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| Peer Support for Enhancing Learning and Teaching | |
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| Peer Support for Enhancing Learning and Teaching |

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| Peer Support for Enhancing Learning and Teaching |

# Introduction

* 1. Peer support is a developmental and rewarding process for all involved1 and contributes to a culture of quality learning and teaching. A university-wide peer support scheme for enhancing learning and teaching has to operate across a range of diverse learning and teaching situations at different levels, in different disciplines and within different pedagogical approaches. The University of Hull’s approach acknowledges that all teachers have the capacity to improve their practice and that collegiality and openness are important to enhancing learning and teaching.

1 Bell, A. and Mladenovic, R. (2008) The benefits of peer observation of teaching for tutor development. Higher Education, 55 (6), 735-752

# Purpose

* 1. The primary purpose of the University’s approach is to support the individual development of all staff involved in all forms of learning and teaching activity. Peer support is an opportunity for colleagues to critically reflect on their practice and thereby enhance their teaching competence. Information from the process may be used to:

1. share and enhance teaching and learning practice across the University, Faculty, and Subject Area;
2. provide evidence to external reviewers and other stakeholders, including students through their representatives at University committees, that teaching enhancement and evaluation takes place;
3. support formal CPD such as an application for AdvanceHE Fellowship;
4. contribute to the staff Performance Development Review process.

# Peer Observation

* 1. The key vehicle for peer support is peer observation of teaching. There is a single University process to provide consistency and transparency for all relevant staff. Being observed and discussing approaches to learning and teaching can provide valuable perspectives and help spread effective practice, hence cross-disciplinary observations form part of the process.
  2. All staff with a teaching responsibility **must** have some element of their practice observed **at least once a year**, though this may be more frequent if it helps individuals to develop their learning and teaching practice. The expectation is that staff choose two different approaches to their learning and teaching practice in a two-year period so that they receive feedback on a range of teaching activity.
  3. Observees are responsible for arranging their review with their observer, and negotiating a mutually convenient time to undertake the observation with them. Training and support for observers is available from the Teaching Excellence Academy.
  4. All elements of the student learning experience are important and can be enhanced through a process of reflection and constructive dialogue. Observation of the full range of activities involved in teaching and supporting learning is therefore encouraged. In addition to lectures, laboratories, tutorials and seminars, this may include online delivery, assessment and feedback, and teaching on fieldtrips.
  5. Observation **should** not be a process of using a checklist, as this cannot encompass all the complexities of learning and teaching practice. Nevertheless, some common features do exist across most learning situations and these can be used to provide feedback. These may, where relevant to observer background and nature of the learning and teaching activity, include [related UKPSF Dimension of Practice]:

1. openings and closings [K2];
2. planning and organisation [A1];
3. methods/approach [K2];
4. delivery and pace [A2];
5. content [K1];
6. intellectual stimulation [A4];
7. student participation [K3];
8. nature of student feedback [K3];
9. use of appropriate resources [A1];
10. overall style and atmosphere [A4];
11. acknowledgement of individual student’s particular needs [V1].
    1. Peer observation **should** be a transparent and open process between colleagues. It is acknowledged that teaching observation may involve observer and observee discussing and agreeing areas for development however there are no ‘satisfactory/unsatisfactory’ judgements, though the process does include identification of observees’ staff development needs where relevant. Effective practice identified as part of the peer observation process can be shared with the Teaching Excellence Academy as e.g. a short case study or blog post.

# The Process

* 1. The process involves three stages: (1) Pre-observation preparation, (2) Observation, (3) Post-observation reflection and discussion.
  2. Due to the additional regulatory environment and requirements for the observation of teaching practice for apprenticeship provision, separate arrangements for the operation of the process when observing apprentice delivery, including observing teaching/activities where students are co-taught with apprentices, are included as Appendix C. In the case of apprenticeships, observations may take place in workplaces where relevant and these may include observations of practical assessments and progress reviews.

