OTLA POLICY

1 – Policy Overview

1.1 - Policy Statement:

The reasons for the development of this Policy are to:

- Provide and ensure consistency, validity and rigour within the observation of teaching and learning at Projecting Success

- Develop a common approach for observers and tutors across different vocations and levels

- Continue to develop the strategy which will support and underpin effective peer review and development

- To put the apprentice at the centre of the process

- To ensure, promote and enhance the quality of learning experience for all apprentices

1.2 – Policy Aims

- Raise the standards of teaching and learning and assessment

- Monitor that effective learning takes place

- Recognise and share good practice

- Identify staff development and support needs

- Underpin a rigorous self-assessment process

- Encourage and promote constructive professional dialogue

- Develop a culture of continuous improvement.

1.3 – Quality Improvement Framework:

Each individual observation fits into a larger quality improvement framework. The evidence and judgements from each observation provide feedback and actions for each tutor as well as building up an evidence profile for an area of learning and development.

2 - Observations:

2.1 – Types of Observation:

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Observations may be graded or ungraded. Where observations are graded, the grading standards used will be from the Education & Inspection Framework (EIF)

Grades and grade descriptors are:

- **Grade 1:** Outstanding

- **Grade 2:** Good

- **Grade 3:** Requires Improvement

- **Grade 4:** Inadequate

Further information on the standards underpinning each of these grades may be found in Further Education and Skills Handbook.

Examples of ungraded observations may be:

- Peer Observation

- Mentored observation

- Drop-in visits

- Tutor requests

Examples of graded observations may be:

- Individual observation

- 'At risk/intervention' observation

- Themed observations

- Tutor requests

- Follow-up observation (part of observation feedback action plan)

Any graded observation may sit within Projecting Success' formal performance management process.

2.2 - Scope of Observation:

All learning activities and all staff involved in them are part of the observation process. Learning activities include formal sessions and activities undertaken as part of:

- Taster sessions

- Workshops

- Induction activities

- Practical activities

- Tutorials

- On-the-job-training

- Assessment of apprentices

Tutors who are employed in partner/sub-contracted provision are also covered by the quality assurance standards of Projecting Success. This will include access to quality information from the partner organisation's own quality assurance procedures.

Grade	Descriptor	Outcome
Grade 1	Outstanding	Mentor – good practice exemplar
Grade 2	Good	As above with minor actions for improvement
Grade 3	Requires improvement	Re-observation within an agreed timescale. Action plan and agreed actions for improvement which may include mentoring, CPD, peer observation etc, implemented prior to re-observation
Grade 4	Inadequate	As above including specific re-training as appropriate

Where Grade 1 (Outstanding) or Grade 2 (Good) is awarded, the good practice will, with the agreement of the tutor, be used to raise standards across the delivery team. Tutors may be asked to mentor other tutors and/or allow their colleagues to peer observe their lessons or examples of their practice – such as planning, managing learning, embedding English and maths, using IT effectively this will also be shared across an area of learning or across the adult learning service as a whole. Strategies for sharing good and outstanding practice might include:

- Curriculum team meeting

- Tutor newsletters

- Mentoring

- Resource sharing

- Staff development activities

- Developing good practice manuals

- Showcasing course files/developing case study examples

Where a Requires Improvement Grade 3 is awarded a re-observation within an agreed timescale will take place. Observers will agree specific actions for improvement with individual tutors through an action plan. This may include mentoring, CPD, peer observation, which must be implemented prior to re- observation.

When an Inadequate Grade 4 is awarded for an observed lesson, the same actions will be implemented as Grade 3, including specific re training as appropriate. The observer will complete a detailed action plan with the tutor. This will include detailed actions for improvement, mentoring and training as required and a further graded observation at an agreed time.

These different grade outcomes will determine the dates agreed for the next observation. For example, with Grade 1 or 2, the next graded observation will usually take place after 6 months, whereas with Grade 3 and 4 the re-observation will take place within the following two months.

The process for observation and re-observation outcomes is shown on the schedule attached to this Policy and applies to all teaching staff.

