

Handbook for Teaching Observations

Centre for Academic Practice

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Loughborough University

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1. Introduction

This section sets the context for teaching observations at Loughborough, including the different types of observation and categories of observers:

Type of Observation	Reasons for Observation	Observer
<p>Summative a formal observation with a grading that contributes to an award or programme</p>	To meet the requirements of an academic or accredited course, e.g. Academic Professional Apprenticeship, where a grading of meets expectation or higher is required	University Assessor
	Promotion to Senior Lecturer; where a grading of meets expectation or higher is required	University Assessor
	To provide evidence for a HEA CPD Portfolio submission, where a grading of meets expectation or higher is required	University Assessor
	To meet the requirements of Non-Academic Probation for Specialist and Supporting Academic (SSA) teaching staff	University Assessor
<p>Formative an observation conducted for general feedback about teaching practice</p>	To meet the requirements of an academic or accredited course, e.g. Academic Professional Apprenticeship	Experienced School-based colleague
	Quality assurance within a School	Experienced School-based colleague
<p>Peer peer-to-peer to share practice between colleagues</p>	Observing an experienced colleague	Colleague who is keen to learn from others
	Sharing experience within a School to improve practice	School-based colleague

2. The Teaching Observation Process

The process of teaching observation falls into three phases:

- Pre-observation
- Observation
- Post-observation

The process is initiated by the person requiring a teaching observation contacting CAP. CAP then allocates an appropriate University Assessor and emails both the Observee and Assessor to enable confirmation of the date and time for the observation.

A request is made for the observee to complete the first part of the Teaching Observation Report Form within a set time frame, and a reminder to arrange a date for a Pre-Observation Meeting.

Pre-Observation Phase

The Pre-Observation meeting between the observer and observee is important as a means of setting the scene for the observation, clarifying issues and establishing a professional rapport. This meeting should be scheduled for at least one hour to ensure there is sufficient time to explore all these aspects.

At the Pre-Observation Meeting the observer and observee should agree/confirm:

- where the observer is to sit;
- whether or not the observer's presence is to be explained to students;
- how the observation is to be recorded during the session;
- protocols regarding confidentiality;
- the practice areas to be reviewed within the observation (*the observee should bring along any previous Teaching Observation Reports forms to inform this discussion*);
- criteria to be used in evaluating the session (*Appendix 1 on the Teaching Observation Report Form*);
- the timing and structure of the Post-Observation Meeting;
- the completion and status of the Teaching Observation Report Form.

The observee should, and where appropriate prior to the Pre-Observation Meeting:

- provide the required pre-session information on the *Teaching Observation Report Form*;
- provide copies of the relevant module specification (where appropriate), handouts and other supporting material to be used in the session;
- alert the observer to any supporting material located on LEARN;
- confirm the session's overall purpose/aim and learning objectives;
- relate the session objectives to identified module learning outcomes (where applicable);
- describe any salient features of the student group.

Observation Phase

The observer should:

- locate themselves in the agreed position;
- be as discrete and unobtrusive as possible;

- record details of the observation during the session using the agreed format;
- ensure coverage of the practice areas noted on the observation report form.

The observee should:

- explain the presence of the observer to students (if agreed beforehand);
- undertake their teaching as usual without further reference to the observer.

Post-Observation Phase

The Post-Observation Meeting should be scheduled, where possible, within one week of the observation. The meeting gives the opportunity to discuss points of strength and any areas for development. Where necessary, any 'bad' news should be delivered face-to-face and discussed with CAP in advance of the Post-Observation Meeting. This meeting should be scheduled for at least one hour.

The observer should:

- invite the observee to provide a reflective evaluation of the session;
- seek clarification on issues as necessary;
- focus on the observed behaviour;
- provide feedback that is specific, constructive and supported by evidence;
- highlight particular strengths;
- identify areas for further development;
- give an indication of the likely grading outcome where possible;
- confirm with the observee the next stages of the process;
- write the formal Teaching Observation Report Form, allocate a grade and sign the report;
- forward the report to the observee.

The observee should:

- provide an oral, reflective evaluation of the session;
- avoid being defensive;
- recognise that the observation process is intended to be supportive and developmental as well as affirming teaching standards;
- record informally any personal action points or development needs that need to be followed up;
- read the formal Teaching Observation Report Form and record any feedback comments;
- sign and forward the report to the Centre for Academic Practice and, if different, their School/departmental contact.