## Pre-Observation

* 1. Observees are responsible for arranging their review and **should** liaise with the observer to negotiate a mutually convenient time to undertake the observation. Observees may suggest a trained observer where the observee wishes to develop a specific aspect of their practice. The Peer Observation forms (Appendix A) can be copied and created as a shared document which both observer and observee can access and edit.
  2. Observees **should** decide what element of their learning and teaching practice they would like the observer to focus upon. It may, for example, be an aspect of teaching in which the observee has considerable experience, something they wish to improve, a new approach they are trying and would like feedback on or an aspect of their practice they have identified they would like to develop as part of their staff performance development review.
  3. Section A of the Observation forms contains a deliberately open section concerning focus of the observation so that the observee may populate it according to their own needs. This then provides the observee with a list of specific aspects of the activity that they would like the observer to focus upon during the observation and which will inform the nature of observee feedback following the activity.

## Observation

* 1. Section B of the Observation forms provides structure for observer feedback including:

1. comments on the specific issues raised by the observee on the pre-observation form;
2. aspects of the activity that the observer felt went well;
3. suggestions for improvement;
4. things the observer takes away from the activity;
5. effective practice observed during the activity that could be shared with others.
   1. Observer and observee may wish to consider practical aspects of how the observation is to be carried out (e.g. if in lecture theatre where does the observer sit? If online teaching, how will the observed get access? Do you explain to the students why the observer is there? Should the observer observe the whole activity or just a part of it?).
   2. The observer **should** make notes during the session and then complete the form after the activity has been observed and return it to the observee. Observer and observee **should** then agree a date and time for post-observation reflection and discussion.

## Post-Observation Reflection and Discussion

* 1. The Peer Observation forms aid the process of reflection and post-observation discussion on the activity. This may be on the strengths and/or areas for development.
  2. Prior to the post-observation discussion, it will be useful for all participants to reflect on what went well and what could be developed. The post-observation meeting might usefully compare views and identify any actions to support improvement. Both observer and observee may wish to note key points arising from the observation report as foci for discussion.
  3. The observer **should** then meet with the observee to provide confidential feedback. This is essential to the success of the process and **must** be handled sensitively. In such a meeting there is a joint responsibility to keep the feedback focussed and constructive, and to emphasise that the role of the observer **should** not be judgemental.
  4. Meetings **should** always be a critically reflective conversation between colleagues, not the delivery of a judgement. They **should** be conducted as an honest and open dialogue between peers. However real issues where they are perceived to exist **must** be raised and discussed. Consideration **should** therefore be given by the observer as to how feedback is given to ensure that it is not provided in a way that may be perceived as confrontational or judgmental. All participants need to be aware of the tone of their voice, language and body language. It **should** also be acknowledged that there may be power asymmetry between observer and observee in terms of experience, position and status.
  5. The conversation **should** as a minimum cover:

1. did the teaching contribute to the students’ learning?
2. what went well in the activity?
3. why do you think it went well?
4. could this have been improved and if so, how?
5. things to take away from the activity?
6. does the observee have any specific development needs that would help enhance their teaching practice?
7. any ‘effective practice’ observed during the activity?
   1. Appendix B provides additional guidance on the nature of the post-observation discussion.

# Appendix A: Observation Forms (use Appendix C for Learning and Teaching Observation form for Apprenticeship Delivery)

**SECTION A: PRE\_OBSERVATION *(observee to complete)***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Faculty:** | **School:** |
| **Observee:** | **Observer:** |
| **Date and time of activity to be observed:** | |
| **Nature of activity to be observed (e.g. synchronous tutorial; asynchronous lecture etc):** | |
| **Name and number of module:** | **Number of students (expected / attended): /** |
| **Activity Title:** | |
| **Learning outcomes for the activity:** | |
| **1** | |
| **2** | |
| **3** | |
| **4** | |

| ***For observee to complete:***  **I would find it helpful for you to focus and provide comment on the following areas:** |
| --- |
|  |

**SECTION B: THE OBSERVATION *(observer to complete)***

|  | **Observer’s Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| Comments on specific issues raised by the observee (*above*): |  |
| Things I thought went well: |  |
| My suggestions for improvement would be: |  |
| Things I will take away from today: |  |
| Any other thoughts: |  |

**SECTION C: POST-OBSERVATION REFLECTIONS *(observee to complete)***

|  | **Observee’s Comments** |
| --- | --- |
| Things I thought went well: |  |
| Aspects of the activity that could be improved:   * How I could make an improvement? * Where could I seek support from to help me improve my practice? |  |
| Any other thoughts: |  |

**POST-OBSERVATION MEETING**

The post-observation meeting is a confidential, peer-to-peer developmental conversation to reflect on the observation. Prior to the meeting, it will be useful for all participants to reflect on what went well and what could be developed. The meeting might usefully compare views and identify any actions to support improvement. Both observer and observee may wish to note key points arising from the observation report as foci for discussion.

