



OAKLANDS COLLEGE

Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Policy Statement

The College is committed to helping all employees learn and develop in order to improve their effectiveness in their job role and contribute towards the College's mission and strategic aims.

Scope and purpose

This policy aims to provide an overview of observations of teaching learning and assessment at Oaklands College. Support, guidance and expectations of staff in relation to ensure students and apprentices engage in effective teaching, learning and assessment practice that helps their next steps are set out in the [Support for Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook](#). This policy should be read alongside the Handbook which sets out minimum expectations relating to teaching, learning and assessment. Where these expectations are not met at any point in the year, the College will introduce appropriate measures to performance manage staff. If staff are unclear about any of the details, they should contact a member of the quality team in person or via quality@oaklands.ac.uk for clarification.

Both this policy and the STLA Handbook have been revised in 2020 with the intention of addressing areas for development and improvement identified through the College's self-assessment processes, ongoing changes to teaching, learning and assessment as a result of COVID19, and the requirements of external scrutiny, such as OFSTED's Education Inspection Framework, awarding organisations' regulations and processes and the requirements of funding bodies. Please note that details set out in this policy may be subject to alteration in line with emerging public health advice and guidance for the further education sector in response to COVID19.

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Observations

General principles

- All observers will be trained and validated.
- 1 formal observation of all teaching staff will take place during the academic year. A further formal observation will only take place if either the observation 'did not meet expectations' or any concerns of practice are raised in year.
- Observers will only use ProObserve and approved documentation detailed on the procedures part of this document to record observations.
- All feedback to observees will be provided within 3-5 working days of the observation.
- Observations will be graded as either the standard of teaching learning and assessment in the session 'meets expectations' or 'does not meet expectations.' (LSA and SSA observations will be graded as 'effective' or 'ineffective')
- Thematic learning walks will be used as a tool to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers will be supported to improve their practice with the support of the Quality Improvement Facilitators and Quality Assurance Facilitators. This support will comprise of each member of teaching staff being allocated a Quality Improvement Facilitator, who will provide regular one to one support and regular bite size training sessions. The Quality Assurance Facilitators will support teachers with the assessment of learning and moderate grading decisions.
- Thematic learning walks may be carried out throughout the academic year without notification and will be supportive. Themes will be determined by the needs of the College. The learning walks will not form part of any capability process for individual staff. However, if there is a cause for concern or a student complaint the member of staff may be subject to a formal observation.
- Probationary lecturers will be in scope for observations during curriculum reviews. Probationary staff will also be subject to developmental and supportive learning walks and observation during their 2-, 4- and 6-month probation periods. These will be conducted by their Head of department. Identified actions and support will be given to the individuals prior to their formal observation.

Observers

The observation team will consist of the Deputy Principal for Curriculum and Quality, Directors of Curriculum, the Head of Quality Assurance, the Head of Teacher Training and Quality Improvement, Heads of Department, Quality Assurance Facilitators (QAF's) and Quality Improvement Facilitators (QIF's). The observation team will undergo regular training and will be supported to regularly update their observation skills and techniques. Observations and reports will be moderated for quality assurance purposes and to ensure consistency in findings.

The Quality Team will lead on observations and identify themes for observations and learning walks. Learning walks may be conducted by members of the Corporation.

Types of observation:

1. Learning walk
2. Thematic learning walk
3. Formal observation
 - Taught class
 - Workshops
 - 1-2-1 Personal Development Review (PDR)
 - Group PDR
 - Assessors
 - LSA and SSA
 - Validation- to ensure the quality of session observations
 - Reobservations – when the standard of teaching learning and assessment in a session delivered by a staff member ‘did not meet expectations’ or when the standard of support provided by an LSA/SSA was ‘ineffective’
4. Informal observations
 - Peer or joint- ungraded observations by a colleague or a quality improvement facilitator to provide mutual support and share good practice- these include snapshot observations, typically carried out by QIFs.
 - To support the development of new teachers practices ungraded observations form part of the new teacher induction process. New teachers to the college will have a supportive peer observation from their QIF during their induction. They will also participate in a joint observation with their assigned QIF. Trainee teachers can access support from QIF’s prior to the observation windows but, will also undergo the College’s formal observation cycle.

