Observation of Teaching Policy

Phase 1[1] applies to all Apprentice Programmes and, where required, PSRB and Collaborative Programmes

Version Number 2.2

Effective from 1 March 2022

Author: Quality Management Office

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[1] There will be wider consultation before the rollout of the policy beyond these programmes

Background

The Observation of Teaching Policy is a part of our work to ensure we put consideration of the student experience at the heart of our teaching and learning practice.

The Observation of Teaching Policy provides a clear, developmental path through which we can take pride in the innovative and high-quality teaching demonstrated throughout the University. It is also a way in which the academic community can continually improve, champion and recognise good practice in the University's most significant asset: its staff. The Policy provides a safe environment for teaching staff to observe different teaching methods in practice and to share their own teaching practice with colleagues with the aim of placing consideration of the student experience at the heart of our endeavours.

1.0 Purpose

1.1   This document outlines the general principles and guidance relating to the routine use of observation of teaching (OoT) as part of the University's approach to improving students' learning experiences through advances in teaching practice. In addition, the University's aspiration is that observation of teaching will result in developmental, constructive feedback leading to improvements in reflective practices and educational scholarship. The experiences of the observers and those who have been observed should contribute to the sharing of good practice and offer fresh perspectives on teaching and learning.

1.2   OoT will help the University meet the [Learning and Teaching Advice and Guidance Section of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) which states the "*Providers operate staff performance review processes that include opportunities for observed teaching and/or peer review of teaching*" (QAA, 2018, p9). Also, OoT will contribute towards the University's preparedness for an Ofsted inspection of the University's Level 3 to Level 7 Apprenticeship provision. [The Further education and skills inspection handbook](#) states that inspection activity will include *"direct observation of teaching, training and assessment"* (Gov UK, 2021, para 128).

1.3   The University of Salford supports the Higher Education Academy's (HEA 2006) (now Advance HE) list of reasons why academics should be observed and observe teaching:

- "To enhance the importance attached to quality of teaching.
- To encourage all staff to reflect on the effectiveness of their own teaching and identify their development needs.
- To foster discussion and dissemination of best practice.
- To increase staff awareness of the whole student experience.

- To identify any weaknesses and put in place an action plan to remedy them.
- To assist departments in providing a high-quality educational experience for their students." (Abridged from Gosling)

2.0 Scope

2.1 Phase 1 of this policy applies to staff (including sub-contracted and hourly paid staff) who teach on Apprenticeship programmes and those who teach on programmes where the Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requires formal observation of teaching to take place. Staff teaching on UoS collaborative programmes (where the collaborative provider does not have an Observation of Teaching Policy) are within scope of this policy.

2.2 "Teaching" for the purposes of this policy includes all activity with students that contributes to module learning outcomes and/or successful achievement of programme outcomes. Thus, staff who meet the criteria in paragraph 2.1 but whose only teaching activity is supervising dissertations and/or projects for students on taught programmes are included.

2.3 Staff who are registered on the PGCAP Learning and Teaching in Higher Education module, that includes observation of teaching at the University can, in the academic year they are doing the module, opt out of the OoT scheme as they will be engaging in observations as part of their studies. The exception being where the PSRB requires them to take part in OoT.

3.0 Policy Statements

3.1 The University recognises that a developmental and supportive approach to teaching is the most helpful to the professional development of observers and observees**.**

A developmental approach to OoT

3.2 If the OoT policy is to deliver the positive impacts outlined in section 1.0 above, it should be recognised as a supportive process. All academic staff that are in scope are expected to engage with this activity regularly (i.e. at least once a year) with the option to take part more often according to development needs. Academic staff being observed should feel that they could choose to be observed in an area of their practice that they struggle with without concern that this may go beyond the observer/observee relationship.

3.3 OoT is part of a wider enhancement strategy that further develops the University's ambition to be pedagogically excellent.

3.4 The University provides online learning and development material and optional staff development sessions for all staff who are required to take part in OoT.

3.5 Unless a PSRB or external audit requires otherwise, those taking part in OoT can decide what teaching activity they want to be observed, which could range from a one-to-one supervision to a lecture to a large cohort. The activity can be in-person

teaching or online. Academic staff should be prepared to propose several options for observations to help ensure that a mutually agreeable date can be identified. It is expected that observations should be a minimum of an hour long. The observation should normally be of the full length of the scheduled teaching event and of sufficient duration to allow the desired skills to be meaningfully observed. If an Observer is to leave part way through the session, they should plan their departure to minimise disruption to students.

Organising observations

3.6 Appendix 3 sets out the process for arranging Observation of Teaching. Schools are responsible for determining which academic staff should take part in the observations. Staff will be expected to contact each other and make the necessary arrangements for the observations.

3.7 Staff will normally observe colleagues from within their own Schools, although not necessarily from within their own discipline area.

3.8 If a member of staff is uncomfortable observing or being observed by a particular colleague, they can request (via the Associate Dean Academic or the School nominee) a change of observer/observee (within the bounds of what is permissible by a PSRB, if applicable).

