



OBSERVATION OF TEACHING, LEARNING & ASSESSMENT

FRAMEWORK AND PROCEDURE

2016-17

**THIS DOCUMENT OUTLINES THE PROCESS FOR THE OBSERVATION OF
TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT ACROSS ALL PROVISION TYPES**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The observation and quality assuring of teaching, learning and assessment is a key process in maintaining and improving our teaching standards, as set out in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy, and in measuring the overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

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 framework reflects the requirements of Ofsted and the College's strategic priorities.

The observation process will:

- inform individual development
- inform provision of Professional Development at curriculum and whole-college level
- inform the dissemination of good practice
- provide a cross college view on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

This framework details a wide variety of observation activities and the protocols associated with each of them.

There are a number of fundamental principles that are consistent across all observations at HRC, and these are outlined below.

1.1 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.
- Where aspects of good practice are identified, they will be celebrated and shared with others in a timely way so that staff can learn from each other and encourage similar practice to be adopted across the college.
- Observing teaching, learning and assessment is a highly privileged activity. Providing effective feedback to staff requires high level skills and ongoing training. All observers will receive robust training reflecting the type of observation activity that they participate in so that they can perform this key role with confidence and courtesy.
- 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.

1.2 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. As outlined later in this document, there are particular triggers for further support linked to the Teaching and Learning Standards. If the staff member is identified as being someone who requires re-observation, or would benefit from development and support to further develop their practice, the observation form must be sent to the Teaching & Learning Development Manager (as well as the Quality Team) and a meeting will be arranged with the relevant line manager to determine the appropriate support package based on actions identified. During this initial meeting, the programme of support, including any follow up observations, coaching, and training and other relevant activity will be agreed along with clear timescales, and documented within the TLA Development Plan. This support will either be with their Curriculum Manager or Director, or the member of staff may be allocated an Advanced Skills Teaching & Learning Practitioner (ASTLP) or member of the Quality Team to support them in this.

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

1.3 TYPES OF OBSERVATION

- Formal observation, linked to Teaching & Learning Standards.
- Observation of Supported learning
- Learning walks
- Peer observation

These are covered in the following sections.

2.0 THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

At the start of the academic year, and through one to one discussions with their line manager (usually as part of the Performance Development Review) each member of teaching staff will initiate their Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) Development Plan and agree Teaching, Learning & Assessment targets.

Any outstanding actions 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.

The TLA Development plan is owned by the teacher, but it is their line manager's responsibility to ensure that through one to one meetings with the teacher, it is kept fully up to date.

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 desk 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's development plan carried out by a panel in conjunction with attendance, appraisal records, success rates and learner feedback (see section 3.9 Observation Outcomes).

3.0 FORMAL OBSERVATION

3.1 PURPOSE

Formal observation activity provides both a snapshot of the quality of the learning experience and an opportunity to explore how key aspects of the student experience (e.g. expectations linked to the quality of assessment) are being delivered. 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 on their journey to good or better
- Ensuring outstanding practice remains so

and will feed directly into the TLA Development Plan for that member of staff.

3.2 PLANNING OBSERVATION

The curriculum management team, in consultation with the Quality Team, plan the observations of the Directorate provision. Planned observations will be recorded on the Observation Schedule by the Quality Team Leader, who will then follow up with progress against agreed completion dates. This will provide evidence of the standards of teaching, learning and assessment in all aspects of provision across all funding streams and all ages, including:

- Classroom based activity
- Workshop based activity

- English and maths
- One-to-one reviews (Personal Progress Appraisals)
- Group Tutorials (Professional Tutorials)
- Learning Support
- Assessment activities for employment-based provision

3.3 FREQUENCY OF OBSERVATIONS

All staff 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 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.

Staff who are undertaking teacher training can use their HRC observation to contribute to their specific number of required, observed hours. Where this is the case, observers will need to use the appropriate paperwork for the training course that the observee is undertaking.

3.4 NOTICE PERIOD

The college has established a consistent approach to notice periods for formal observation activities that are somewhat aligned to Ofsted inspections. Members of staff will be given 2 working days' notice of a 2 day window of observation.

