

Writtle University College

FE Lesson Observation Policy

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Policy Owner	Department
FE Central	FE Central
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1.0	April 2022
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	Yes
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Purpose

Writtle University College is committed to continuous improvement through a process of self-assessment and development planning, and aspires to all teaching being good or better (as measured using Ofsted judgements). This includes observation of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the organisation

The aims and outcomes of the lesson observation process are:

1. To improve the quality of teaching and the learning experience:
 - Develop reflective practice
 - Improve skills (e.g. in planning – including programme design, classroom management and delivery)
 - Recognise, develop and disseminate good practice
 - Develop observation skills and peer review
 - Inform self-assessment and development planning at individual, team and college level
 - Inform the appraisal process
2. To provide data by which quality standards can be measured:
 - Enable internal and external benchmarking
 - Measure improvements and distance travelled
 - Assess the outcomes of particular improvement strategies
 - Provide a grade profile of an area
 - Inform self-assessment and development planning at individual, team and college level

In seeking to achieve these aims and outcomes, four types of lesson observations will take place.

1. Formal observations which will give a quality measure of the standard of teaching and learning across the curriculum areas.
2. Informal developmental observations are part of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and aim to develop tutor skills and improve the experience of learners.
3. Informal walk the floor observations will take place for all staff. They will be unannounced and will not be graded.
4. Informal peer observations. All staff will be encouraged to peer observe colleagues and be observed by peers both within curriculum areas as well as by peers outside of curriculum areas.

Supporting documents of these observation schemes will be found in the “Lesson Observation Scheme”, available on Moodle in the Teaching and Learning Toolkit (<http://moodle.writtle.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=950&topic=6>). On ‘teams’ in the WUC Staff space, and on the G-Drive.

Scope

This Policy covers all FE staff who deliver theory, practical, tutorial or progress reviews.

Basic Principles

The Formal Observation Process:

All staff will have a minimum of one formal observation. Formal observations will be carried out on a risk basis as agreed by the members of the FE Quality Team. A mix of theory, practical and tutorials across all course levels will be observed, with targets set by the FE Quality Team.

A two-day notice will be given to staff of when formal observations will take place. Observation timetables will be planned by the FE Quality Team.

1. All in-scope staff will be subject to a minimum of one observation per year. Support and mentoring will be provided for those teachers not achieving an outstanding / good result. If an outstanding / good result has not been achieved by the end of the first formal observation, continued mentoring and development will be given and a further formal observation will take place. Please refer to Appendix 1 'Developing Excellence Staff Support Structure'.
2. Staff new to teaching will receive a developmental observation via the CTL/Observation team within the first 10 weeks of delivery after which time they will enter the formal observation system.
3. Formal Observations will be undertaken by a member of the lesson observation team or external consultants.
4. Formal observations will be undertaken only by trained observers.
5. Observation feedback should be provided by the observer to the observee within two working days. If this is not possible, communication should be maintained between the two parties until a convenient time to meet can be arranged.
6. Results of formal observations will be recorded through the FE Quality Team.
7. Areas of development will be reviewed as per the Teaching and Learning Development Plan (TLDP) and/or PDR with CTL.
8. Formal observations will be subject to moderation ('Moderated Observations') to ensure consistency and standardisation.
9. Tutorials, learner support sessions and work-based learning delivery (including progress reviews) will be observed under this policy.

Informal Developmental Observations

Developmental observations will take place with new staff and staff receiving support under the Developing Excellence Staff Support Structure' (see Appendix 1). These observations will be pre-planned between the observer and person to be observed and may include a pre-meet to discuss lesson planning and delivery.

Informal Walk the Floor Observations

Walk the Floor observations will:

- take place for all staff
- be unannounced

- may have a focus set by the FE Quality Team
- generalized feedback will be offered in a timely manner

Informal Peer Observations

Peer observations will be undertaken within curriculum teams. These observations will be pre-planned between the observer and person to be observed and may include a pre-meet to discuss lesson planning and delivery. This process will be supportive where good practice can be shared in order to aid the teacher's professional development. An overall plan will be drawn up within curriculum teams. Feedback will be summarised and fed back to the FE Quality Team in order that feedback within curriculum teams can be shared in order that further opportunities of staff development be undertaken.