There is a joint responsibility to keep the feedback focussed and constructive, and to emphasise that the role of the observer **should** not be judgemental. Meetings **should** always be a critically reflective conversation between colleagues, not the delivery of a judgement. They **should** be conducted as an honest and open dialogue between peers. However real issues where they are perceived to exist **must** be raised and discussed. Consideration **should** therefore be given by the observer as to how feedback is given to ensure that it is not provided in a way that may be perceived as confrontational or judgmental. All participants need to be aware of the tone of their voice, language and body language. It **should** also be acknowledged that there may be power asymmetry between observer and observee in terms of experience, position and status.

The conversation **should** as a minimum cover:

* Did the teaching contribute to the students' learning?
* What went well in the activity?
* Why do you think it went well?
* Could this have been improved and if so how?
* Things to take away from the activity.
* Does the observee have any specific development needs that would help enhance their teaching practice?
* Any 'effective practice' observed during the activity?

Additional guidance on the nature of the post-observation discussion is provided [here](https://universityofhull.box.com/s/p9l98f5tavgcdzzn5cb91p2mgyk7ypro). (Appendix B)

# Appendix B: Additional points for Post-Observation discussion

The following **key points** are provided **to help guide the post-observation discussion**.

Observers **should** reflect on these questions in advance of this meeting.

In addition to the standard areas of discussion, the post-observation discussion could also cover:

* How did the approach to the activity align with disciplinary best practice and Education Strategy?
* Did the students participate actively where required?
* Did the activity allow the observee the opportunity to use their planned approach?
* To what extent to which the observee achieve the aims of the activity?
* Were there any changes made since it was last taught? If so, did they improve the student learning experience?
* Was the observee able to assess whether the students learned what was intended by the end of the activity?
* What were the particular strengths observed?
* How might the observer/observee have approached it differently?
* What might be changed for next time?
* What could be improved or developed, and how might this be achieved?
* What sources of support might help the observer/observee improve their practice?
* In what aspects of the activity has feedback been invited?
* What will observer take away as good practice to improve their teaching?
* What the observee may be working on next to further improve their teaching?
* What did both participants feel were the most important points to emerge from their discussion?

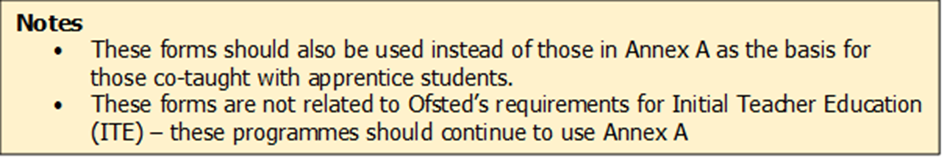
Observers **should:**

* Be descriptive, reflective and provide evidence for their comments,
* Be specific rather than general!
* Focus on behaviour rather than the person!
* Focus on observations, so that any constructive criticism is justifiable,
* Focus on behaviour that the observee can do something about,
* Focus on "what" or "how" (observed behaviour) as well as "why",
* Provide opportunities for further discussion,
* Provide clear suggestions about improvement that can be generated by the observee based on questions from the observer,
* Identify points of good practice that you might use in your own teaching,
* Provide an opportunity for critical reflection.

Constructive feedback will:

* Allow the observee to describe the activity and say how they felt the activity went before the observer makes any further comment. The observee might reflect on whether the observation process had affected the activity in any way, for example, in their behaviour or that of the students,
* Positively state what the observer considers the observee to have done with skill, insight, competence, etc., providing evidence or instances of any claims made,
* Identify what did not appear to be so successful, or any areas in which some difficulties were observed. It is important that specific instances are cited as evidence for any comment about what did not go so well,
* Provide the opportunity to discuss the issues raised,
* Provide opportunity to discuss any matters of concern to the observer and to allow the observee to consider and reflect on these. This **should** always be handled sensitively,
* Provide an opportunity to identify constructive solutions to any agreed difficulties, including sources of professional development and support,
* Focus on particular issues rather than allow generalised description or evaluation.

