

Observation Policy

Introduction

Observation of teaching and learning (OTL) is one of our company's core quality improvement processes. The purpose of observation is to 'ensure, promote and enhance' the quality of the learning experience for all. Key outcomes from the observation process are:

- To improve the quality of teaching and learning
- To improve information, advice and guidance (IAG) delivery
- To improve progression and achievement
- To provide staff with an opportunity for reflection and self-analysis
- To identify training and resource needs
- To support the identification and sharing of good practice
- To inform self-assessment and quality improvement planning

Observation can also be a requirement for:

- Gaining formal teaching or IAG qualifications
- Internal and external verification to meet awarding body requirements
- Funding/contracts
- National quality standards i.e. matrix, Customer Excellence

Who is observed?

This will depend on the nature of your role. Anyone who delivers or supports learning, training or IAG will be observed. This will be a minimum of once a year for each type of observation. Some staff may need to undergo additional observations as required. A new member of staff or someone who changes roles may be also observed more frequently. Similarly, if customer feedback indicates a particular area for development, this may incur additional observation. Staff can also request to be observed for professional development purposes.

Who observes?

A suitably qualified and experienced teammate who has undergone training will carry out observations.

Occasionally external observers may observe staff as a result of;

- Partnership working to drive quality improvement
- The moderation process
- Assessment for formal qualifications
- Inspection i.e. Ofsted
- Assessment for nationally recognised quality standards i.e. matrix

Peer observation may also take place to support best practices and professional development.

Invigilator observation

All staff involved in the administration and/or assessment of qualifications will have undergone relevant training in their role.

All new invigilators will be observed conducting an assessment at least once a year.

Information from the awarding body is disseminated to all members of staff involved in the delivery of qualifications.

The company's policy for equal opportunities is followed and monitored. Please refer to the company's Equality and Diversity Policy.

What is observed?

All staff will be observed working with all subjects they deliver and all stages of the learner journey which may consist of:-

- Formal information, advice & guidance (IAG) sessions.
- Induction and enrolment (to include Initial Assessment)
- Setting targets, planning learning
- Teaching and learning (Support, including how the learners are inspired and challenged, how they are supported in their learning and how staff interact with their learners)
- Reviewing progress and achievement (Learner progression, including how well the learners progress within the observed session)
- Resources, including the quality of resources used, how they are used (resources, awarding body resources such as practice tests, additional resources)
- Initial, formative and summative assessments, including for:
 - the initial assessment: interpretation of assessment results and discussion of programmes
 - the formative and summative assessment: the accuracy of marking, how timely marking is, how constructive feedback is and the process of SLC observations

- Adhering to policies and procedures, including Data Protection, Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity
- Test invigilation, including paperwork and posters
- Exit reviews/planning next steps

Judgements will now be focused on the development of the member of staff rather than previous grading systems. Each judgement will be made regarding specific aspects of delivery within each type of observation. These judgements will be evaluative and observers will assess whether they are areas for development, standard practice/the norm or strengths.

Equality and diversity, health and safety and safeguarding will be embedded as far as reasonably possible, within all aspects of delivery/stages of the learner journey in a practical and meaningful manner. Judgements regarding these aspects will be made in every type of observation.

In order to make a sound judgement about the quality of a session, observations will also take into account learner feedback, review of work completed, review of learner files, and review of supporting documentation such as handouts and lesson plans.

Process

Observations will be either:

Announced	The observer will inform staff where and when they are being observed, or
Un-announced	The observer will turn up at the location without prior warning.

For best practice, the observers will endeavour to undertake a higher percentage of unannounced observations than announced each year.

Joint observations will happen at times: two observers will observe the same activity, compare their notes, agree on what has been observed and on the grade, and give feedback jointly to the observed staff. In most cases, the specialist subject staff will carry out a joint observation with another observer. The second observer may be any other appropriate third party. Joint observations are used to ensure that the observers work within the same standards and interpret and grade an activity in the same manner.

Before the observation takes place observers will require the following information:

- Learner profile - a summary of the group including the ability of learners, support needs, goals/targets, progression & achievement so far. The observer will need to visit the trainer at a convenient time to gather this information. The observer will look at learner files to gather this information.
- Scheme of work (if applicable) and session plan
- Copies of any supporting learning resources
- They will ask to see the register

The observer has a duty to:

- Agree the timing and method of feedback.
- Answer any questions the tutor has.
- Minimise disruption and fit in with normal work patterns and programme structure.

The observed has a duty to:

- Explain the purpose of observation to your learners and ensure they understand the focus is not on them.
- Have all relevant documentation/information ready before the start of the observation for the observer to look at e.g. scheme of work, lesson plan, register, copies of handouts or other training resources.

The Observation

Observers will not interfere in the session and will remain as discreet as possible. They will only intervene if there is a Health and Safety risk or Safeguarding/PREVENT risk.

Observers will make notes during the observation.

Only work relating directly to the observed session will be reviewed.

Observers will remain professional when speaking to learners. They will not personalise issues with the observed or raise doubts about their ability.

Discussion will focus on learning that has taken place in the session, the support, information or guidance they received and their understanding of key subjects i.e. safeguarding, equality and diversity.

Key areas observed include: Sources of evidence including Lesson Plan, Scheme of Work, Register, Starting Points/Group Profile, TRLA, PLRs, ILPs and Learning Diary, Health and Safety paperwork, Evidence of follow-up of learner actions.

