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The policy or procedure will be reviewed by the date shown on the front cover sheet, or sooner if a change in legislation, best practice, or other circumstances indicate that this is necessary. If, for whatever reason, the policy or procedure is not reviewed by the date shown, the policy or procedure shall stay in force until formally reviewed.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy (OTLA) is the name given to the formal process where teaching, learning and assessment activities across the college are formally observed. The main objective of lesson observations is to raise the standard of teaching, learning and assessment within the college and so enhance the learners' experience.

In addition to raising standards, the observations also aims to ensure advice, guidance, support and continuing professional development is provided to all staff via the professional development process.

Each individual observation fits into a larger quality framework. The evidence and judgements from each observation provide feedback and actions for each tutor as well as building up an evidence profile at course level and the college as a whole. This profile is recorded in the annual self-assessment report (SAR). Inspectors make judgements about the accuracy and rigour of the SAR when provision is inspected.

## **2. PURPOSE**

**The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that:**

- The standards of teaching, learning and assessment are raised
- The effective monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment takes place
- Good practice is recognised and shared
- Staff development and support needs are identified
- The self-assessment process is rigorous
- A constructive professional dialogue is encouraged and developed
- A culture of continuous improvement is embedded

## **3. DEFINITIONS**

- Observer is the individual who will carry out the observation of the teaching, learning and assessment activity.
- The observee is the member of staff being observed carrying out the teaching, learning and assessment activity.
- Formal observations are observations which sit within this policy where staff are formally observed, oral and written feedback is given and an action plan is devised. The written record of the observation is included within the observee's personnel file and forms part of their performance management monitoring and review.
- Informal observations are observations that are not specific to the performance of an individual and are only used to inform practice of the College as a whole. The process is informal with no oral or written feedback being provided to the individual and no records of findings being included within the individual's personnel file.

## 4. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. FE Academic Committee is responsible for ensuring the:

- Approval of the OTLA policy.

4.2. Quality Manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- The OTLA process is aligned and carried out in accordance with Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework
- The OTLA policy links in with other performance management processes where appropriate.
- Findings from the OTLA process are incorporated in the SAR and used to inform the QuIP.
- All staff are informed of the policy and procedure to ensure its effective implementation and all observers are appropriately qualified and trained.
- All staff are observed in accordance with the timescales set out within this policy.

4.3. Heads of Schools are responsible for ensuring that:

- The findings and action plans resulting from the OTLA process are monitored and reviewed.
- The outcomes of the OTLA process are used within the performance management of staff and are used to help them with CPD planning.

4.4. Observers are responsible for:

- Carrying out observations with professionalism, integrity and courtesy.
- Give staff the required notice of being observed set out within this policy.
- Evaluate objectively.
- Report accurately and fairly.
- Respect the confidentiality of the information gained.
- Ensuring they are familiar with the policy and procedure, following the process and completing all relevant paperwork accurately and timely.

4.5. Observees are responsible for ensuring that:

- They inform the Quality Manager of any changes to their regular timetabled sessions that are taking place within the duration when they have been notified that they may get observed.
- Ensure learners are informed of the possibility of the teaching, learning and assessment activity being observed.
- Have all the documentation ready and available as outlined within this procedure for the teaching, learning and assessment activity that may get observed.

## **5. OBSERVATION OVERVIEW**

### **5.1 Type of observations:**

The Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and the grade descriptors will be used as a guide when carrying out observations.

#### **Examples of formal observations may be:**

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

#### **Examples of informal observations may be:**

- Mentored observation
- Themed observations / learning walks
- Drop-in visits (first/last 15 minutes of lesson)
- Tutor requests
- Peer Observation

### **5.2. 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 – including vocational
- On the job training
- Summer schools

### **5.3. Observation cycle**

- Observations of teaching, learning and assessment for the purposes of performance management will be limited to one observation per teacher, of a maximum of 60 minutes in length per performance management cycle, except in exceptional circumstances. Those exceptional circumstances are where the observee chooses to request a further observation, or where concerns have been raised about a tutor's performance which require further observation to take place.
- New teaching staff to the college will be observed within the first 3 months of their start date.
- Oral feedback from the observation of teaching, learning and assessment will take place at a convenient time for both the observer and observee in a private space. Feedback will be given as soon as possible after the observation. Where necessary, release time within the College day will be provided, to allow for the observer and observee to have adequate time to discuss the observation and the outcomes at length.

- Written feedback will be provided within ten working days of the observation taking place. The observer will be given sufficient time within the College day to put in written form the conclusions agreed with the observee on the outcomes of the classroom observation.
- The written record of feedback will include the date on which the observation took place, the lesson observed and the length of the observation. The written record will also allow for the observee to comment.
- Teachers will have access to all written accounts of the observation after their lessons.
- Observations will be recorded using standard College observation records. Heads of School, HR and the Quality Manager will have access to the observation records of staff. These records will be used to inform the performance management process, self-assessment and the provision of training and development.
- Judgements within the observation process will be aligned to the grade descriptors and the CIF and a sample will be moderated to ensure consistency of standards. Moderation will include paired observations, use of external observers and desk based monitoring of observation records.
- Observations will be arranged in order to provide appropriate coverage of all types of College provision. Observations may take place throughout the academic year. To help develop staff and prepare them for Ofsted inspection, advance notice of 2 working days of an observation will be given in line with current Ofsted practice.