2.3 - Frequency of Observations:

All tutors will have at least one graded observation every 12 months at an absolute minimum. Some tutors may be observed more than twice a year depending on experience and the results of previous observations. New staff will be observed within eight weeks. The timescale for all re-observations will be included in post observation action plans. Projecting Success reserves the right to observe all tutors and to vary the pattern and timing of observations.

For example, initial observations of new staff may be graded or ungraded depending on the experience of the tutor, the subject area and the location of the learning. (I.e. It might be a new course, taking place at a new venue etc.)

2.4. – Graded Observation Criteria

Here are the teaching, learning and assessment standards that the observer is assessing within a graded observation:

2.4.1 - Teaching Standards:

2.4.1.1 - Preparation

- Is there a clearly structured scheme/programme of work, appropriate for the learning needs of the group and the demands of the subject?

- Does it meet organisational requirements?

- Are student records - assessment, ILPs etc - available where appropriate?

- Is the lesson clearly planned and a logical part of overall programme?

2.4.1.2 - During the Lesson

- Is the register available and up to date?

- Is punctuality noted/challenged?

- Are aims and objectives of lesson made clear to apprentices?

- Is the tutor up to date/knowledgeable in subject area?

- Are most effective teaching/learning methods used?

- Is the session effectively introduced and summarized?

- Is previous learning referred to? Are links in the learning drawn out?

- Are English and maths - skills noted and referenced within lesson where appropriate?

- Are health and safety practices adhered to and reinforced?

- Is the tutor interested/enthusiastic about the subject?

- Are clear directions given?

- Are these re-enforced by written guidance where needed?

- Is subject content at right level for individual/group?

- Does pace and structure of lesson promote learning?

- Are frequent and appropriate checks made on learning? Is learning reviewed, recapped and consolidated? Is feedback timely? Does feedback lead to improvements in learning?

- Is assessment effective? Does feedback enable apprentices to know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve?

- Does the tutor assess apprentices' progress in a variety of ways, regularly and accurately and discuss assessments with them so that apprentices know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve?

- Does on-going assessment and feedback inform further planning of learning?

- Are e-Learning approaches used to aid learning where appropriate?

- Are outcomes for apprentices cross-referenced in the planning documents e.g., SOW, lesson plans, ILP's etc. where appropriate?

2.4.1.3 - Inclusive Teaching and Learning Strategies

- Are student-learning styles/needs used to inform planning?

- Are teaching and reference materials free from stereotypical images, language and bias?

- Are equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices modelled by the tutor?

- Are all apprentices valued, encouraged to contribute and involved in the lesson?

- Are different ability levels planned for and managed in lesson?

- Do apprentices receive appropriate individual support in the lesson?

- Is the learning environment suitable and safely equipped?

- Are apprentices with additional support, including Learning Support Assistants making good progress?

2.4.2 - Learning Standards:

- Are apprentices suitably challenged by the lesson content? Does it hold their interest and attention?

- Is attendance good?

- Is there a productive atmosphere? Do apprentices feel able to question and comment?

- Are apprentices actively involved in the lesson? Are their responses appropriate?

- Do apprentices work well on their own? Do they manage tasks/time well?

- Do they co-operate with each other and the teacher?

- Do apprentices understand assessment? Does feedback improve learning?

- Does standard of work match individual learning goals?

- Have all apprentices achieved stated objectives of lesson?

2.4.3 - Assessment Standards:

- Do apprentices show a level of independence, perseverance and initiative appropriate to work at this level?

- Have they developed skills appropriate to the curriculum/vocational area?

- Do they understand underlying principles and ideas?

- Can they apply their knowledge/skills appropriately?

- Have all apprentices reached an appropriate standard for the level and stage reached in the learning programme?

- Are outcomes for apprentices cross-referenced in the planning documents such as SOW, Lesson Plans, ILPs, where appropriate?

