

Observation of Teaching & Learning Policy & Procedure

2025-2026

1. Policy Introduction and Purpose

Lesson observations are a key component of Shockout Arts and Shockout Academy's quality assurance and enhancement framework. A robust and transparent observation process ensures continuous improvement in teaching, learning and assessment, while promoting a culture of reflective practice and professional growth.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance and support for all teaching and learning staff to ensure that every learner receives the highest possible standard of education and experience.

This policy aligns with:

- Shockout's internal quality standards and values;
- Partner institution policies and regulatory frameworks; and
- The **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF)**.

Where observed teaching or assessment practice falls below the expected standard, supportive intervention will be implemented through performance management and professional development processes. Continued failure to meet improvement targets may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with Shockout's internal procedures.

2. Policy Management and Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy lies with the **Senior Management Team**, who will coordinate activity with the **Quality and Observation Team**, in collaboration with the **Principal** and relevant curriculum or support leads.

The observation team will conduct both **formal and informal observations**, including:

- Full lesson observations;
- Short 'walkthrough' observations;

Observers are allocated in a balanced and equitable manner to ensure consistency across the provision. Dual observations may also be conducted periodically to support standardisation, staff development, and quality assurance.

3. Objectives of the Observation Process

The observation of teaching, learning and assessment is designed to:

- Enhance the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all settings (classroom, studio, and workplace).
- Promote an outstanding **student experience**, focusing on high standards, support, well-being, inclusivity, and engagement.
- Identify, recognise and share examples of effective practice to raise standards across the organisation.
- Support staff professional development and performance management.
- Provide measurable benchmarks for internal quality reviews and external inspections.
- Inform the **Self-Assessment Report (SAR)** and contribute to the continuous improvement cycle.
- Support leadership and management in evaluating teaching and learning performance within curriculum areas.

4. Observation Team

Observations will be undertaken by trained members of the **Programme and Student Support Observation Team**. Where required, additional observers may be deployed to strengthen moderation and ensure consistency.

- **Peer Observations:** As part of continuous professional development (CPD), qualified staff (holding PGCE, Cert Ed, DTLLS, QTLS or equivalent) may conduct peer observations to support reflective practice.
- **Training and CPD:** All observers receive training and ongoing professional development to ensure that observations are conducted consistently and in alignment with regulatory standards.
- **Collaborative Observation:** At times, dual or joint observations may be undertaken with partner institution quality teams to strengthen cross-institutional alignment and best practice.

5. Procedure and Process

Scheduling and Frequency

- Observations will take place throughout each academic year across all areas of provision.

- A timetable of observations will be established at the beginning of each academic cycle by the Senior Management Team.
- All teaching and learning staff, including freelance practitioners, will be subject to at least:
 - **One full lesson observation per year**, and
 - **Regular 20-minute walkthroughs** conducted at set intervals.

Typical cycle:

- Term 1: Full observation and reflective feedback prior to the winter break.
- Term 2: Focused walkthrough(s) and developmental feedback.
- Term 3: Shorter reflective review and follow-up, ensuring ongoing improvement.

6. Observation Guidelines

Before the Observation

- All observations and walkthroughs are **unannounced** to ensure authenticity of practice.
- Observers must be trained, approved, and named within the quality framework.
- Staff are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the **Observation Form, Shockout Standards**, and relevant frameworks during induction and ongoing CPD.
- No more than **two observers** will be present in any session.

During the Observation

- Observations typically last for the full duration of the scheduled session.
- Observers should use the formal observations form
- The observer must remain unobtrusive but may review learner work or speak with students/employers, ensuring minimal disruption.
- Learner feedback (“learner voice”) will be incorporated where appropriate.
- Observers must use official Shockout documentation to record findings, which will be shared only with authorised management personnel.

After the Observation

- **Initial feedback** will be provided on the same day, at a mutually convenient time.
- Full written feedback will be shared within **five working days**.
- Observations are **not graded** — the process is reflective, developmental, and supportive.
- Clear action points and areas for improvement (if required) will be agreed and monitored through subsequent walkthroughs or follow-up observations.
- Observation records will be stored securely and confidentially by the Vice Principal (Programmes).

7. Support and Follow-up

Where a member of staff is identified as requiring additional support:

- A structured **Action Plan** will be created in collaboration with their Line Manager and monitored closely.
- A **follow-up observation** will be scheduled within **two to four weeks** to evaluate progress.
- Continued underperformance may trigger a **Performance and Capability Review**, and where necessary, formal disciplinary action.
- Line Managers are responsible for implementing and monitoring improvement plans, ensuring the Vice Principal (Programmes) remains informed of progress.