Staff in scope for observations during curriculum reviews or external development reviews

Some colleagues may be due reobservations, be in a probationary period, or undertaking teacher training qualifications. The following table identifies who will be observed and if so, whether the session observed will be graded:

Staff circumstances	What will happen
If you are a colleague who has completed their period of support following an observation where college expectations were not met	You will be seen as part of a curriculum review and the observation would count as your re-observation
If you are a colleague who has not completed their period of support following an observation where college expectations were not met or If you are a colleague currently in their probationary period	If you are teaching on one of the courses that will be looked at in detail during the curriculum review, then you may be observed in order to gather evidence of the quality of education received by students but this wouldn’t be a re-observation, and no observation report will be produced. If you are teaching on any other course in the area, you won’t be observed during the curriculum review In both cases, you will be re-observed only once your support is complete

<p>If you are a colleague undertaking their level 3 or level 5 teacher training qualification</p>	<p>You will still be observed and the session you deliver will be graded as to whether it meets College expectations</p> <p>Teacher Training observations and Curriculum review observations are for different purposes and use different criteria, so you could be observed for both in a curriculum review week</p>
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Other points to note about observations during curriculum reviews

- The curriculum review team will be undertaking a range of observations of students in classroom, practical, functional skill and PDR sessions. Some staff may therefore be seen more than once but we aim to ensure that graded observations are where a member of staff is delivering a session where the focus is on the vocational area, be it classroom based or a practical session.
- Functional Skill and PDR sessions will be ungraded, but an observation report will still be produced identifying strengths and areas for development and, where appropriate, an action plan for support produced.
- If you are teaching on one of the courses that will be looked at in detail during the curriculum review, then an observer may visit more than one of your sessions within a curriculum review week – they will identify clearly to you whether or not they are observing you or whether they are gathering evidence of the quality of education received by students. In the latter case, no observation report will be produced.

Preparation

The observer is expected to prepare for the observation by establishing what subject/unit is expected to be taught in the session; the numbers of students on the register; the start and end times and location plus any other factors that will help the observer gain a better understanding of the context of the observation.

Observers should arrive and introduce themselves to the member of staff before the start of the observation. During curriculum reviews, observers may interrupt sessions at an appropriate time to talk to students and teachers and may potentially require the teacher to leave the room, so that learning can be better assessed. Observers should judge the effectiveness of the session on the requirements of the Ofsted education inspection framework and minimum college expectations.

It is recommended as good practice that staff being observed have planning documentation (namely a scheme of work, session plan and group profile) available to hand to observers but only a scheme of work is mandatory. Whilst observers may request additional paperwork or information during or subsequent to an observation they will only do so to arrive at a better informed judgement, and will be mindful that they do not make unreasonable requests of staff that will not help inform their judgement.

Judgements

The criteria used for Formal Observations, reobservations, curriculum reviews and external development reviews will depend upon the provision and session type and the staff role as set out in the [Support for Teaching, Learning and Assessment Handbook](#). Observers will make judgements against each criterion, identifying whether each was a strength or as an area for improvement in the observed portion of the session. Observers will make an overall judgement of whether the standard of teaching, learning and assessment 'met' or 'did not meet' College expectations and provide a summary statement. LSA and SSA observations will be graded as 'effective' or 'ineffective' and a summary statement provided.

Feedback

Feedback after a formal session observation should normally be given within 3-5 working days of the observation. Only in exceptional circumstances should this be extended and not without the observer notifying the observee. Feedback from a thematic observation or learning walk should be given within the week. All observers should provide teachers with feedback at a mutually convenient time and in private, away from distractions or interruptions.

The observer should lead the discussion. To ensure a common approach and consistency of feedback, all observers should feedback on the list of items below:

- Listing of key strengths
- Listing key areas for improvement
- Whether the observee meets expectations or does not meet expectations.

Feedback should form part of a professional dialogue between the observer and observee which enables the observee to build and develop their teaching learning and assessment practices.

The agreed actions will be shared with their Head of Department who will discuss with the member of staff how best to support them to meet the actions on their individual Teaching Learning and Assessment Development Plan.

Appeals against observation outcomes

If a member of staff observed wishes to appeal against the outcome of an observed session, they should discuss with the observer in the first instance. Appeals may be made on two grounds

1. Procedural irregularity (e.g. conduct of observer or incorrect notice period given)
2. Insufficient or inconsistent evidence provided to support the outcome

If agreement cannot be reached between the observer and member of staff there will be a 5 working-day limit of a right of appeal to the Head of Quality Assurance*, who will investigate and then feedback to the appellants.

The appeal outcome should be reached within 5 working days of receipt and communicated to the appellants. The appeal may lead to further clarification of strengths, areas for development or action plan components.

