**Guidance for using the Observation of Teaching Form for Probation**

**Probation**

***Who is observed?***

* Academic staff appointed to University of Worcester with a learning and teaching responsibility in their contract of employment.

***How many observations?***

* Two observations of teaching are required during the probationary period.

***Who observes and why?***

* Teaching Observations during a probationary period should be undertaken by a Head of Department, Deputy Head or Head of School.

***Is training required?***

* Heads of Department, Deputy Heads or Heads of School must complete the University training on the use of the Observation of Teaching form.

***Who completes the form?***

* The individual on probation completes Section A of the form prior to the observation and submits it to the observer.
* Section B and the Probation Summary is completed by the Head of Department, Deputy Head or Head of School.
* There is no requirement for every domain in Section B to be completed and comments within the form should reflect the teaching observed.
* Observers will provide feedback to an observee following an observation. Time should be allowed for this when scheduling a teaching observation. Any further developmental needs identified in the feedback session should be added to the ‘Further support, actions or outcomes’ section of the form.
* Observees should add their comments to the bottom of Section B following feedback.

***What happens to the forms?***

* The two observation of teaching forms should be submitted to HR within 10 days of each teaching observation.

**General guidance on conducting teaching observations**

The process of observing teaching provides both the observee and the observer the opportunity to learn from each other and reflect upon their teaching. Such observations provide a development opportunity, enabling the observer and observed to engage in critical dialogue and reflection on practice.

Use this guidance alongside the [Observation of learning and teaching activity form](https://uniworcac.sharepoint.com/%3Aw%3A/t/uwd-0074/ESmQfEAQWF1Ckx0mTksX9ycBNQMlB-R2zxfuEpXMrSxnnw?e=ULakpc). This is aligned with Advance HE’s [Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education 2023](http://d//1.%202022%202023%2014%20April23/21.%20Worcester%20Scheme/AdvanceHE%20review%20of%20UKPSF/PSF%202023%20-%20Screen%20Reader%20Compatible%20-%20final_1675089549.pdf) (PSF2023) to support staff gaining external recognition and accreditation for their teaching, learning support, curriculum, and professional activities. The Dimensions of the Framework, Professional Values, Core Knowledge, and Areas of Activity are set out in Appendix 1 and should be referred to / bracketed in feedback, where they are evident, or where areas of further development are highlighted.

Observations would usually be around an hour in length.

**Guidance for writing up notes on the observation**

* When observing, focus not only on the observed but also on what the students are doing and their learning.
* Write in a positive and constructive way.
* Provide examples and descriptions from the session to support your judgements, both positive and developmental.
* Focus on specific areas of good practice and areas to develop.
* Include key questions that may prompt reflection, these may be referred to in your discussion.
* Link feedback to Advance HE Dimensions of Practice (Core Values, Areas of Activity and Core Knowledge).
* Feedback can be written in either bullet points or prose.

**Guidance on providing feedback post observation.**

* Your feedback meeting would usually be around 45 minutes, in person or online and would highlight key areas from the written feedback.
* It is suggested that you arrange feedback soon after the observation but with enough time for the observed to reflect upon their session***.***
* Feedback should be a two-way dialogue and learning conversation. Key questions from written feedback are useful to prompt reflection and dialogue.
* You may wish to add further notes to the written feedback during or post verbal feedback.

**Here are 20 questions (mapped to PSF2023) which you may wish to consider when you reflect upon your observation of teaching and encourage the observed to reflect on their teaching and student learning. It can also be useful to ask the observed to select one or two questions to reflect upon per observed teaching session.**

**Co-reflection with students (V5, K3).**

**Questions to ask with students when evaluating the effectiveness of teaching**

1. Was the activity successful? If so, why? If not, why not?

2. If we do this again, what can be done differently to help students / you learn / understand / engage more?

**Classroom Culture and Effective Learning Environments (V1, V2, K1, K2, K4, A1, A2)**

**Questions to ask about your rules, expectations & relationships**

3. Are the relationships developed with my students helping them to learn?

4. Are expectations clear?

5. Are routines for effective learning embedded within the sessions?

6. Are there appropriate and fair procedures to deal with any issues?

7. Is the approach towards students conducive to effective learning?

8. What choices (learning or behaviour) have been given to students?

9. How well are students known? I.e., What career and learning aspirations do they have?

**Design and planning of learning activities (v1, v2, v3, K1, K2, K4, A1)**

**Questions to ask about the learning activities in your session**

10. How well does the structure of the session, as evident in planning and teaching, promote student learning?

11. Do students understand what they are being asked to do at each stage of the session?

12. Is the subject material set at the appropriate level, challenge student learning, and provide knowledge to meet the session outcomes?

**Assessing and giving feedback to learners (V2, A3, A4)**

**Questions to ask about activities which check and feedback on learning**

13. What evidence is there that students are learning?

14. Has student understanding / learning improved as a result of the detailed and accurate feedback given to them?

15. What actions were taken when students did not understand the intended learning of the session?

**Understanding how students learn as individuals (V1, V2, K1, K3, A4)**

**Questions to ask about the progress and learning of individuals**

16. How were students who are having difficulty understanding supported to learn?

17. How were students who easily grasped the learning challenged to enhance their learning?

**Questions to help maintain a healthy outlook**

18. What new ideas have you tried lately to keep yourself energized about teaching?

19. What have you done lately to connect with others and share your experiences, to ensure you remain an effective teacher?

20. What things could you realistically do to reduce the time you spend on time consuming tasks?

**Appendix 1**

[Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education 2023](http://d//1.%202022%202023%2014%20April23/21.%20Worcester%20Scheme/AdvanceHE%20review%20of%20UKPSF/PSF%202023%20-%20Screen%20Reader%20Compatible%20-%20final_1675089549.pdf) (PSF2023)