Code of Practice

3.9 The Code of Practice for OoT (see link in Appendix 1) will apply to all staff taking part in developmental OoT.

Records of observations

3.10 The post-observation discussion between the observer and observee is private (unless a PSRB requires otherwise) but the outcomes will be captured on the OoT template (see link in Appendix 2). For audit purposes, staff taking part in observations are required to report, via the online OoT Logging App both the date they observed a colleague and the date they were observed by a colleague. This data will be reported to the School Teaching and Learning Committee.

3.11 OoT will not be recorded on PDRs, however staff are encouraged to use the feedback from observations to identify proposed learning objectives and/or development activity in their PDR. Observers should encourage Observees to share good practice via the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Centre's Academic Practice Exchange.

University Consideration

3.12 School Learning and Teaching Committees are responsible for ensuring the implementation of this Policy. The University's Learning and Teaching Committee will receive an annual report, collated by the Quality Management Office, about the operation of OoT to provide assurance re compliance.

3.13 The University's Learning and Teaching Committee will commission audits and other such evaluations or reports as may be required to verify the effective implementation of the OoT Policy to assure Senate that the procedure and the policy governing it remain fit for purpose and contribute to the enhancement of the quality of student learning opportunities.

4.0   Related Documentation

- Observation of Teaching Code of Practice (Appendix 1)
- Observation of Teaching Observation Template (Appendix 2)
- Observation of Teaching Process Flowchart (Appendix 3)

5.0   References

- HEA Study Centre for Education ESCalate (2006a) Peer Observation [Accessed online from http://escalate.ac.uk/resources/peerobservation/index.html 14 Feb 2013].
- HEA Study Centre for Education ESCalate (2006b) Planning for Peer Observation of Learning and Teaching [Accessed online http://escalate.ac.uk/resources/peerobservation/02.html 14 Feb 2013].
- Gov.UK (2021) Further education and skills handbook [Accessed online from Further education and skills handbook - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) 4 Feb 2022].
- QAA (2018) UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Learning and Teaching [Accessed online from Learning and Teaching (qaa.ac.uk) 10 May 2021]

Appendix 1: Observation of Teaching Code of Practice

See the Observation of Teaching Code of Practice on the [Getting Started with Peer Observation Hub Page.](#) This Code of Practice applies to all staff taking part in Observation of Teaching under the University's Observation of Teaching Policy.
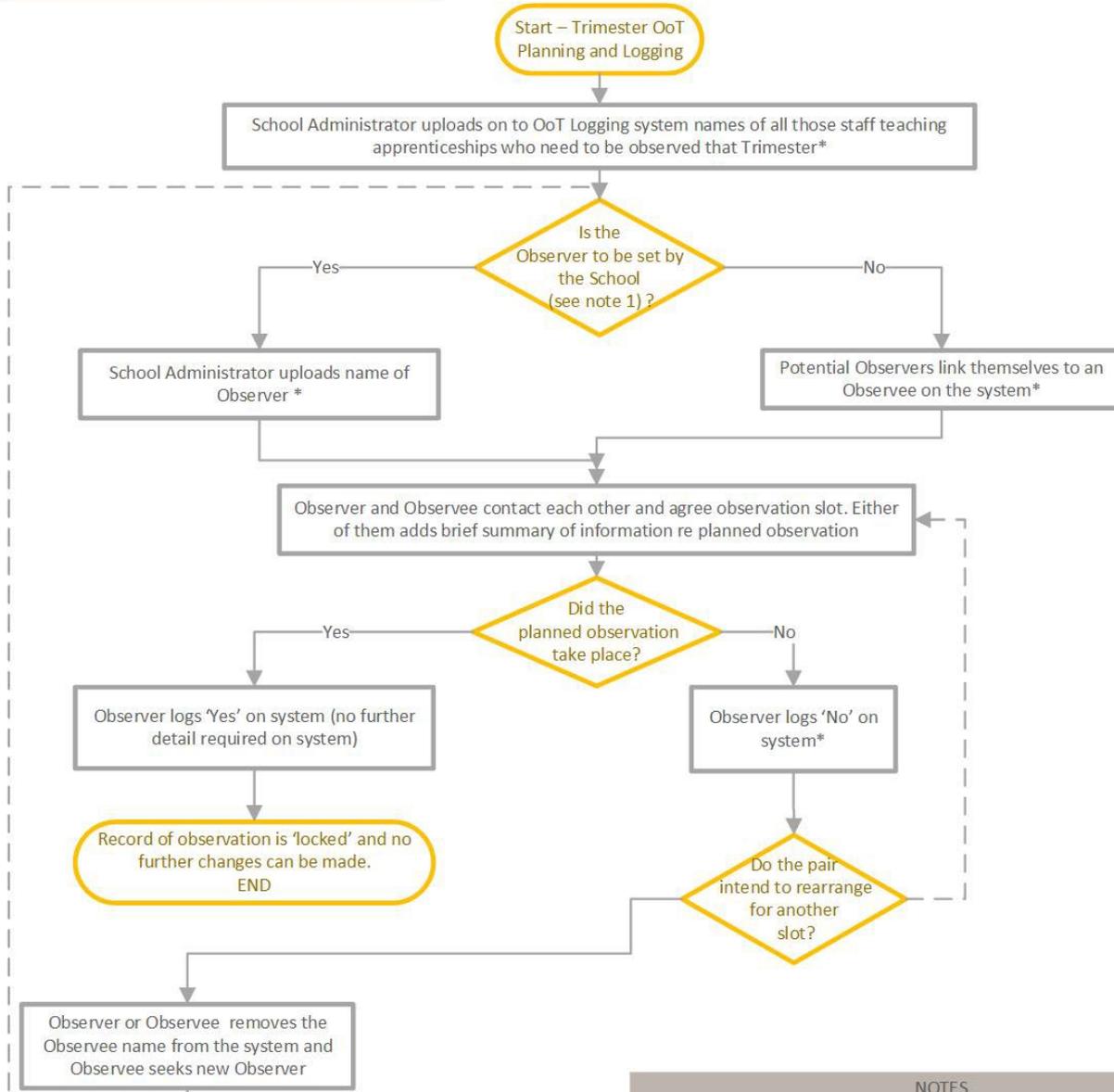
Appendix 2: OBSERVATION OF TEACHING TEMPLATE

