



OTLA policy

Date ratified: 18th March 2020

Date policy due to be reviewed: March 2022

Committee responsible for policy: Board of Governance

Policy Statement

The purpose of the Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy is to clearly state how The Ridge Employability College will:

- quality assure the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment
- develop tutors and drive high standards of teaching, learning and assessment across all provision
- identify where further support and mentoring is required
- identify and share best practice across all provision

Standards and Targets

The Ridge Employability College has set the standard for teaching, learning and assessment observation profile as

- good if 85% OLTs are at grade 2 or above.
- outstanding if 95% OLTs are at grade 2 or above

The overall target for grade 1 observations is 25%

Requirements

All tutors should be observed delivering at least once during the year.

Those tutors who have not taught before for The Ridge Employability College should be observed during their first half term.

Responsibility

The observation and maintenance of the quality assurance process is management led and the overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the process rests with the directors who will review the policy every two years.

Procedure for Lesson Observation (where college staff conduct the observations)

- Observations will be carried out by experienced observers including the Lead Tutor
- Observations will not necessarily last for the entire duration of a teaching session but tutors can expect to be observed for a minimum of 45 minutes
- A provisional grade (1-4) will be given for each observation and be confirmed to the tutor on the OTLA record
- All OTLA records and feedback are confidential
- The Action Plan resulting from the observation will be monitored by the tutor's line manager and progress recorded.

Before the visit

- Notice of two working days will be given for the OTLA visit, except during Inspection.

During the visit

- The observer can arrive at any time during the session and will introduce themselves to the tutor.
- The observer will observe for a minimum of 45 minutes
- The tutor will make the learners aware of a possible visit and reassure them of the process.
- The tutor file and all materials appropriate to that session should be available to the observer.
- The observer will make notes during the session
- The observer will talk to the learners and look at their work and Individual Learning Plans. The questioning of learners by the observer will be informal but professional. It will not personalise issues to do with the tutor or raise doubts in learners' minds about the programme of learning.

Feedback

Feedback arrangements to the tutor will be agreed prior to the observation and the extent of the initial feedback will depend on the available time and circumstances of the group. However, the major strengths, areas for improvement and provisional grade should be discussed.

Feedback arrangements must ensure sufficient time for both observer and tutor to allow the session to be reviewed thoroughly and take the opportunity to review and reflect on the teaching practice observed. It is recommended that both the tutor and the observer set aside at least 30 minutes to ensure that this process is developmental and involves a 'two way' professional dialogue between the tutor and the observer.

It may only be possible to carry out this via telephone (or online discussion) but face to face is preferred.

Tutors should be advised that the observer may reflect on the observation before detailed feedback is provided and a provisional grade decided.

During the feedback tutors are encouraged to be actively involved in the review of the session and their subsequent actions for improvement. Questions on the observation report support this process.

Tutors will be reminded that they will receive written feedback.

The tutor will have the opportunity to discuss the observation further with the observer by phone or in a meeting if required.

General tutor development needs identified through the OTLA process will be collated and discussed at standardisation meetings by the Curriculum Lead.

Appeals

If the tutor disagrees with the observer's grade then initially this should be discussed with the observer.

If, after subsequent discussion, the tutor still disagrees with the grade, the tutor must contact the Curriculum Lead by email within 5 working days. The OLT report will be reviewed and the Curriculum Lead will contact the tutor to discuss the issues within 5 working days.

Following the discussion and review of the evidence, the decision by the Curriculum Lead will be made and communicated to the tutor within 5 working days to uphold the original grade or to carry out a second observation by an alternative observer.

Lesson Observation Ratings

GRADE 1 - Outstanding

Teaching staff who receive a rating of 'Outstanding' may be invited to share their good practice with colleagues during tutor meetings/events, and the opportunities for sharing good practice will be discussed and recorded at the feedback session, and notified to the College Manager using the Sharing Good Practice form (Appendix 1).

GRADE 2 - Good

Those teachers who receive a rating of 'Good' are demonstrating a high standard. However, advice on areas for further development will be given on the observation form to move practice from 'Good' to 'Outstanding' wherever possible.

Opportunities for sharing good practice may also be identified and observers will complete an action plan if required and tutors will report back on their progress in the allotted time.

GRADE 3 - Requires improvement

Those tutors who receive a grade 3 quality rating will be given a set of recommendations for improvement by the observer. The Curriculum Lead will contact the tutor to arrange mentoring sessions.

The tutor will be re-observed within 3 months if possible and if this results in a further Grade 3, the support and/or mentoring must continue and a further re-observation within two months arranged. This process does not restart at the beginning of each academic year, ie, continues from one year to the next.

A further grade 3 would result in the tutor no longer being approved to teach on funded classes.