The appeal cannot amend the overall outcome awarded for a session but can revoke the outcome awarded completely and arrange for a fresh observation to take place. If the appeal outcome is a

further observation, then that observation will be undertaken by another member of the observation team, will normally** take place within four working weeks of the appeal outcome being reached and the outcome at this stage will be final.

* If the observer was the Head of Quality Assurance, the appeal should be forwarded to and heard by the Deputy Principal.

** Subject to delivery and or teaching still taking place at this date and an appropriate member of the observation team being available.

Sharing of good practice

Exemplary practice will be identified and shared. Identified staff will share their experiences and their session with their teams and /or others during staff development activities.

Monitoring of Teaching Learning and Assessment Development Plans

Observers will identify strengths, areas for improvement and state actions from a teachers' observation in their Teaching Learning and Assessment Development Plan, these will be uploaded to the college's ProObserve system.

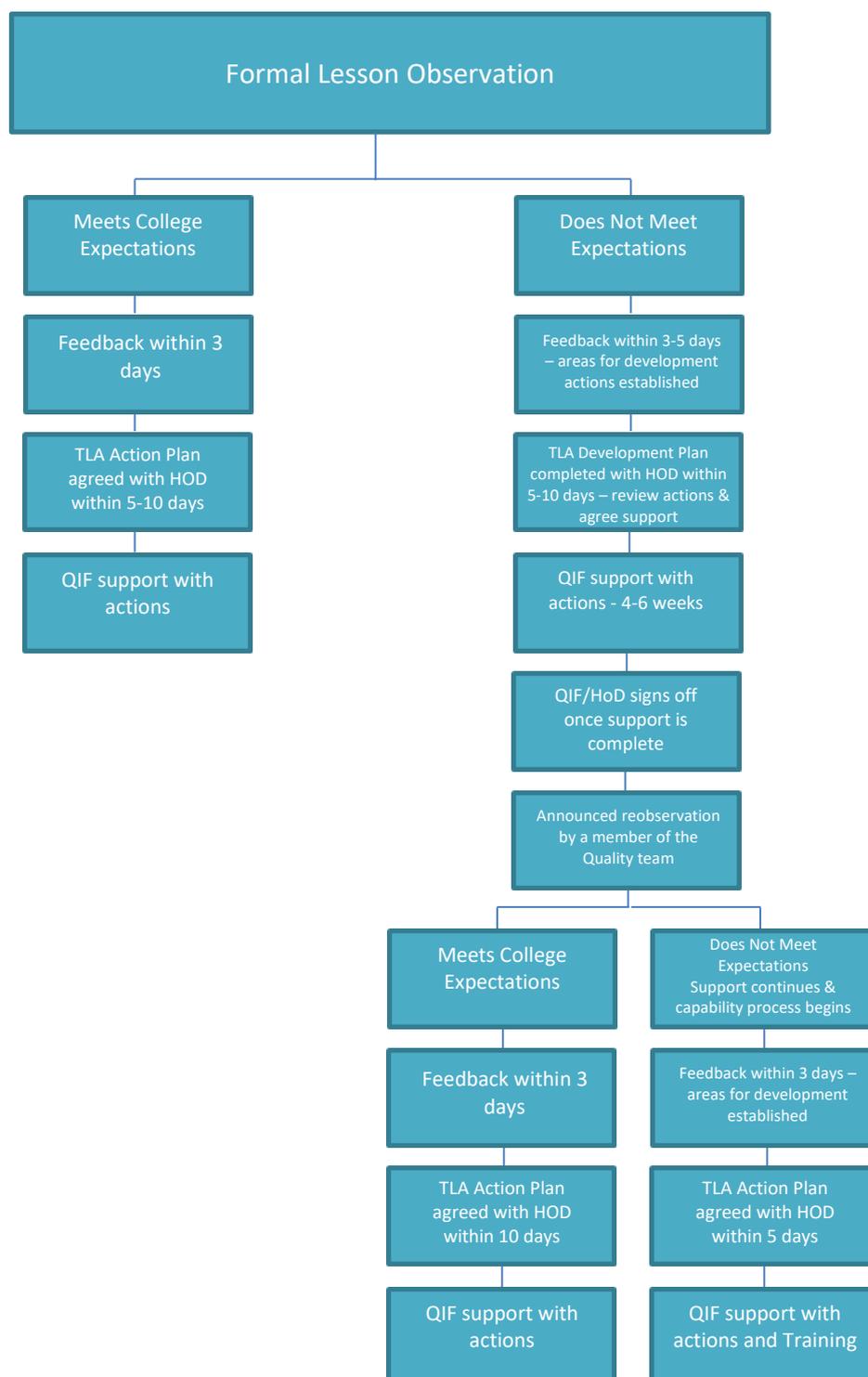
The Head of Department will conduct a one to one meeting with observed staff where their individual Teaching Learning and Assessment Development Plan will be discussed. The Head of Department will assign actions from the observation to support improvement to either themselves or the QIF allocated to the member of staff. Where the standard of teaching, learning and assessment in a formal observation 'does not meet expectations', the member of staff will receive intensive support from their Head of Department and/or assigned Quality Improvement Facilitator for a period of 4 to 6 weeks, to help them address the actions identified from the observation.

