

LESSON OBSERVATION POLICY

Introduction

1. Community Links is committed to providing high quality teaching, learning and assessment to enable all learners to achieve their full potential. This will be achieved through quality teaching and learning opportunities, rigorous assessment, feedback and the sharing of good practice.
2. Our Lesson Observation Policy aims to provide an effective framework for the delivery of high quality teaching and learning. It applies to all Community Links staff and associates engaged in facilitating, supporting and managing learning.
3. Through this Policy, we aim to ensure that teaching at Community Links is inspirational and of the highest quality by:
 - all learners having the opportunity to succeed and be empowered to fulfil their potential
 - placing the learner at the centre of the learning process
 - the self-esteem and aspirations of all learners being raised through mutual support and commitment
 - all staff and learners having high expectations and working together to develop high levels of achievement and success
 - ensuring learners are retained and achieve their programme of learning
 - developing employability skills as part of the curriculum
 - taking opportunity to develop Maths, English and digital skills as appropriate
 - providing excellent progression opportunities, to employment, apprenticeships, or further and higher learning
 - using assessment to provide effective learning opportunities through feedback
 - ensuring levels of learner satisfaction are high

Observation of teaching and Learning

4. The lesson observation process is fundamental to enhancing and improving the learning experience and supporting staff in the development of their teaching and management of learning.
5. It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to:
 - Be familiar with and maintain the standards of performance expected of them
 - Comply with, and undertake, appropriate CPD relating to improving teaching, learning and assessment
 - Comply with any action plans that are developed as a result of the OTL process
6. It is the responsibility of lesson observers to:
 - Attend observation training as required
 - Be familiar with policies and procedures associated with lesson observation
 - Ensure the lesson observation procedure is fairly and consistently applied
 - Ensure standards of performance and expectations are clearly communicated and understood

- Ensure that the professional discussion following lesson observation is timely, supportive and appropriate

Process

7. The observation process is as follows:

- All tutors who deliver planned teaching sessions will be observed.
- Observations, other than peer observations, will be carried out by appropriately experienced members of staff
- Staff will have maximum three unannounced observations each year.
- Each observation will be at least 20 minutes in duration.
- Feedback should be completed on the Observation form
- Observers should distinguish lesson strengths and norms; ie, learners working safely should be the norm, not a specific strength
- A professional discussion must take place following the observation, enabling the tutor to reflect on their practice and strengths and areas to develop and actions agreed by the observer and tutor
- The observer must decide if the observation met the expected standards for teaching and learning at Community Links.
- It is usual for observations to have at least one area for development, identified by the tutor/observer during the professional discussion - this is where sharing of effective practice could be highlighted
- Observers have the right to extend the length of the observation in order to gather more evidence to inform their judgements on the strengths and areas to develop of the lesson
- Observations will be conducted on all types of lesson including knowledge and practical lessons.

Joint Observations and Validation

8. All observers will have a minimum of one joint observation per year as part of maintenance of standards and consistency. This may be someone internal or external to Community Links.
9. Following a joint observation, the person carrying out the joint observation will provide feedback to the Observer.

Appeals

10. It is hoped that the procedures, guidance and information provided will ensure that the situations are avoided where a formal procedure is required, and every effort should be made to resolve any issues arising from lesson observations 'informally' through positive dialogue and clarification.
11. If a dispute cannot be resolved informally, the member of staff should appeal in writing to the Operations Manager or Director (if the Operations Manager is the Observer), stating the grounds for the appeal within 5 working days of receiving feedback.
12. The member of staff will be given the opportunity to state his or her case at the meeting. If the member of staff chooses not to attend, a paper review of the evidence will be carried out.
13. There are three possible outcomes from an appeal:

1. The Appeal is upheld, and no record of the observation is retained.
2. The Appeal is upheld and the outcomes of the observation, in terms of areas for improvement and actions, are retained and the member of staff is required to respond to them accordingly.
3. The appeal is NOT upheld, the outcomes of the observation are retained and the normal procedure, as identified in this policy, is followed. The decision of the panel will be made in writing within 5 working days of the meeting and will be final.

Version Control

Version history	Content Changed
1 – Feb 2025	Policy produced
2 – 24/10/2025	Mid-Year review as part of Quality Improvement Plan objectives
3 – 23/10/26	Policy reviewed and agreed

Review and Ratification

Next Review Date	Reason for Review
October 2027	Annual Review

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