

LTC15D171

Title: Policy on the Peer Observation of Teaching
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Circulation: LTC – 22 June 2016
Agenda: LTC15A006
Version: FINAL
Status: Open

Issue

As part of the cycle of reviews, Laura McGonagle and Helena Gillespie reviewed the Code of Practice on Peer Observation in May 2016. Overall the compliance with the code of practice was high, shown in the table below:

	2014/15		2013/14	
	Number observed	%	Number observed	%
FMH	199	88% HSC 49% MED	No data	HSC* 59% MED No data
HUM	100	HIS 30%, IAH 89%, PPL, 53% AMA No data LDC No data	124	200 (62%)
SCI	211	229 (92%)	118	256 (46%)
SSF	192	281 (68%)	225	312 (71%)

However reporting systems still need to be improved to ensure compliance. Forms PO2 and PO3 in the code of practice are not being used consistently. For this reason, the only major change proposed is to have streamlined reporting system which requires levels of compliance (as a number of staff observed and a percentage of those eligible) being monitored by the LTS Head of Quality via Senior Faculty Managers. In addition there is little evidence that the system of reporting good practice identified in peer observation is adding any value. There are many better ways of disseminating good practice including Learning and Teaching Day, Faculty and School Teaching Committees and seminars and informal groups around the university. Therefore we propose to remove this aspect of the policy and focus on the individual professional development aspect of the process and reporting compliance. This removes some administration tasks for School Teaching Directors and Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching.

Recommendation

The code of practice is fit for purpose with the following changes:

1. The code of practice is changed to a policy.
2. Whether the reporting aspect of the policy outlined in 2.1 is sufficient, and whether the statistics should additionally be reported within schools to SSLCs.

3. Whether moving away from the dissemination requirements of the previous code of practice presents any risk to the quality of teaching. In discussion, it is clear that some schools feel that the teaching directors seeing forms is helpful, but this is not a consistent view.

The committee also is urged to consider the following issues:

The inclusions and exemptions for categories of staff in paragraph 1.2

Whether paragraph 2.3 adequately represents the emerging new HE quality assurance landscape

Whether paragraph 2.6 is sufficiently strong to prevent the Peer Observation process from being used as a performance management tool. This is not a change to the policy.

Forms PO1 a-d are useful.

Resource Implications

There are no additional resources required to implement the policy in the revised way, in fact there should be a small saving in academic leadership time by removing the formal dissemination aspects of the process.

Risk Implications

There is risk to the institution of not achieving compliance with the policy, however these are mitigated by the new monitoring arrangements.

Equality and Diversity

No specific issues

Further Information

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Policy on Peer Observation of Teaching

1. Introduction

1.1 This Policy sets out the procedure for peer observation of teaching, which is mandatory with effect from academic year 2011-12. It is intended for Schools, Heads of School, Directors of Learning, Teaching and Quality and staff in roles which involve teaching. Schools are free to determine the frequency and details of their own peer observation of teaching schemes, subject to the minimum requirements of this Policy.

1.2 This Policy applies to the following categories of staff:

ATR

ATS (level 2 and above)

PBL tutors

Associate tutors (at the discretion of the Head of School)

Staff seconded to the University, and whose role entails teaching

Teaching practitioners (mostly in FMH)

This Policy does not apply to the following categories of staff:

ATS level 1

Honorary lecturers (except where an entire module is delivered by an individual honorary lecturer)

PG students

1.3 It is acknowledged that the categories of teaching staff listed above may not encompass every type of teaching status which may arise at UEA. In the event that an individual in a teaching role does not reasonably fall into any of the listed categories then that individual and their line manager should reach mutual agreement on whether or not this Code of Practice applies to the individual concerned.

2. The purpose and principles of peer observation

2.1 Peer observation is intended to support the personal and professional development of academic staff,. For this reason, oversight of the process lies with the Teaching Director in each School. Teaching Directors will, towards the end of each academic year, each school will report the percentage of staff observed in that academic year and a rolling 2 year total to both FLTQC and Faculty Executive. This will be reported by each senior faculty manager on

an annual basis to the Head of LTS (Quality) who will report compliance with this policy to LTC.

2.3 Whilst colleagues applying for promotions may, if they wish to do so, include a copy of a peer observation report relating to a session in which they were observed, the reports produced as part of the peer observation process will otherwise be confidential to the staff member being observed, the colleague doing the observation, the Director of Teaching, and the Head of School. Colleagues serving a period of probation may, if they wish to, draw on peer observation reports as evidence in completion of their Teaching Reports for Module 5 of the MA HEP, but this is entirely optional and there is no requirement for them to do so.