UK Professional Standards Framework¹

The Observer should take the opportunity to remind the observee that the completed teaching observation can be aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). See separate guidance document for further information.

¹ UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education. 2012. HEA <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf>

3. The Teaching Observation Report Form

Where an overall grading is required for a teaching observation, this is recorded using the standard University *Teaching Observation Report Form* (see [Appendix 1](#)). Where a grading is not required, for example a peer observation, the *Formative Teaching Observation Report Form* should be used (see [Appendix 2](#)).

The report form is structured as follows:

- Information to be completed by the observee in advance of the observation.
- Commentary on practice areas observed, to be completed by the Assessor.
- A summary statement on the overall quality of the session, to be completed by the Assessor.
- A grading to be assigned by the Assessor along with their signature.
- Feedback from the candidate along with their signature.

Front Page of Observation Form

This page is completed by the **Observee** and made available to the Assessor before the Pre-Observation Meeting. The category of observation should be indicated by a tick being placed in one of the following boxes:

Academic Professional Apprenticeship/ Taught Course	✓
Associate Teaching Pathway	
ROTOR	
HEA Application	
Other (specify):	

The first part of the front page requires basic details to be entered pertaining to the session:

School:	Subject:	Module/Course Unit:
Assessor:	Session Length (Hr/Mins):	Observation Length (Hr/Mins):
Level/Year:	Mode (FT/PT):	Number of Students/Participants:
Type of Activity:	Topic/Title:	Room Number and Time:

The remaining part of the front page and the following page requires the candidate to record:

- **Purpose and Aim of the Session**
- **Specific Learning Objectives**
 - It is important that learning objectives are expressed in behavioural terms, using active verbs such as: *State; Discuss; Analyse; Apply; Evaluate; Debate; Construct; Demonstrate* etc.
- **Relationship of Learning Objectives to Module Learning Outcomes**

- **Role of Learn pre- and post-session**
 - Outlining how Learn is used to support student learning for the observed session, for example, pre-reading or preparatory activities, and any specific support following the session.
- **Inclusive Practice**
 - Outlining the actions that have been taken to ensure an inclusive learning environment for all students, including consideration of backgrounds and composition of the cohort in addition to those with protected characteristics.

Feedback from the Teaching Observation

This section of the *Teaching Observation Report Form* is completed by the Assessor following their observation of the teaching. Comments are recorded under six headings:

1. Planning, preparation and organisation
2. Learning and teaching methods
3. Delivery/Presentation
4. Content
5. Student engagement and/or participation
6. Learning Environment

Examples of the types of questions to be addressed under the various headings are given below. These questions should be regarded as indicative, and their applicability will depend to some extent on the subject and nature of the session being observed.

1. Planning, preparation and organisation

- Is the overall purpose/aim of the session clear and appropriate?
- Are the learning objectives explicit, well-articulated and the session planned so that it fully addresses the stated learning objectives?
- Are the learning objectives appropriate for the level being taught?
- Do the learning objectives support the module learning outcomes/overall programme?
- How does the session relate to previous sessions?
- Is the session well-structured with an identifiable introduction, development and conclusion?
- Is the session well-planned in terms of time management?
- Is there a clear rationale for the choice of learning and teaching methods?
- Have appropriate supporting resources been made available to students/participants?
- Has due consideration been given to the teaching space available?
- How is the session linked to Learn?

2. Learning and teaching methods

- Is the purpose and structure of the session clearly outlined to students/participants?
- Are the methods used appropriate to the objectives of the session?
- Are the methods well suited to the students'/participants' level and needs?
- Do the methods used stimulate student interest?
- Have issues of inclusivity, student diversity/accessibility been addressed?
- Is Learn used to supplement the session?

3. Delivery/Presentation

- Can the tutor can be seen and heard by all the class?

Is oral delivery clear, well-paced, and appropriate in tone and style?
Is the session introduced effectively?
Is it clear to students/participants how the session relates to previous work?
Is the material clearly structured and easy to navigate?
Are there helpful 'verbal signposts' for students/participants? (e.g. tone of voice and signalling moves to indicate a change of focus)
Are explanations clear and coherent?
Are key points summarised?
Are diagrams/graphs clearly presented, labelled and referenced?
Have accessibility issues been addressed?
Is the session drawn to a satisfactory conclusion?
Is there eye contact with students/participants?
Is body movement, posture and facial expression used appropriately?

