Observation of Teaching Policy

Version Number 1.2

Effective from 14 November 2016

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Quality & Enhancement Office

Background
The Observation of Teaching Policy is a part of our work to ensure we put consideration of the student experience at the heart of our teaching and learning practice.
The Observation of Teaching Policy is a clear, developmental path through which we can take pride in the innovative and high quality teaching demonstrated throughout the University. It's also a way in which the academic community can continually improve, champion and recognise good practice in its most significant asset: its staff. The Policy provides a safe environment for teaching staff to observe different teaching methods in practice and to share their own teaching practice with colleagues with the aim of placing consideration of the student experience at the heart of our endeavours.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This document outlines the general principles and guidance relating to the routine use of observation of teaching (OoT) as part of the University's approach to improving students' learning experiences through advances in teaching practice. In addition the University's aspiration is that observation of teaching will result in developmental, constructive feedback leading to improvements in reflective practices and educational scholarship. The experiences of the observers and those who have been observed should contribute to the sharing of good practice and offer fresh perspectives on teaching and learning.

1.2 OoT will contribute towards the University meeting the requirements of Indicator 3 of the QAA Quality Code which states that "*Learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship*" (2012 p13).

1.3 The University of Salford supports the Higher Education Academy's (HEA 2006) list of reasons why academics should be observed and observe teaching :

- "To enhance the importance attached to quality of teaching.

- To encourage all staff to reflect on the effectiveness of their own teaching and identify their development needs.

- To foster discussion and dissemination of best practice.

- To increase staff awareness of the whole student experience.

- To identify any weaknesses and put in place an action plan to remedy them.

- To assist departments in providing a high quality educational experience for their students." (Abridged from Gosling)

2.0 Scope

2.1 The OoT Policy applies to all academics, other than hourly paid lecturers (see note 2.2) teaching on taught programmes leading to credit or qualification of the University. "Teaching" for the purposes of this policy includes all activity with students that contributes to module learning outcomes. Thus, staff whose only teaching

activity is supervising dissertations and/or projects for students on taught programmes are included.

2.2   This OoT Policy shall not apply to hourly paid lecturers and associate lecturers unless Schools make local arrangements to apply the policy. Schools may decide a threshold number of hours that hourly paid staff must teach for the policy to apply.

2.3   Staff who are registered on the PGCAP Learning and Teaching in Higher Education module, that includes observation of teaching at the University can, in the academic year they are doing the module, opt out of this University-wide OoT scheme as they will be engaging in observations as part of their studies.

2.4   Implications for collaborative programmes: for accredited partners arrangements for OoT will be included in their accreditation agreement. The approach to OoT for all other forms of collaboration will be reviewed by the Quality & Enhancement Office as part of the development of a CPD Framework in 2016/17.

3.0 Policy Statements

A developmental approach to OoT

3.1   If the OoT policy is to deliver the impacts outlined in section 1.0 above it needs to be recognised as a supportive process. All teaching staff are expected to engage with this activity regularly (i.e. at least once a year) with the option to take part more often according to development needs. Academics being observed should feel that they could choose to be observed in an area of their practice that they struggle with without concern that this may go beyond the observer/observee relationship.

3.2   OoT is part of a wider enhancement strategy that further develops the University's ambition to be pedagogically excellent.

3.3   The University provides online learning and development material and optional staff development sessions for all staff who are required to take part in OoT.

3.4   Those taking part in OoT can decide what teaching activity they want to be observed, this could range from a one-to-one supervision to a lecture to a large cohort. However academics are expected to propose several options for observations to help ensure that a mutually agreeable date can be identified. It is expected that observations should be a minimum of an hour long.

Organising observations

3.5   The Quality and Enhancement Office will work in conjunction with Schools to arrange observation of teaching groups.   These groups of between five and seven staff will be expected to contact each other and arrange observations.

3.6   Generally groups will be arranged across the University's Schools and so be interdisciplinary as there is evidence that this is the most effective approach to OoT. Academic staff should be prepared to travel across the University's campuses to take part in observations. However, in the 2016-17 academic year OoT will be organised so that staff observe colleagues from within their own Schools, although not necessarily from within their own discipline area.