Moderated Observations

Moderated observations will take place as part of the lesson observation cycle during the academic year.

1. Moderated observations will be organised by the FE Quality Manager with support from the FE Deputy Director and FE Director.
2. Internal moderation in the form of dual observations and external moderation will take place throughout the observation phases.
3. Each observer will be moderated. In the event of any disagreement over grades and feedback, additional moderation will be arranged.
4. Moderated observations will be carried out by a core team of experienced observers who are trained to use OFSTED criteria and also in feedback skills, in order to establish accurate judgements in respect of observation outcomes, and to give constructive feedback to facilitate development at individual and area level.
5. Moderation of observation forms will take place in a formal meeting.

The Procedure

Planning and Executing Formal Lesson Observations

1. Allocation of responsibility for lesson observations will be agreed by the FE Quality Team on an 'at risk' basis.
2. A two-day notice will be given that an observation is going to take place.
3. The teacher will ensure that the following are available for the session – NOTE: this may be in the form of the teacher's file on the college IT system, it is not necessary to copy all documentation:
 - Scheme of work / Session plan in an appropriate format
 - Group profile / Learner at risk register
 - Register
 - Examples of learner work and/or progress trackers
4. Observations will normally be for a minimum period of 30 minutes and generally 45 minutes to one hour. The observer will:
 - carry out the observation at any point during the lesson. The observer will therefore not always be present at the start of the lesson
 - check register, record number of students on register and in attendance

- complete the Lesson Observation Form
 - talk informally to learners as and when appropriate and ask learners to complete a student feedback sheet
 - check learners work
 - arrange a mutually convenient time in order that lesson observation feedback can be given
5. Feedback will be arranged as soon as possible, and ideally this should take place no later than two working days following the observation. The observer will:
- give a summary of the lesson including the balance of strengths and weaknesses – these will be reflected on the Lesson Observation Form
 - provide recommendations for any further actions to help the teacher to improve by asking the teacher to complete the TLDP form
 - identify if the lesson was outstanding/good or requires improvement
 - NOTE: the outcome is based on the observer's judgement and is not negotiable. If there are any disagreements, these should be recorded, and the teacher referred to the appeals section of this policy
 - NOTE: if a teacher refuses feedback then the observation outcome will be recorded and compulsory staff development will be arranged based on the written feedback as appropriate. Capability action may result
6. Completed lesson observation forms will be passed to the Quality Officer who will record the information.
7. Copies of the lesson observation feedback forms will be sent electronically to the teacher, the observer, the line manager and, when required, to Human Resources.
8. Teachers that are requiring improvement will be given support through the 'Developing Excellence' process (appendix 1) and re-observed within six weeks of the observation date with the aim of achieving a good/outstanding rating. A further "requires improvement" outcome will lead to implementation of the Capability Policy.

Planning and Executing Informal Developmental Observations

1. These observations will be pre-planned between the observer and person to be observed and may include a pre-meet to discuss lesson planning and delivery. The observations will generally be a minimum of 30 minutes long.
2. It is expected that a member of staff undergoing a developmental observation will have the standard paperwork in place; this includes:
 - Scheme of work / Session plan in an appropriate format
 - Group profile / Learner at risk register
 - Register
 - Examples of learner work and/or progress trackers
3. Feedback will be arranged as soon as possible, and ideally will take place no later than two working days following the observation. The observer will:
 - give a summary of the lesson including the balance of strengths and weaknesses – these will be reflected on the lesson observation form
 - provide recommendations for any further actions to help the teacher to improve; the teacher will then be required to complete the TLDP form
4. Completed lesson observation forms will be passed to the Quality Officer who will record the information.

5. The FE Quality Team will take advice from the observer carrying out the developmental observation and the mentor providing support as to when the observed member of staff is ready to re-enter the formal observation scheme.

