

## Observation of Teaching and Learning

### [1] Purpose of Observation

- Observation of Teaching and Learning (OTL) is to ensure high quality teaching and learning for students and to provide a staff development function by allowing the dissemination of good classroom practice amongst peers and highlighting areas for development to feed into individual performance management reviews. OTL evidence can, therefore, be used by staff for the purpose of PSP Threshold and Performance Management Review.
- To this end we aim to observe teaching sessions by all teaching staff at Longley Park Sixth Form College a minimum of three times each academic year. One of these observations will be by a member of the Senior Management Team (Principal, Deputy Principal, Vice Principal), one by the relevant Director of Teaching and Learning (DTL) or one of their Deputies (DDTL) and one by a peer.
- Observations may cover all types of sessions. This includes all teaching sessions, group tutorials and one-to-one tutorials, including progress review interviews. Formal teaching sessions and group tutorials will be observed using the same criteria and documentation, however whilst observation of one-to-one sessions will use the same criteria as above, a different pro forma will be used to record the outcomes. Similarly, a different pro forma will be used to record the outcome of peer observations.
- It is important that all new managers receive training in lesson observation, focusing on OFSTED inspection criteria for teaching sessions and group tutorials and the outcomes for one-to-one observations. This should ensure that they can observe and be observed effectively. This will also allow a consistency of standard to be applied to all lesson observations across the college.
- Training will involve in-house INSET for all new managers to make them aware of the process and of the criteria being used. Validation of all observers will take place before they are allowed to observe and grade sessions. This will involve an observation by two of the College Management Team, who will then compare strengths, weaknesses, comments, completion of paperwork and grades. Where this is found to be consistent the observers will be validated. Where there are any disagreements, a further observation will take place using the same format.
- In addition the college sees informal peer observation to be critical to developing a culture of continuous improvement, sharing good practice and creating a shared ethos of quality provision. To this end an open-door policy will operate within college, in addition to the formal observations, to encourage staff to observe particular types of learning activities, new ideas, ways of ensuring differentiation etc. Staff are welcome to observe DTL/DDTL and SMT as part of the commitment to this culture.

#### **(i) Observation by SMT/DTL/DDTL**

These two observations will follow the same format. These observations will lead to the identification of individual and team teaching strengths and areas for development. They will also contribute to the college Self Assessment Report (SAR). Either of these observations can be offered as evidence for PSP applications. Lessons will be observed with a focus on quality of teaching, learning, attainment and resources. Lessons observed will include

vocational and academic courses of all levels, the tutorial programme where appropriate and the enrichment programme.

### **(ii) Observation by peers.**

The peer observation will focus entirely on sharing good practice and staff development, with peers having the chance to see how specific parts of courses are taught and the variety of generic teaching and learning strategies used in different curriculum areas that could be adopted across college. They will lead to dissemination of good practice 'mini' training sessions. This is the formal strand of the open-door policy, and should be seen as little more than an extension of the general college ethos of learning from others quality teaching.

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## **[2] The Observation Process**

The particular session to be observed will be by agreement between the observer and the teacher. All lesson observations will therefore be announced. Observers should contact all teachers they will observe and negotiate a session to be observed. An observation should be of a minimum of one hour, but by agreement longer timetabled lessons may not be observed in their entirety e.g. a two-hour lesson may only be observed for one hour, but a lesson plan showing the whole session's activities will give the context on which to make overall judgements on the teaching and learning process.

Before the observation takes place, the observer and the teacher need to make contact so that the session is placed in context, i.e. number in group, particular issues (for example five students absent on a field trip), etc. This will also enable the teacher to be observed to provide any appropriate documentation (i.e. lesson plan, scheme of work, handouts etc). There are a number of ways this could be achieved, i.e. via email contact, a scheduled meeting, or a discussion just prior to the lesson starting.

### **(i) Observation by SMT/DTL/DDTL of full group sessions (teaching and tutorial)**

Observation by Senior Management, Directors of Teaching and Learning and Deputy Directors of Teaching and Learning are to identify individual and team good practice and to identify training and development needs. They can also be used to form part of the evidence used by staff for their PSP Threshold/Management applications. For this reason observations will follow formal procedures, and will be assessed using the OFSTED Common Inspection Framework. This means observation will involve the identification of strengths and areas for development based upon the four specified quality criteria categories, namely **learning, teaching, attainment** and **resources**. All observations will be carried out by trained observers. Grades will be given for **learning and teaching** using the four-point scale used by OFSTED:

- Grade 1 (Outstanding)
- Grade 2 (Good)
- Grade 3 (Satisfactory)
- Grade 4 (Inadequate)

Grades 1-3 represent a satisfactory lesson observation for PSP Threshold purposes.

**Attainment** will be assessed as being satisfactory or not satisfactory.

In line with current Ofsted practice an **overall grade** will then be given for the lesson. It is not possible to state which of the individual grades predominates. In other words, a grade three for Learning and a grade four for Teaching may mean a grade four overall, though this depends on the judgement of the observer in weighing up the strengths and areas for development within the lesson.

### **(ii) Observation by SMT/DTL/DDTL of one-to-one sessions.**

Observation by Senior Management and Directorate Management Teams are to identify individual and team good practice and to identify training and development needs. This is also relevant to one-to-one sessions. Observation will follow formal procedures, using the same grading criteria employed for Teaching, Learning and Attainment used in 'standard' observations, i.e. 1 (Outstanding), 2 (Good), 3 (Satisfactory) and 4 (Inadequate), with one overall grade also awarded. Such observations can, therefore, still form part of the basis of PSP Threshold applications and PMR. Observation will, however, involve the identification of strengths and areas for development based upon five quality criteria categories, namely **preparation by tutor, setting the climate, the dialogue, setting targets and closure.**

There are occasions where it would be inappropriate for a one-to-one tutorial to be observed, should the discussion between the progress tutor and the tutee be of a confidential nature. It may also be appropriate for tutors to place confidential information in an envelope within the student's tutor file (or in a separate, secure cabinet).

### **(iii) Observation by Peers**

All teaching staff will be observed a minimum of once a year by one of their peers and observe one of their peers once a year.

- In curriculum areas where there is more than one member of staff, peer observation in the first instance at least will take place intensively, allowing different staff to observe how their colleagues teach the same specific topic. The focus would be on teaching techniques and approaches to learning in delivering the same content. The focus will be on good practice only.
- For curriculum areas with only one member of staff, peer observation in the first instance will involve paired members of staff observing teaching techniques and approaches to learning, rather than content. These peer observations will produce a list of strengths and areas for review. From these records, the DTL will compile an anonymous list of directorate wide strengths and areas for review, which will then be presented to the members of the directorate team for discussion, with a focus on praising strengths and making improvements as necessary.
- It should be possible from this to start to produce a checklist for a good lesson. This research, which could be carried out during the reduced summer timetable period will then be used to inform further peer observations in future years, which could have a specific focus e.g. questioning techniques, differentiation etc.
- All observations will produce a summary of good teaching and learning ideas from the lesson for sharing. This information should be compiled as either a paper file/shared folder on the intranet. It should also then help identify ideas that can be disseminated through INSET meetings by Directorate Management Teams or in Directorate/Course Team meetings. A session such as this may feature the teacher who had been observed explaining the activity, and the observer explaining why the activity was effective as a teaching and learning tool.

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### [3] Quality Criteria

#### (i) Observation of full group sessions.

It is important that observers provide evidence to support judgements they make on learning, teaching, attainment and resources.

#### **Learning**

Evaluate how well learners learn and make progress.

In making judgments consider where applicable the extent to which all learners:

- understand the purpose of the lesson and what they are expected to achieve
- where appropriate work independently and are consistently challenged
- acquire new knowledge and skills, develop ideas and increase their understanding
- understand what they are doing, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve
- are stimulated and show interest in their work.

#### **Teaching**

Evaluate how well teachers meet individuals' needs and course requirements.

In making judgments consider where applicable the extent to which teachers:

- use assessment methods to inform future planning and present progress
- show appropriate knowledge and/or technical competence
- plan sessions effectively and show productive use of learner's time
- builds on previous learning and looks at future learning
- give clear explanations and instructions and pace the lesson appropriately
- use methods of teaching and learning styles that match individual learners needs
- ensure all members of the group are involved in learning activities
- identify and redress poor motivation and inappropriate behaviour.

#### **Attainment**

Evaluate the standards of learners' work in relation to their learning goals.

In making judgements consider where applicable the extent to which learners:

- know how well they are doing and what they need to improve
- complete tasks and activities successfully
- acquire knowledge, skills and understanding appropriate to the subject and level of study
- enjoy and achieve in a safe and positive environment
- achieve challenging learning goals and targets.

#### **Resources**

Evaluate the adequacy, suitability and use of specialist equipment, learning resources and

accommodation.

**In making judgements consider where applicable the extent to which:**

- specialist equipment and materials are used
- accommodation provides a suitable setting for teaching, learning and support for learners
- learning resources and accommodation allow all learners to participate fully
- learners have access to and make effective use of appropriate learning and ICT resources.

**(ii) Observation of one-to-one sessions**

It is important that observers provide evidence to support judgements they make on preparation by tutor, setting the climate, the dialogue, setting targets and closure.

### **Preparation by progress tutor**

**Evaluate how well tutors prepare for the session.**

**In making judgments consider where applicable the extent to which:**

- learners understand the purpose of the session and what they are expected to achieve
- learners have prepared for the session
- the progress tutor collects and uses relevant data
- the progress tutor prepares using subject reviews
- there is a shared framework for discussion between tutor and tutee.

### **Setting the climate**

**Evaluate how well progress tutor sets the climate for the session appropriately.**

**In making judgments consider where applicable the extent to which progress tutors:**

- build a purposeful relationship between tutor and tutee
- have an appropriate meeting place and time
- provide positive affirmation.

### **The dialogue**

**Evaluate the dialogue between the progress tutor and tutee.**

**In making judgements consider where applicable the extent to which progress tutors:**

- listen
- ask questions
- know when to refer students
- seek clarification
- makes positive contributions.

### **Setting targets**

**Evaluate the effectiveness of the target setting by the tutor.**

**In making judgements consider where applicable the extent to which:**

- Agree targets
- Set short term targets
- Set long-term targets
- Set SMART targets
- Effective action planning is agreed.

### Closure

Evaluate the effectiveness of the closure of the session by the tutor.  
In making judgements consider where applicable the extent to which:

- There is effective summarising
- The learner is left feeling positive
- Accurate and up-to-date records are kept.

### OFSTED Guidance on where to pitch judgements about the overall quality of a lesson 2007-2008

The overall judgement will be a 'best fit' of the grade descriptions in the box, except in the case of an unsatisfactory lesson where particular conditions mean that the lesson cannot be satisfactory/not adequate.

Description	Characteristics of the lesson
<b>Outstanding (1)</b>	The lesson is at least good in all or nearly all respects and is exemplary in significant elements, as shown by the exceptional enjoyment and progress of the learners
<b>Good (2)</b>	<p>Most learners make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. Behaviour overall is good and learners are keen to get on with their work in a secure and friendly environment in which they can thrive. The health and safety of the learners are not endangered</p> <p>Teaching is well informed, confident, engaging and precise. The work is well matched to the full range of learners' needs, so that most are suitably challenged. Teaching methods are effectively related to the lesson objectives and the needs of learners.</p> <p>Teaching assistants and resources are well deployed and good use is made of time. Assessment of learners' work is regular and consistent and makes a good contribution to their progress.</p>
<b>Satisfactory (3)</b>	The lesson is inadequate in no major respect, and may be good in some respects, as shown by the satisfactory enjoyment and progress of the learners
<b>Inadequate (4)</b>	<p><b>A lesson cannot be adequate if:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ most learners, or a significant specific minority of learners, make less than satisfactory progress, whether this is due to unsatisfactory teaching or the impact of bad behaviour</li> <li>▪ learners' overall behaviour or attitudes are unsatisfactory, and the tone of the</li> </ul>

	<p>lesson is inimical to the development of learners' personal qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the health or safety of the learners is endangered</li> <li>▪ the teaching is unsatisfactory. This will usually cause the learners' progress to be unsatisfactory, but occasionally progress will be satisfactory in spite of the teaching due to the good attitude of the learners. Unsatisfactory teaching is likely to have one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- weak knowledge of the curriculum leading to inaccurate teaching and low demands on pupils</li> <li>- work badly matched to the pupils' starting points</li> <li>- ineffective classroom management of behaviour</li> <li>- methods which are poorly geared to the learning objectives or which fail to gain the interest and commitment of the learners</li> <li>- inadequate use of resources, including assistants and the time available</li> <li>- poor assessment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Grade 1 'Outstanding' features:**

- Teaching and training are consistently (*generally 2*) challenging for all groups of learners and activities are matched closely to learners' needs.
- Teaching promotes independent research, good working relationships and the productive use of learners' time
- Teachers and trainers have high levels (*good levels 2*) of subject and vocational expertise and knowledge
- Teachers' enthusiasm and commitment inspire learners, who respond well to the challenges set for them
- Learners' additional support needs are accurately assessed and needs are addressed rapidly and sensitively
- Their progress is considerably better (*might be better 2*) than may be expected
- Assessment is rigorous and well organised
- The outcomes are effectively used for planning future learning and training

**A Grade 1 will:**

1. Appear to be exemplary in significant areas as stated above
2. Exceptional enjoyment shown by most learners
3. Good progress shown by the learners.
4. At least a 2 in most areas from below:

**Grade 2 'Good' features:**

- Setting of clear objectives which are made known to the learners
- There are good working relationships between staff and learners.
- Teachers are helpful and committed.
- Learners respond well to the challenges set for them.
- Learning resources such as ICT are used well by teachers, trainers and learners to promote learning.

- Assessment is well organised.
- The outcomes are effectively used for planning future learning and training.
- Teachers make relevant comments on learners' written work so that they know how well they are doing and how to improve their work.
- Learners' additional support needs are accurately assessed and these needs are addressed rapidly and sensitively
- Most learners benefit from the support that is provided.
- The impact of this support is regularly assessed.

### **Grade 3 'Satisfactory' features:**

Teaching is a highly skilled profession and in qualifying as a teacher staff have already undertaken significant training and met rigorous standards. The Grade 3 'Satisfactory' descriptors therefore relate to the features of a lesson that one would expect from a qualified practitioner who is working to these high standards to meet the needs of students.

- Most learners make the progress that should be expected of them
- Teachers and trainers have a sound knowledge of the curriculum
- Lessons have clear objectives and learners know what they are doing.
- The level of challenge is sufficient for all groups of learners and the teaching methods encourage and engage them.
- They respond positively and purposefully in lessons, willingly answering questions and participating in discussions.
- Teachers take steps to encourage them to work effectively on their own, but a few learners remain too dependent on the teacher.
- ICT supports independent study, which adequately complements classroom learning.
- Assessment is adequate for teachers and trainers to monitor learners' progress and plan their lessons and training, and learners know what to do to improve.
- Work is marked regularly and thoroughly, and written comments help learners to understand where they have gone wrong and what to do about it.
- Most learners' additional support needs are accurately assessed and most of these learners benefit from suitable additional support.

### **Grade 4 'Inadequate' features:**

- A significant proportion of learners do not progress well enough because teaching and training is ineffective or behaviour is poor
- Much teaching and training fails to capture learners' interest
- Activities are not sufficiently well matched to learners' needs to provide a suitable level of challenge
- Some teachers' and trainers' command of the subject is inadequate for the level demanded by the course
- Assessment is inadequate and some learners do not know how to improve
- Initial assessment is inadequate for a significant number of learners
- Many learners do not receive the additional support that they have been identified as needing
- Health and safety of the learners is endangered

### ***Matters that are particularly relevant to the judgement of practical lessons include:***

- Whether the balance between the teaching of theory and practical skills is appropriate and there is sufficient time to practise these skills

- Whether learners have a sufficient grounding of theory before starting the relevant practical work
  - The safety and suitability of the environment
  - Whether the activities reflect current commercial or industrial practice
  - The quality of teachers' demonstrations of practical skills
  - Whether teachers divide their time equitably between all individuals in the group, and are aware of individuals' progress
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#### [4] Grade 4 Observations

Where a teaching or full group tutorial lesson observation receives a grade four in any of the three graded areas there will be a need for further action. Where a one-to-one session receives an unsatisfactory observation there will be a need for further action. This will include quick identification of development needs and training to meet these needs before the second observation. The observer and the teacher will agree on a plan of action to improve the quality of learning, teaching and attainment. The teacher will be observed again within six teaching weeks.

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#### [5] Feedback

All judgements should be honest and evidence based.

Following an observation, staff will receive both verbal and written feedback. Initial feedback will be verbal, but based on written up notes from the observation.

##### (i) Observation by SMT/DTL/DDTL

Verbal feedback will be arranged within twenty-four hours. It should take place in an appropriate environment that ensures formality and minimum interruption. It should follow the following format:

- (i) Ask the teacher general feedback/comments on how the session went
- (ii) Highlight strengths
- (iii) Highlight areas for review
- (iv) Give a judgement as to whether teaching, learning and attainment were satisfactory
- (v) Discuss how areas for development can be addressed. If the lesson was graded as unsatisfactory in any way, an action plan should be devised for improvement a date for a further observation should be agreed
- (vi) Summary of main issues
- (vii) Finish on a positive note.

Written feedback should be given within five to ten working days of the verbal feedback, using the **SMT/DTL/DDTL Observation Record pro forma**. One signed copy is kept by the teacher. A further signed copy is sent to Linda Webster, who will record that the observation has taken place and pass the paperwork to HR. A final copy is sent by Linda Webster to the relevant Director (this can, however, remain unsigned). Details of the grades awarded for observation will be entered on the college central database. These central records will be anonymous.

## (ii) Observation by peers

Although there is a need for an approach to peer observation feedback that shares the professionalism of the SMT/DTL/DDTL observations, the purpose is different. Discussion should centre on the learning activities observed and the dissemination of good practice identified.

