

Observation of Teaching & Learning

Policy & Procedure

Policy Introduction and Aim

Lesson observations are an essential part of the quality assurance and quality improvement processes. 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 learners receive the highest possible standards. Staff will be regularly monitored through the Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy in alignment with the standards set by Shockout, alongside relevant regulatory body and compliance frameworks such as partner policies (The University of Bolton & Bolton College) and the OFSTED Education Inspection Framework (EIF). Lessons observed that fall below any of the satisfactory benchmark standards will lead to performance management intervention, to support, improve and develop best practice. Failure to meet these objectives may lead to disciplinary procedures.

Management

Overall responsibility for this policy lies with the Vice Principal (Programmes) who will coordinate with the relevant members of the Quality & Observation Team in alignment with the principal where necessary.

The observation team will carry out formal and informal walkthroughs and full lesson 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 and Shockout Arts staff. Observations are essential and are designed to:

- Develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in both the classroom, studio 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 be undertaken by members of the programme and student support observation team; however, standardisation can be strengthened through an additional observer where necessary and appropriate.

Where peer observations are undertaken, as part of CPD activities, teaching and learning staff holding a full teaching qualification, qualified at Level 7 or higher (PGCE/Cert Ed/PGCertHE/QTLS or equivalent), will be entitled to observe a session. The team of observers have received training and ongoing CPD in line with quality procedures and relevant regulatory frameworks.

It may be appropriate at times for members of the observation team to carry out dual observation with partner institution staff and members of their quality team.

Procedure

Observations will take place throughout the academic year for all areas within the teaching and learning provision. The Vice Principal (Programmes) 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 will be subject to a full lesson observation with a subsequent reflective discussion.
- All staff involved in teaching and learning, including any freelance staff will be subject to a formalised 30-minute Walkthrough within your first term of teaching.

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 observation process and are considered developmental.

Observations & Walk-throughs

Observations focus on assessing the effectiveness of practice within individual sessions in the classroom/studio. 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 follow a non-notification policy for all observations and walkthroughs.
- Observers will offer to the observed the opportunity to become familiar with the observation form, Shockout standards and relevant frameworks 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.

During the observation

- Observations of learning are typically of a single session and will last for the entirety of the timetabled session with a walkthrough lasting 30 minutes.
- The observation outcomes reflect the impact on learning, progress and attainment of all students and their needs.
- Judgements about students' progress use a range of evidence sources including scheme of work, planning, module specification, Shockout standards 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 and these are only shared with senior management.

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 within five working days.
- Observations are not graded and are a reflective and supportive process to enhance and share best practice.
- Where necessary clear improvement actions (as a result of the observation) are implemented and will be monitored through subsequent walkthroughs/observations.
- A copy of the observation record is stored securely, electronically and confidentially by the Vice Principal (Programmes) and is accessible to relevant Shockout management team.
- If an observed member of staff is identified as requiring additional support a necessary action plan will be implemented and a further follow-up observation with an additional member of the quality team will be undertaken.
- Failure to improve within the agreed timeframe may lead to a review of the teacher's/assessor's capabilities and disciplinary action may be taken.