

Lesson Observation Policy

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Produced by	Compliance Team	Approved by	Academic and Quality Board
Related policies:	<p>Staff Handbook Quality Assurance Policy Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy Staff Appraisal Policy</p>		
External reference points	<p>OfS Condition B1 (d) each higher education course is effectively delivered B2 (a) each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives resources and support which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring: a high-quality academic experience for those students</p> <p>UK Quality Code [June 2024] Expectations for Standards, Core Practice 2(p3); <i>...students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold...</i> Expectations for Quality, Core Practice 3 (p3) <i>The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</i> Guiding principles on Teaching and Learning 12.1 – 12.9</p>		

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1 Background and Purpose

The Lesson Observation Policy at LCK Academy (LCKA) provides full details on how observations of learning and teaching are conducted at the Academy. This policy ensures that lessons are assessed according to clear and fair criteria aligned to the key priorities of the LCKA Learning and Teaching Strategy. The policy includes transparent standardised procedures to so that all faculty understand how to utilise lesson observations for continuous improvement and enhancement of teaching practice. Familiarisation with this policy ensures that all teaching staff are well-informed of the expectations and preparedness required to not only meet but surpass the educational quality benchmarks set by the institution.

2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of lesson observations is to provide the teaching faculty with impartial, transparent, and equitable feedback from an experienced observer. Furthermore, observations enable senior faculty including the Heads of Programme, Head of Quality and Academic Dean to assess the efficacy of teaching and learning and identify areas for development, training and support. The key objectives of lesson observations are as follows:

- To provide tutors with procedural information on what to expect before, during and after a lesson observation
- To offer clear criteria and standards of assessment for all senior academic staff appointed to conduct lesson observations
- To allow all teaching faculty the opportunity to observe and learn from the teaching practices of their peers
- To ensure high and consistent standards of learning and teaching take place in alignment with the key priorities of the LCKA learning and teaching strategy.
- To enable faculty to reflect in depth and detail on their own teaching practice, methods and techniques and to consider alternative methods and techniques they might employ
- To identify the developmental needs of the teaching faculty and inform an annualised programme of Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- To identify areas of concern in teaching practice and ensure the implementation of early interventions, resolutions and corrections

3 Application

This policy applies to the observation of all higher education programmes at the Academy unless the Academy is obligated to apply the lesson observation policy of a partner organisation, in which case, the partner organisation's lesson observation policy will take precedence. According to the LCKA lesson observation policy, all higher education Tutors will have a minimum of two observations per annum. All Tutors will also carry out a minimum of one peer observations per annum. Newly appointed Tutors will be observed delivering a micro lesson and observed again within one month of teaching at the Academy.

4 Type of Observation

The Academy conducts two distinct forms of observation:

- Peer Observations, where tutors observe their colleagues, and
- Formal Observations, executed by senior faculty, academic management, or external inspectors.

Observers receive specialised training prior to conducting Formal Observations, which includes shadowing veteran observers and engaging in feedback discussions.

5 Peer Observations

Peer observations enable faculty to observe their fellow Tutors and share best practices. Tutors are required to conduct peer observations at least once per annum, but teaching faculty are encouraged to do more peer observations if they can. Programme Leaders and the Head of Quality utilise the feedback from peer observations to tailor CPD workshops, addressing emergent themes.

At least once every year the Programme Leader creates a schedule of peer observations for staff they are responsible for. Tutors should observe each other for at least 45 minutes and give feedback to colleagues they observe using the Academy's Peer Observation Form in the appendices.

The Programme Leader and the Head of Quality should be provided with the peer observation form. The Programme Leader in consultation with the Head of Quality will review the comments in Peer Observation feedback forms and recommend CPD workshops to the Academic Dean based upon themes that emerge.

6 Formal Observation Process

Formal observations provide all teaching faculty with an assessment of their teaching practice based upon criteria aligned to the key priorities of the LCKA learning and teaching strategy. Through constructive feedback with recommendations in targeted action plans, formal observations encourage reflective teaching practice and promote the continuous improvement and enhancement of learning and teaching by all faculty at the Academy.

Every Tutor will be formally observed at least twice per annum or every six months. If concerns are raised about Tutors they may be subject to additional formal lesson observations. New Tutors must be formally observed within the first four weeks of teaching. If lesson concerns are identified in a lesson observation, the observer may request a follow up observation to allow the Tutor an opportunity to implement any recommendations the observer provides in the action plan. Tutors who consistently fail to meet the required standards of teaching practice based upon the five key criteria in the learning and teaching strategy may be replaced.

6.1 Pre-Observation Preparations

6.1.1 Scheme of Work

Tutors should provide the observer with a scheme of work before the observation showing how the individual lesson fits into the overall syllabus of the unit or module.

