



Learning & Teaching Committee of Senate

University Code of Practice

on

Peer Observation of Teaching

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CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The purpose and principles of peer observation	3
Characteristics and requirements of successful peer observation	4
Stages of the process	5
The observed session	7
Giving feedback	8
Dissemination	8
APPENDIX A - FORMS	10
<i>REPORT FORM TYPE 1 (PO1)a</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>REPORT FORM TYPE 2 (PO1)b</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>REPORT FORM TYPE 3 (PO1)c</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>REPORT FORM TYPE 4 (PO1)d</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>SCHOOLSUMMARY REPORT (PO2)</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>FACULTY SUMMARY REPORT (PO3)</i>	<i>21</i>

PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING - CODE OF PRACTICE

Introduction

This Code of Practice 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 Code of Practice.

This Code of Practice 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

This Code of Practice 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

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.

The purpose and principles of peer observation

Peer observation is intended to support the personal and professional development of academic staff, and to disseminate and share instances of innovative/best practice in lecturing via Faculty LTQCs. For this reason, oversight of the process lies with the Teaching Director in each School. Teaching Directors will produce an annual Summary Report (PO2) on peer observations in their school for consideration by their Faculty LTQC. School Directors of Teaching may draw on instances of best practice/innovation contained in the reports to produce their summary report, but should not identify individuals by name. The summary report produced by Teaching Directors will constitute the formal record of the peer observation process and confirmation that it has been completed satisfactorily.

Completed Peer Observation (PO1) forms should be forwarded to the School Teaching Director, who will ensure that copies are lodged with the relevant Local Support Office. The Teaching Director may retain copies of reports in order to draw on them annually in the completion of the School Summary Report Form (PO2). It is not expected that Teaching Directors will hold PO1 forms on file for more than a year and they are asked to delete PO1 files following completion of their annual PO2 form.

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.

It is expected that Associate Deans and Faculty LTQCs will be able to share Faculty summary reports with colleagues in other Faculties to maximise the opportunities for sharing of practice and innovative approaches across the University.

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.

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.

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 application.

Characteristics and requirements of successful peer observation

When used constructively and imaginatively, there are many benefits to be gained from peer observation. To be really successful peer observation needs:

- to be undertaken by all relevant staff
- senior staff who both support and participate in the process.
- The School Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality to keep an overview of the process;
- to be planned with an appropriate lead-in time.;

- to have outcomes and a dissemination strategy (School / Sector / Faculty-wide meetings);
- to be regular – probationers must be peer-observed every year, moving to a **minimum** of once every two years after completion of the five-year probationary period (more often if appropriate);

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

- 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;
- 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;

Minimum Requirements for Peer Observation:

- 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
- The process shall be 'signed off' within the School with each School Teaching Director submitting an annual report to FLTQC

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 are strongly encouraged to use one or more of these.
- 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.
- The completed form is read and signed by both the staff member and the observer.
- The form is then sent to the staff member's Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality (School Teaching Director), who reads the completed form, enters their own comments and proposals for development for the staff member if applicable, and signs and dates the form.
- The original form is then held in the relevant Local Support Office with a copy sent to the staff member.
- It is intended that only two copies of the form be retained – one by the relevant Local Support Office, and one by the observed staff member. Teaching Directors may hold copies in order to complete their annual School Summary Report (PO2), but will destroy any PO1 files on completion of this annual exercise.

- The School Teaching Director will forward their completed PO2 form to the Secretary of their Faculty LTQC.
- The Faculty Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning will draw on School Summary Reports (PO2s) to compile a Faculty Level Summary Report for consideration at FLTQC (PO3).
- Secretaries of Faculty LTQCs will forward copies of completed Faculty Summary Reports (PO3) to the Secretary of the University's Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC).

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.

Dissemination

If Schools are to make the most of peer observation they need to:

- ensure that good practice is shared through regular meetings or other fora within and across Schools and Faculties, for example at a staff development, School planning/strategy event or Learning and Teaching Day;
- discuss more general learning outcomes to aid the improvement and enhancement of students' experience of learning and teaching and the expertise of the staff member;

- identify and remedy common shortcomings, ensuring that action on commonly occurring areas for development is taken at group level, as well as at individual level;
- contribute to an item on peer observation of teaching being included on each Faculty LTQC agenda once per academic year.

Dissemination should be a key part of the peer observation process.