3 - Observers

3.1 - Selection and Training of Observers:

All Observers will hold appropriate professional qualifications together with substantial teaching experience in the lifelong learning sector. They will attend standardisation events and team meetings to discuss common themes and continuously develop their own CPD. All Observers will have:

- Awareness and application of EIF grading standards

- Skills required to conduct effective observations

- Conditions required for effective feedback

- Effectiveness of written feedback

- Effectiveness of verbal feedback

- Agreeing and setting clear actions for improvement

- Undertaking effective monitoring of actions within agreed timescales for completion.

3.2 - Before the Observation:

Tutors may or may not be given notice that they are going to be observed. This might include no-notice observations; external observations by third parties e.g. OFSTED; Class observations within a defined timeframe; observations on a specific date; or observations on an agreed date. Observers will ensure that tutors have a copy of the OTLA Protocol as well as the most up-to-date OTLA grading descriptors and are clear about the purpose and management of the observation and the feedback process.

Observers will ask tutors to:

- Inform and prepare their apprentices about the observation where appropriate (apprentices should be clear what the observation is for and aware that they are not being judged in any way)

- Ensure that the Course Folder is available on the day and that the observer has a copy of the scheme of work and lesson plan (and any other relevant documentation to support the observation) Records which should be made available include:

- Register/record of attendance ☐ programme information

- Course outline/scheme of work

- Session plan/previous session plans

- Records of apprentice progress

- Group/individual profile

- Individual learning plans

- Access to apprentices' portfolios/work

- Evidence of individualized target setting for apprentices

- Records of formative assessment

- Agree the date/time of the feedback session

- Provide a place for them to sit in the lesson which is as unobtrusive as possible but allows them to see what is happening clearly

3.3 - During the Observation:

To undertake a successful observation, the observer will:

- Stay for a minimum time of 45 minutes to ensure that they have gathered sufficient and valid evidence to support their judgements. This is usually a consecutive period of time. Some observers, however, might choose to vary this, by observing, for example, both the beginning and end of the lesson. The time spent in the lesson is not the most important factor; the effective use of this time is the most important element.

- Minimise their impact on the lesson by being as unobtrusive as possible.

- Not take part in lesson activities.

- Review the lesson documentation to assess the quality and appropriateness of the lesson content. Does the lesson fit well into the scheme of work, have activities and resources been developed and/or amended to meet different leaner needs etc.?

- Look at the register to check patterns of attendance and punctuality.

- Focus primarily on the quality of the learning taking place and the progress made by apprentices in the lesson. Just because something has been taught does not mean that it has been learnt.

- Speak to apprentices and ask them their views of their learning/progress in the lesson/on the course. Observers will be sensitive when doing this and will not interrupt lesson activities.

- Thank the tutor when they are about to leave and confirm the time/date of the feedback.

3.4 – Sample Questions for Apprentices:

Here are a selection of example questions that observers may use to help gain some context for the session or the course as a whole.

3.4.1 - Session Questions:

- How typical is this lesson?

- What have you done today that you have not done before?

- What can you do now that you could not do before?

- How well have you been able to follow the content of the lesson?

- How does this lesson link to previous work you have done?

3.4.2 - Course Questions:

- Why did you choose to come to this course?

- Are you learning what you set out to do?

- What access do you have to IT resources to support your development?

- Do you feel comfortable asking questions during the class?

- Does the teaching on this course provide a variety of activities?

- How is Equality and Diversity promoted in your classes?

- How do you use your learning outside of the class?

- What links are made during sessions to employment and the workplace?

- Is the course what you expected?

- What information advice and guidance have you been given (about this course and progression opportunities)? When was IAG given? Who provided IAG?

3.4.3 - Assessment Questions:

- Do you feel that you are learning and making good progress in your studies?

- How does the tutor/assessor check that you understand the content of the lesson?

- Have you had any work marked so far? If so, was the feedback useful and did it tell you what you need to do to improve?

3.4.4 - Administrative Questions:

- What health and safety instructions have you been given? (Both general and course related)

- What would you do if you thought another member of the group was being bullied / mistreated?

- What do you know about the Computer Usage / Internet Safety Policy?

- Do you know how to feed compliments back, make complaints and comments?

