



Peer Observation of Teaching Policy

Head of Academic Professional Development

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Indicate whether the document is for public access or internal access only Indicate whether the document applies to collaborative provision? <i>(Strikethrough text, as appropriate)</i>	Public Access Internal Access Only Applies to Collaborative Provision
Summary: Please document outlines the aims of peer observation of teaching and provides guidelines to staff engaging with the process.	

PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING POLICY

Section 1 Aims

Peer observation is a collaborative, developmental activity which has the potential to enhance teaching practice, and improve the quality of the student learning experience. Discussion of ideas and best practice is an essential aspect of peer observation which helps to develop reflection and innovation for both the observer and the observed. Observation will be of engagement with students, whether face-to-face or remote teaching, supervision, supporting learning or any other teaching and learning related activity. In accordance with this, the aims of the University of Winchester's Peer Observation of teaching (POT) Policy are:

- a) To enable all teaching staff (established, associate and part-time hourly paid) to learn from each other and mutually benefit from improving understanding and practice;
- b) To develop a framework which enables and strengthens sharing, discussion and reflection about best practice in learning and teaching;
- c) To help staff to identify strengths in learning and teaching, and to identify areas where teaching and student learning could be improved;
- d) To support individual, modular and programmatic improvements in the design of programmes, particularly related to teaching methods and to student learning, through identifying common challenges and fresh solutions;
- e) To engender greater awareness, understanding and value for teaching approaches which enhance student learning, and disseminate these approaches within and across programmes;
- f) To help staff who teach and those who support learning to collect evidence of learning and teaching reflection for recognition through the Inspiring Excellence in Teaching continuing professional development scheme, and benchmark their own practice to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF);
- g) To ensure that the quality of teaching and learning at Winchester is continually refreshed and enhanced.

Section 2 Policy guidelines

In support of these aims, the University has approved the following requirements for the operation of peer observation:

- a) Departments within Faculties are expected to ensure that teaching staff (full- and part-time) are peer observed at least once every two years¹. Observation will be of engagement with students, whether face-to-face or remote teaching, supervision, supporting learning or any other teaching and learning related activity. New members of teaching staff, including associate lecturers and part-time lecturers who teach more than 20 hours per semester should be peer observed within their first semester of teaching.
- b) Established members of staff² should normally observe new Associate Lecturers and Hourly Paid Lecturers who are on contracts >20 hours in a semester, as part of the university's commitment to supporting their work and building a shared community of practice.
- c) It is a requirement for colleagues enrolled in the PGCert Learning and Teaching in Higher Education to complete two POT activities as part of the Engaging Students In Learning, core module.
- d) Peer observations will take place within a Winchester context (i.e. not at another educational

¹ It is expected that peer observation will be arranged locally as part of any collaborative provision arrangement and that this will be informed by the principles of development, dialogue and support which inform this policy

² 'Established' refers to permanent members of staff

institution); this includes off-site teaching on Winchester programmes by Winchester staff e.g. fieldtrips, archaeology digs etc.

- e) Peer observation works best as a structured reflective activity. Good practice in POT includes:
 - i) Pre-meeting, face-to-face or online, between observer and observed: the person being observed outlines the principles of engagement, both arrange a mutually agreeable time for the observation, and the observer identifies focus areas for discussion and observation.
 - ii) The observation of engagement with students: letting students know in advance of the event that you are going to be observed. Their consent is not required unless the teaching and learning event being observed is a tutorial.
 - iii) Written record of observation by the observer, with opportunity for reflection and response by the observed, using the standard form (Section 3, below) which categorises observable areas of teaching and learning. This form is confidential to the observer and observed.
 - iv) Post-meeting face-to-face or online discussion with reference to the constructive write-up. This meeting would elicit strengths, areas of shared interest, enhancement ideas and identify examples of best practice to disseminate.
- f) Colleagues should select an observer who they feel is able to contribute to their growth and development as a lecturer. This may be someone from their department, or faculty, or it may be from outside the faculty. Normally it is wiser not to select a direct line manager, but it is best to allow common sense to prevail.
- g) Peer observation is an intentional activity designed to foster reflection and conversations about teaching, both before and after the session. Team teaching is not the same as peer observation: in team teaching situations, the observer may be distracted by their own responsibilities to teach students and by the activity and dynamic in the room. Peer observations must therefore not be combined with team teaching; the observer must be separate from the teaching activity occurring.
- h) All peer observation is undertaken to enhance teaching, improve student learning and develop a culture of reflection about learning and teaching.
- i) Peer observation should contribute to Staff Development and Review conversations; it may highlight excellent practice for wider dissemination (for example, through Learning Lunches, faculty seminars on L&T, and DELTA). POT may also provide evidence for reward and recognition through the Inspiring Excellence in Teaching CPD scheme, and University of Winchester L&T Awards, for example.
- j) Peer observation will remain confidential between observer and observed, although the observed individual is free to share their peer observation record should they wish. In order to facilitate the dissemination of best practice, Heads of Department (HoD) will be invited by the Head of Academic Professional Development to nominate examples of good practice which can be shared through the University of Winchester Developing Learning, Teaching and Assessment (DELTA) resource to contribute to the systematic enhancement of teaching and learning across disciplines.
- k) The University requires a record of all peer observation that has taken place. HoDs are responsible for collecting brief monitoring data from all teaching staff concerning the time, place and sessions at which observation has taken place, as well as a record of observers (section A, below). This should be reported to the Dean annually. This record excludes the content of discussions and observation.
- l) Both the observers and observed can reflect on insights and enhancements which have occurred through engaging in POT in the annual L&T return, which captures engagement, collaboration and enhancement through L&T activities.

PEER OBSERVATION FORM

Section 3 Template for Peer Observation

Please read the Peer Observation Policy before completing this form.³

The content of discussions and the observations on this form are confidential to the observer and the observed, although the observed individual is free to share their peer observation record should they wish and may be invited to disseminate their good practice via DELTA.

At the conclusion of the observation and a post-meeting discussion, the completed form should be retained by the member of staff being observed.

However, as Deans are responsible for collecting brief monitoring data from all teaching staff about the time, place and sessions at which observation has taken place, as well as a record of observers, the member of staff being observed should **forward a copy of Section A only to their Head of Academic Department** as soon as possible after the observation has taken place.

PEER OBSERVATION FORM

Section A

To be completed by the Observer

(A copy of **Section A only** should be forwarded to the Head of Academic Department as soon as possible after the observation has taken place)

Lecturer			
Programme			
Observer			
Date and time			
Description of venue			
Number of students		Level	

³ Form can be downloaded as a Word document from the website:

PEER OBSERVATION FORM

Section B – CONFIDENTIAL TO OBSERVER AND OBSERVED

To be completed by the Observer

1. **What areas for observation did you jointly identify in advance of the session?**

2. **What approaches struck you as particularly valuable for student learning?**

3. **What were the main challenges in the learning environment, and what possible strategies to overcome them were discussed?**

PEER OBSERVATION FORM

Section C – CONFIDENTIAL TO OBSERVER AND OBSERVED

To be completed by the Observed

4. Reflections and response