# Appendix C: Observation of teaching and related activities as part of a University apprenticeship



Since September 2018, Ofsted has been the statutory body with regulatory responsibility for apprenticeship provision at levels 2 to 5. From April 2021 this responsibility was extended to all apprenticeship provision and so the university’s provision from level 4 to level 7 will be in scope for Ofsted inspection.

Ofsted inspection follows the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) 2019 for further education and skills and this informs the university’s approach to observation of teaching on apprenticeships:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook-eif>

During inspection, Ofsted inspectors are asked to form a judgement on “the extent to which leaders ensure that learners benefit from effective teaching and high expectations in classrooms, in workshops, at work or with subcontractors”.

Ofsted expects that leaders have in place a policy and procedure to demonstrate this oversight and they will conduct teaching observations during their visit to assess its efficacy.

For observations of teaching and related activities on apprenticeships, the processes detailed in the university’s code on peer support for enhancing learning and teaching will be mostly the same with the following exceptions:

* The Teaching and Learning Observation forms in Annex C replace the Annex A Observation Forms for apprenticeship delivery – including for co-taught students. If there are differences in the approach or feedback that do not apply in the case of co-taught students, these **should** be made clear in the forms.
* A report on the quality of teaching including areas of good practice and themes for improvement will be produced by the Skills and Apprenticeships Service and will be received by the Apprenticeship Governance Group including numbers of sessions and numbers of staff observed. Information regarding individual staff will not be included in this report.
* Observers will be required to send a copy of the observation form to the Skills and Apprenticeships Service at [apprenticeships@hull.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@hull.ac.uk) so that use of the forms can be monitored and improvement actions identified and aggregated into key themes.

Observers and observees will be able to seek advice from the Skills and Apprenticeships Service on the use of these alternative forms via [apprenticeships@hull.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@hull.ac.uk)

# Teaching and Learning Observation Form (Apprenticeship Delivery - and those co-taught with apprentices)

Details of Observation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of staff member being observed:** |  |
| **Date:** |  |
| **Duration:** |  |
| **Apprenticeship Standard:** |  |
| **Cohort number (if known):** |  |
| **Year of study:** |  |
| **Type of activity being observed (e.g. synchronous lecture/progress review etc.)** |  |
| **Number of apprentices in attendance:** |  |
| **Number of non-apprentice students in attendance (e.g. where co-taught):** |  |
| **Name and position of observer(s):** |  |
| **Title of module and module code:** |  |
| **Apprenticeship Knowledge, Skills, Behaviours (KSB) expected to be delivered and assessed within whole module:** |  |

Stage 1 – Pre-Observation discussion

**Pre-observation discussion**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Context of the session:** | **Lecturer comments (recorded by observer through discussion)** | **Observer comments** |
| Please provide a brief description of the plan for this session, including how this addresses the apprenticeship KSBs within this module and how it links to the wider programme.  (Note, if a lesson plan is being used, this may be appended to the form) |  |  |
| How will you take the learners’ starting points into consideration and adapt your delivery to build on prior knowledge and skill? |  |  |
| How will this activity link with the workplace environment of the learners and develop competency? |  |  |