- Are there any other comments you would like to make?

4 - Feedback

4.1 – The Feedback Meeting

To be effective, the feedback meeting should be held as soon as possible but no later than one week following the observed session. The feedback meeting will normally last no more than half an hour. The purposes of the feedback session are:

- To support colleagues in their professional practice

- To provide constructive feedback on the observed lesson

- To engage in a professional dialogue and share teaching and learning strategies

- To identify what worked well and why and what worked less well and why

- To match the strengths and areas for improvement to agreed teaching and learning standards and grade (if appropriate) these using the common grading descriptors

- To agree actions, which will maintain or improve the standards of teaching and learning using action plans set to clear timescales.

- Agree a date and time to communicate to agreed monitor actions.

4.2 – The Contents of the Feedback Meeting:

- The observer will go through their evidence and judgements recorded on the observation evidence form.

- The observer will aim to be direct and avoid ambiguities, focusing on the impact on the learning.

- The tutor needs to be prepared to discuss what happened in the session.

- The tutor needs to be prepared to discuss strategies for development and improvement.

- The tutor will be asked to agree actions to maintain or improve the standards of teaching and learning.

- The tutor will need to sign and complete any appropriate documentation relating to the observation process.

4.3 - Agreeing Action:

When the evidence and grade has been shared, a subsequent action plan will be agreed on to improve performance. If the feedback stops at this point, there is no guarantee that any change of

behaviour, performance, knowledge or skill will result. The action plan will use the following guidance:

- The action plan must utilise realistic and achievable targets for the tutor.

- The plan's targets must be clear, concise and easy to understand.

- The action plan must take into account the current staff development training opportunities available.

- The plan can be reviewed in any keeping in touch (KIT) meetings to allow for support and monitoring of the plan's progress.

- The plan should use examples and models of good practice to support agreed actions where appropriate.

4.4 - Checking Feedback:

The feedback and action plan should be checked to ensure that it has been received and understood. This will be done by:

- Summarising the feedback at select intervals during the feedback meeting

- Actively encouraging comment and questions

- Ensuring that the written pro-forma is an accurate record of the strengths and areas for improvement shared and discussed in the feedback session.

5 – Moderation & Appeals

5.1 - Moderation of Observation Evidence and Judgements:

Projecting Success will undertake standardisation and moderation activities to ensure the rigour, consistency and validity of observation evidence, judgements and grades. This might include:

- Paired observations

- Observer training sessions

- Observer team meetings

- Formal sampling of evidence forms

- Formal moderation panels

When moderating any observation forms, they will be scrutinised against the following criteria:

- Are all the data sections complete?

- Is there a good practice section?

- Is the evidence sufficient to support the judgements and grade?

- Is there sufficient evidence about learning progress?

- Are examples used to support judgements?

- Is the evidence consistent with the grade?

- Are there any contradictions?

- Does the 'narrative' match the key strengths and areas for improvement?

- Is there a summary?

- Does this start with a clear judgment on the lesson?

- Are clear actions to maintain or improve the quality of teaching and learning recorded

- The monitoring procedures for following up and monitoring of the completion of action plans

Moderation of evidence confirms or amends the judgements and grades awarded. This means that grades can stay the same or be changed – higher or lower - following a moderation panel. This formal examination of observation evidence is a key part of the quality improvement strategy.

5.2 - Appeals Procedure:

It is hoped that the clear evidence guidelines and the transparency of the observation of teaching and learning process will eliminate situations that necessitate an appeals procedure. Following a teaching and learning observation, the tutor will receive both verbal and written feedback. If the tutor disagrees with any points made by the observer or with any aspect of the observation process, the tutor and observer should try to resolve the differences through discussion.

If this does not resolve the situation, then the tutor should contact their Team Leader. This may result in a re-observation with a different observer but with the same group of apprentices, or with a different group of apprentices.

Version History				
Date	Version	Details of Change	Revision By	QA
24/03/2023	4	- Improved layout and section titles - Improved concise language throughout - Added Version Control	*A̶b̶a̶t̶h̶*	*JSCollins*