

Observation Policy and Procedures

Policy Statement

Observations at L&F Training Academy are part of its quality assurance and improvement strategy aimed at assuring and developing the highest standards in teaching, learning and assessment.

Observations focus on educator / assessor performance in an individual session and the impact of this on student / apprentice cohort(s) within the observed session. The primary aim is to assess and judge the impact teaching and assessing is having on student / apprentice progress and attainment. This approach provides an accurate picture of teaching, learning and assessment practice that covers the following:

- The effectiveness of teaching and assessing practices and how these enable students to progress and to achieve their potential and learning goal;
- Improvement areas to assure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment;
- Good and excellent practice and the sharing of this to assure sustainable best practice;
- The student / apprentice experience;
- The effectiveness of the management of teaching, learning and assessment

Responsibilities

The academy directors and management team have overall responsibility for implementing observations at L&F. Together they organize a comprehensive process for the observations of teaching and learning and carry out quarterly.

Observations

Observations focus on assessing the effectiveness of practice within individual sessions in the classroom, workshop or workplace. The objective of an observation is to assess and judge the impact of educator / assessor / trainer practice and strategies and the extent to which these impact on students' / apprentices' progress, development and attainment.

Before the observation

- The notice period for observations is two working days of a five-day window but also include spot check observations.
- Observations are undertaken only by trained observers.
- Normal practice would be to have one observer in a session but where more are required the maximum will be two observers in a session at any one time.
- The observee will be notified with a minimum notice of two working days if there is to be a 2nd observer in the session and will also be informed about what the role of the 2nd person in the observation is.

During the observation

- Observations of learning are typically of a single session but the observer and observee may agree that the observation takes place across more than one session and / or across work-based / NVQ assessments if this is advantageous in making a judgement on progress or attainment.
- The observation outcomes reward the impact on learning, progress and attainment.
- Observation judgements about students' / apprentices' progress use a range of evidence sources including scheme of work, specification, framework, online systems such as ManageAssess and BKSB, marked work, student / apprentice feedback, employer feedback.
- The observer does not become involved in the session and undertakes the observation in an unobtrusive way, although the observer should look at student work and speak with students / employers taking care to ensure that this does not interfere with the delivery / workplace.
- The observer uses only L&F documentation for recording their findings.
- Observation durations may vary in time but will typically last a minimum of 45 minutes.

After the observation

- Initial feedback to the observee is provided on the day of the observation at a convenient and mutually agreed time.
- The failure of the observee to agree a feedback time will not prevent the observation and outcome from being finalised.
- The observer will provide full feedback with outcome and a hard copy record of the observation to the observee within five working days.
- The observer sets clear improvement actions as a result of the observation and ensures that these actions are SMART.
- A copy of the observation record is stored securely and confidentially by the Head of Quality Improvement and is accessible to relevant L&F managers.
- The practitioner requires support outcome triggers coaching and development support for the observee with a further follow-up observation undertaken within two to four weeks from the first observation. Failure to improve may lead to a performance and capability review of the educators / assessor's performance.
- The line manager of an observer, who has received practitioner requires support outcome, will take responsibility for the action plan for the observee and keeping HR fully informed.

Educators/Assessors on the L&F educators/assessors training course(s)

An educator/assessor who is in training requires a minimum of two outcomes of at least good (2) by the end of their course. A trainee educators/assessors' outcome

can be recorded by the L&F for inclusion as a trainee educators/assessors observation grade. Performance capability management of educator/assessor whose outcome requires support is handed across to the trainee line manager for action planning.

A trainee educator/assessor whose outcome requires support and whose subsequent observation outcome is good (2) or outstanding (1) (undertaken by their line manager) can have this outcome recorded as his / her observation training grade.

Staff in probation

Staff who are new to the L&F will be observed before their probation period ends and will need to achieve an outcome of good (2) or outstanding (1). A line manager is assigned to an educator / assessor who is in his / her probationary period to provide support and guidance to them about L&F observation criteria and expectations.

Moderation and standardisation

- Regular standardisation activities will be organised by the management team
- All outcomes will be sampled and moderated to ensure proper and fair implementation of observations
- All observers are trained as part of a standardised L&F observer training programme
- Managers and observers will exercise discretion and will defer the observation of educators / assessors where there are extenuating circumstances

Professional Development

Practitioner requires support outcome triggers coaching support and a further observation within two to four weeks. Failure to improve at 2nd observation may trigger a review of the educator's / assessor's performance. Actions arising from this outcome if sufficiently commonplace will be fed into the wider L&F development plan. Good (2) and outstanding (1) outcomes will typically feed actions in to L&F professional development plan. These actions may be delivered 'locally' by curriculum teams or through specialist inputs into these teams.

L&F strengths and areas for improvement will be built into self-assessment and self-evaluation documents and improvement plans within the SAR and QIP.