3.7   If, once they are informed about their observation of teaching group, a member of staff is uncomfortable working with a particular colleague, they can request (via the Associate Dean Academic of their School) a change of group.

Code of Practice

3.8   The Code of Practice for OoT is based on a document initially developed by staff who participated in the College of Science and Technology OoT Pilot in 2013/14. It will apply to all staff taking part in OoT. The Code of Practice will be reviewed alongside the review of the Policy in 2016-17.

Records of observations

3.9   The post-observation discussion between the observer and observee is private but can be captured using the optional OoT template. This is not obligatory.

3.10 For audit purposes, staff taking part in observations are required to report [via an online survey] to the Quality and Enhancement Office both the date they observed a colleague and the date they were observed by a colleague.

3.11 OoT will not be recorded on PDRs however staff are encouraged to use the feedback from observations to identify proposed learning objectives and/or development activity in their PDR.

University Consideration

3.12 SELTEC is responsible for advising Senate on the enhancement of teaching. SELTEC will receive an annual report from the Quality and Enhancement Office on the operation of OoT.

3.13 SELTEC will commission audits and other such evaluations or reports as may be required to verify the effective implementation of the OoT Policy to assure Senate that the procedure and the policy governing it remain fit for purpose and contribute to the enhancement of the quality of student learning opportunities.

4.0   Related Documentation

- Observation of Teaching Optional Observation Template

- Observation of Teaching Code of Practice

  5.0   References

- HEA Study Centre for Education ESCalate (2006a) Peer Observation [Accessed online from http://escalate.ac.uk/resources/peerobservation/index.html 14 Feb 2013].

- HEA Study Centre for Education ESCalate (2006b) Planning for Peer Observation of Learning and Teaching [Accessed online http://escalate.ac.uk/resources/peerobservation/02.html 14 Feb 2013].

- QAA (2012) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part B: Assuring and enhancing Academic quality Chapter B3: Learning and teaching* [Accessed online from http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/B3.pdf 24 March 2014].

Document Control Information			
Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)			
Author	**Summary of changes**	**Version**	**Authorised & Date**
L Clarke	*Transferred into new policy template. Update to section 2.4 re planned review of OoT in 2015/16. Update to section 3,6 to reflect arrangements for organising OoT in 2016/17. Update to section 3.8.to reflect arrangements for review of Code of Practice.*	V1.2	Jonathan Carson, Chair of SELTEC, 14 November 2016
L Clarke	*Amended web links for QEO web pages*	V1.1	6 May 2015

Policy Management and Responsibilities:	
Owner:	This Policy is issued by the Chair of SELTEC, who has the authority to issue and communicate policy on Observation of Teaching and has delegated day-to-day management and communication of the policy to the Quality & Enhancement Office.
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	Policies, Procedures and Regulations governing the operation of the Observation of Teaching (OoT) Policy are determined by Senate on the recommendation of the Student Experience, Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Committee (SELTEC). The operation and management of OoT within Schools is the responsibility of Deans of Schools. The operation and management of OoT at institutional level is the responsibility of the Head of QEO. All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this Policy, including Academics, Module Leaders, Programme Leaders, Directors of Directorates, Deans of School and Associate Deans Academic.

Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:	
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR) *Equality Assessment form*	1. *October 2016*
Legal implications (LPG)	2. *N/A*
Information Governance (LPG)	3. *N/A*
Student facing procedures (QEO)	4. *N/A*
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	5. *N/A*

Consultation:	
Staff Trades Unions via HR Students via USSU Relevant external bodies (specify)	*Minor organisational changes only: no Trade Union consultation required.*

Review:	
Review due:	The approach to OoT for all other forms of collaboration will be reviewed by the Quality & Enhancement Office as part of the development of a CPD Framework in 2016/17.
Document location:	University Policy & Procedure Pages – http://www.salford.ac.uk/policies

The owner and author are responsible for publicising this policy document.