The Head of Department or assigned QIF will record all interventions, support and development on the Teaching Learning and Assessment Development plan. Plans must be updated with clear demonstration of action taken to achieve the target and the impact of those actions. Heads of Department will receive feedback and a detailed log of all support and development given by the assigned QIF, this will be on ProObserve. Heads of Department will use the findings from the support provided to inform their staff appraisals and 1-2-1 meetings. The actions will be monitored by the quality team.

The relevant Head of Department and/or assigned QIF will sign off actions set once the identified support needed is complete, signalling that the staff member is ready for re observation. The re observation will be arranged and conducted within two to four weeks by either the Deputy Principal for Quality, the Head of Quality Assurance or Head of Teacher Training and Quality Improvement.

Managing teaching performance:

The only acceptable standard of performance is that the standard of teaching, learning and assessment 'meets expectations' or that LSA or SSA support was 'effective'. The College is committed to ensuring all sessions provide students and apprentices with exceptional experiences to ensure that all reach their full potential. Therefore, staff who do not meet expectations will be supported and monitored to improve. However, if subsequent observations show no significant improvement in performance, capability procedures may commence.



Changes to planned activities in the light of current public health and further education sector guidance

Reobservations

Reobservations of staff who delivered sessions where the standard of teaching, learning and assessment 'did not meet' college expectations, and who couldn't be re-observed prior to lockdown cannot currently be conducted as planned. This is because observers would be visitors to the department and therefore must comply with the 15-minute rule as well as social distancing and the requirement to wear a face mask and visor.

Instead, a session delivered by a colleague who is due to be re-observed will be seen for a maximum of 15 minutes by either the Deputy Principal for Curriculum and Quality, the Head of Quality Assurance or the Head of Teacher Training and Quality Improvement - re-observations of staff in LIFE will be undertaken by the Head of Learning for Independence and Future Employment (L.I.F.E.). Observers will be required to comply with social distancing rules and to wear face masks and visors.

15-minute visits will not be graded this academic year. If there were no significant concerns over the standard of teaching, learning and assessment in a 15-minute visit, then the observer will identify actions from the 15-minute visit on the staff member's Teaching Learning and Assessment Development Plan, to support their ongoing development.

If the 15-minute visit raises any concerns about the standard of teaching, learning and assessment, then a reobservation will be required. The reobservation will take place remotely in real time using a camera and microphone placed in the classroom or workshop. The outcomes and processes resulting from the reobservation will be as outlined in the existing policy.

Curriculum Reviews and External Development Reviews

Curriculum Reviews and External Development Reviews – observations of staff during reviews cannot currently be conducted as planned. This is because observers would be visitors to the department and therefore must observe the 15-minute rule and they would also need to comply with social distancing and wearing face masks and visors. Instead, sessions will be seen for a maximum of 15 minutes by observers who will be required to comply with social distancing rules and to wear a face mask and visor, to provide one source of evidence to inform the review.

Where a member of staff's session during a review would normally be judged to have either met or not met college expectations – see handbook for exceptions – 15-minute visits will not be graded this academic year. If there were no significant concerns over the standard of teaching, learning and assessment in a 15-minute visit, then the observer may still identify actions from the 15-minute visit, and these will be included in the staff member's Teaching Learning and Assessment Development Plan, to support their ongoing development.

If there were concerns, a second 15-minute visit would be arranged within the next two working weeks and if there were still concerns, a remote observation would be arranged within the next four working weeks and this would be graded. The outcomes and processes resulting from the observation will then be as outlined in the existing policy. Note that no 15-minute visits or remote observations for this purpose would take place after Friday 28th May.