

QA 5.3 Lesson Observation Policy

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1 Lesson Observation Policy

1.1 Document Owner

The document owner is the Quality Committee.

1.2 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principals and processes for the undertaking of the Cenit College lesson observations. Lesson observations play a vital role in supporting all staff within the College. Conducted annually, they are designed to be constructive and supportive. As an essential component of professional development, all staff should view them as an opportunity to enhance their growth and improvement.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives

- To assess and enhance teaching effectiveness.
- To provide constructive feedback to teachers.
- To ensure alignment with curriculum and educational goals.
- To promote professional development and best practice

1.4 Planning and Scheduling

- The observation schedule is put in place at the start of the academic year.
- Tutors are notified in advance about the observation process.
- Assign observers (e.g. Head of Quality, Head of Training. In the UK this may include external evaluators such as Ofsted or the DfE).
- All new teaching staff must be observed within the first 6 to 8 weeks of their employment with Cenit College as a tutor.
- The observer will stay approximately 45 minutes to conduct the lesson observation

1.5 Procedure

Prior to the annual observation:

1. Prior to the annual observation taking place the tutor should complete Part A of the Observation Tutor Input Form, this will inform the observer of any items they might want to discuss with the observer in pre observation discussion.
2. The tutor completes Part A of the Tutor Observation Input Form which will provide information on the following:
 - Name of the programme
 - Name of the tutor
 - Name of reviewer
 - Any web or system links to the programme, its syllabus or other relevant information
 - Communications between the tutor and learners

This form will be returned via email to the observer prior to the observation taking place. This document will be reviewed by the observer prior to the pre-observation discussion.

3. A pre-observation discussion should take place between the Tutor and the observer. This discussion will help inform the following:

- The session to be observed.
 - The learning outcomes and the content of the session being reviewed.
 - The focus of the observation– the tutor can request feedback on specific areas of teaching for example: the pace of the lesson, learner engagement or active learning strategies.
 - How the observation will be explained to the learners.
 - An agreement on the date and time of the review.
 - All this information will then be communicated to the tutor in writing.
4. The observer will request access to all the web or system links and any other relevant documents identified in the Tutor Observation Input Form.

During the observation:

1. The appropriate observation form should be completed by the observer during the observation of teaching practise.
2. The observer should arrive early for the observation and be introduced to the class. Clear communication must be made to the learners that they are not the subject of the observation – and the observation is a standard procedure to ensure effective teaching practices.
3. The observer should have a copy of the lesson planning document (scheme of work) which should include the lesson outcomes and topics being delivered. During the observation the observer will take notes and complete the Cenit College observation form.

Post observation

The following steps should be taken:

1. Within 48 hours of the review taking place (if possible), the observer and the tutor will meet to discuss the observation. The observer will provide constructive, balanced feedback based on the observations made during the session. Such observations will include:
 - Evidence found to support the observation of teaching practice
 - Improvements to the teaching practice
 - Examples of good teaching practices
2. The observer must inform the Head of Training that the observation has taken place and send the completed report to the Head of Training within 2 days of the discussion with the tutor. This report will contain the following information:
 - i. Name of tutor reviewed
 - ii. Name of observer
 - iii. Date of review
 - iv. Focus of the observation
 - v. Examples of good teaching practise
 - vi. Developmental action plan
 - vii. Any unresolved issues
3. The report will be jointly signed by the observer and the tutor.

4. The tutor will complete Part C of the Teaching observation Self-Reflection Form and forward it to the Head of training.
5. Where good practices are highlighted, these should be shared with the wider Cenit College teaching staff.
6. The tutor should reflect upon the observation report and discuss areas of professional development with their manager where applicable. These will form part of the overall professional development plan for that tutor.