The notice will be in writing via email (the email must be sent before 9 am on the notice day). All notifications should be copied to the Line Manager and the Quality Team. The notice can be given by any of the following: Line Managers, Teaching and Learning Development Manager, a Director, or the observer who is carrying out (or leading in the case of joint observers) the observation.

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 this 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).

3.5 JUDGEMENTS AND CRITERIA FOR FORMAL OBSERVATION ACTIVITY

In June 2014, Ofsted announced that they would be piloting an inspection system where individual teaching sessions would be ungraded. HRC have decided to adopt the same policy and have replaced the grade with Teaching and Learning Standards (see section 8.0). The standards are based on the key priorities for Ofsted inspections and make judgements in ten key areas. This will provide a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement for individuals, within curriculum areas and across college, and will also support 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. Support and coaching will typically be provided by the ASTLPs or curriculum managers.

Observers are provided with a copy of the teaching and learning standards devised from the common inspection framework and will all have training on this as part of the licence to observe process.

From September 2016, formal observations will not be graded.

3.6 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OBSERVEE

The member of staff being observed is expected to have read and clarified the criteria they are to be judged against prior to the observation taking place.

For formal classroom observation, the observee is expected to provide a range of documentation relevant to the session, including:

- 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/learning walk when the observer arrives. During the observation the observer will talk to learners and look at their notebooks/folders/other examples of work.

3.7 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 the session. Learner progress will also be informed wherever possible by looking at student work, in addition to tracking documentation.

3.8 PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Detailed verbal feedback should be given to the observee within 48 hours of the observation wherever possible, but . At this meeting the observer should notify the observee of the outcome and outline the strengths and areas for development. The main focus of the meeting should be to discuss areas for development for improved performance and to agree the actions to be taken and any support the member of staff 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, peer observation, development of resources, coaching, etc.

The observation report will be written up within 1 week of the observation and sent to the individual, the Line Manager (if not the observer) and the Quality Team. However, it must be emphasised that the outcome will be subject to moderation. The moderation will usually take place outside of the 48hour period. If the observer has any concerns about the outcome, they should seek moderation guidance from the Teaching & Learning Development Manager or Director of Quality & Learner Experience before giving feedback.

3.9 OBSERVATION OUTCOMES

After observation, the observer will give detailed feedback and agree outcomes/actions with the observee, and these are also recorded on the Observation Action Plan. This could include arrangements to share good practice as well as to improve practice. Timescales are set and a review date agreed. This plan is copied to the Line Manager and the Quality Team. The line manager must ensure that actions are transferred to the TLA Development Action Plan for that individual and that actions are followed up in a timely way.

If a session has been judged to be 'effective' overall, i.e. all TLA standards judged as effective or highly effective, the action plan must contain elements of sharing good practice and the observee should take responsibility for their own action plan with support from the Line Manager if required.

If a session has been judged as 'not yet effective' overall during observation, the member of staff will be provided with appropriate support within their department, and possibly also from an ASTLP, and will be re-observed within 8 teaching weeks, and in accordance with agreed actions (see section 1.2). If the next session is also judged as 'not yet effective', then the member of staff will be provided with an updated action plan, informed by the actions from the two observations, in consultation with the Line Manager. If at the next observation the member of staff receives a third successive 'not yet effective' they will have a review of their development plan carried out by a panel in conjunction with attendance, appraisal records, success rates and learner feedback.

The panel will consist of their Line Manager, Director, and may also include the Director of HR and Teaching & Learning Development Manager. 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.

See Appendix 1 for details of the performance review panel.

3.10 OBSERVERS

Formal observations are carried out by the following groups:

- Curriculum Managers (Vice Principal and Directors of Curriculum)
- Members of the Quality Team, including ASTLPs
- Learning Support Managers
- External Consultants (typically experienced Ofsted Inspectors).

3.11 TRAINING FOR OBSERVERS

The college recognises that making judgement decisions linked to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is a significant responsibility.