## **6. OBSERVATION PROCESS**

### **6.1 Arrangements prior to observation**

- Tutors will be given notice of 2 working days informing them that they are going to be observed. This is in line with Ofsted notice for inspection timeframe.
- Observers will ensure that tutors have a copy of the OTLA Process as well as the most up-to-date OTLA grading descriptors and are clear about the purpose and management of the observation and the feedback process.

### **6.2 Observers will ask tutors to:**

- Inform and prepare their learners about the observation (learners should be clear what the observation is for and aware that they are not being judged in any way)
- Ensure that the Course Folder is available on the day and that the observer has a copy of the scheme of work and lesson plan (and any other relevant documentation to support the observation) Records which should be made available include:
  - register/record of attendance
  - course outline/scheme of work
  - session plan
  - records of learner progress/tracking
  - group/individual profile (including full diagnostic assessment information and detailing particular requirements of individuals in the group e.g. learning support, special learning needs, factors affecting attendance etc)
  - individual learning plans
  - access to learners' portfolios/work
  - copies of any hardcopy resources to be issued to learners and any additional resources that may be used

### **6.3 During the observation:**

### **To undertake a successful observation, the observer will:**

- Stay for a minimum time of 45 minutes to ensure that they have gathered sufficient and valid evidence to support their judgements. This is usually a consecutive period of time. Some observers, however, might choose to vary this, by observing, for example, both the beginning and end of the lesson. The time spent in the lesson is not the most important factor; the effective use of this time is.
- Minimise their impact on the lesson by being as unobtrusive as possible. NB. Observers are not just observing a lesson; they are observing a lesson with an observer present. This immediately changes the atmosphere and dynamic of the learning. (However, most tutors and learners quickly settle down within a few minutes of an observer's arrival.)
- Not take part in lesson activities (with the exception of addressing safeguarding or health and safety issues).
- Review the lesson documentation to assess the quality and appropriateness of the lesson content. I.e. Does the lesson fit well into the scheme of work, have activities and resources that have been developed and/or amended to meet different learner needs?
- Look at the register to check patterns of attendance and punctuality
- Focus primarily on the quality of the learning taking place and the progress made by learners in the lesson. NB Just because something has been taught does not mean that it has been learnt
- Speak to learners and ask them their views of their learning/progress in the lesson/on the course. If appropriate look at learner's work and gather their feedback. Student comments will be discussed by observer/observee as part of the feedback process. (Observers will be sensitive when doing this and will not interrupt lesson activities)
- Make records as appropriate using the relevant standard College documentation
- Thank the tutor when s/he is about to leave and where possible confirm the time/date of the feedback

### **6.4 After the observation:**

- The observation should be followed as soon as possible by a feedback session. This should take place in a private space. This session will include verbal feedback. Full written feedback will be provided within 10 working days of the observation. During or immediately after the feedback session or after seeing the completed observation record, the observee should complete the observation record with their comments.
- An action plan must be devised and agreed as part of the feedback session. The action plan will highlight areas for improvement which need to be addressed and/or good practice that could be developed and/or disseminated to other practitioners. HOS will follow up on the completion of action points.
- A re-observation can be set as an action within the action plan where the lesson observation feedback identified that significant improvements are required. The action plan will agree specific actions and improvements required to support the observee in preparing for their re-observation. The observee will be allocated a mentor to support them in improving their teaching, learning and assessment, preparing them for their re-observation. This will take place within an agreed timescale set.
- All observation paperwork must be signed and dated and a copy sent to HR, HOS and the Quality Manager.

## **7. APPEAL OF OBSERVATION JUDGEMENTS AND/OR FEEDBACK**

- Anyone observed who feels that the judgements made and feedback given is not a true reflection of the session should, in the first place, raise their concern with the observer and/or HOS.
- If the matter is not resolved at that level an appeal against the observation findings should be made to the Quality Manager within 5 working days of the written feedback becoming available to them.
- If the appeal cannot be resolved a further observation may be arranged. This would normally be a paired observation involving two members of the observation team.
- If the member of staff is still not satisfied with the outcome then any further action should be through the College Grievance Procedure.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

This policy will be implemented in line with the principles of the college's commitment to equality and diversity which is: Cleveland College of Art and Design is committed to the principles of equality and diversity and aims to ensure that all employees and college users are treated fairly and equally regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

## **9. DOCUMENT CONTROL INCLUDING ARCHIVING ARRANGEMENTS**

Copies of all documents will be held confidentially by HR and the Quality Manager. Information regarding the OTL process will be used as part of the College performance management process and in the College SAR.

## **10. STANDARDS/KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

- The OTL policy will be monitored by the Vice Principal (Academic).
- The SAR will contain a summary of strengths and areas for improvements identified by the OTL process and actions taken. The QuIP will include any common areas for improvement required to improve the College. The SAR will also review the impact of the previous year's OTLs findings