Observation mandatory fields: All mandatory fields to be completed detailing whether the area is a Strength (S), Norm (N), or Development (D).

Observer will then detail Positive Feedback/Good Features and Agreed Development Priorities listed.

Feedback

Initial verbal feedback will be given on the day of the observation. This will not be rushed. If there is insufficient time, the feedback session will be re-scheduled for the closest convenient time.

All strengths/good practices, standard practices and areas for development will be identified, recorded and fed back in a professional and constructive manner. Self-assessment by the observed will be encouraged e.g. how they thought the session went. They will be able to give their feedback to the observer and record this on the observation report.

The observer will clarify any aspects of the observation process as needed.

The observer will be supportive and encouraging, but will not avoid difficult messages. They will share ideas on how improvements can be made, focusing on resolutions rather than problems.

If the observed disagrees with any of the findings they should explain why immediately rather than waiting until after the feedback. They should also record this in writing on the observation report, which will then ensure that it goes to the moderation panel for resolution.

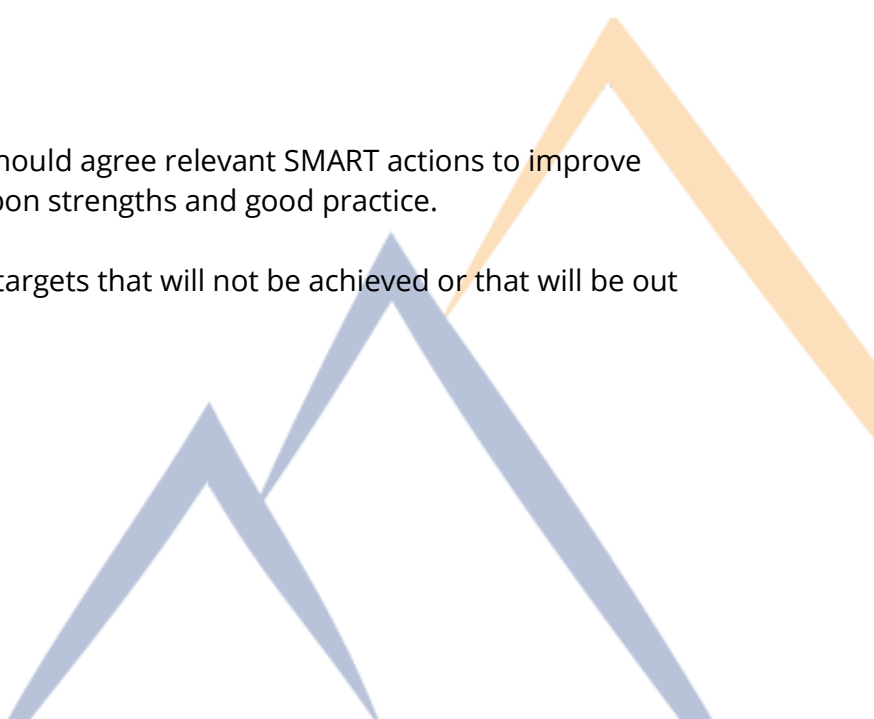
The observer will take into account learner feedback when writing the report.

If the observer has facilitated clear and effective feedback, they should both come to similar conclusions.

Actions

Both the observer and the observed should agree relevant SMART actions to improve areas for development and to build upon strengths and good practice.

Care will be taken to avoid unrealistic targets that will not be achieved or that will be out of the control of either party.

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of stylized mountain peaks. One peak is orange and the others are blue, all pointing upwards.

Wherever possible observation reports including any ensuing actions, will be written and emailed to the observed within 5 working days. If it is anticipated that there may be a delay in the completion of the report, the observer has a duty to inform the observed, giving a suitable explanation along with an estimation of when they are likely to receive it.

A copy of the observation form is kept in the Observation folder on the Drive and sent to the observed staff.

The observer will also discuss the observed session with the observed staff and record the latter's comments.

Below is a summary of the observation's frequency:

Type of staff	Frequency
New staff	Within the first 12 weeks of employment.
Time-served staff	Once every 12 months depending on development points.

Feedback and action plan

The observer needs to ask the observed staff how they felt about the observed session before giving feedback. They give constructive feedback to staff on the day of the observation, or, if not possible, the day after. Constructive feedback means that the observer(s) will:

- explain any areas of development / good points
- agree with the observed staff on development priorities
- agree with the observed staff their targets, which are SMART* and which show what impacts on teaching and/or learning these targets are meant to have, if appropriate

*"SMART" is an acronym used in relation to targets. Targets must be:

- **S**pecific so that it is clear what outcome is expected
- **M**asurable so that it can be evidenced that the target is met
- **A**chievable so that it is possible and not impossible for the target to be achieved

- **Relevant** as it is about progressing the observed staff to become “better” in their role
- **Time-bound** so that the observed staff are able to work within a timeframe. Timeframes could be renegotiated if appropriate and necessary

Any agreed actions are monitored at the next observation and are fed into the Company’s appraisal system. Should staff have any difficulty meeting the agreed action points, they should contact their observer to discuss it.

Review of the policy

A Senior Manager will review this policy annually or more frequently where there are significant changes in circumstances.

To be disseminated to: Staff, volunteers, stakeholders, visitors		Version no. 004
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