In the Autumn Term of 2015, all observers undertook a robust training programme to become 'Licenced Observers'. This was overseen by an external consultant and included joint learning observations, feedback and agreement of judgements, and scrutiny of the final written observation report.

This work will continue in 2016/17 with refresher training provided to promote consistent practice across the college. The training that observers receive will include the following in 2016/17:

- Exploring the criteria for the observation of teaching, learning and assessment, linked to the Common Inspection Framework, to ensure robustness of judgement decisions (HRC Teaching & Learning Standards)
- Joint observations with a member of the Quality Team (or external consultant) to check that:
 - There is agreement on the evaluative judgements made during the observation, and therefore accuracy of decisions;
 - Observation reports are well written with evaluative statements that clearly evidence the factors that have contributed to the observation outcomes;
 - Effective face-to-face feedback of observation outcomes is provided to staff, giving them clarity in relation to the key judgements that have been made during an observation, and facilitating effective coaching conversations that underpin the development of high impact action plans that build upon observation outcomes.

Any members of staff 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.

3.12 RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLETING THE OBSERVATION FORM WHEN OBSERVING ACROSS DEPARTMENTS

Where an observer observes a session outside their main department:

- The cross college observer is responsible for completing the observation form and suggesting outline actions for improvement.
- The Line Manager will review this action plan with the observee, and ensure actions are added to the observees main TLA Development Plan, adding and completing detail as necessary. The Line Manager is responsible for the in-year review of the TLA Development Plans and making sure they are returned to the Quality Team when complete.

3.13 MODERATION OF 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 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 has their

licence to observe, they become a qualified 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 have a discussion about 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 observation team, and/or external consultant(s). 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)?

Observations by external observers:

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

Outside of the moderation process, if an observer has any concerns about writing the report or would like feedback on a completed report, they may seek guidance from the Teaching and Learning Development Manager or the Director of Quality & Learner Experience.

3.14 APPEALS PROCESS FOR OBSERVATIONS

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

1. Procedural irregularity (e.g. conduct of observer or incorrect notice period given)
2. Insufficient evidence provided to support the grade
3. Inconsistent evidence provided to support the grade.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Director of Quality & Learner Experience. In all cases where an appeal is upheld, the original outcome is removed from the system and a re-observation arranged.

3.15 MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS OF OBSERVATION

Observations must be recorded using the College's standard observation form, with reference to the HRC Teaching and Learning Standards. These documents can all be found on Staff Net within the Learner Journey Handbook.

After the observation:

- An electronic copy of the completed observation form and the observation action plan should be sent to the Quality Team within one week of the observation
- The original observation report, signed by both the observer and observee, should be given to the observee
- A photocopy of the signed report should be retained in the department.

The electronic report should be updated to show progress against development of the Teaching & Learning Standards and any updates sent to the Quality Team.

4.0 OBSERVATION OF LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT IN THE WORK PLACE (WORK BASED AND 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, but for TLA Standard 2, read 'Learning and assessment inspires learners and sparks their curiosity'. The observer needs to be clear in their notes about the type(s) of activity seen.

Observation report forms should be submitted to the Quality Team within 7 working days, and copies sent to the observee and their line manager.

Sometimes employers (supervisors and senior managers) are keen to be involved in the process. It is important this does not interfere with the observation but time taken at the end does support the relationship between the organisation and the college. It can be a useful opportunity to gather feedback from the employer on their experience of the college. If there is any formal feedback the employer wishes to make, then please make a note of it and pass to Business Solutions who will follow it up.

Please see Appendix 2 for practicalities.

5.0 LEARNING WALKS

In addition to the formal observations, managers with responsibility for teaching, learning and assessment are expected to carry out a number of unannounced walkthroughs in their area each year. These will also be used to support the follow up of any actions identified on TLA Development Plans for individual teaching staff.

College wide themed learning walks will also be organised by the Quality Team at key points during the year, e.g. induction, and all Curriculum Managers, members of SLT and the Quality Team will be involved in these.

Please see 'HRC Guidelines on Learning Walks 2016-17' in the Learner Journey Handbook for more information.