6.1.2 Learning Outcomes

Tutors will need to demonstrate that the lesson being observed is related to one or more of the learning outcomes that will be assessed for the unit or module they are teaching. In most observed lessons, tutors will be preparing students to pass assessments when they complete a course unit or module. The assessments will be coursework based upon an assignment brief.

6.1.3 Planning

Tutors should complete a lesson plan for their lessons when they are being observed using the template provided in the appendices, which should include the following:

- Learning Objectives
- Timed stages of the lesson (usually 15 minutes)
- Activities conducted at each stage by Tutors and Students including interactions
- Relevant information on assessment of learning including what all students, many students and few students will be able to do
- Relevant information on differentiation – the steps you will take to ensure all students are able to participate and are adequately challenged
- Resources to be used for each stage

The plan should include clear aims linked to the learning outcome(s) and the stages and activities of the lesson should align to these. The tutor should send the lesson plan to the observer at least two days beforehand. Arrangements for this should be made during the pre-observation meeting (below).

6.1.4 Photocopying

If tutors copy any published material, they must make sure that they write the **author** and **book name** on the photocopies as we are bound by copyright laws. They can take a master copy, write the reference details at the top and copy off the numbers needed.

6.1.5 Pre-observation meeting and Lesson Planning

There is a pre-observation meeting arranged by the observer before an observation. This will usually be an email sent to the tutor to arrange a time and date to carry out the observation, and to get some information about the lesson and students. At least two days before the observation, the tutor should complete a 1-hour lesson plan to cover the period in which the observation will take place, using the template in the appendices below.

7 The Observation

Tutors will be observed for about 45 minutes. There should be a spare table and chair for the observer on the day of the observation if it is being conducted in a physical classroom, with a copy of the scheme of work (if available), lesson plan and any hard copies of materials being used. Tutors should try to place the observer where they can see the students, the Tutor and the board. **Tutors must provide a lesson plan when they are being observed.** Tutors should warn their students that an observation will be conducted. The Tutor should not normally attempt to involve the observer in the lesson unless agreed beforehand.

The lesson should follow the plan unless there are good reasons for the tutor to ignore the plan. If the tutor finds the need to explain something to the students they may decide to do a different activity that is not included in the plan. The observer will take this into consideration when assessing the lesson.

8 Types of Evidence the Observer Looks for

Observers will look for evidence of five criteria based upon the priorities in the learning and teaching strategy:

- Lesson planning
- Independent learning
- Active learning
- Communications skills
- Critical thinking skills

8.1 What evidence is there of effective lesson planning?

- Good alignment of the lesson plan with the scheme of work and assignment brief.
- Logical, well-staged and well-timed plan.
- Good level of detail and clarity provided for the lesson activities and the resources needed.
- Learning objectives integrated and aligned to learning outcomes and assessment criteria.
- Good consideration of the different needs of students and how they will be accommodated.
- Any other criteria

8.2 What evidence is there of independent learning?

- Students challenged
- Student centred approach used
- Students able to work unassisted
- There has been prior learning beyond the scope of the learning objectives
- Students asking good questions to assist learning
- Any other criteria

8.3 Is there active learning with inclusive engagement and participation by students?

- Students are engaged
- Students are given equal opportunities
- The tutor has made the subject interesting
- Teaching methods help to facilitate engagement
- Participation supports achievement of intended learning outcomes
- Any other criteria

8.4 How effective is the development of communication skills?

- Students developing the ability to produce good academic writing
- Students developing the confidence to speak to the Tutor and their peers in class
- Students developing the ability to speak or present in public
- Students developing the ability to ask pertinent questions
- Students developing the ability to communicate effectively in work-related situations
- Students developing the ability to collaborate and learn through social interaction

8.5 Are students demonstrating critical thinking skills about the subject?

- Students developing the ability to critically evaluate an aspect of the subject
- Students developing the ability to apply relevant theory in practice
- Students developing the ability to make effective judgements about the lesson topic
- Students developing the ability to analyse and synthesise up to date information
- Students developing employability skills and self-reflection on performance

9 Lesson Observation Feedback

After the observation the tutor will be given written feedback on evidence of:

- **Lesson planning** with effective use of time, facilities, equipment and resources
- **Independent learning** with inductive guided discovery and student questions
- **Active learning** with inclusive engagement and participation by students
- **Communication skills** development in both speaking and writing
- **Critical thinking skills** through effective teaching of subject knowledge

The observer will indicate with a tick on the lesson observation form (Appendix) which of the agreed criteria have been met by the tutor. The observer may also write comments on any of the areas they wish. The following concluding feedback will be provided.

Concluding Feedback
A second observation is needed within three weeks.
Good
Very Good
Outstanding

Finally, the observer will provide the tutor with an action plan containing some recommendations that will help the tutor to improve their teaching practice.

10 Tutor Feedback

After feedback by the observer, tutors must complete a form expressing their views about the process and outcomes of the observation.