2.4 Peer observation of teaching is a simple and very effective way to develop learning and teaching. Peer observation, can be a source of new ideas as well as a means of affirming existing practice and learning from each other. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) also expects all Universities to undertake some form of peer observation of teaching. Our commitment to peer observation demonstrates to students, prospective students and other stakeholders the importance of high quality teaching to the institution.

2.5 It is important to be clear about the purposes of peer observation of teaching: It is a formative process designed to develop and enhance the practice of both the observer and the observed.

2.6 Peer observation will not be used as a management tool and its outcomes will not inform management decisions regarding individual members of staff, except in requests for promotion where an individual has chosen to supply evidence from peer observations in support of their applications

3. All observation of learning and teaching should be based on the following principles

3.1 There are different ways of being an effective teacher. Teaching should be planned with regard to the learning outcomes of both the particular session and which itself should be prepared with regard to the intended learning outcomes of the module / course; Teaching and learning styles should be capable of being explained and justified and be relevant to the session / module / course and to the intended objectives / outcomes;

3.2 A variety of teaching sessions should be observed over the course of an individual's career, ensuring different teaching formats are observed where applicable. Existing good practice should be recognised and encouraged. Peer observation of learning and teaching should be 'light touch' and regarded as part of a wider process of professional development;

3.3 The minimum Requirements for Peer Observation are that Peer Observation must take place regularly and must involve all relevant members of staff. Staff shall be observed at least once per annum during any probation period and at least biennially after the completion of any probationary period

4. Stages of the process

Step One

The staff member concerned agrees, in consultation with their Head of School / School Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality / designated delegate, an appropriate colleague to be their peer observer. The observer could be a colleague from outside the staff member's subject area, School or even Faculty. The observer will usually be of similar role/ seniority to the staff member concerned.

- At this point, both the staff member and the peer observer should have access to (may be electronically) and read this Code of Practice so that they can follow the procedure.
- The staff member and peer observer should also agree on the format the written feedback will take. A variety of Peer Observation Report (PO1) forms is appended (Appendix A) and Schools may choose to use these or other formats they find useful..
- The staff member discusses with the observer which aspects of their teaching or their students' learning they would like to focus on and would particularly like to receive feedback on.
- The staff member and peer observer agree which session is to be observed (lecture, seminar, workshop, laboratory practical, research supervision). One session per cycle should be observed, with a variety of sessions being included over time.

Step Two

- The period of observation should be approximately one hour on each occasion.
- The staff member and observer agree where the observer will sit during the session.
- At the session, the staff member should explain the presence of the observer to students.

Step Three

- Feedback will take the form of a discussion between observer and staff member immediately after the observed session, followed by the observer's written feedback on the chosen form.
- All feedback should be completed as quickly as possible, with written feedback being completed and delivered preferably within the week.
- Comments on the feedback form should focus on 'points of good practice' and
- 'areas for development' rather than 'strengths and weaknesses'.

- Written feedback should be confidential to the observer, the staff member and his / her line manager. It must not form part of any performance review or disciplinary procedure.
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- The completed form is read and signed by both the staff member and the observer.

The observed session

The staff member and the peer observer should have a number of areas for consideration and questions in mind when discussing and designing the process of observation and deciding what is to be the focus of the feedback. These could include:

•Planning the session:

How does the plan relate to previous sessions?

Are there clear aims and objectives?

What are the intended learning outcomes?

How does the session fit in with the overall programme for the module / course? Are resources (IT, hand-outs) available at the appropriate points?

• Introducing the session to the students:

Are the intended learning objectives clear?

Is it clear to the students how this session fits with previous work?

Does the introduction set the scene?

Is there a clear overview for the session?

• Delivering and developing the plans:

Is the communication of ideas relevant, clear and coherent?

Is there an opportunity for students to clarify their understanding? How is this handled?

• What strategies are used to gain attention, to refocus at intervals and to ensure attention is maintained?

Are the students engaged and motivated?

Are the teaching methods appropriate to the tasks in hand?

Are there opportunities for the students to solve problems, think, question and feed-back?

What modes of delivery are used? Is more than one mode used?

• Concluding the session

Is the session drawn to a satisfactory conclusion (or an on-going series of conclusions)?

Is there a summary of the main ideas or a review of the point reached so far? Does the staff member attempt to evaluate whether the intended learning outcomes have been met?

Does the conclusion look forward to the next session?

· The observer's perspective

What relevance did the experience have for the observer's own practice? What might he/she do differently?

· Environment

What impact did the environment (size of room, numbers of students, heat, light, and time of day) have on the teacher and the observer and the students?