Verbal feedback will again be arranged within twenty-four hours. It should take place in an appropriate environment that ensures formality and minimum interruption. It should follow the following format:

- (i) Highlight strengths
- (ii) Highlight areas for development
- (iii) Deal with issues requiring clarification
- (i) Discuss good practice that could be shared and whether the teacher observed would be prepared to give one of the short INSET sessions
- (iv) Finish on a positive note.

Written feedback should be given within five to ten working days of the verbal feedback, using the **Peer Observation Record**. Two copies of the record should be given to the teacher observed to sign and date. The teacher observed should keep one copy and one copy would be passed to the Director of Teaching and Learning. This form does not identify the teacher observed.

The pro forma for each of these observations is enclosed at the rear of this policy document. The SMT/DTL/DDTL Observation Record Pro Forma comes in two formats, one for group sessions and the other for one-to-ones.

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## [6] Appeals

In some situations, teachers to be observed may not be able to agree on elements of the lesson observation process with the member of SMT/DTL/DDTL who is carrying out the observation.

For agreement on the outcome of observations, the member of staff may request one further lesson observation from a further member of SMT/DTL/DDTL but if the second observation does not result in agreement, the College will require the lesson observation outcomes, including but not limited to, grading and further training, be adopted and the member of staff may request a formal appeal. This will follow the procedure set out for appeals in the Staff Grievance Procedure.

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## [7] OTL Process Summary

SMT/DMT Observation	Peer Observation
<i>Prior to Observation</i>	<i>Prior to Observation</i>
1. Agreement of session to be observed.	1. Agreement of session to be observed.
<i>Day of the Observation</i>	<i>Day of the Observation</i>
2. <u>Contact made between observer and teacher to be observed to set context and/or provide any relevant documentation.</u>	2. <u>Contact made between observer and teacher to be observed to set context and/or provide any relevant documentation.</u>
3. Observation of session.	3. Observation of session.
4. Verbal feedback <u>arranged</u> within 24 hours.	4. Verbal feedback <u>arranged</u> within 24 hours.

<i>Post Observation</i>	<i>Post Observation</i>
5. <u>Written feedback within 5-10 working days.</u>	5. <u>Written feedback within 5-10 working days.</u>
6. Decision on any further observation due to grade 4. Action Plan agreed.	6. Decision on whether the teacher observed will run an INSET session.
7. Training needs identified	
8. <u>Copy signed and returned to the observer.</u> <u>Further signed copy to Linda Webster. Copy to DTL</u>	8. <u>Copy signed and returned to the observer.</u> <u>Further signed copy to Linda Webster. Copy to DTL.</u>

**SMT/DTL/DDTL Observation Record**

Name of Teacher:	
Name of Observer:	
Lesson and level:	
Date:	
Time:	
Number on register:	
Number present:	
Number absent:	

Signed Teacher:

Signed Observer:

SMT/DTL/DDTL Observation Record

Teacher Name & Date:

Observer:

Session observed:

<i>Learning</i>	
Strengths	Evidence
Areas for Development	

<i>Teaching</i>	
Strengths	Evidence
Areas for Development	Evidence

<i>Attainment</i>	
Strengths	Evidence
Areas for Development	Evidence

<i>Resources</i>	
Strengths	Evidence
Areas for Development	Evidence

Comments:

Grade:

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Satisfactory 4: Inadequate

SMT/DTL/DDTL Observation Record (1-1 session)

Name of Teacher:	
Name of Observer:	
Lesson and level:	
Date:	
Time:	
Number on register:	
Number present:	
Number absent:	

Signed Teacher:

Signed Observer:

**SMT/DTL/DDTL Observation Record**

Teacher Name & Date:

Observer:

1-1 session observed:

<i>Preparation by Tutor</i>	
Strengths	Evidence
Weaknesses	Evidence

<i>Setting the Climate</i>	
Strengths	Evidence
Weaknesses	Evidence

<i>The dialogue</i>	
Strengths	Evidence
Weaknesses	Evidence

<i>Setting targets</i>	
Strengths	Evidence
Weaknesses	Evidence

<i>Closure</i>	
Strengths	Evidence
Weaknesses	Evidence

**Comments:**

**GRADE:**

1 (Outstanding) 2 (Good) 3 (Satisfactory) 4 (Inadequate)

Peer Observation Record

**Sharing Good Ideas from Lesson Observations**

Description of Activity

How it helped students learn

**Name of Observer:**

When completed please pass a signed copy to the teacher.

Please also pass a signed copy to Linda Webster who will pass to HR and arrange a copy to go to the DTL

If the teacher observed is prepared to run an INSET session on this technique, please tick the box below. The DTL will arrange this.