The Growth Company

Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy

Version 1.1 August 2023

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Values - Intent

The process of observing teaching, learning and assessment enables clear, collaborative, development for learner facing staff, by highlighting areas of strength and development, which are supported by clear and smart goals to improve. Observations are collaborative in nature as they consider both the observers views, as well as observees self identified strengths and areas for improvement, working towards a clearer and more supportive observation process that will drive staff improvement.

Observation evidence will be used for self-assessment, appraisal, cross sector trends and themes reporting.

The five key drivers informing our approach to assessing the effectiveness of teaching and learning work alongside the values and missions of The Growth Company:

- The process should be conducted in an open and transparent manner – **doing the right thing.**
- Assessing the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment should result in standardised judgements and areas for improvement to **build on success**.
- The Quality Manager – Teaching and Learning and approved, experienced, and trained observers will undertake observations of teaching, learning and assessment, **making a positive difference** to the standard of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The process will underpin the drive for quality improvement across the organisation. It will include all key aspects of managing and supporting learners and be integrated within the staff performance management system. **Empowering people** through support and challenge.
- Observees self-reflection allows observers to have a focus on areas of, self-identified, practice improvement. **Ensuring we are stronger together**.

*Subcontracted providers, who have their own policies for observation of teaching, learning and assessment, must ensure that their policies meet our required standards. This must be proven to the satisfaction of The GC Education and Skills, who reserve the right to carry out further observations during the quality assurance/improvement process. All subcontracting provisions with ten learners or more will be observed by the Quality Manager – Teaching and Learning and/or other approved, experienced, and trained observers.

Intent

All members of staff at The Growth Company Education and Skills are dedicated to ensuring all learners achieve their full potential through the very best teaching, learning and assessment practices.

This policy further aligns the Observation process and collaborative practice. The requirement for pre-observation professional preparation discussions between observer and observee allow for a clearer understanding of the class dynamics, historic learning, context of lessons and identified areas of focus. All of which enables us to capture a clear and fair understanding of the standards of teaching, learning and assessment with staff, more effectively, to develop their practice.

The Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) Policy main aims are, to set out the objectives and the key features of OTLA for The Growth Companies learner facing staff and any

partners involved in the education, learning and skills training of learners. **Leading us to an outstanding Quality of Education.**

The outcomes will provide accurate and comprehensive judgements and development areas, based upon our benchmarks on the overall effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment across all provisions. Added value will be supported further by a structure of peer observations and line management support, which enhances the development of staff in their teaching, training, and assessment roles. **Empowering our people to support each other.**

Strategy for OTLA

All staff will be observed at least once a year and probation staff will be observed on two occasions within their probation period. This will be carried out by the Quality Managers – Teaching and Learning and/or other approved, experienced, and trained observers. Based on the feedback from your observation, the frequency of observations may be increased to support any developmental needs.

Judgements are made throughout the observation process, before, during and after the event. These are informed by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) standards 2022, Education Inspection Framework (EIF) methodologies and The Growth Company OTLA standards of practice, outlined below.

Intent & Preparation for Delivery

- Reflect on, and articulate, your own teaching and identify areas of focus for your professional development.
- Lesson/session planning is available and demonstrates plans for effective learning.
- Up to date lesson/session resources are available that contribute toward accelerated learning.
- Group profiles are in place and understood by observees to create an equal and inclusive learning environment.
- Long term planning is evident and facilitates well-structured and sequenced learning.

Implementation of Teaching and Delivery Methods

- Observees present information and/or demonstrates skills, knowledge, and behaviours clearly.
- Observees set work to learners that is appropriately stretching and challenging and ensures that learners build knowledge and acquire skills, improving on what they already know and can do.
- Differentiate learning activities to enable all learners to progress and meet and exceed their learning goals.
- Communicate and maintain high expectations of all learners.
- Observees personalise learning based on individual knowledge, skills, behaviours, understanding, abilities, and attitudes.
- Observees encourage learners to use subject-specific, professional, and technical vocabulary well.
- Check learners' understanding effectively and correct misunderstandings.
- The tutor follows Individual Education Plans where appropriate.

Impact Assessment & Learning

- Check learners' understanding effectively and correct misunderstandings.
- Observees check learners' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions and provide clear, direct feedback.
- Using appropriate assessment methods to provide learners with critical feedback on work and contributions to lessons to accelerate learning.

Implementation

A full observation will take at least 30 minutes and a maximum of 45 minutes.

Where possible Observees will be given a maximum of 48 hours' notice of observation. This will be communicated by email or phone call, however, in both scenarios the Observees line manager will be included in communications.

Where an observation lands on a Monday, Observees and line managers will be contacted on the previous Friday.

Observees are obliged to confirm receipt of their observation notification.

In some circumstances observations may be conducted unannounced. Observees must supply the Quality Manager, ahead of the observation, the following information and documentation:

- A summary of what will be covered in the session.
- A copy (or link to) their scheme of work/sequence of learning
- A copy (or link to) a lesson plan/planning
- A link to a group profile (do not send copies of sensitive information)
- A copy (or link to) any resources for the session (presentations, handouts etc.)
- Confirmation of their highest Maths and English qualifications.
- Confirmation of their teaching qualification.
- Agreement of a time for pre-observation discussion with Quality Manager.