Progress against the plan and further staff development needs will be reviewed by the line manager and the progress monitored with the directors at contract monitoring meetings.

GRADE 4 - Inadequate

Those tutors achieving a rating of 'inadequate' will be provided with a more intensive action plan. The observer will refer the tutor to the Curriculum Lead who will contact the tutor and agree the support required.

A detailed mentoring and action plan will be drawn up and the mentor will be responsible for informing the Curriculum Lead on the progress made within the agreed timescales.

A further observation date will be agreed with the observer to identify progress made within three months. If this results in a further grade 4 the tutor will be unable to teach on funded classes.

If this results in a grade 3 the support and/or mentoring must continue and a further re-observation within two months arranged. Tutors with this grade will be required to undertake a range of monitored activities with a view to improving their rating to 'Good'.

These activities must include some of the following:

- ongoing support/mentoring from an appropriate manager external mentoring /coaching
- taking part in an internal/external CPD training activity
- e-learning modules
- working with a best practice peer, including peer observations
- engaging in team teaching activities
- attending meetings/briefings.

Note: The re-observation grades for grades 3 and 4 will replace the original grades in the provider grade profile. See Appendix 2 for Grade Descriptors

Mentoring for Newly Appointed Tutors

Directors will ensure that newly appointed tutors are supported and have regular reviews of their schemes of work and session plans including a review of the teaching, learning and assessment strategies planned.

Peer Observations

The Curriculum Lead will encourage teaching staff to participate in Peer Observations where possible. This enables teaching staff to informally, but systematically, observe other teaching staff teaching, particularly those teaching in other subject areas.

Tutors participating in this activity are expected to reflect on their learning from observing other staff and to identify how their teaching skills will develop as a result.

Observation Training

Observers are supported and encouraged to undertake formal accredited observation training.

Updating workshops will also be arranged by the directors for all staff designated as observers. This includes the sharing of best practice and standardisation meetings.

Tutors may also receive updates through observation training packages which includes best practice for example in giving feedback and general best observation practice.

Good Practice

Sharing and Developing

In order to establish a common view of what is good practice in teaching, learning and assessment, this section provides examples of national guidelines, inspection evidence and models of teaching and learning.

The model for sharing best practice which sets out the stages and processes for identifying , validating, and sharing good practice is shown in Appendix 3 and is based on the QIA research and publication *“Little Acorns Taking Root”*.

The 2014 professional standards, devised by the Education & Training Foundation with the support of practitioners, aims to help teachers and trainers use the standards and apply them to the context in which they work. The standards:

- set out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training;
- enable teachers and trainers to identify areas for their own professional development;
- support initial teacher education; and,
- provide a national reference point that organisations can use to support the development of their staff.

The Standards can be found on the following link

<http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/programmes/professional-standards/>

(Checked 11th February 2020 SM)

Using the above standards it is possible to identify an outline of a checklist of the main skills that a teacher should have in order to be able to demonstrate good practice. A good practice profile for teaching can be viewed in appendix 4. Features of an outstanding lesson recommended by Ofsted can be viewed in appendix 5.

Ways of sharing Good Practice

The Curriculum Lead will produce a schedule of CPD events for all tutors in which sharing good practice and teaching and learning strategies will be a focus.

Managers are expected to cascade the CPD in order to promote good practice and record and report on its impact, using the sharing good practice form (Appendix I) within two months of the event.

Sharing good practice may be done through:-

- Network meetings: where workshops are arranged which focus on:
- teaching and learning issues that arise from observations and staff development which is cascaded
- Recording of lessons and presentations or interviews with tutors and students
- Mentoring arrangements made by observers as a result of OLTs
- Teaching and learning Conference or CPD sessions
- Teaching and Learning updates

Appendix 1

Sharing Good Practice Form

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Provider | | Tutor | |
| Course | | Programme Area | |
| Date(s) | | Method of identification (please select) | OTLA Class visit RARPA audit CPD follow up Supported experiment Other |

| | |
|---|--|
| Description of Best Practice used, including any resources and source of idea (if applicable) | |
| What was the impact on learning? | |
| Practical tips for other tutors / possible development? | |
| Suggested actions for sharing of Best Practice within your own team or across the college | |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------|--|
| Validated by: | | Date: | |
|----------------------|--|--------------|--|

Grade 1: OUTSTANDING

- Consistently outstanding session.
- Very well planned, using a wide variety of teaching and learning and assessment strategies.
- Attention to individual learner needs and learning styles.
- Regular, precise learner feedback recorded.
- Learners indicate high satisfaction levels with and proactive involvement in the learning.
- A “wow” factor.

