

Oxford Professional Education

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Observation of Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy and Procedure

This document outlines the process for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment across all provision types.

Introduction

The observation and quality assuring of teaching, learning and assessment is a key process in maintaining and improving our teaching standards and in measuring the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment and invigilation practice.

The observation framework, and associated processes, are in place to help us identify what we need to develop in order to achieve improved learner experience and outcomes, providing clear feedback to staff to support them in this.

The observation process will:

- Inform individual development;
- Inform the dissemination of good practice;
- Provide a cross college view on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and invigilation practice
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and invigilation practice.

There are several fundamental principles that are consistent across all observations at OxPE and these are outlined below:

Core Principles

- Judgements relating to all observation activities are focused on exploring how what has been observed has impacted learners and how instrumental it has been in supporting their progress;
- Judgements about this impact will involve discussions with students and consideration of assessed work;
- All observation activity contributes to the college's understanding of the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment that it delivers, including learning walks;
- The college provides learning across a diverse range of settings - observation activities need to be appropriate to the different contexts being observed;



- All actions that observed staff commit to take forward, and which the college commits to support and resource, provide the platform for performance improvement. It is the responsibility of observed staff to act on the feedback that they receive.

Observation of Teaching, Learning, Assessment, Support and Development

One of the key outcomes of observation activity is that development and support can be put in place where improvement is required. This development or support is normally based around the areas for improvement that are identified.

If the staff member / contractor is identified as being someone who requires re-observation or would benefit from development and support to further develop their practice, a meeting will be arranged to agree a package of support with timetables.

At the end of the process, a further meeting will be held with the staff member / contractor and if necessary, senior manager to sign off the support or agree further action.

Types of Observation

- Formal observation, linked to Teaching & Learning Standards
- Unannounced themed observations may be introduced at key points during the year and may be conducted by managers outside the normal observation team
- Peer observations may be arranged to support development
- Observation of invigilation of exams.

At the outset of the academic year each member of teaching staff will be recorded on the overarching Teaching, Learning and Assessment Development Plan Schedule. Any outstanding actions for individuals from the previous year will be carried forward and recorded within the development plan along with support actions with clear timescales for completion, any follow up observations, coaching, training and other relevant activity as agreed.

During the academic year, this plan will be updated with both impact and any new actions identified as a result of the formal observation process, learning walks and/or outcomes from skype or discussion-based reviews, thus providing a more holistic view of performance.

Where insufficient progress is being made against agreed actions, this may result in a review of the member of staff / contractor's development plan carried out by a panel in conjunction with learner success rates and learner feedback.

Formal Observation

Formal observation activity provides both a snapshot of the quality of the learning experience and an opportunity to explore key aspects of the student experience. The Observation Action Plans that flow from formal observations provide a key means of:



- Promoting the sharing and transfer of good practice;
- Supporting the improved performance of delivery staff / contractor on their journey of improvement;
- Ensuring outstanding practice remains so and will feed directly into the Development Plan for that member of staff / contractor.

Planning Observation

The curriculum compliance team plan the observations. This will provide evidence of the standards of teaching, learning and assessment in all aspects of provision across all ages, including:

- Classroom based activity;
- English and maths;
- One-to-one reviews;
- Learning Support;
- Practice Assessment activities for Apprenticeship Standards-based provision.

Frequency of Observations

All staff/contractors linked to delivering or facilitating learning will take part in at least one formal observation per contract during each academic year. The only exception to this is staff / contractors who are in their probationary period, who will have their first formal observation at 6 weeks and another at 18 weeks in addition to any teacher training observations.

New Invigilators will be observed conducting their first assessment/test. All working Invigilators will be observed annually. Observations must be conducted by a member of staff who has had Observation training and also Awarding Organisation specific Invigilation training regarding the course being Observed. Any Invigilator Observations will be signed ,stored securely and made available to Awarding Organisations upon request.

Notice Period

Members of staff/contractors will be given 2 working days' notice of a 2-day window of observation. The notice will be in writing via email.

With the observation of assessment in a work-based setting it may be necessary to be more flexible with formal notification in order to meet the needs of the candidate and the employer.

Formal observations will be based on at least 45 minutes of observed activity; though these 45 minutes may not always be a continuous period e.g. it may be two parts, or even three fifteen-minute observation periods over the course of a morning.

Judgements will be comprehensive and holistic with the aim of understanding and supporting the strengths and areas for improvement for individuals and the identification of CPD requirements.



