
Peer Observation Framework

Contents

1.0 Context	3
1.1 Continuous improvement	3
1.2 The purpose of peer observation	3
1.2.1 OFSTED.....	3
1.2.2 Higher Education Academy.....	4
1.2.3 QAA.....	4
<hr/>	
2.0 Peer observation approach	5
2.1 Overarching peer observation requirements.....	5
2.2 Before an observation	5
2.3 During an observation.....	5
2.4 After an observation.....	7
<hr/>	
3.0 Peer Observation Record	8

1.0 Context

The Dyson Institute is committed to delivering the highest quality of education and training to its students through a diverse range of learning settings including: lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratories/workshops and workplace experience.

In order to deliver on this commitment, it is essential that the Institute has arrangements in place that support it to ensure the quality of education and training.

1.1 Continuous improvement

The Dyson Institute uses a range of mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the quality of its education and training, including mid and end of module feedback, the Annual Survey, annual programme review, External Examiner feedback and the Student Staff Liaison Committee. More detail about these mechanisms can be found in the Continuous Improvement Framework.

The Peer Observation Policy is designed to complement and enhance the Dyson Institute's other continuous improvement and professional development mechanisms.

1.2 The purpose of peer observation

Peer observation is a recognised and commonly used tool in education. It supports developmental, constructive feedback and the sharing of best practice, ideas, and perspectives, nurturing academic staff development and leading to improvements in the quality of educational provision. It is widely recognised to have pedagogical benefits for both the member of staff being observed and the observer and encourages the enhancement of teaching through critical reflection.

The outcomes of peer observation may also feed into assessments of the quality of teaching. A holistic approach to institutional quality would necessarily include mechanisms for identifying and disseminating good practice, and for determining the need for tools, resources, and professional development for teaching staff.

1.2.1 OFSTED

The Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook states that *"an important element of the inspection approach will be to visit lessons, workshops or sessions where teaching, training, learning and assessment are happening... inspectors will view teaching and training across a sample of the provision to provide part of the evidence base to inform inspection judgements, in particular the quality of education and training... Observation is also useful for gathering evidence that contributes to other key judgements, including behaviour and attitudes. Observation enables inspectors to see direct evidence about how behaviour is managed and how behaviours and attitudes are developed in individual learning sessions."*¹

¹ Gov.uk, *Further Education and Skills Handbook*, 2021

Available online at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook-eif/further-education-and-skills-handbook-for-september-2021

1.2.2 Advance HE

AdvanceHE states that the primary objectives of peer observation are:

- To assist departments in providing a high-quality educational experience for their students
- 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 them²

1.2.3 QAA

The Advice and Guidance provided in relation to Learning and Teaching in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education states that “Providers operate staff performance review processes that include opportunities for observed teaching and/or peer review of teaching”³.

² The Higher Education Academy, *Peer Observation*, 2006

Available online at: <http://escalate.ac.uk/resources/peerobservation/index.html>

³ Quality Assurance Agency, *UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Learning and Teaching*, 2018, p 9

Available online at: www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/learning-and-teaching

2.0 Peer observation approach

2.1 Overarching peer observation requirements

- All staff involved in the direct delivery of timetabled learning, whether academic or vocational, will be observed at least twice in each academic year.
- All new staff will be observed twice during their first semester of taught delivery and the observation reports will contribute to the probation judgement and/or performance conversations with their line manager.
- All staff involved in the delivery of learning and training are required to act as an observer at least once per academic year. Observers should have completed a Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (CLTHE) or its equivalent and should have relevant experience of teaching in higher education.
- New teaching staff must discuss the Peer Observation Framework with members of the teaching team within their probationary period, in order to understand the Institute's developmental approach to peer observation and associated expectations.
- Additional observations may be scheduled in response to student feedback or where otherwise requested by the Teaching and Learning lead or Head of Department.
- Observations can take place as part of wider professional development/learning of staff including as part of a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education or alternative.
- The observed member of staff may choose to draw upon the observer's comments for any purpose, including annual performance reviews and as evidence of meeting UKPSF for HEA Fellowship applications.

2.2 Before an observation

- The Teaching and Learning lead will allocate observers for each member of staff at the start of the academic year. In general, staff should not be observed by their line manager, unless specifically requested by the observed member of staff.
- Staff who are being observed should agree the time and date of observation with their observer, to suit both parties.
- Prior to the observation, the observed staff member will complete Section One of the Peer Observation Record and share it with the observer. This will provide information about the specific aspect of their practice on which they would like to focus.
- At least one observation should be of face-to-face classroom delivery, where appropriate. However, the second observation could be of any aspect of academic practice where the observed staff member would benefit from peer feedback. This could include, but is not limited to, lectures, tutorials, lesson or module planning, assessment and feedback.

