

Observation of Teaching & Learning Policy & Procedure

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 Shockout Academy learners receive the highest possible standard of experience. Staff will be regularly monitored through the Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy in alignment with the standards set by Shockout, E.T.F Standards and the Education Inspection Framework (EIF). Lessons observed that fall below any of the satisfactory benchmark standards will lead to performance management in order to support, improve and develop best practice. Failure to meet these objectives may lead to renewal of contract being affected.

Management

Overall responsibility for the Session Observation Policy and Procedure lies with Head of Postgraduate Studies who will co-ordinate with the relevant members of the Observation Team in alignment with the Principal and Head of Dance where necessary.

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

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

Objectives

The observation process must be understood and supported by all Shockout Academy 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 to enhance the quality of learner experience
- Enhance the performance management process and identify individual and team development needs
- 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

Observation Team

The observations will largely be undertaken by the Head of Postgraduate Studies and Head of Dance respectively, however standardisation can be strengthened through an additional observer where necessary.

Where peer observations are undertaken, as part of CPD activities, teaching and learning staff holding a full teaching qualification (PGCE/Cert Ed/DTLLS/QTLS), will be entitled to observe a session. A post-observation discussion comparing strengths, areas for development and possible grades will take place, to ensure consistent and fair judgement. Where there are any disagreements, a further observation will take place, using the same format.

The team of observers will receive training in line with the Education Inspection Framework (EIF).

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

Procedure

Observations will take place each term during the academic year for all areas within the teaching and learning provision. However, one per month will be conducted for new and self-employed staff. The Head of Postgraduate Studies and Head of Dance 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 three observations (where applicable) will be conducted per year
- For assessors one observation will be conducted per year
- Informal 20 minute Walkthroughs will be conducted throughout the year on all staff at intervals.

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

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 relevant heads of department.

Observations

Observations focus on assessing the effectiveness of practice within individual sessions in the classroom. The objective of an observation is to assess and judge the impact of teacher/assessor/trainer practice and strategies and the extent to which these impact on student's progress, development and attainment.

Before the observation

- Shockout Academy follow a non-notification policy.
- Observers will offer to the observe the opportunity to become familiar with the Observation Form, Shockout Standards, ETF Standards and Education Inspection Framework as part of Staff Induction training.
- Observations are undertaken only by trained and named observers.
- There is normally only one observer in a session but there will never be more than two observers in a session at any one time.
- The observed will be notified with a minimum notice of two working days if there is to be a 2nd observer in the session and will also be informed about what the role of the 2nd person in the observation is.

During the observation

- Observations of learning are typically of a single session and will last for the entirety of the timetabled session.
- The observation outcomes reward the impact on learning, progress and attainment.
- Judgements about students' progress use a range of evidence sources including scheme of work, planning, module specification, Shockout common lesson observation framework.
- The observer does not become involved in the session and undertakes the observation in an unobtrusive way, although the observer should look at student work and speak with students/employers taking care to ensure that this does not interfere with the delivery/workplace.
- Learner voice will be sought within observed sessions.
- The observer uses only Shockout documentation for recording their findings.

After the observation

- Initial feedback to the observed is provided on the day of the observation at a convenient and mutually agreed time.
- The failure of the observed to agree a feedback time will not prevent the observation and outcome from being finalised.
- The observer will provide full feedback with outcome within five working days.
- The observed will be graded upon the overall session.
- The observer sets clear improvement actions as a result of the observation and ensures that these actions are SMART. Organisation will ensure action plan is monitored through weekly learning walks.
- A copy of the observation record is stored securely and confidentially by the Head of Postgraduate Studies and is accessible to relevant Shockout Academy management team.
- If an observed is identified as requiring additional support observation triggers coaching and development support for the observed with a further follow-up observation undertaken within two to four weeks from the first observation. Failure to improve may lead to a performance and capability review of the teacher's/assessor's performance.

- The line manager of an observed who has been identified as requiring further support will take responsibility for the action plan for the observed and for keeping the Principal fully informed.