A judgement of 'Not yet entirely effective' or 'Little evidence or not seen' for any of the Teaching & Learning Standards, will result in a support and development process being put in place.

For formal classroom observation, the observee is expected to provide a range of documentation relevant to the session, examples of which are as follows:

- A class register for the session being observed;
- A scheme of learning relating to the class/course being observed;
- A learning plan and learner profile, including evidence to show how the session has been planned to meet the individual needs of learners;
- Copies of any hand-outs, worksheets, assignment material and such, related to the session;
- Records of achievements/grades/progress tracking and Individual Learning Plans;
- Examples of assessed work.

This documentation can be the members of staff's own copy, accessible either electronically or hard copy, in order to prevent unnecessary duplication of paperwork. Any paperwork with learner details will not be retained by the observer after the lesson. Where possible, and only when it does not present a disruption to the learning, it is recommended that the member of teaching staff briefly introduces the observer and informs students of the purpose of the observation when the observer arrives. During the observation the observer may talk to learners and look at their notebooks/folders/other examples of work.

Learner Feedback During Observations

Wherever possible, observers should elicit learner feedback during the session. This is a normal part of the observation process. This is usually done through talking to individual learners during, or after the session. Learner progress will also be informed wherever possible by looking at student work, in addition to tracking documentation.

Providing Feedback

A meeting to agree improvements should be arranged within 48 hours of the observation wherever possible but flexibilities will be given for WBL. During this period the observee should evaluate the lesson and come prepared to the meeting with suggested improvements.

This meeting will also agree the actions to be taken and any support the member of staff / contractor needs in order to improve or further develop their practice. The observer and observee should therefore identify and record what action will be undertaken to achieve this aim. This could include specific staff development, development of resource, etc. The observation report will be written up after the feedback meeting and will then be subject to moderation.

Observation Outcomes

If a session has been judged as 'not yet effective' overall during observation, the member of staff/contractor will be provided with appropriate support and will be re-observed within 8 teaching weeks.



If the next session is also judged as 'not yet effective', then the member of staff/contractor will be provided with an updated action plan, informed by the actions from the two observations, in consultation with a senior manager. If at the next observation the member of staff/contractor receives a third successive 'not yet effective' they will have a review of their development plan carried out by a panel in conjunction success rates and learner feedback. The panel will decide, based on evidence from lesson observations and other sources, whether there is a reasonable prospect of improvement in the near future or whether the member of staff is currently unable to meet the teaching and assessment standards expected by the college, in which case the decision will be made to invoke the capability procedure.

Any members of staff/contractor new to observation will be required to obtain their 'Licence to Observe' by shadowing an experienced observer, acquiring feedback on judgement decisions and scrutiny of the written observation report, prior to undertaking a formal observation independently.

Observation Judgements

The stated purposes of formal observations will only be achieved if observation criteria are applied consistently across each observation and provide evidence rich, evaluative feedback to each member of staff / contractor who is observed. A robust process has been developed to assure consistent standards; it contains three key elements:

- A licence to observe completion of observation training will provide potential observers with a licence to observe as described earlier;
- Once a member of staff / contractor has their Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment licence to observe, they become an observer and a member of the College's lesson observation team;
- Moderation of lesson observations.
- This is carried out in specific ways:
- Observations by internal observers;
- Joint observation; if a session is observed by two observers then they will discuss all aspects of the session, including the judgements made, before giving feedback to the observee.
- Moderation of the written report after the session; observation reports will be sampled and scrutinised by an internal moderation panel comprising members of the college managers and/or the observation team. The panel will focus on two key questions:
 - Does the evidence provided in the observation report and the judgements that accompany it, support the judgements that have been awarded?
 - Does the narrative provided in the report provide sufficient evidence about how what took place in the lesson has impacted learners (i.e. does it clearly evidence the degree to which students made progress during the lesson, and are progressing on their course?)

Any observations carried out by external consultants who are associate Ofsted inspectors will be deemed to be accurate and will not require moderation.



Observations Appeals Process

If a member of staff/contractor does not agree with the overall judgement that has been awarded, they may appeal on three grounds:

- Procedural irregularity (e.g. conduct of observer or incorrect notice period given);
- Insufficient evidence provided to support the judgement;
- Inconsistent evidence provided to support the judgement.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Managing Director of OxPE.

In all cases where an appeal is upheld, the original outcome is removed from the system and a re-observation arranged.