2.3 During an observation

- The Observer should complete Section 2 of the Peer Observation Record. This will highlight

any areas of good practice to be disseminated amongst the wider teaching team alongside any areas for development.

2.4 After an observation

- Section 2 of the Peer Observation Record should be shared with the observed staff member within five working days of the observation taking place.
- The observer and the observed staff member should meet within five working days of Section 2 being shared in order to discuss the feedback and consider appropriate actions for both parties.
- Section 3 of the Peer Observation Record should be used to record actions and development items for both parties. Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the form should remain confidential between the observed staff member and the observer.
- Section 4 of the Peer Observation Record should be completed, signed, and returned to the Head of Engineering Programme within two weeks of the observation taking place. The Head of Engineering Programme is responsible for storing records, ensuring that any identified good practice is disseminated amongst the teaching team, and that any problems arising from Institutional or company policies and procedures are addressed.
- The observed staff member may choose to share the action plan agreed in relation to the peer observation at their next monthly performance conversation with their Line Manager.
- Full observation reports will be shared with regulatory bodies upon request.

3.0 Independent Observation

- Independent observation is conducted by the Head of Department or Teaching and Learning Lead. It is conducted when peer observation/student feedback has highlighted a need for additional feedback and development.
- Independent observations may provide evidence for performance conversations at the Dyson Institute as well as evidence for fellowship with AdvanceHE.
- The independent observation will follow the same process as peer observation
- The independent observation will include a short (less than 30 minute) discussion with the students being taught to incorporate their feedback of the session observed.

4.0 Peer Observation Record

Section 1 – Prior to observation

(to be completed by the observed staff member)

Name of observed staff member:	Name of observer:	Date:
Module:	No. of students:	Activity: (lecture, tutorial, etc.)
Topic:	Session length: (hrs.)	Observation: (hrs.)
What are the intended learning outcomes of this session?		
What aspect(s) of your teaching practice would you like feedback on?		
What is the reason for your focus on this aspect (e.g. from student feedback, analysis of assessment performance, personal reflection)?		

Section 2 – During observation

(To be completed by the observer)

Please refer to Appendix 1 of this form, Areas for Consideration, for guidance on areas that merit consideration during an observation.

Overview of the session as a whole	Identified strengths	Questions or suggested areas for development
Clarity and achievability of LOs:		
Planning and organisation:		
Teaching methods/approach:		
Inclusivity of style/content:		
Delivery and pace/time management:		
Student engagement:		
Use of teaching resources and technology:		
Development of students' skills:		
Recommendations and learning points <i>Please provide commentary on potential points of learning for the wider academic team, as well as for the observed.</i>		

Section 3 – Following observation

The observer and the observed staff member should meet in person to discuss the written feedback and consider actions that may support either staff member. The conversation should also highlight areas of strong academic practice and areas of good practice to be shared more widely. This should include reflections from the observer on whether there are any resulting actions for themselves based on their observation.

Action Plan for the observed staff member (to be completed by the observed staff member) *Based on the feedback received in Section 2 and your conversation with the observer, create an action plan to support the further development of your academic practice. Please ensure that actions are time-bound where appropriate.*

Action Plan for the observer (to be completed by the observer)
Based on your observation of your colleague's teaching practice, please reflect on any actions to be taken to support the further development of your academic practice. Please ensure that actions are time-bound where appropriate.

Section 4 – Record of outcomes

Name of observed staff member:	Name of observer:	Date:
Module:	No. of students:	Activity: (lecture, tutorial, etc.)

Areas of good practice for dissemination amongst the wider academic team

Areas of professional development that may be beneficial for the wider academic team

Signatures

The observer and observed staff member should sign below to confirm that observation of teaching has taken place and all parties are satisfied with the process.

Observed staff member:	Observer:
Date:	Date:

Once completed and signed, Section 4 of the Peer Observation Record must be submitted to the Principal Lecturer – Teaching and Learning. The Principal Lecturer – Teaching and Learning will use the forms to monitor any themes across the Institute and provide opportunities for the development of the entire academic team where appropriate. For example, this may include additional training. The Principal Lecturer – Teaching and Learning will also report to

Academic Board on how many peer observations have been undertaken.

Appendix 1: Areas for consideration

Please find below areas for consideration during an observation. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list, and it should be used selectively.

