



Observation of Learning and Assessment (OTLA) Strategy

Revised 01/08/2024

Next Review Due By 01/08/2025

Purpose of Policy

1.1 The reasons for the development of this Policy are to:

- Provide and ensure consistency, validity and rigour within the observation of teaching and learning
- Develop a common approach for observers and tutors
- Continue to develop the strategy which will support and underpin quality and development
- To put the learner at the centre of the process
- To ensure, promote and enhance the quality of learning experience for all learners

1.2. Aims: Observation of teaching, learning and assessment

- Raise the standards of teaching and learning and assessment
- Monitor that effective learning takes place
- Recognise and share good practice
- Identify staff development and support needs
- Underpin a rigorous self-assessment process
- Encourage and promote constructive professional dialogue
- Develop a culture of continuous improvement.

Each individual observation fits into a larger quality improvement framework. The evidence and judgements from each observation provide feedback and actions for each tutor as well as building up an evidence profile for an area of learning. This profile is recorded in the annual self-assessment report (SAR).

2.1. Types of observation

Observations may be graded or ungraded. Where observations are graded. Grades and grade descriptors are:

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Requires Improvement

Grade 4 Inadequate Further information on the standards underpinning

Examples of ungraded observations may be:

- Peer Observation
- Mentored observation
- Themed observations/learning walks

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- Drop in visits
- Tutor requests.

Examples of graded observations may be:

- Individual observation
- Paired observations
- 'At risk/intervention' observation
- Themed observations
- Tutor requests
- Follow-up observation (part of observation feedback action plan)

2.2. Scope of observation

All learning activities and all staff involved in them are part of the observation process. Learning activities include formal sessions and activities undertaken as part of:

- Taster sessions
- Workshops
- Induction activities
- Practical activities
- Tutorials
- On-the-job-training
- Assessment of learners.

2.3. Outcomes of observation

Grade 1 Outstanding Mentor – good practice exemplar

Grade 2 Good As above (with minor actions for improvement)

Grade 3 Requires Improvement within an agreed timescale. Action plan and agreed actions for improvement which may include mentoring, CPD, peer observation, etc., implemented prior to re- observation

Grade 4 Inadequate As above including specific re-training as appropriate.

Where Grade 1 (Outstanding) or Grade 2 (Good) is awarded, the good practice will, with the agreement of the tutor, be used to raise standards. Tutors may be asked to mentor other tutors and/or allow their colleagues to peer observe their lessons or examples of their

practice – such as planning, managing learning, embedding English and maths, using IT effectively this will also be shared across an area of learning.

Strategies for sharing good and outstanding practice might include:

- Curriculum team meeting
- Tutor newsletters
- Mentoring
- Resource sharing
- Staff development activities
- Developing good practice manuals
- Showcasing course files/developing case study examples

Where a Requires Improvement Grade 3 is awarded a re-observation within an agreed timescale will take place. Observers will agree specific actions for improvement with individual tutors through an action plan. This may include mentoring, CPD, peer observation, which must be implemented prior to re- observation.

When an Inadequate Grade 4 is awarded for an observed lesson, the same actions will be implemented as Grade 3, including specific re training as appropriate. The observer will complete a detailed action plan with the tutor. This will include detailed actions for improvement, mentoring and training as required and a further graded observation at an agreed time.

These different grade outcomes will determine the dates agreed for the next observation. For example, with Grade 1 or 2, the next graded observation will usually take place the following year, whereas with Grade 3 and 4 the re-observation will take place within 3 months.

Sample questions that can be used but it is for the observer to decide what is most appropriate given the context and session etc.

About the session:

1. How typical is this lesson?
2. What have you done today that you have not done before?
3. What can you do now that you could not do before?
4. How well have you been able to follow the content of the lesson?
5. How does this lesson link to previous work you have done?

About the course:

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6. Why did you choose to come to this course?
7. Are you learning what you set out to do?
8. What access do you have to IT resources to support your development?
9. Do you feel comfortable asking questions during the class?
10. Does the teaching on this course provide a variety of activities?
11. How is Equality and Diversity promoted in your classes?
12. How do you use your learning outside of the class?
13. What links are made during sessions to employment and the workplace?
14. Is the course what you expected?
15. What information advice and guidance have you been given (about this course and progression opportunities)? When was IAG given? Who provided IAG?

About assessment and progress:

16. Do you feel that you are learning and making good progress in your studies?
17. How does the tutor/assessor check that you understand the content of the lesson?
18. Have you had any work marked so far? If so, was the feedback useful and did it tell you what you need to do to improve?
19. Have you developed an Individual Training Plan?
20. Have you been set personal learning goals? If so, can you give an example?

About other matters:

21. What health and safety instructions have you been given? (Both general and course related)
22. Is the venue suitable / class time convenient? (E.g. public transport availability, travel time, car parking, security, other facilities)
23. What would you do if you thought another member of the group was being bullied / mistreated?
24. What do you know about the Computer Usage / Internet Safety Policy?
25. Do you know how to feedback compliments, make complaints and comments?
26. Could you rate the room from 1 (outstanding) to 4 (inadequate)? Consider layout, space, facilities, presentation, temperature etc
27. Are there any other comments you would like to make?

After the observation: Feedback and actions for improvement

To be effective, the feedback meeting should be held as soon as possible but no later than one week following the observed session. The feedback meeting will normally last no more than half an hour.

The purposes of the feedback session are:

- To support colleagues in their professional practice

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- To provide constructive feedback on the observed lesson
- To engage in a professional dialogue and share teaching and learning strategies
- To identify what worked well and why and what worked less well and why
- To match the strengths and areas for improvement to agreed teaching and learning standards and grade (if appropriate) these using the common grading descriptors
- To agree actions which will maintain or improve the standards of teaching and learning using an action plan set to clear timescales.
- Agree a date and time to communicate to agreed monitor actions

Always remember that none of this is personal; it is about providing the best quality teaching and learning experience for every learner in AVCT.