6.0 OBSERVATION OF SUPPORTED LEARNING

7.0 PEER OBSERVATIONS

The opportunity to observe fellow practitioners leading learning can be a powerful vehicle for professional dialogue and development. Staff who observe their colleagues can reflect on their own practice whilst viewing the practice of their peers. The college recognises the value of this practice and Directors of Curriculum and Curriculum Managers should co-ordinate opportunities for staff to access this. This can be supported by the Quality Team, since the Quality Team maintain the observation database and can therefore provide staff with a good understanding of where specific strengths can be observed across the college. There is an expectation that staff 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 college.

7.1 COVERAGE OF STAFF

Being observed as part of a peer observation is a voluntary act. In many cases reciprocal arrangements for peer observation will be established; however, there will also be occasions when observers will take part in peer observations to develop an action agreed with their line manager after a formal observation.

7.2 OBSERVERS

All staff may take part in peer observation activities as observers. It is expected that their behaviour as observers will be in keeping with the college values such that respect is shown to the staff and students linked to the observed activity at all times. The Peer Observation Template should be used by observers carrying out peer observations.

7.3 NOTICE PERIOD

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

7.4 REPORTING OF OUTCOMES

Copies of the observation document should be kept by both the observer and the observed staff member; 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 at curriculum area level by the relevant Curriculum Manager.

It is envisaged that Directors of Curriculum and Curriculum Managers have an awareness of both the scale of peer observation activities within their area and can discuss the impact that such activity has within their own area.

8.0 TEMPLATES, PRO FORMA AND GUIDANCE

The following templates, pro forma and guidance are available within The Learner Journey Handbook:

- HRC Teaching, Learning and Assessment Standards
- Formal Observation Report Form
- **Supported Learning Observation Report Form**
- Learning walk Guidance and Record Forms
- Peer Observation Template

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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. These brief notes outline the purpose of the panel and the responsibilities of the Convener.

Purpose:

The purpose of the panel is to ascertain if the Capability Procedure is appropriate bearing in mind all the evidence available about the performance of the member of staff.

Convener:

The Director of the member of staff concerned convenes the meeting and chairs the panel.

The panel is quorate if the following members are present: Line Manager, Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality, Director of HR and Corporate Development. Other members who may be invited are: Professional Development Manager, relevant ASTLP and Teaching and Learning Development Manager.

The Curriculum Manager collates information on the following areas:

- Lesson observation reports and action plans
- Records of walkthrough observations
- Appraisal and 1:1 records
- Student feedback
- Professional Development records
- Records of any observations carried out via the Teacher Training Team if appropriate
- Other relevant records

Where possible, this evidence should cover a two-year period.

The member of staff 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. If the panel feels that the member of staff 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 all panel members (whether present or not) by the Line Manager on a standard form – see below.

The outcome will be communicated to the member of staff by their line manager.

Summary: Performance Review Panel	
Name of employee:	Date:
Panel members present:	
Summary of evidence reviewed:	
Agreed outcome:	

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.
- Check with the Assessor if any PPE is required. If any is required, the Assessor will be able to advise if they can arrange some for you. If not, then please liaise with the relevant Curriculum Manager for the loan of equipment. Some companies will not allow visitors on site unless properly equipped.

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 are planned to fit in with the candidates work pattern and often cannot be moved. Late arrival would disrupt the observation. Check out travel the time with the Assessor.

Parking:

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

Arrival

- Make sure you have your College ID badge 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. However, some supervisors do like to monopolise your time and distract the assessment. It may be necessary to politely ask them if you could carry on with the observation and then catch up with them before you leave.
- In some instances senior managers are also keen to become involved and often ask for clarification of the observation process. Again do not let this interfere with the observation, but time taken at the end in discussion does support the relationship between the organisation and the college.
- The outcomes and grading of the observation are not disclosed to any member of the organisation. This is confidential information shared with the Assessor and relevant staff in college only.

PEER OBSERVATION TEMPLATE

Observer	
Observee	
Date	

Things I saw today I am going to take away to use...

--

Things I would like to share with you...

--