Preparation and planning

- Session organisation (opening, closing, signposting, structuring)
- Preparation (content, handouts, planning of activities)
- Learning outcomes for session (explicit, achievable, achieved)
- Time management (also allocation of time to various activities)

Classroom management

- Teaching methods/approaches
- Delivery (clarity, pace, variety of modes of delivery, repetition, summary)
- Use of resources/teaching materials (extent, types, effectiveness)
- Student responses (participation, attention, note-taking)
- Inclusivity
- Guidance to students
- Learning activities in which students are engaged
- Overall style and teaching presence

In the classroom:

- Questioning strategies (number/types of questions, wait time, tutor responses)
- Error correction strategies
- Giving feedback to students (oral/written)
- Obtaining student feedback on teaching (oral/written)

Please also consider the following extract from the Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook (EIF). The EIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging the quality of education.

INTENT

- Leaders take on or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all students, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or high needs, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- the provider's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.
- the provider has the same academic, technical, or vocational ambitions for almost all students. Where this is not practical – for example, for some students with high levels of SEND
 - its curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs.
- students study the full curriculum. Providers ensure this by teaching a full range of subjects for as long as possible, 'specialising' only when necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION

- teachers⁴ have good knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise.
- teachers present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter they are teaching. They check learners' understanding systematically,

¹ Throughout the framework, the term 'teachers' should be read as including early years practitioners, lecturers, trainers and assessors

- identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback. In doing so, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary, without unnecessarily elaborate or differentiated approaches.
- over the course of study, teaching is designed to help students to remember in the long term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts.
 - teachers and leaders use assessment well, for example to help students embed and use knowledge fluently or to check understanding and inform teaching. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff or students.
 - teachers create an environment that allows the learner to focus on learning. The resources and materials that teachers select – in a way that does not create unnecessary workload for staff – reflect the provider’s ambitious intentions for the course of study and clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.
 - a rigorous approach to the teaching of reading develops students’ confidence and enjoyment in reading. At the early stages of learning to read, reading materials are closely matched to students’ phonics knowledge.

IMPACT

- students develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. Where relevant, this is reflected in results from national tests and examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained.
- students are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. Where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests, aspirations, and the intention of their course of study. They read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension.

BEHAVIOURS AND ATTITUDES

The EIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging behaviour and attitudes. Inspectors will make a judgement on behaviour and attitudes by evaluating the extent to which:

- The provider has high expectations for students’ behaviour and conduct and applies these expectations consistently and fairly. This is reflected in students’ behaviour and conduct.
- student’s attitudes to their education or training are positive. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively and do so, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.
- students have high attendance and are punctual.
- Relationships among students and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture. Leaders, teachers, and students create an environment where bullying, peer-on-peer abuse or discrimination are not tolerated. If they do occur, staff deal with issues quickly and effectively, and do not allow them to spread.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The EIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging personal development. Inspectors will make a judgement on behaviour and attitudes by evaluating the extent to which:

- the curriculum extends beyond the academic, technical, or vocational. It provides for student’s broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents.
- the curriculum and the provider’s wider work support students to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence, and independence – and help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.

- at each stage of education, the provider prepares students for future success in their next steps.
- the provider prepares learners for life in modern Britain by:
 - equipping them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society.
 - developing their understanding of fundamental British values.
 - developing their understanding and appreciation of diversity.
 - celebrating what we have in common and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The EIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging leadership and management. Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management by evaluating the extent to which:

- leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies, and practice.
- leaders focus on improving staff’s subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge of staff are built up and improve over time.
- leaders aim to ensure that all learners complete their programmes of study. They provide the support for staff to make this possible and do not allow gaming or off-rolling⁵
- leaders engage effectively with learners and others in their community, including – where relevant – parents, carers, employers, and local services.
- leaders engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way that they manage staff, including their workload.
- leaders protect their staff from bullying and harassment.
- those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the provider has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are managed well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education or training.
- those with responsibility for governance ensure that the provider fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, for example in relation to the ‘Prevent’ strategy and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners.
- the provider has a culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to:
 - identify students who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation.
 - help students reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need or referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help.
 - manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to students and vulnerable adults.

Inspectors will always report on whether arrangements for safeguarding students is effective.

² There is no legal definition of ‘off-rolling’. However, we define ‘off-rolling’ as the practice of removing a learner from the provider’s roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the provider rather than in the best interests of the learner. Off-rolling in these circumstances is a form of ‘gaming’