Planning and Executing Walk the Informal Floor Observations

1. These observations will be unannounced and generally last between 15 and 30 minutes.
2. It is expected that a member of staff undergoing a walk the floor observation will have the standard paperwork in place; this includes:
 - Scheme of work / Session plan in an appropriate format
 - Group profile / Learner at risk register
 - Register
 - Examples of learner work and/or progress trackers
3. Generalized feedback will be offered in a timely manner.
4. Completed lesson observation forms will be passed to the Quality officer who will record the information.
5. The FE Quality Management team will review the outcomes of walk the floor observations to identify themes for further development or review.

Lesson Observation Team

Stage 1

CTL Teaching, Learning and Assessment
CTL Student Success (FE)
CTL English & Maths
CTL Animal Studies
CTL Veterinary Nursing
CTL Sport
CTL Equine, Work-Based Animal
CTL Agriculture
CTL Horticulture, Land and Wildlife
CTL Floristry, Art and Design, Dog Grooming

Stage 2

Director of Further Education
Deputy Director of Further Education
FE Quality Manager

Monitoring of the Lesson Observation Process

Review of all aspects of the lesson observation process and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment will be through the weekly FE Quality Team meetings. This will include:

- strengths and areas for development
- moderation activity
- 'Developing Excellence' support
- performance management
- observation targets, including formal and developmental observations along with 'walk the floor' observations

Training and Development of the Lesson Observation Team

The College is committed to ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.

The College will carry out training for all observers active in the formal observation process, brief/train staff about the observation policy and procedures and keep staff regularly updated on teaching and learning developments. The training will include equal opportunities awareness.

Documentation to support the lesson observation process and the development of teaching, learning and assessment is held on both G drive, in the FE Course Managers section, and in Moodle / FE Division / Teaching and Learning Toolkit / Lesson Observation Scheme (<http://moodle.writtle.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=950&topic=6>)

Evaluation of the Observation Policy and Procedures

The ethos and culture of the observation process is to provide positive professional development opportunities for staff and a climate in which observation is seen to make a valuable contribution to improvement.

The observation policy and process will be reviewed annually by the FE Quality Team.

The policy will be agreed and reviewed regularly following consultation with the FE Quality Team.

Safeguards and Appeals

1. Records of observations and confidentiality.

Observee's are required to keep securely a copy of all documents pertaining to observations of their lessons.

For formal observations, one copy of the lesson observation record should be retained by the observee, one copy by the line manager, and one copy by the FE Central, marked confidential.

Summary data will be recorded by the FE Quality Officer.

Access to observation records will be restricted as follows:

- the observed teacher – to their own reports
 - Curriculum Leaders – to the reports of teachers within their curriculum area
 - the Head of FE Quality – to reports of teachers within the FE Division
 - CTL for Teaching and Learning
2. Teachers have the right, if they have concerns, to request a further observation, and should raise this with their line manager in the first instance.
 3. Teachers have the right to invoke college procedures at any stage if they feel that the observation process has not been conducted fairly.
 4. Should the teacher feel concerned at the conduct of the observation, they may make an official appeal through the FE Quality Manager.
 5. Should an observer witness any serious contravention of College Policy while engaged in the observation, they are required to inform the staff member and report

the incident to the FE Quality Manager. An investigation will then be undertaken. If an observer has concerns relating to health and safety during any session, they should stop the session and consult the Health and Safety Officer.

6. Should any member of staff refuse to be observed or be unwilling or unable to accept support and development to improve practice, this may lead to formal college procedures (e.g. disciplinary, capability).