11 Report on Lesson Observation Findings

When all the documentation has been completed for a Lecturer who has been observed, it is passed to the relevant Head of Programme and the Head of Quality. The Head of Programme checks the findings of the observations and ensures that Lecturers follow up on any recommendations in the development plan, including subsequent lesson observations if required. Every six months after all Lecturers have been observed at least once, the Head of Quality submits a monitoring report on the outcomes of Lesson Observations to the Academic and Quality Board.

Appendix 1. LCK Academy HE Lesson Plan

Course:		Unit:			Group:
Course Week No:	Date:	Time:	Level:		Duration:
Unit Tutor:	Number on register:				Room:
Topic of lesson:			Lesson Aims. The Tutor will:		
Materials, equipment and resources required:			Learning objectives. Students will be able to:		
Class Profile:					
Lesson Outline					
Duration	Subject matter/content	Activities	Assessment (how learning will be recognised)	Differentiation (addressing all learners' needs)	Resources
15 mins			All students will be able to: Many students will be able to: Few students will be able to:		Handout
15 mins			All students will be able to: Many students will be able to: Few students will be able to:		
15 mins			All students will be able to: Many students will be able to: Few students will be able to:		
Homework / Tasks:			Evaluation / Review:		

Appendix 2 Lesson Observation Feedback Form (LOF)

Tutor		Observer	
Date		Time	
Programme		Class	
Unit/Module		Lesson Topic	
Mode (Online or In-person)		Number enrolled	
Number attending		If online, number with video on	

1. General Comments

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2. Feedback Form

2.1 Evidence of effective lesson planning					
Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.1.1	Good alignment of the lesson plan with the scheme of work and assignment brief.				
2.1.2	Logical, well-staged and well-timed plan.				
2.1.3	Good level of detail and clarity provided for the lesson activities and the resources needed.				
2.1.4	Learning objectives integrated and aligned to learning outcomes and assessment criteria.				
2.1.5	Good consideration of the different needs of students and how they will be accommodated.				
2.1.6	Any other criteria				

2.2 Evidence of independent learning

Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.2.1	Students challenged				
2.2.2	Student centred approach used				
2.2.3	Students able to work unassisted				
2.2.4	Students asking good questions to assist learning				
2.2.5	There has been prior learning beyond the scope of the learning objectives				
2.2.6	Any other criteria				

2.3 Evidence of active learning with inclusive engagement and participation by students					
Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.3.1	Students are engaged				
2.3.2	Students are given equal opportunities				
2.3.3	The tutor has made the subject interesting				
2.3.4	Teaching methods help to facilitate engagement				
2.3.5	Participation supports achievement of intended learning outcomes				
2.3.6	Any other criteria				

2.4 Evidence of the development of communication skills

Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.4.1	Students developing the ability to produce good academic writing				
2.4.2	Students developing the confidence to speak to the Tutor and their peers in class				
2.4.3	Students developing the ability to speak or present in public				
2.4.4	Students developing the ability to ask pertinent questions				
2.4.5	Students developing the ability to communicate effectively in work-related situations				
2.4.6	Any other criteria				

2.5 Evidence of critical thinking skills in relation to subject knowledge

Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.5.1	Students developing the ability to critically evaluate and analyse				
2.5.2	Students developing the ability to apply theory in practice				
2.5.3	Students developing the ability to make effective judgements				
2.5.4	Students developing the ability to synthesise information				
2.5.5	Students developing employability skills and self-reflection				
2.5.6	Any other criteria				

2.6 Any other criteria

Assessment Criteria		✓ Tick	Strengths	Areas for Development	Recommendations
2.6.1					

Concluding Feedback

A second observation needed in six weeks.

Satisfactory

Good

Outstanding

3.

4. Development Plan Agreed

Recommendations for the Tutor	Date to be implemented by	Outcome

Appendix 3 Tutor's Feedback to the Observer (TFO)

Tutor's Feedback to the Observer (TFO)			
Thank you for your cooperation with the lesson observation procedures at the Academy. Please provide your comments below and then email this to the observer.			
Tutor's Name			
Date of Observation			
Observer's Name			
Observer's email			
Do you feel that the observer's feedback is fair?			
YES/NO Please say why			
Do you think that you will change any of your teaching practices as a result of the feedback?			
YES/NO Please say explain			
Role	Name	Signature	Date
Tutor			
Observer			

Appendix 4 Record of Engagement in Peer Observation

Date of Observation:					
Format of Observation (Tick)					
Online		Paired Observation		Team Observation	
Lecture		Seminar		Other	
Participants involved (Optional)					
Name of observer					
Name of observee					
Programme and class level					
Partner institution					
Points of Interest:					
Please summarise any interesting points arising out of this observation, this should include examples of best practice as well as aspects that would benefit from further development or both.					
Best Practice					
•					
•					
•					
•					
•					
Areas for further development					
•					
•					
•					
•					
•					

Please send this form to the Programme Leader