Work

The lecturer must provide the observer with a scheme of work or a time plan showing how the individual lesson fits in to the overall syllabus of the unit or module.

8.4. Planning

- Lecturers should complete a lesson plan for their lessons when they are being observed using the template provided in appendix 3, which should include the following:
- Learning Objectives.
- Timed stages of the lesson
- 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. The Lecturer should email the lesson plan to the observer at least one day beforehand. Arrangements for this should be made during the pre-observation meeting.

8.5. During The Lesson Observation

Lecturers can expect to be observed for about 45 minutes, but it may not actually be that long. Some observers enter and leave at will and the lecturer 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, lesson plan and any hard copies of materials being used. When being observed, it is essential to provide a lesson plan. Lecturers should explain to students that the lesson is being observed and the observer may wish to engage with them during the lesson. The lecturer 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 lecturer to veer from the lesson plan. For example, students may ask questions that require the lecturer 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.

8.6. Types Of Evidence the Observer Looks For

The evidence that observers look for below has been designed to show how well the college LTA strategy has been implemented. Observers look to evidence the following five themes (although other areas may also be observed and included in the feedback and development including specific areas in line with the requirements of partner institutions where applicable):

- Evidence of effective planning
- Evidence of students becoming independent learners
- Inclusive engagement and participation
- Expert subject knowledge
- Development of higher-level thinking

8.7. 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

8.8. 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

8.9. Is There Inclusive Engagement and Participation By Students?

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

8.10. 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 with a high degree of academic rigour (level 4-6).

- Relevant examples are used to explain different aspects of the topic
- Good use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching
- Any other criteria

8.11. 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

8.12. Lesson Observation Feedback

After the observation the lecturer 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.
- Any other criteria the observer and lecturer agree upon before the lesson observation.

The observer will indicate with a tick on the lesson observation form (Appendix 1) which of the agreed criteria have been met by the lecturer. The observer must also write comments to justify the decision of why the lecturer has met the criteria. The following concluding judgements and feedback will be used to provide the Lecturer with a guide to the outcome of the lesson observation.

Category	Exceeds Expectation	Meets Expectation	Needs Development
Evidence Of Effective Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence Of Students Becoming Independent Learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusive engagement and participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expert subject knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of higher-level thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Finally, the observer will provide the lecturer with feedback and agree on a developmental plan (Appendix 2) containing some recommendations that will help the lecturer to improve their teaching practice which may also be part of CPDs to be offered.

8.13. Confidentiality

All observations are conducted in a confidential and supportive manner, with the primary goal of promoting professional growth and enhancing the learning experience for students.

Appendix 1 Lesson Observation Feedback Form (LOF)

Teaching Observation: Appraisal of Academic Practice

Observer:		Participant:	
Module:		Course Title:	
Module/Course Leader:		Time:	
Date:		Academic Level:	
Number Students:		No. of others teaching module:	
No. times session taught previously:			

This form is designed to help you explore your participants teaching practice. Part of the form will relate to things that you will see during a classroom observation but some of them will act as question prompts for your pre or post -observation meetings, to help you understand how your participant sees their academic practice.

Some criteria may not apply to your participant and where this is the case you should just indicate that with N/A

Observers look to evidence the following five themes:

- Evidence of effective planning
- Evidence of students becoming independent learners
- Inclusive engagement and participation
- Expert subject knowledge
- Development of higher-level thinking

Observers MUST justify with in each section the reason for their decision.

Teaching Practice – To Be Completed by The Observer

Category	Exceeds Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meets Expectations	Needs development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of Effective Planning					

Category	Exceeds Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meets Expectations	Needs development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of Students Becoming Independent Learners					

Category	Exceeds Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meets Expectations	Needs development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expert Subject Knowledge					

Category	Exceeds Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meets Expectations	Needs development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusive Engagement and Participation					

Category	Exceeds Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meets Expectations	Needs development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of Higher-level Thinking					

Summary Of Lesson Observation

Category	Exceeds Expectation	Meets Expectation	Needs Development
Evidence of Effective Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of Students Becoming Independent Learners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusive Engagement and Participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expert Subject Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of Higher-level Thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall Judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary Feedback			

A copy of this document should be given to the participant and to the Head of Programme. The information contained herein should be used to inform the Programme level teaching and learning, strengths and areas for improvement. This will be reported to Quality enhancement committee, and should inform the design of annualised CPD plans for the programme.

Appendix 2 Development Plan Agreed

Teaching Observation: Developmental Plan

Observer:		Participant:	
Module:		Course Title:	

Module/Course Leader:		Time:	
Date:		Academic Level:	
Number Students:		No. of others teaching module:	
No. times session taught previously:			

This form is designed to record the commendations, conditions and recommendations agreed between you and the participant immediately after their classroom observation. A copy should be provided to the **participant, the participant's line manager (where that is not you) and the Head of Programme.**

Teaching Observation: Developmental Plan

The Developmental Plan agreed between you and your participant must be the result of open, non-judgmental discussions. Your participant may ask you for your expertise and opinion.

The plan is informed by the views of both you and your participant of their professional practice and by the appreciative inquiry that occurs at the debriefing session.

The completed, plan is **sent to the participants line manager (where that is not you) and the Head of Program.** An anonymised version must be sent to the Head of Quality & Compliance for the development of all staff CPD.

It is the **responsibility of a participant's line manager** to ensure the development plan is completed.

Teaching Observation: Developmental Plan

Staff Name		Please remove before sending to Head of Quality & Compliance
Observer		

Issue	Proposed Action	Rationale	Others involved	Indicative Timescale
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1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Any additional notes should be provided below:

Is further observation needed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
If the answer is Yes, the observer and participant must arrange the following:	Date of next meeting:	Click or tap to enter a date.	Date of next Observation	Click or tap to enter a date.

I confirm that this is an accurate record of the agreed conditions, recommendations and commendations discussed in the debriefing session:

Observer signature:		Participant's signature:	
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Date of completion	Click or tap to enter a date.
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Appendix 3 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:		

Appendix 4 Lecturer's Feedback to the Observers (TFO)

Lecturer'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.	
Lecturer'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
Lecturer			
Observer			

Appendix 5 Record of Engagement in Peer Observation

Date of Observation:					
Format of Observation (Tick)					
Online		Paired Observation		Team Observation	
Lecture		Seminar		Other	
Participants involved (Optional)					
Name of observer					
Name of observer					
Programme and class level					
Partner institution					
Points of Interest:					
Please summarise any interesting points arising out of this observation, this should include examples of best practice as well as aspects that would benefit from further development or both.					
Best Practice					
•					
•					
•					
•					
•					
Areas for further development					
•					
•					
•					
•					
•					

Please send this form to the Head of Academics and Quality and the respective Heads of Programme.