Stage 2 – Teaching Observation

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Yes/no or N/A** | **Observer comments** |
| 1 | Strong start to session |  |  |
| 2 | Recap on the learning from the previous session takes place |  |  |
| 3 | There is a link from the previous session to this one (if appropriate) |  |  |
| 4 | The intended learning outcomes are made clear to the students including reference to apprenticeship KSBs |  |  |
| 5 | The beginning of the session sets the scene appropriately for the rest of the session |  |  |
| 6 | Student interest and enthusiasm are maintained |  |  |
| 7 | The pace of the session is appropriate for all the students |  |  |
| 8 | The delivery method of the session is appropriate for intended learning |  |  |
| 9 | All students are appropriately challenged and engaged with the learning |  |  |
| 10 | The session is managed effectively |  |  |
| 11 | The active participation of all students is encouraged |  |  |
| 12 | Dignity and respect for all students is promoted |  |  |
| 13 | There is an awareness of diversity and inclusivity |  |  |
| 14 | Strategies to ensure the positive engagement of all students are used |  |  |
| 15 | An effective rapport with students is established and maintained so as to facilitate positive engagement and communication |  |  |
| 16 | The communication of ideas is relevant, clear and at a level appropriate for all students |  |  |
| 17 | The opportunity for students to clarify their understanding is handled well |  |  |
| 18 | Strategies to gain attention, to refocus at intervals and to ensure attention is maintained are used effectively |  |  |
| 19 | An effective questioning and listening technique is used as appropriate |  |  |
| 20 | Embedded English Skills |  |  |
| 21 | Embedded maths skills |  |  |
| 22 | Embedded IT skills |  |  |
| 23 | Students are made aware of the purpose of any exercises given |  |  |
| 24 | Student learning from the activities is captured and consolidated |  |  |
| 25 | Best use is made of the learning space available |  |  |
| 26 | Teaching resources are used effectively to support student learning |  |  |
| 27 | The use of technology effectively supports and enhances student learning |  |  |
| 28 | Student learning is checked throughout the session |  |  |
| 29 | Important learning points are reinforced throughout the session |  |  |
| 30 | Students are given the opportunity to practise relevant skills (as appropriate) |  |  |
| 31 | The session is drawn to a satisfactory summary and conclusion |  |  |
| 32 | The summary and conclusion link to the work to be covered in the next session |  |  |
| 33 | Important learning points are reinforced and assessment opportunities signposted |  |  |
| 34 | The intended learning outcomes/competencies stated at the beginning of the session are revisited to check coverage |  |  |
| 35 | The students are advised of additional follow-up reading / activities to consolidate their learning |  |  |

Stage 3 – Post-Observation discussion and reflections

**(You may wish to use Appendix B to support the discussion)**

|  |
| --- |
| **Key strengths and examples of good practice for sharing** |
| **Key areas for development** |
| **Suggested ways forward and/or opportunities to share practice with others** |
| **Feedback from lecturer** |

Observer(s) signature ......................................................... Date

Lecturer signature……………………………………………… Date

**Observer** - Please send the completed form to [apprenticeships@hull.ac.uk](mailto:apprenticeships@hull.ac.uk)

**Version Control**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Author** | **Date approved** | **Relevant sections** |
| 2 03 | Lisa Tees, Quality Manager, Quality Support Service | Aug 2023, Housekeeping | Updated Committee Structure |
| 2 02 | Lisa Tees, Quality Manager, Quality Support Service | Nov 2021, Housekeeping | Migrated to new template |
| 2 02 | Adam Greenwood, Director of Skills and Apprenticeships. | Sept 2021, Education Committee. | * Reviewed to ensure that colleagues can be supported to enhance the areas of learning and teaching that Ofsted, in the context of delivering apprenticeship programmes, consider within their Education Inspection Framework guidance. * Inclusion of an alternative framework to be used through the peer support process where an apprenticeship is observed. |
| *error in version control* |  | Feb 2021, Housekeeping | Updated Committee structure. |
| *error in version control* |  | July 2018, Housekeeping | Transferred to new template. |
| 2 02 | Lisa Tees, Quality Manager, Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice (LEAP) | Sept 2016, Housekeeping | Replaces department with school. |
| 2 01 | Jane Iddon, Quality Manager, Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice (LEAP) | Aug 2015, Housekeeping | Updated to reflect change from CDTE to LEAP. |
| 2 00 | Jane Iddon, Quality Manager, Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice (LEAP) | May 2012, ULTAC | * Substantial change. UCoP Peer Observation of Teaching becomes UCoP Peer Support for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching. * A single University scheme replaces faculty approved schemes. * The developmental approach removes ‘satisfactory / unsatisfactory’ judgements. * All eligible staff must have some element of their practice observed at least once every two years but must participate in the scheme annually. * Staff can choose their own peer observers and can work in groups of up to four members. * Observations of the full range of activities involved in teaching and supporting learning is encouraged. * Cross school / cross faculty observations are encouraged. |
| 1 01 | Quality Officer | Dec 2010 | Housekeeping. |
| 1 00 | Quality Officer | May 2007, Senate | * Peer Observation of Teaching. * Sets out the University’s expectations for the operation of a scheme for the peer observation of teaching. |