

OBSERVATION OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT (OTLA) POLICY

Aims of the policy

The aims of the Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment policy is to provide the Quality Team with a framework to follow that will provide and ensure consistency, validity and accuracy within the observation of teaching, learning and assessment at Riverside Training. The business wants to ensure that a common approach is developed for all observers and assessors to follow which will support and develop the assessment team in the quality of their delivery, therefore putting the learner at the centre of the process. As part of this process we aim to:-

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Monitor the effectiveness of delivery
- Recognise and share good practice
- Identify staff development and training and support needs
- Develop an ethos of continuous improvement

Types and frequency of observation

The observations aim to cover all aspects of delivery and will consist of observations of teaching, learning and assessment. If, during the completion of these, it is deemed necessary for the purposes of quality and delivery that other observations need to be introduced, these will either be completed on an ad hoc basis as required, or introduced as part of the self-assessment record (SAR) to improve the overall effectiveness of delivery.

The observations may be graded or ungraded. Where they are graded, the grading standards used will be from the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) and will follow the format of

1. Outstanding
2. Good
3. Requires Improvement
4. Inadequate

Further information on the standards underpinning each of these grades can be found in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook 2018'.

All delivery staff will partake in a graded observation a minimum of once in a calendar year, for each of the required observations types as stated above. Where it is deemed that the delivery 'requires improvement' or is 'inadequate', the observation frequency will be increased to support the needs of the staff member and a specific training plan will be introduced with agreed actions for improvement. Probationary staff will be observed at least once within their probation period.

These observations will form part of the assessor's required KPI's and can be used as part of a formal management process.

Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy 1.0 (Dec 18)

Before the observation

The delivery team may or may not be given notice of an observation taking place. If notice is given, the assessors will be provided with a copy of the Common Inspection Framework (CIF), along with a copy of the most up to date observation template that will be used for the grading during the planned observation. It will be the assessor's responsibility to inform their learner of the observation that will be taking place so that they are prepared but so that they are also aware what the observation is for and that they are not being judged in any way.

During the observation

The observer will observe the full delivery for a minimum duration of 1 hour to ensure that sufficient evidence can be gathered to make an informed judgement. In the majority of cases, the observer will stay for the full duration of a 121 visit, so that all elements of the visit can be monitored and correctly graded so as not to disadvantage the assessor if certain aspects of the requirements are not covered. During the observation the observer will:-

- Minimise their impact on the visit, by remaining as unobtrusive as possible
- Not take part in any of the activities
- Review the planning of the delivery and its effectiveness
- Focus on the learning that is taking place and that the learner understands what they are being taught
- Ensure that the correct quality and delivery requirements are being met in line with the CIF
- Ensure that the learner is being safeguarded and take any appropriate action if this is not the case
- Speak to the learner and/or manager to ask their views on the learning programme and their progress on the course

After the observation

The observer will arrange for a suitable time to feedback on the observation and agree any actions for improvement and development. This meeting will be arranged as soon as possible but within a maximum of one week of the observation having taken place. The purpose of the feedback meeting will be:-

- To discuss the findings of the observation and provide constructive feedback to the assessor
- To identify what went well and equally any areas for development
- To support assessors in their delivery and quality of teaching and learning
- To develop an agreed action plan to maintain or improve the standards of teaching, learning and assessment
- To reflect on the grade given alongside the grade descriptors and the reasons for the grade given
- To agree to a follow up with clearly defined timescales and actions

Moderation of observations

All observers will be provided with relevant training and standardisation to ensure that the observations will be accurately assessed and graded and follow the requirements of the CIF grading standards.

Riverside Training will undertake standardisation and moderation activities to ensure that the measure of the observations is consistent in the judgements and grades given. This may include, but is not limited to:-

- Paired observations
- Observer training
- Moderation of observation forms by the lead IQA/ Curriculum manager
- Reflection of the grading descriptors and how these can be met
- Peer to peer observations
- Writing effective feedback

Appeals procedure

It is expected that the clear evidence guidelines and the transparency of the observation of teaching and learning process will eliminate situations which necessitate an appeals procedure. Following a teaching, learning and assessment observation, the assessor will receive both verbal and written feedback. If the assessor disagrees with any of the points made by the observer or with any aspect of the observation process, the assessor and observer should try and resolve the differences through discussion. If this does not resolve the situation, then the assessor should contact the Lead IQA or Curriculum Manager. This may result in a re-observation with a different observer but with the same learner, or with a different learner.

We will review this policy on an annual basis

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