Giving feedback

Some points to bear in mind when giving feedback:

- it is generally expected that oral feedback / discussion will take place immediately after the observed session;
- the person observed should give their own evaluation first;
- when giving feedback, begin by focusing on the positive;
- any critical comments should be constructive, clear and specific rather than general;
- focus should be on the learning and teaching issues raised, not on the person;
- feedback may include suggestions but should not include advice;
- remember there are lots of ways of being a good teacher.

Approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee:

Endorsed by Senate:

Revised by LTC:

Learning and Teaching Committee

**REPORT FORM TYPE (PO1)a
PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING**

Please use this form as a guideline. Complete ALL or just SOME of the sections, according to the individual situation.

Name of staff member being observed: School:	Observer's name:
A pre-observation discussion should be held. Points arising from that discussion:	
Nature of activity being observed (lecture / seminar / workshop / other (if other, please identify))	

Date:
Location:

Time:

Duration:

Course code (or codes):

and / or

Module code (or codes):

Description of activity (give a brief outline, mentioning how complex the activity is)

Any significant or critical moments

Student reaction and engagement

Other comments

A post-observation discussion should be held. Points arising from that discussion:

Points arising from the observation, eg good practice noted; areas for development noted:

Staff member's signature:

Observer's signature:

Name of staff member being observed: School:	Observer's name:	
A pre-observation discussion should be held. Points arising from that discussion:		
Nature of activity being observed (lecture / seminar / workshop / other (if other, please identify))		
Date: Location:	Time:	Duration:

Course code (or codes):
Module code (or codes):

and / or

Description of activity (give a brief outline, mentioning how complex the activity is)

Aspects of the teaching activity:

Clarity of objectives

Planning and organisation

Methods / approach

Delivery and pace

Content (eg currency, accuracy,
relevance, level, use
of examples,

Match to student needs

Use of learning resources

Please comment on aspects as appropriate:

Student reaction and engagement

Other comments

A post-observation discussion should be held. Points arising from that discussion:

Points arising from the observation, eg good practice / areas for development noted:

Staff member's signature:

Observer's signature:



University of East Anglia
Learning and Teaching Committee

REPORT FORM TYPE (PO1)c
PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING

Please use this form as a guideline. Complete all or just some of the sections, according to the individual situation.

Name of staff member being observed:	Observer's name:
School:	
A pre-observation discussion should be held. Points arising from that discussion:	
Nature of activity being observed (lecture / seminar / workshop / other [if other, please identify])	
Date: Location:	Time: Duration:
Course code (or codes):	and / or Module code (or codes):
Description of activity (give a brief outline, mentioning how complex the activity is)	
Aspects of the teaching activity: Intended outcomes stated at start? Planning and organisation Delivery and pace Content (eg currency, accuracy, relevance, level, use of examples) Other comments on teaching	Please comment on aspects as appropriate:

<p>Interaction with students:</p> <p>Setting the scene</p> <p>Strategies to gain / hold attention</p>	<p>Please comment on interaction as appropriate:</p>
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<p>Content matched student needs?</p> <p>Dealing with questions /challenges</p> <p>Other comments on interaction</p>	
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<p>Other general comments</p>

<p>A post-observation discussion should be held. Points arising from that discussion:</p>

<p>Points arising from the observation, eg good practice / areas for development noted:</p>

<p>Staff member's signature:</p>	<p>Observer's signature:</p>
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REPORT FORM TYPE (PO1)d
PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING

Please use this form as a guideline. Complete all or just some of the sections, according to the individual situation.

Name of staff member being observed:		Observer's name:	
School:			
A pre-observation discussion should be held. Points arising from that discussion:			
Nature of activity being observed (lecture / seminar / workshop / other [if other, please identify])			
Date:		Time:	Duration:
Location:			
Course code (or codes):		and / or Module code (or codes):	
Description of activity (give a brief outline, mentioning how complex the activity is)			
Aspects of the teaching activity:		Please comment on aspects as appropriate:	
Intended outcomes stated at start?			
Planning and organisation			
Delivery, pace, tone, audibility			
Content (eg currency, accuracy, relevance, level, use of examples)			
Use of learning resources (eg visual aids) and of other resources (eg the teaching space, available facilities)			
Intended outcomes revisited at end?			

Other comments on teaching	
The student experience: What students seemed to be doing during the lecture	Please comment on student experience as appropriate:

Were students kept actively learning throughout lecture? Content matched student needs? How were students' questions invited and handled? Other comments on student experience	
Other general comments	

A post-observation discussion should be held. Points arising from that discussion:

Points arising from the observation, eg good practice / areas for development noted:

Staff member's signature:

Observer's signature: