



TEACHING OBSERVATION FRAMEWORK

November 2021

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1. Executive Summary

The Teaching Observation Framework is designed to increase the quality of online and face-to-face teaching, assure departments that they deliver a high-quality student experience and drive development activity. This document sets out the Universities expectation that all staff who teach/support students engage in annual review of their teaching and the process that facilitates this. The Teaching Observation Framework replaces the Peers Enhancing Practice Framework (2011) and progresses a formalised, consistent, wide-reaching approach to teaching review and development.

The process of Peer Review which is central to the Framework meets the needs of all staff who teach and support student learning by providing a mechanism through which peers can regularly observe each other teach and take forward constructive actions towards enhancement. Alongside this core aim, a transparent process of Action Planning and highlighting best practice surfaces strengths and weaknesses which can feed into quality assurance mechanisms.

The process of teaching observation is facilitated by the Teaching Observation Online Toolkit, including training materials, mouldable peer review templates and advice for line managers.

The University of Portsmouth is committed to promoting equality and diversity best practice both within the workforce and in any other area where it has influence. We will therefore take every possible step to ensure that this Framework is applied fairly to all employees regardless of, for example; race, ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality; gender (including marital status); gender reassignment, age; disability; sexual orientation; religion or belief; marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, length of service, whether full or part-time or employed under a permanent or a fixed- term contract.

2. Principle Base

The 3 Principles ...

1

A COMMUNITY AND CULTURE COMMITTED TO TEACHING EXCELLENCE

The University will provide you with a safe, inclusive space, based on trust, collegiality and reciprocity, where you will work, alongside your peers and students, to develop the highest academic and professional standards .



2



A SHARED PROCESS; A SHARED PURPOSE

The University will expect your engagement with a robust, evidence-informed developmental process that affords a flexible, responsive approach to localised enhancement activity that aligns with the University's commitment to teaching excellence

3

A COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The University will commit to delivering a rewarding and emboldening experience where you will have the opportunity to engage in critical discussion around academic and professional practice, allowing you to develop a personalised action plan for your continuing professional development



3. Underpinning Expectations

3.1 This Framework applies to all staff, whose role is to teach and/or support students with their learning. This includes group teaching and one-to-one support sessions. This includes both academic and professional service staff.

This includes, but is not limited to, the following staff:

- ***Learning Support Tutors***
- ***PhD Students who teach***
- ***Tutors operating within Central Services***
- ***Career/Employability Advisors***
- ***Guest Lecturers***
- ***PTHP staff***

3.2 Staff will be required to complete a cycle of peer review at least once annually per academic cycle

3.3 By engaging in the process both Observer and Observee will gain:

- ***experience of different teaching mechanisms including practical ideas which are mutually beneficial***
- ***confidence in their teaching practice***
- ***evidence of their sustained commitment to teaching excellence***
- ***experience of different disciplinary approaches***
- ***documented feedback evidencing their teaching competency which can be used when applying for recognition awards and/or role promotion***
- ***evidence to support Higher Education Fellowship applications***

3.4 The process of observation set out in this Framework is a Peer Review of activity. A structured reflective activity is conducted which is mutually beneficial to both individuals

3.5 Pairings are self-selected and should be different for each academic cycle in order to ensure objectivity and build community as part of the process

3.6 The process of peer review has three distinct stages which are tracked as a guided process via the (Peer Review Form).

3.7 The Action Plan is the output which evidences the process has occurred in line with the framework. The Action Plan may inform discussions which should capture and recognise excellent practice worth sharing and formalise any identified CPD activity.

3.8 Team teaching would not count as peer observation in this context. To enable the best output, the Observer should be objective and have the sole purpose of reviewing the teaching activity against the agreed aims.

3.9 Colleagues should select an observer who they feel is able to contribute to their growth and development. This should wherever possible be from a different subject area and discipline. This may be someone from their department, or faculty, or it may be from outside the faculty. Usually, line managers would not observe their team.

3.10 It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to collate the broader themes identified across the submitted Action Plans and take strategic action as appropriate. The Action Plan is structured to capture 3 Best Practice Highlights to be shared and 3 Development Activities to be undertaken per pairing. By collating these plans Line Managers will be informed and able to action wider initiatives that benefit all. The next steps should be celebratory and developmental.

3.11 It is the responsibility of Heads of School/Section or equivalent to track that the Peer Review is scheduled. This involves notifying staff of the following:

- ***who will be involved in this annual cycle of Peer Review***
- ***when the annual cycle begins (EQUIP planning may be a factor here)***
- ***how the activity will be reported upon and by what date***
- ***if the review is to be for an online or physical teaching activity***
- ***how and when pairings should share their Action Plans***
- ***which version of the Peer Review Form should be used (see 4.12)***

3.12 Where applicable, Heads of School/Section may wish to tailor the Peer Review Forms which are provided in an editable format. Again, this will be informed by EQUIP Action Planning and discussions with Associate Deans, where appropriate.

Changes may be made, on an annual basis, to achieve the following:

- ***direct focus towards the review of a particular strategic priority (e.g. VLE Review/Assessment/Inclusivity)***
- ***signpost to key preparatory activity***
- ***provide contextual information relating to departmental aims***

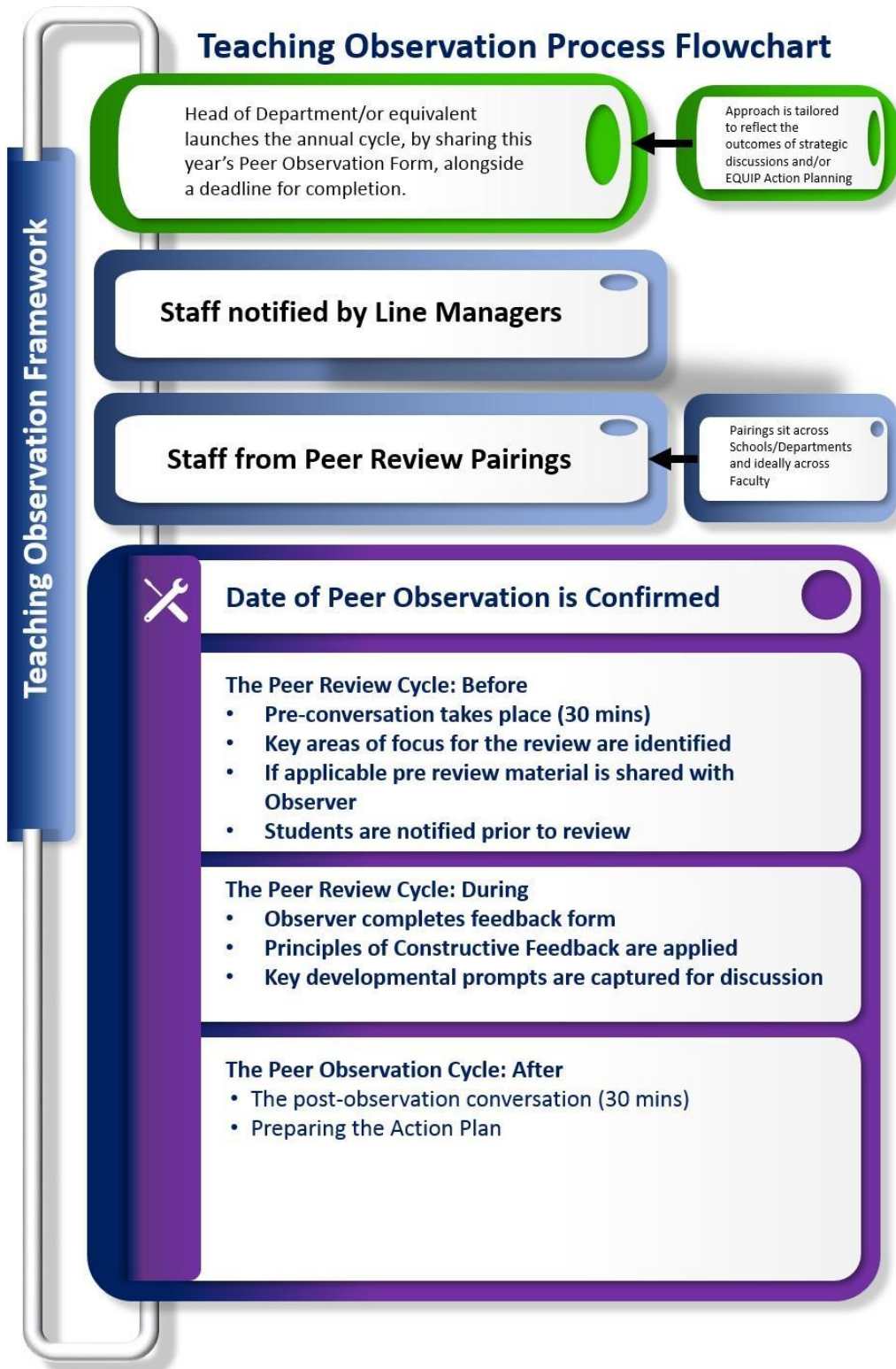
3.13 Prior to starting the process, the Observed should consult with their Line Manager about which documentation to use. Multiple versions of the Peer Review Forms and reflective prompts are available, and these can be edited prior to use. For staff teaching on apprenticeships there is a specific form.

3.14 Associate Deans Students in liaison with Heads of Department or equivalent may shape the focus of the observation cycle for that year with a strategic theme. This would be informed by NSS Action Plans and EQUIP Action Plans. The introduction of a strategic focus is possible through the launch of the cycle with staff and by the addition of amendments/additions to the Peer Review Forms. New prompts can be added to address the needs of departments and target the review of specific components. For example, inclusion, use of Moodle, differentiation between degree apprentices and non-degree apprentices.

3.15 Associate Deans and Heads of Department of equivalent will collate the Action Plans resulting from each Peer Review Cycle, as evidence of completion, but also to provide key information about best practice and where development is needed.

3.16 The process is not linked formally to the PDR Process.

4. The Peer Review Process Flowchart



4. The Peer Review Process

4.1 In the toolkit, forms are provided to guide each stage of the process:

Stage One: PLAN the Peer Review Activity

Stage Two: COMPLETE the Peer Review Activity

Stage Three: REFLECT AND ACT on The Peer Review Activity

(These three reflect the steps typically known as Pre-Observation, Observation and Post-Observation.)

4.2 It is anticipated that each review will take 2 hours per pairing where the session observed is 1 hour in length.

4.3 Stage One: PLAN (A pre-meeting, face-to-face or online, between observer and observed)

The Observed should lead this discussion to identify points which they would like feedback on which are captured in the Peer Review Forms. This planning process should also consult the brief provided by the Line Manager. This meeting is key to the success of the observation. Discussions will provide context for the observer including the aims and objectives of the session and student cohort. If the process has been completed in previous years, the past action plan should be consulted in the discussions. It is then the responsibility of the Observed to notify students in advance of the live teaching event that an observation will be taking place. Student consent is not required as part of this process. However, if the live event is a personal or group tutorial, where the discussion is likely to be of a sensitive nature, then consent must be gained, from all parties, prior to the observation taking place. Please refer to the guidance in the Toolkit.

Stage Two: COMPLETE (The live event/VLE Review)

During the observation of the activity the Observed should explain clearly to students why another staff member has joined the session. There is guidance provided on this in the Teaching Observation Toolkit. If the session being reviewed is face-to-face then the Observer should sit discreetly and silently to one side so as not to interrupt proceedings. During this time extensive notes should be captured on the Peer Review Form.

Stage Three: REFLECT and ACT (The follow up conversation)

During this component the observer would provide constructive and detailed feedback. Both should agree actions to be taken forward and these are recorded on the Action Plan component of the Peer Review Form. Progress against these agreed actions should be referenced at the start of the next annual cycle. The Action Plan component of the Peer Review form is shared with the Line Manager as evidence that the cycle has been completed.

5. Staff Teaching on and Managing Degree Apprenticeships

5.1 Introduction

Ofsted is the sole regulator for the Degree Apprenticeship provision. As such, the Teaching Observation Framework is tailored, from this point, to meet the developmental needs of staff who teach on Degree Apprenticeships. The role of Ofsted is to make an overall effectiveness judgement for the institution and to make a judgement on the quality of education. The Teaching Observation Framework addresses part of this quality assurance process as set out by Ofsted; the direct observation of teaching, training and assessment.

The Framework Principles apply to ALL staff:

- 1 A COMMUNITY AND CULTURE COMMITTED TO TEACHING EXCELLENCE
- 2 A SHARED PROCESS; A SHARED PURPOSE
- 3 A COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

6. Underpinning Principles for Staff Teaching on Degree Apprenticeships

6.1 As part of an ongoing process of 'Ofsted Readiness' staff teaching on Degree Apprenticeships who engage with the Framework will gain:

- ***Key information of what to expect if an Ofsted Inspector observes teaching***
- ***An opportunity work with trusted peers to take part in a 'simulation' of an Ofsted lesson inspection as part of a preparatory activity***
- ***An understand the criteria that Ofsted will use to make a judgement on the quality of the education provision of a singular teaching event***

6.2 Those teaching and managing Degree Apprenticeships should use the Degree Apprenticeship Peer Review Forms and Guidance provided in the Online Toolkit. The observer and observee should be from different Apprenticeship Standards, the rationale here is that a higher level of objectivity can prevail with the added benefit of sharing best practice across the provision.

6.3 If a staff member is involved in teaching both degree apprenticeship and non-degree apprenticeship then the peer review activity should follow that of the Degree Apprenticeships and refer to this documentation. This is appropriate as this is designed to facilitate a meaningful review of teaching which includes additional degree apprenticeship components.

6.4 All stages of the Observation Process as outlined in this Framework should engage both Observer and Observee in a developmental conversation focused on the Behaviours and Attitudes as outlined in the relevant Degree Apprenticeship Standard. Colleagues should note the following wording from the Ofsted Handbook which sets the direct observation of teaching within the wider inspection context:

- ***Ofsted has no preferred teaching style. Inspectors judge the quality of education by the ways in which learners acquire knowledge, develop skills and exhibit appropriate behaviours for work and success in life or study. Teaching staff should plan their lessons/sessions as usual.***
- ***Observation is not about evaluating individual teachers or trainers. Inspectors will not grade the teaching or training they observe. Instead, inspectors will view teaching and training across a sample of the provision to provide part of the evidence base to inform inspection judgements, in particular the quality of education and training.***
- ***Observation is also useful for gathering evidence that contributes to other key judgements, including behaviour and attitudes. Observation enables inspectors to see direct evidence about how behaviour is managed and how behaviours and attitudes are developed in individual learning sessions. This evidence will complement the other evidence that inspectors gather about behaviour and attitudes during inspection.***

Taken from : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook-eif/further-education-and-skills-handbook-for-september-2021>

6.5 Staff teaching on Degree Apprenticeships should be prepared to engage in additional 'Ofsted Readiness' Peer Review activity with a short notice period. This may form being observed as part of a 'Learning Walk' process which is a simulation following the protocol of an Ofsted inspection. This activity will count as the Peer Review activity in that annual cycle.

6.6 The following additional information would be required by Ofsted should they directly observe a teaching event. This should be provided to the Observer as part of the Peer Review Process. This should be provided via a paper folder (if an in person teaching event) or shared digital (if an online teaching event)

The pre-material takes the form of the following:

- ***A statement which contextualises the stage of the curriculum and the cohort experience to date***
- ***Information detailing the student characteristics in the cohort (see Online Toolkit Guidance documentation)***
- ***A Session Plan mapped to the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours of the standard***
- ***Links to or hard copies of supporting resources for example powerpoint slides/handouts/digital tools which will enable the observer to understand the structure of the session***

6.7 As part of the Post Review Activity, the Observer and Observed should reflect on and examine the Moodle Module Page and how this scaffolded the learning for the teaching event. This is not a set component of an Ofsted Observation but in some cases, would be a follow up activity.

This tailored approach to Peer Review will act as a meaningful preparatory and developmental activity for staff. It is a supportive and peer led review process designed to provide confidence and assurance prior to an Ofsted Inspection.