See the Observation of Teaching Template on the [Getting Started with Peer Observation Hub Page.](#) This should be used before, during and after observations

Appendix 3 - Flowchart showing the Observation of Teaching Process

OBSERVATION OF TEACHING PROCESS

Click here for more information (link to Getting Started with Peer Observation Hub page)

Start – Trimester OoT Planning and Logging

School Administrator uploads on to OoT Logging system names of all those staff teaching apprenticeships who need to be observed that Trimester*

Is the Observer to be set by the School (see note 1) ?

Yes — School Administrator uploads name of Observer *

No — Potential Observers link themselves to an Observee on the system*

Observer and Observee contact each other and agree observation slot. Either of them adds brief summary of information re planned observation

Did the planned observation take place?

Yes — Observer logs 'Yes' on system (no further detail required on system)

Record of observation is 'locked' and no further changes can be made.
END

No — Observer logs 'No' on system*

Do the pair intend to rearrange for another slot?

Observer or Observee removes the Observee name from the system and Observee seeks new Observer

NOTES
*System automatically emails relevant people with link to system and info re next steps

1- School may decide to allocate Observers or leave it to Observers and Observees to pair up.

Document Control Information			
Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)			
Author	**Summary of changes**	**Version**	**Authorised & Date**
Helen Sharman	*Section 3.12 in earlier version removed to remove 'judgemental' language. Flowchart added (Appendix 3) Reference made to online OoT Logging App.*	V2.2	University Learning and Teaching Committee. 16 February 2022
Helen Sharman	*Change to section 2.1 following consultation with Unions to make it explicit that this is referring to the apprenticeship of PSRB related programmes at partners not all provision.*	V2.1	Neil Fowler Chair of SE**LTEC** 21/7/21
Helen Sharman	*Revised to focus on Apprenticeships and PSRBs*	V2.0	SELTEC, 19 May 2021
L Clarke	*Transferred into new policy template. Update to section 2.4 re planned review of OoT in 2015/16. Update to section 3,6 to reflect arrangements for organising OoT in 2016/17. Update to section 3.8.to reflect arrangements for review of Code of Practice.*	V1.2	Jonathan Carson, Chair of SELTEC, 14 November 2016
L Clarke	*Amended web links for QEO web pages*	V1.1	6 May 2015

Policy Management and Responsibilities:	
Owner:	This Policy is issued by the Chair of University Learning and Teaching Committee , who has the authority to issue and communicate policy on Observation of Teaching and has delegated day-to-day management and communication of the policy to the Quality Management Office.
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	Policies, Procedures and Regulations governing the operation of the Observation of Teaching (OoT) Policy are determined by Senate on the recommendation of the University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULT). The operation and management of OoT within Schools is the responsibility of Deans of Schools. The operation and management of OoT at institutional level is the responsibility of the Head of QEO. All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this Policy, including Academics, Module Leaders, Programme Leaders, Directors of Directorates, Deans of School and Associate Deans Academic.

Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:	
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR) *Equality Assessment form*	1. *October 2016 –* 2. *Updated July 2021 – Contact QMO for a copy*
Legal implications (LPG)	3. *N/A*
Information Governance (LPG)	4. *N/A*
Student facing procedures (QMO)	5. *N/A*
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	6. *N/A*

Consultation:	
Staff Trades Unions via HR Students via USSU Relevant external bodies (specify)	*February 2022 – Minor changes to policy - Consultation will take place prior to any wider rollout of the policy.* *May 2021 – changes required to meet external quality assurance requirements :no Trade Union consultation required. Consultation will take place prior to any wider rollout of the policy.*

Review:	
Review due:	May 2024.
Document location:	[Academic Handbook	University of Salford](#)
The owner and author are responsible for publicising this policy document.	