1.6 Underperforming tutors

1.6.1 Identification of Underperformance

Underperformance is identified through a **range of quality evidence**, not solely through lesson observation. This may include:

- lesson observation evidence indicating limited impact on learner engagement or progress
- learner feedback and retention data
- assessment outcomes or progress tracking
- concerns raised through quality reviews, audits or learner voice
- failure to implement previously agreed improvement actions

Underperformance is defined as **practice that is not yet consistently effective** in enabling learners to make sustained progress in their learning, skills development or achievement.

1.6.2 Support-Led Approach

Cenit College will support tutors to improve the effectiveness of their teaching practise. Any concerns associated with a tutor's teaching practices will be identified

- The Head of Training will discuss with the tutor any issues with their teaching practise and identify corrective action.
- Further evaluation will be conducted on the tutor to ensure the corrective action is working. This evaluation can be in the form of another peer review, learner feedback or tutor self-evaluation. A mentor can be assigned if agreed.
- All records of evaluations and corrective action are retained until such time that the issues have been resolved.
- If the tutor is still under-performing, then the training manager must arrange to meet with Human Resources to discuss the tutor.

Human Resources evaluate the situation and ensure the tutor has been given every opportunity possible to improve their teaching practices and the corrective action advised has been appropriate. If this has been completed correctly, then Human Resources can remove the tutor from their teaching post.

1.6.3 Improvement Action Planning

Where underperformance is identified, the tutor will:

- meet with their line manager and/or quality lead to discuss concerns,
- jointly agree a Targeted Improvement Action Plan (TIAP), which will:

- identify specific areas for development,
- include clear, measurable actions,
- identify appropriate support (e.g. mentoring, shadowing, CPD, peer observation),
- set realistic timescales for improvement.

The plan will be documented and reviewed regularly.

1.6.4 Re-Observation Timeline

Re-observation will be **proportionate, purposeful and time-limited**, and will normally follow the timeline below:

Stage	Timescale	Purpose
Initial observation identifying underperformance	Day 0	Evidence gathered and feedback provided
Improvement planning meeting	Within 10 working days	Agree action plan and support
Development period	4–6 weeks	Tutor implements agreed actions with support
Re-observation	Within 6–8 weeks of initial observation	Evaluate progress and impact on learners
Review meeting	Within 5 working days of re-observation	Decide next steps

The exact timeline may be adjusted depending on:

- the nature and severity of concerns,
- the frequency of delivery,
- the tutor’s experience and role,
- learner risk or safeguarding considerations

1.6.5 Outcomes of Re-Observation

Following re-observation, one of the following outcomes will apply:

- 1. Improvement Evident**
 - Practice shows sufficient improvement and positive impact on learners.
 - Tutor returns to standard quality assurance cycle.
- 2. Partial Improvement**
 - Some improvement evident, but further development required.
 - Action plan updated and a second re-observation scheduled within a further **4–6 weeks**.
- 3. Insufficient Improvement**
 - Limited or no improvement evident despite support.
 - Escalation to formal performance management procedures in line with the provider’s capability policy.

1.6.6 Safeguarding and Learner risk

Where underperformance presents an **immediate risk to learners**, including safeguarding, health and safety, or assessment integrity concerns:

- immediate intervention will take place
- additional observations or monitoring may be introduced
- learners' interests will always take priority

1.6.7 Record-keeping and Confidentiality

All documentation relating to underperformance and re-observation will be:

- factual, evidence-based and non-judgemental
- securely stored in line with data protection requirements
- used solely to support improvement and quality assurance

1.7 Monitoring

This procedure will be monitored by the Director of Human Resources, Quality and Academic Committees on an ongoing basis. Staff feedback will provide input to this monitoring process.

The Head of Quality will perform any document updates for this procedure through information obtained from the annual QA audit. Further monitoring will occur through feedback from programme board meetings, feedback from learners on the effectiveness of teaching and from those involved in the peer review process.

Effectiveness of teaching staff is also monitored through:

- Peer reviews
- Learner Feedback forms
- Learner representative's feedback at programme review meetings
- External Authentication reports
- Staff performance appraisals

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