

Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

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1.0	Gemma Conti	October 2024	Revision	New procedures
2.0	Gemma Conti	October 2025	Slight revision	

Introduction

The Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) policy sets out the College's commitment to the continued enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment standards through lesson observation and feedback.

The OTLA policy is written to ensure that the learner experience is at the heart of teaching, learning and assessment practice throughout the college and that the college promotes a clear developmental path for staff to share good practice, to innovate and to continually develop their skills.

The OTLA process will assist departments in growing great teachers through walkthroughs, focused professional development, collaborative development activities and addressing concerns effectively.

1. Purpose

- To ensure that lesson observations are fair and consistent.
- To raise the quality of teaching, training, learning and assessment through professional discussions and feedback,

- To provide opportunities for staff to improve performance through reflection, sharing good practice, support, and professional development.
- To provide analysis of OTLA trends to inform continuous improvement.

2. Scope

All teaching staff are required to participate in the observation process to monitor and maintain standards of teaching and learning.

3. Responsibilities

- The Head of Quality and Teaching Excellence has overall responsibility of this policy.
- Heads of department are responsible for ensuring that all teaching, learning, assessment, and support staff comply with this policy and encourage their staff to improve their practice and quality assurance.
- All teaching, learning, assessment and support staff are responsible for quality assurance, improvement and enhancement in relation to their own areas of work, and within their teams.

4. Communication

The following principles are fundamental to the communication of the Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy and Procedure:

- Reviewed by a working group and the union before being escalated to the SMT for approval.
- Referred to the Quality and Curriculum Committee
- Publication to the College intranet.
- Heads of Department include the OTLA policy as part of staff induction to the College.

5. Implementation

Scheduling of lesson observations will involve providing notice of 2 working days for a one-week window. The different forms of observations are set out below.

a) Term Walkthroughs – 15 minutes

- Term 1 – walkthrough observations for all teaching staff will be undertaken by a Head of Department (HOD) from an alternative department, Dual walkthrough will be undertaken by Quality, Senior management Team (SMT), or external consultant. Teaching staff enrolled on an Education and Training qualification, or a new member of teaching staff who has a developmental walkthrough in their first 3 weeks of teaching will not be included.
- Terms 2 & 3 – walkthrough observations for all departments unless the member of teaching staff has been formally observed as part of a Curriculum Review.
- When a collection of factors indicate that the Quality of Education is less than College expectations, it will trigger a formal observation within one week of the walkthrough which will be undertaken by Quality.

b) Peer Walkthroughs – 15 minutes

It is beneficial for all teaching staff to participate in peer walkthroughs both within and outside of their department to develop and enhance our practice. A minimum of one peer walkthrough per year is required.

Development Walkthroughs – 15 minutes

Developmental observations will be undertaken by Quality and the Head of Department and take place within the first three weeks of teaching.

c) Formal Observations – 30 minutes

Formal observations will be scheduled during the Curriculum Review process. Where a term walkthrough has demonstrated that support is required, or teaching is inadequate it will trigger a formal observation. The observations will be undertaken by the observation team and notice will be given in advance.

If areas for development are identified teaching staff follow two supportive routes

- i) Attend a 'Be Exceptional' session/s with a Teacher Development Lead, followed by a walkthrough undertaken with their HOD. If improvement is evident teaching staff will return to the termly walkthrough process. However, if teaching and learning has not improved a six-week 1-1 coaching programme with an Advanced Practitioner (AP) will be arranged. This will be followed by a walkthrough with the Head of Quality and Teaching Excellence or Teaching and Learning Manager. The process will be completed by staff returning to term walkthroughs or referred to HR.
- ii) Attend a six-week coaching programme with an AP. This will be followed by a walkthrough with the Head of Quality and Teaching Excellence or Teaching and Learning Manager. The process will be completed by staff returning to the term walkthrough or referred to HR.

d) Appeals

As no grading decision is made, it is not necessary to have an appeal process withing this policy. However, if you do not agree with findings this can be brought to the attention of the Head of Quality and Teaching Excellence who manages standardisation across the observation team.

6. Associated Documentation

This policy will be used in conjunction with the following college policies: -

- Lesson observation matrix (Curriculum Observer)
- Lesson walkthrough matrix (Curriculum Observer)
- Quality of Education Strategy

Observation of teaching, learning and assessment process

