



Procedure 6.10.1 Higher education lesson observation procedures

Introduction

The aim of this document is to explain the higher education lesson observation process. All lecturers will be observed at least two times per annum and possibly more. New lecturers should expect to be observed within two months of starting and usually by the fifth week.

Tutor preparation

Before being observed lecturers should ensure they have prepared the following documentation.

Module booklet

Module booklets for Pearson programmes need to be written in the same format and style as the DAL standard module booklet.

The Pearson booklet must be written by the Tutor/Assessor and contain the following:

- a cover sheet with basic details of the unit
- an introduction and the aim(s) of the unit
- learning outcomes and assessment criteria given in the programme specifications
- the assignment brief divided into tasks with integrated learning outcomes
- a scenario with the brief where feasible given the content of the assessment criteria
- in Pearson programmes Level 4 and 5 students need one indicative characteristic for every grade descriptor M1, 2 and 3 or D1, 2 and 3 in addition to achieving a Pass for every learning outcome in order to achieve a Merit or Distinction respectively. The indicative characteristics must be contextualised within the tasks of the assignment brief and provided in the table attached to the brief.
- lecturers need to write a **Scheme of work** with a lesson schedule that indicates when students must complete the tasks for formative assessment.

Planning

Lecturers should create lesson plans in addition to the scheme of work for their lectures when they are being observed using the template provided, which should include the following in separate columns:

- times
- objectives
- resources used
- activities of the lecturer
- activities of learners including interaction
- functional and higher level practical skills being developed

VLE/Moodle

Lecturers must upload their assignment brief with module booklet, lesson plans and lecture notes in advance. Lecturers must provide prompt formative assessment/feedback on the learners' written work using track changes.

Turnitin

Students must submit their own work on Turnitin before submitting to the lecturer for marking. They should not have more than 20% similarity, but lecturers may use their judgement and accept up to 30% officially if they think there are good grounds i.e. the plagiarism is not all in one section of the student's work.

Photocopying

We are bound by copyright laws and if lecturers copy any published material, they must make sure that they write the **book name** and **author** on the photocopies. They can take a master copy, write the reference details at the top and copy off the numbers needed. The copyright rules we must comply with are provided on the wall by the photocopier.

Type of observation

There will be two types of observation carried out at DAL. The first are **Formal Observations**. This is when the **Academic Head** or **Inspector** from an external body or organisation observes a lesson and gives formal written feedback. The second are **Peer Observations**, which are informal, but teachers are still asked to produce some written feedback. [See Procedure 6.10 for details of Peer Review]

Pre-observation meeting

Before a formal or informal observation, there must be a pre-observation meeting arranged by the observer. Typically this may be an email sent by the observer to arrange a time and date to carry out the observation, and to get some information about the teacher and students.

Observation

Lecturers can expect to be observed for about an hour, but it may not actually be that long. Some inspectors enter and leave at will and the lecturer is supposed to more or less ignore their presence; but make sure there is a spare table and chair for them on the day of the observation with a copy of the lesson plan and materials being used. **When being observed, it is essential to provide a lesson plan.** The plan should include clear aims linked to the learning outcome(s) and the stages and activities of the lesson should reflect these.

Observation feedback

After the observation the lecturer will be given verbal and written feedback on the following:

- evidence of effective planning
- evidence of independent learning
- engagement and participation by learners
- effective teaching of subject knowledge
- effective teaching of higher level practical skills

Types of evidence the observer looks for

What evidence is there of effective planning?

- staged and detailed plan
- class profile, pen portrait
- skills audit, initial assessments, tutorial notes
- scheme of work aligned with programme specifications
- learning objectives integrated and aligned to learning outcomes and assessment criteria

What evidence is there of independent learning?

- learners challenged
- learner centred approach used
- learners able to work unassisted
- learners developing higher skills
- learners asking good questions to assist learning

Is there effective engagement and participation by students?

- learners are engaged
- learners are given equal opportunities
- the lecturer has made the subject interesting
- teaching methods help to facilitate engagement
- participation supports achievement of intended learning outcomes

How effective is the teaching of subject knowledge?

- the lecturer is confident about the subject
- the lecturer can answers questions on the topic
- the lecturer provides reliable, up to date information
- relevant examples are used to explain different aspects of the topic
- there has been prior learning beyond the scope of learning objectives

How effective is the teaching of higher level practical skills identified in the programme specification and subject benchmarks?

- learners developing the ability to critically evaluate
- learners developing the ability to apply theory in practice
- learners developing the ability to make effective judgements
- learners developing the ability to analyse and synthesise information
- learners developing employability skills and self-reflection on performance

Lecturer feedback

During feedback lecturers will be given the chance to discuss any comments. In addition, they must complete a form expressing their views about the process and outcomes of the observation.

Appeals

If a lecturer feels that comments in the observation feedback are unfair or inaccurate in any way they have the right to appeal. First they should make their concerns known to the observer. If they are not satisfied with the response, they can put their appeal in writing to the Quality Committee. The decision of the Quality Committee will be final.