Grade 2: GOOD

- Consistently good with some very good elements.
- Well planned, using some variety in teaching and learning and assessment strategies.
- A learner-centred approach with regular learner feedback recorded and some differentiation.
- Learners are satisfied and aware of their progress

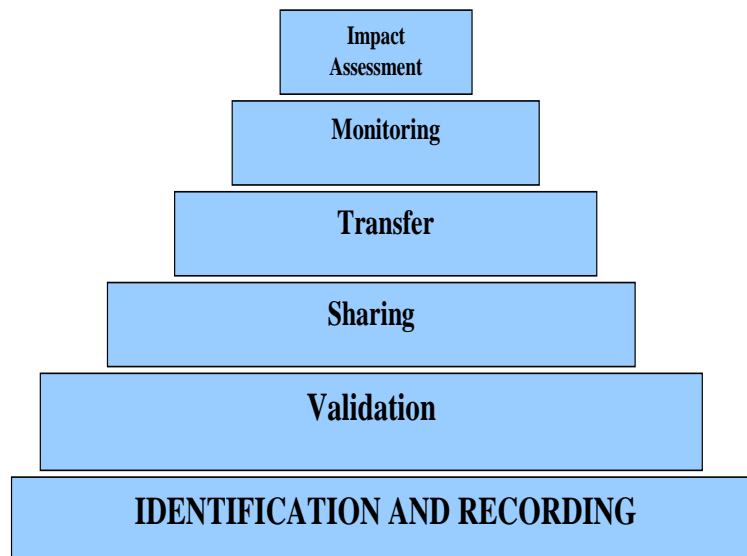
Grade 3: REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT

- Session is well planned but there is little variety in teaching and learning strategies.
- Assessment strategies are in place but not focused.
- The session appears too teacher-centred or not sufficiently managed.
- Minor breach in H&S or E&D requirements.
- There are missed opportunities to facilitate learning

Grade 4: INADEQUATE

- Insufficient planning and attention to learner needs.
- Many missed opportunities to facilitate learning.
- Poor recording of learner progress and lack of feedback.
- Serious breach in H&S or E&D requirements

A model for good practice transfer



Appendix 4 Good Practice Profile for Teaching

Knowledge

“Ensure that knowledge of own specialist area is current and appropriate to the teaching context”. (Professional standard C P1.1)

Organisation

“Plan teaching sessions which meet the aims and needs of individual learner’s and groups using a variety of resources, including new and emerging technologies”. (Professional standard D P1.2)

Engagement

“Use a range of effective and appropriate teaching and learning techniques to engage and motivate learners and to encourage independence”. (Professional standard B P2.2)

Ability to enthuse

“Implement appropriate and innovative ways to enthuse and motivate learner’s about own specialist area”. (Professional standard CP2.1)

Feedback

“Use feedback as a tool for learning and progression”. (Professional standard E S 4)

Assessment

“Devise, select, use and appraise assessment tools, including, where appropriate, those which exploit new and emerging technologies”. (Professional standard E P 1.2)
(adapted from an example in Collegenet 2007 ‘Reflective observation’ training

Appendix 5 Features of outstanding lessons (from Ofsted inspection reports)

Planning

“Teaching is very well planned and all courses have detailed and thorough schemes of work”.

Classroom environment

“The display of relevant technical information, charts, posters and students' work on the walls of the classrooms contributes to a welcoming and stimulating learning environment”.

Aims

“The aims of every lesson are displayed and shared with students at the start “.

Recap

“Each lesson begins with an initial test, revision or review questions, which provides a stimulating start and a chance to reinforce students' understanding of earlier work”.

Presentation skills

“Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and the best are inspirational, skilfully imparting their passion to students”.

Variety of teaching strategies

“In the best lessons, teachers use a wide range of imaginative teaching strategies. These include revision games, group and pair work, debates and presentations”.

Questioning

“Students are expected to articulate answers to questions in some depth, and are gently discouraged from monosyllabic responses”.

Integration of key skills

“In the better teaching, key skills opportunities are identified by teachers, enabling students to map and record their key skills work appropriately”.

Differentiation

“In the best lessons, activities have been devised that will stretch and challenge the more able students and also enable the weaker students to learn effectively”.

Promotion of ILT

“Teachers offer useful and interesting website addresses to assist students with their research. Computer-based resources are used effectively for learning and good use is made of Internet research”. (New inspection criterion 2005 –9 ‘Interesting and relevant use of ILT’)

Assessment and targets

“Marking is meticulous and feedback gives students clear guidelines on ways to improve their work. Students are set demanding minimum performance standards at the start of their course”.

Developing learner skills

“Students learn how to be critical and analytical as well as gaining good subject knowledge. They understand complex issues and theories, and demonstrate high levels of evaluative skills. Additional skills, such as group work and oral skills, are well developed through the teaching and learning methods used in the classroom”.

Summation

Learning is constantly checked and summarised well at the end of lessons”.

Independent learning

Very high quality, extra material is available for extension activities