Maintenance of Records of Observation

Observations must be recorded using the College's standard observation form.

After the observation:

- The original observation report, signed by both the observer and observee, should be kept by the Quality and Compliance Team;
- A photocopy of the signed report should be sent to the observee.

Observation of Learning & Assessment in The Work Place (Work Based & Apprenticeship Assessors)

Different activities (e.g. assessment, group teaching / training, 1 to 1 training) may occur during the observed session. The same lesson observation paperwork as for classroom-based learning should be used.

The observer needs to be clear in their notes about the type(s) of activity seen. Sometimes employers (supervisors and senior managers) are keen to be involved in the process. It is important this does not interfere with the observation process.

It can be a useful opportunity to gather feedback from the employer on their experience of the college.

Peer Observations

The opportunity to observe fellow practitioners leading learning can be a powerful vehicle for professional dialogue and development. Staff/contractors who observe their colleagues can reflect on their own practice whilst viewing the practice of their peers.

There is an expectation that staff/contractors who have delivered good or outstanding learning are open to sharing the good practice that they have developed. Giving colleagues the opportunity to view this practice has the potential to transfer that practice across the organisation.

It is expected that their behaviour as observers will be in keeping with the college values such that respect is always shown to the staff and students linked to the observed activity.

Notice Period

The observer and staff member/contractor being observed will negotiate a mutually convenient timetabled session for the observation.

Reporting of Outcomes

Copies of the observation document should be kept by both the observer and the observed staff member/contractor; there is no expectation that the college maintains any records of the feedback, though records of who has been involved within the process will be maintained by the Quality and Compliance team.

Templates

A Formal Observation Report Form template is available from the Apprenticeships Lead (Paul Jones).

Appendix 1: Conducting a Performance Review Panel

The Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Procedure and the Capability Procedure state that if an individual member of staff has received three consecutive 'Not yet effective' lesson observation judgements, or that if insufficient progress against agreed improvement actions is made, then a panel should be convened. The Apprenticeships Lead will collate information on the following areas:

- Lesson observation reports and action plans;
- 1:1 records;
- Student feedback;
- Professional Development records;
- Other relevant records.
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Where possible, this evidence should cover a two-year period. The member of staff/contractor does not attend the panel.

Outcome

The panel will discuss all the evidence available and decide on the appropriate next step to support the member of staff/contractor. If the panel feels that the member of staff/contractor is currently unable to meet the teaching standards expected at college, they may initiate the Capability Procedure. In exceptional circumstances, the panel may feel that the Disciplinary Procedure may be more relevant.

The outcome will be communicated to the member of staff/contractor containing the following summary:

Performance Review Panel Name of Employee / Contractor:

Date:

Panel members present:

Summary of evidence reviewed:

Agreed outcome:

Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment:



Appendix 2: Observation of Learning And Assessment In The Workplace (Work Based And Apprenticeship Assessors) – Practicalities

Contact the Assessor to arrange the visit:

- Please bear in mind that Assessor schedules are planned well in advance and difficult to change. Consequently, make contact early;
- Clarify the context in which the assessment will take place so you can prepare;
- Remind the Assessor which documents you will require at the start of the observation;
- Exchange mobile phone numbers in case of emergencies;
- Keep in touch for updates. Call the day before the observation to make sure all is well;
- Ask the Assessor to let the company know you will be joining them before the observation;

Travel:

- Ideally travel together;
- If this is not possible then make sure you have the full address and details of how to get there;
- Get a contact name and number in the organisation in case of emergencies;
- Take a road map or use a sat-nav if you have one;
- Allow plenty of time as it is important not to be late. Assessments or even practice assessments are planned to fit in with the candidates work pattern and often cannot be moved. Late arrival would disrupt the observation. Check out travel time with the Assessor.

Parking:

- Check with the Assessor parking arrangements;
- Check requirements for logging your car registration number with reception;
- Check if you need a car park pass.

Arrival:

- Make sure you have official ID with you;
- Check in with reception. Many companies require visitors to sign in;
- Check with the Assessor and company regarding security;
- Some companies will not allow you to take mobile phones or cameras into the working area. If this is the case, they are usually deposited at reception and a receipt issued.

Employers:

- When in the working/assessment environment make yourself known to the supervisor. They usually want to know why we observe staff, and a brief conversation assuring them that it is part of the College's QA process is usually sufficient.

Signed:

Date: December 2022