4. Content

Does the content support the achievement of learning objectives?
Is the content appropriate for the level, abilities and needs of students/participants?
Is the content well-researched and up-to-date?
Are examples of topical illustrations, analogies and references to research appropriate?

5. Student engagement and/or participation

What evidence was there of student engagement with the session?
Was student participation appropriate to the nature and purpose of the session?
What evidence is there of the learning objectives being achieved?
What strategies are used to gain attention, to refocus at intervals, and to ensure attention span is maintained?
Are there opportunities for students to question and feedback?
Was the session managed in an appropriate way, including classroom management?

6. Learning Environment

Is the teaching space effectively utilised?
Are the learning and teaching methods employed suitable to the accommodation/size of group?
Are selected resources (specialist equipment, visual aids, etc) appropriate for purpose?
Are resources used effectively?
Do resources, including Learn or other learning technologies, support the content of the session?

Summary of the overall quality of the session

This section requires the Assessor to produce a summary statement reflecting the overall quality of the teaching observed. Any areas where further development of practice would be useful should be clearly identified.

Assessor's Evaluation

The Assessor should enter the grade awarded for the session and sign the report form; assessment guidance is provided in the appendix of the Teaching Observation Report Form to help guide University Assessors in their understanding of the expectations.

The grades as worded imply a necessary link between teaching quality and the achievement of learning objectives. This will generally be the case. Exceptionally, a very well taught session may still leave a learning objective unachieved. Where this occurs, and the candidate provides a clear rationale for not having addressed the learning objective, observers should use their professional judgement in awarding the grade.

For observees who are participants on the Academic Practice Apprenticeship, if it is felt that the teaching observed does not meet expectations and a judgement of 'Requires Improvement' should be given please flag this as soon as possible to the Apprenticeship Director, Dr Sarah Turner (S.Turner4@lboro.ac.uk), so that appropriate follow-up support can be arranged.

If examples of effective and/or innovative teaching which merit wider sharing have been identified, these should be noted. Nothing will be shared unless the candidate has signed the box in agreement.

Please tick the box ✓ if you agree to elements of effective/innovative practice identified being shared

Observee's Comments

This section of the *Teaching Observation Report Form* invites feedback from the observee on the teaching observation process. Completion of this section is not mandatory. The report form however must be signed by the observee and returned to the observer for submission to the Centre for Academic Practice within three weeks. If the observee would like to make any additional comments about the teaching observation process that they do not wish to share with their observer they can send these directly to Dr Sarah Williamson in CAP (S.L.Williamson@lboro.ac.uk).

Formative and Peer Observations

Formative Teaching Observations and Peer Observations do not require a grading and the *Formative Teaching Observation Report Form* ([Appendix 2](#)) should be used. The guiding principle of these types of observations is that they are primarily conducted for developmental purposes and not judgemental.

For observees who are participants on the Academic Practice Apprenticeship, if it is felt that the teaching observed does not meet expectations please flag this as soon as possible to the Apprenticeship Director, Dr Sarah Turner (S.Turner4@lboro.ac.uk), so that appropriate follow-up support can be arranged prior to any Summative Teaching Observations.

Appendix 1: Summative Teaching Observation Form

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY
Centre for Academic Practice

Please tick:

Academic Professional Apprenticeship/ Taught Course	
Associate Teaching Pathway	
ROTOR	
HEA Application	
Other (specify):	

Teaching Observation Report Form

This page to be completed by the observee

Name:	Date of Observation:
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School:	Subject:	Module/Course Unit:
Assessor:	Session Length (Hr/Mins):	Observation Length (Hr/Mins):
Level/Year:	Mode (FT/PT):	Number of Students/Participants:
Type of Activity:	Topic/Title:	Room Number and Time:

Purpose and Aim of the Session

The overall purpose/aim of the session is:

Specific Learning Objectives (e.g. objectives linked to knowledge and understanding; subject-specific skills; generic skills)

The students/participants should be able to:

Relationship of Learning Objectives to Module Learning Outcomes

The learning objectives of this session support the following module learning outcomes:

Role of Learn pre- and post-session

Learn is used to support the module in the following ways (include any specifics for the observed session):

Inclusive Practice

The actions that have been taken to ensure an inclusive learning environment for all students, including consideration of backgrounds and composition of the cohort, include:

Feedback from the Teaching Observation:

1. Planning, preparation and organisation

(e.g. clarity of aims and learning objectives; aims/learning objectives shared with students; extent to which learning objectives were achieved; structure of the session; time management within the session)

2. Learning and teaching methods

(e.g. variety of methods; inclusivity; appropriateness for the objectives, content, students, etc.)