APPENDIX A - FORMS



University of East Anglia
Learning and Teaching Committee

REPORT FORM TYPE (P01)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): Module code (or codes):	and / or	
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 School Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality:
Comments of School Director of LTQ (including proposals for development and/or common areas identified for action and dissemination, if applicable):**

Signature of School Director of Teaching:	Date:
Staff member's next observation to be carried out by the end of (month) (year) (Code of Practice sets out normal frequency but Director may request next observation sooner if it is felt necessary)	
Original → filed in School; Copy → Staff member	



University of East Anglia
Learning and Teaching Committee

REPORT FORM TYPE (P01)b PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING

Please use this form as a guideline; complete all, or just some, 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:
Location:	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:	Please comment on aspects as appropriate:
Clarity of objectives	
Planning and organisation	
Methods / approach	
Delivery and pace	
Content (eg currency, accuracy, relevance, level, use of examples,	

<p>match to student needs)</p> <p>Use of learning resources</p>	
<p>Student reaction and engagement</p>	
<p>Other 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>
<p>Name of School Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality: Comments of School Director of LTQ (including proposals for development and/or common areas identified for action and dissemination if applicable):</p> <p>Signature of School Director of LTQ: Date:</p>	
<p>Staff member's next observation to be carried out by the end of (month) (year) (Code of Practice sets out normal frequency but Director may request next observation sooner if it is felt necessary)</p>	
<p>Original → filed in School; Copy → Staff member</p>	



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:	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 and pace		
Content (eg currency, accuracy, relevance, level, use of examples)		
Other comments on teaching		
Interaction with students:	Please comment on interaction as appropriate:	
Setting the scene		
Strategies to gain / hold attention		

<p>Content matched student needs?</p> <p>Dealing with questions /challenges</p> <p>Other comments on interaction</p>	
<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>
<p>Name of School Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality: Comments of School Director of LTQ (including proposals for development and/or common areas identified for action and dissemination if applicable):</p>	
<p>Signature of School Director of LTQ:</p>	<p>Date:</p>
<p>Staff member's next observation to be carried out by the end of(month) (year) (Code of Practice sets out normal frequency but Director may request the next observation sooner if it is felt necessary) Original → filed in School; Copy → Staff member</p>	



University of East Anglia

Learning and Teaching Committee

REPORT FORM TYPE (P01)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:		Please comment on student experience as appropriate:	
What students seemed to be doing during the lecture			

<p>Were students kept actively learning throughout lecture? Content matched student needs?</p> <p>How were students' questions invited and handled?</p> <p>Other comments on student experience</p>	
<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>
<p>Name of School Director of Learning, Teaching and Quality: Comments of School Director of LTQ (including proposals for development and/or common areas identified for action and dissemination if applicable):</p> <p>Signature of School Director of LTQ: Date:</p>	
<p>Staff member's next observation to be carried out by the end of(month) (year) (Code of Practice sets out normal frequency but Director may request the next observation sooner if it is felt necessary)</p>	
<p>Original → filed in School; Copy → Staff member</p>	

SCHOOL SUMMARY REPORT ON PEER OBSERVATION

PO2

For completion by School Teaching Director (Completed reports to be forwarded to relevant FLTQC secretary)

Name of School:		Academic Year:	
Name of Teaching Director:		Date report compiled:	
Name of Faculty FLTQC Secretary:		Date report considered by FLTQC:	
Number of staff Observed included in this report:		Proportion of school teaching staff included in this annual report (%)	

Issues identified by Peer Observation of Teaching and School response:
 Teaching Directors should use the grid below to identify issues arising from Peer Observation of Teaching and any actions planned or the reasons for not taking action. The final column may be used to track the progress of planned actions when the Action Plan is reviewed and should be completed once planned actions have been completed. Please list issues of commendation as well as issues requiring attention.

Issue arising	School Response	Follow Up Action (including person responsible & timescale)	Action Completed

Please forward a copy of the completed PO2 report to the Secretary of the Faculty LTQC

FACULTY SUMMARY REPORT FORM: PEER OBSERVATION

PO3

Name of Faculty (e.g. SSF, SCI, HUM, FMH):			
Academic Year:			
Name of Associate Dean:			
Date Faculty Summary Report Form completed:			
Date considered by FLTQC:			
School Reports Attached from following Schools:			
Number of Faculty staff Observed included in this report:		Proportion of Faculty teaching staff included in this annual report (%)	
<p>The Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee has reviewed the School responses to issues arising from Peer Observation of Teaching and confirms that each School has given appropriate consideration to the issues raised and has prepared an appropriate Action Plan.</p>			
<p>The Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee has identified the following points as being worthy of dissemination:</p>			

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The Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee is taking the following steps to disseminate the themes identified above:

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In addition to the issues identified in the individual School responses, the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Quality Office wishes to draw the following general issues or themes to the attention of the Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate:

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Signature of Faculty Associate Dean	
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Date:	
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**Please complete this report and return (in electronic format) to the
Secretary of the Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)**