Supporting Documentation and References

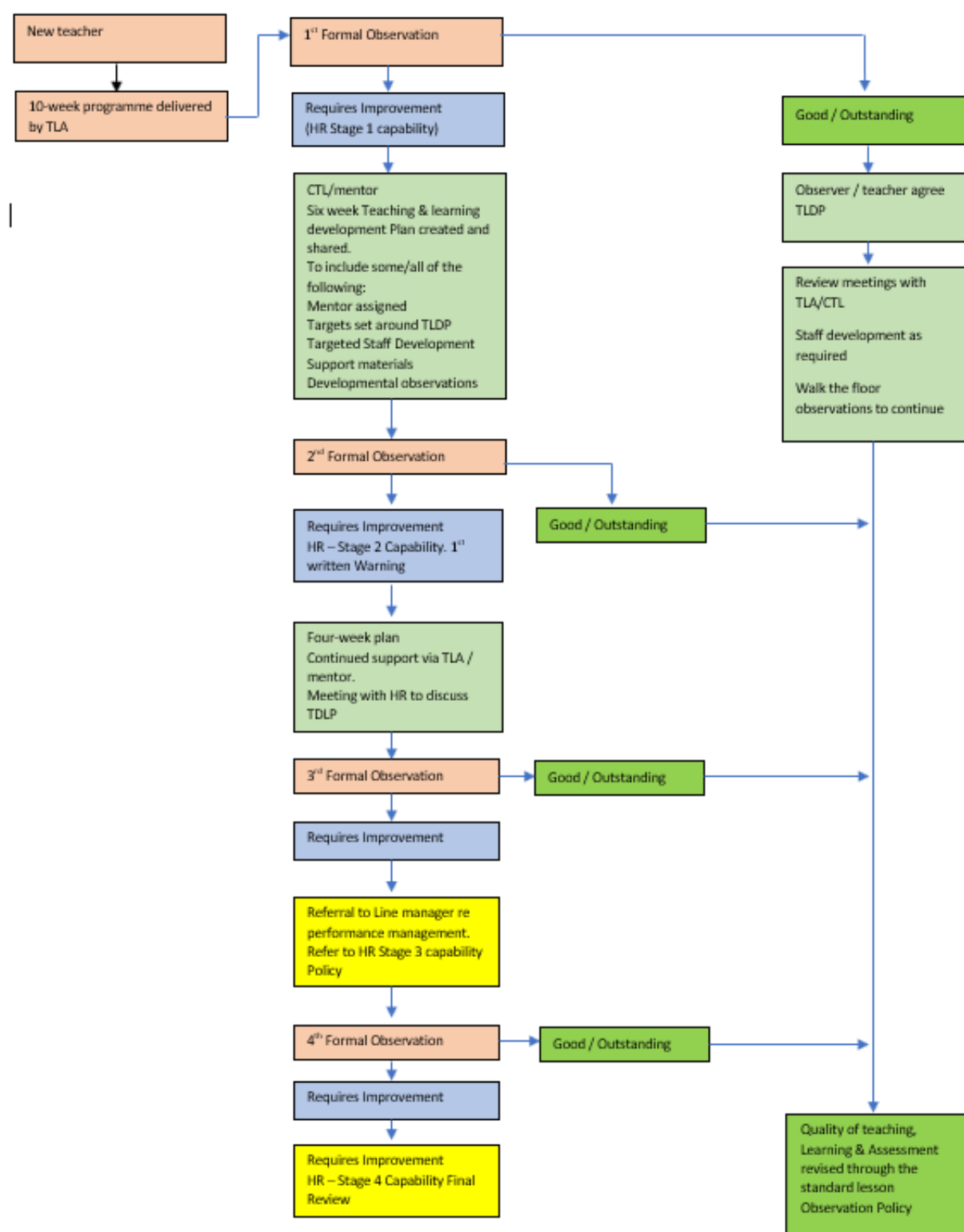
All documentation relating to teaching and learning, including lesson observation paperwork, guidance etc., sharing good practice information and other resources, can be found on Moodle / FE Division / Teaching and Learning Toolkit (<http://moodle.writtle.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=950&topic=6>) and on the G drive

This policy supersedes any other policy and procedural guidelines, which may be in other existing college documents. The College reserves the right to amend this policy from time to time and any such amendments may be notified to employees through News & Events or e-mail.

If this information is difficult to access, read or understand, it can be provided in another format by the FE Division, for example in Braille, in large print on audiotape, in another language or by someone talking it through with you.

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Appendix 1 – Developing Excellence Staff Support Structure



Version Control

Version Number	Purpose/Amendment	Date
1.0	Introduction of policy in line with HR Capability Policy	23/04/22