3. Delivery/Presentation

(e.g. clarity, pace, use of voice (projection/intonation), coherent, confident)

4. Content

(e.g. relevance to aims/objectives and the Module ILOS; content currency/level/challenge; progression/coherence)

5. Student engagement and/or participation

(e.g. opportunities for student engagement; promotion of positive student behaviours; appropriate classroom management; student interest/motivation; student ownership of learning)

6. Learning Environment

(e.g. suitable learning environment; safe/positive/inclusive; use of available space/equipment/resources)

Summary of the overall quality of the session in terms of the learning objectives sought:

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Please tick the box if you agree to elements of effective/innovative practice identified being shared

Assessor's Evaluation <i>See Assessment Guidance in the Appendix</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Exceeds expectations	
Meets expectations	
Requires Improvement	
<i>Please briefly explain your reasons for this rating:</i>	

Assessor's signature:

Date:

Candidate's comments: (optional)

Candidate's signature:

Date:

Appendix: Assessment Guidance

Exceeds Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for the students by working collaboratively and co-creating the knowledge and understanding together • Innovative and creative content, format and/or delivery • Teaching informed by current research or informed by appropriate professional practice or experience • Reactive to students and able to be flexible with content where understanding is not achieved • Session materials are made available to students in advance of the session in a variety of different formats to suit different learning needs • Appropriate supplementary materials for pre and/or post session work are made available on Learn and are presented to students in a variety of formats and in a logical and easily accessible way <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In addition to meeting the expectations outlined below.</i></p>
Meets Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content matching ILOs and evidence that students are meeting/part meeting these • Ability to pick out and explain key ideas and make them stand out from other background/supporting materials • Make connections with earlier sessions, and to other sections of the same session • Coherence and flow to the session, including relating content to real world examples or other elements of the programme/s • The considerations of inclusivity were appropriate to the cohort • Enthusiastic, engaging, clear and confident delivery • Clear and inclusive use of visual aids and other materials/props • Engaging students rather than just talking at them in positive, secure and safe learning environment which is conducive to learning • Students are encouraged to engage and interact at times within the session as part of a coherently planned session and their responses are used within the session or subsequently • Session materials are made accessible to students in advance of the session via Learn • Where appropriate, supplementary materials for pre or post session work are made available on Learn • Appropriate use of space, resources and equipment
Requires Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor pace/poor time keeping • Poor/inadequate planning and preparation • Poor structure and poorly managed/organised session • No clear outline, rationale for session • Lack of inclusive practice • Poor communication skills, monotone delivery or inaudible • Poor use of visual aids • Poor classroom management • Lecturer lacking in subject knowledge • No encouragement of active learning within the session • The session contains some planned interactive elements but is not structured to enable students to engage with them • The session contains some interactive elements but these are not linked to the rest of the session and their outcomes are ignored • Inappropriate use of teaching space, equipment, resources etc • No session materials made available on Learn and no communication to students to explain why, OR session materials are available on Learn but are not easily identifiable and/or accessible

Appendix 2: Formative Teaching Observation Form

LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY

Centre for Academic Practice

Please tick:

Academic Professional Apprenticeship/ Taught Course	
Associate Teaching Pathway	
ROTOR	
HEA Application	
Other (specify):	

Formative Teaching Observation Report Form

This page to be completed by the observee

Name:	Date of Observation:
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School:	Subject:	Module/Course Unit:
Assessor:	Session Length (Hr/Mins):	Observation Length (Hr/Mins):
Level/Year:	Mode (FT/PT):	Number of Students/Participants:
Type of Activity:	Topic/Title:	Room Number and Time:

Purpose and Aim of the Session

The overall purpose/aim of the session is:

Specific Learning Objectives (e.g. objectives linked to knowledge and understanding; subject-specific skills; generic skills)

The students/participants should be able to:

Relationship of Learning Objectives to Module Learning Outcomes

The learning objectives of this session support the following module learning outcomes:

Role of Learn pre- and post-session

Learn is used to support the module in the following ways (include any specifics for the observed session):

Inclusive Practice

The actions that have been taken to ensure an inclusive learning environment for all students, including consideration of backgrounds and composition of the cohort, include:

Feedback from the Teaching Observation:

1. Planning, preparation and organisation

(e.g. clarity of aims and learning objectives; aims/learning objectives shared with students; extent to which learning objectives were achieved; structure of the session; time management within the session)

2. Learning and teaching methods

(e.g. variety of methods; inclusivity; appropriateness for the objectives, content, students, etc.)

3. Delivery/Presentation

(e.g. clarity, pace, use of voice (projection/intonation), coherent, confident)

4. Content

(e.g. relevance to aims/objectives and the Module ILOS; content currency/level/challenge; progression/coherence)

5. Student engagement and/or participation

(e.g. opportunities for student engagement; promotion of positive student behaviours; appropriate classroom management; student interest/motivation; student ownership of learning)

6. Learning Environment

(e.g. suitable learning environment; safe/positive/inclusive; use of available space/equipment/resources)

Summary of the overall quality of the session in terms of the learning objectives sought:

NB: This section should identify any key areas of practice for future enhancement activity and highlight areas of effective/innovative practice which may be appropriate to share with colleagues.

Key learning points emerging from the peer dialogue to inform future teaching:

Please tick the box if you recommend that a further formative teaching observation is required prior to a summative teaching observation by a University Assessor

If you feel that the teaching was requiring improvement, please contact CAP for advice. For those on the Academic Professional Apprenticeship (APA) please contact the APA Director, Dr Sarah Turner, S.Turner4@lboro.ac.uk

Assessor's signature:

Date:

Candidate's comments: (optional)

Candidate's signature:

Date:

Following an observation, if you have any questions, please contact CAP@lboro.ac.uk or your School CAP representative.

Formative Teaching Observations for the Academic Professional Apprenticeship should be uploaded to the TCP100 module on Learn.

Appendix: Assessment Guidance

<p>Exceeds Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for the students by working collaboratively and co-creating the knowledge and understanding together • Innovative and creative content, format and/or delivery • Teaching informed by current research or informed by appropriate professional practice or experience • Reactive to students and able to be flexible with content where understanding is not achieved • Session materials are made available to students in advance of the session in a variety of different formats to suit different learning needs • Appropriate supplementary materials for pre and/or post session work are made available on Learn and are presented to students in a variety of formats and in a logical and easily accessible way <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In addition to meeting the expectations outlined below.</i></p>
<p>Meets Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content matching ILOs and evidence that students are meeting/part meeting these • Ability to pick out and explain key ideas and make them stand out from other background/supporting materials • Make connections with earlier sessions, and to other sections of the same session • Coherence and flow to the session, including relating content to real world examples or other elements of the programme/s • The considerations of inclusivity were appropriate to the cohort • Enthusiastic, engaging, clear and confident delivery • Clear and inclusive use of visual aids and other materials/props • Engaging students rather than just talking at them in positive, secure and safe learning environment which is conducive to learning • Students are encouraged to engage and interact at times within the session as part of a coherently planned session and their responses are used within the session or subsequently • Session materials are made accessible to students in advance of the session via Learn • Where appropriate, supplementary materials for pre or post session work are made available on Learn • Appropriate use of space, resources and equipment
<p>Requires Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor pace/poor time keeping • Poor/inadequate planning and preparation • Poor structure and poorly managed/organised session • No clear outline, rationale for session • Lack of inclusive practice • Poor communication skills, monotone delivery or inaudible • Poor use of visual aids • Poor classroom management • Lecturer lacking in subject knowledge • No encouragement of active learning within the session • The session contains some planned interactive elements but is not structured to enable students to engage with them • The session contains some interactive elements but these are not linked to the rest of the session and their outcomes are ignored • Inappropriate use of teaching space, equipment, resources etc • No session materials made available on Learn and no communication to students to explain why, OR session materials are available on Learn but are not easily identifiable and/or accessible