



Observation of Teaching & Learning Policy & Procedure

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Policy Introduction and aim

Session observations are an essential part of the Quality Improvement process; a strong, effective observation programme helps to support continuous improvement in the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment. The aim of this document is to provide the support necessary for staff to ensure that Bluestone College learners receive the highest possible standard of experience.

Management

Overall responsibility for the Session Observation Policy and Procedure lies with the Lead IQA who will coordinate with the relevant Trainers and Managers.

The selected observation team will carry out formal observations of a range of teaching and learning situations, including taught sessions, group tutorials and workplace assessments. All members of the observation team will be case loaded to ensure a balanced work load.

To support standardisation and staff training, a number of observations will be conducted under dual observations.

The Lead IQA with chair quarterly curriculum standards panel to quality check a sample of lesson observation reports. Lead IQA will be responsible for generating an observation report for the Quality Steering Group with areas of strength and required improvement detailed. All findings from the observation reports will be sent to the Lead IQA for staff development purposes.

Objectives

The observation process must be understood and supported by all Bluestone College Training staff. Observations are essential and are designed to:

- Develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in both the classroom and workplace
- Recognise and disseminate good practice Assess the quality of learner experience
- Measure performance and benchmark against internal and external results Support and add context to the self-assessment process
- Support the assessment of leadership and management within a particular area Enhance the performance management process and identify individual and team development needs

Observation Team

A team of observers will be drawn from across Bluestone College and will include the Lead IQA as well as IQAs and approved teaching and learning practitioners. The team of observers will receive training in line with the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and the 4 point grading scale adopted by OFSTED. It is important that people receive training in session observation to ensure that a consistency of standard is applied to all judgments across the organisation.

The Observation team will also be strengthened by dual observation visits from partners and their quality teams.

Training will involve training to make potential observers aware of the process and the criteria being used. Validation of all observers will take place before they are allowed to observe and grade sessions. The validation process involved a paired observation with the Lead IQA which will include a post-observation discussion comparing strengths, areas for development and possible grades. Where this is found to be consistent the potential observer will be validated. Where there are any disagreements, a further observation will take place using the same format.

Observers who hold a full teaching qualifications (PGCE/Cert Ed/DTLLS) will be entitled to grade a session, those without a full teaching qualification may carry out non-graded development observations.

Procedure

Observations will take place at different stages during the year for all areas with teaching and learning provision. The Lead IQA and will work with relevant personnel to co-ordinate a timetable as close to the start of every academic cycle as possible.

- All staff involved in teaching and learning, including any freelance staff
- For full time teaching staff three observations will be conducted per year
- For part time teaching staff two observations (where applicable) will be conducted per year
- For assessors one observation will be conducted per year

It should also be noted that where a trainer/assessor is undergoing formal teacher training/assessor training their observations for such courses are not included within the formal Options Training observation process and are considered developmental.

All new staff will have their teaching practice observed before the end of their probationary period. The outcome of these observations will directly feedback in to the probationary review, and should therefore be seen as an essential part of probationary performance management.

Observations are also a useful tool in helping to support and develop teaching and assessing staff and therefore peer mentoring and peer observation is encouraged and, where it is considered appropriate, it will be coordinated by the line manager in consultation with the Lead IQA where appropriate.