Procedure for Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Prior to Observation *(ETF Standards 1, 6, 15)*

- A short pre-observation professional discussion will take place between the observee and observer. Where possible this will be conducted face-to-face, in some circumstances this may be done via email. This will be an opportunity for the observee to discuss:
  - o Current landscape of the session (what was taught last, class dynamics etc.).
  - o Context of the session
  - o Areas of practice the observee would like the observer to focus on.
  - o Outcomes of previous observations.
- The observer may wish to discuss and outline the process of the observation and logistics around conducting the observation, breaking for learner voice etc.

During Observation *(ETF Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 - 20)*
- Staff can expect to be observed for approximately 30 to 45 minutes.
- Learner voice will be conducted as part of the OTLA process, this may be before, during or after the observation has taken place. Where possible the logistics of this will be negotiated with the observee.
- Learner voice will usually be completed with minimal disruption to learning, however, on occasion, the observer may require the lesson to be paused and group feedback conducted, with the observee not present.
- Where a session is held virtually, learner voice will take place in a breakout room, or the observee asked to briefly leave the session.

Post Observation *(ETF Standards 1, 6)*

- Verbal feedback will be conducted post observation and will be arranged between observer and observee. This allows for clarification of points raised, questions asked and discussion of teaching practices etc.
- The observation feedback will be recorded on Mesma and shared with the members of staff and their manager.
- Subcontractors and associates will be sent an electronic copy of their observation, this will then be uploaded to MESMA.
- Except for the arrangements detailed above, all OTLA records and feedback are confidential amongst peers.
- Learner-facing staff will receive a personal development improvement action plan which is located on MESMA, or electronic copy for subcontractors/associates.
- Resulting personal development plans from the observation will be monitored by the appropriate line manager and updated as part of monthly KIT meetings.
- Reports will be returned within fourteen working days following observation whenever possible.
- The duration of time between observations is determined by the summary of Teaching Standard Tags (TSTs), again outlined in the '*Teaching Judgements'* section.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Performance

Monitoring and evaluation of staff performance and implementation of the observation and teaching, learning and assessment policies and procedures are undertaken through:

- Monthly reporting in Mesma and fed back to the management team.
- Quarterly analytical summary reports to the Management team measuring impact of delivery and related support mechanisms in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Quarterly observation moderation activity to feed into performance management structures and improvement planning (cross-group where possible for best practice).
- Annual review of the quality improvement cycle processes, procedures, and documentation
- Emerging trends and themes of identified risks will be used to inform the SAR (Self-Assessment Report) and QIP (Quality Improvement Plan).

Peer Observation

The Growth Company are keen to foster a culture of excellence partnered with continuous self-improvement where all staff feel able to openly discuss their professional practice with colleagues and actively engage in the peer observation process helping learners and their own delivery practice.

The aims of peer observation are solely developmental, to share good practice and networking across the organisation. These should empower staff to enhance and improve their own teaching and assessment methods/styles through working collaboratively with colleagues and ensuring that learners receive quality learning experiences, and benefit from the excellent teaching we provide. It will also help you build on your practice and develop your understanding of teaching practice.

The peer observation model is intended to:

- Share good practice between learner-facing staff.
- Supply information from a trusted and respected colleague on the characteristics of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Enable learner-facing staff to gain valuable feedback from others who are graded good or outstanding.
- Encourage discussion between colleagues to support the planning and implementation of changes in practice and inform quality improvement planning processes.

- Encourage collaborate working and sharing good practice across the organisation.

All learner facing staff must carry out two peer observations per year, with one observation in a different sector/ department/ subject to your usual team.

Moderation

OTLA moderation meetings will be chaired on a quarterly basis by members of the Quality Team. All OTLAs (Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment) completed in the previous period will form part of the moderation activity for that meeting.

Dual observations will take place over the course of the academic year to standardise practice between observers. These may be increase due to the needs of the organisation.

Moderated OTLA records will be stored electronically on Mesma.

Impact

It is expected that observations will positively impact the learning experience for each learner, and also positively affect motivation, engagement, and attendance as well as a deeper more satisfying learner journey. The long-term impact, where appropriate, should increase learner-facing staff support, engagement, and overall achievement of their learners.

1. We will provide an excellent learning environment and outstanding motivational environment.
2. We will provide a challenging, inclusive, and engaging curriculum.
3. We will ensure that assessment is part of the learner's experience, so progress becomes part of daily discussions.
4. We will ensure that learner personal and professional progression is central to all we do.
5. We will ensure we are responsive to local labour market needs, creating skilled workforces for the future.

Appeals

If an observee disagrees with the observer's report or judgement, this initially this should be discussed with the observer within 5 working days of receiving the final OTLA report.

If after subsequent discussion the observer and observee cannot agree, the observee must contact the Quality Director in writing within 14 working days. On receipt of the appeal the Quality Director will review the relevant paperwork and contact the observer to discuss the issues. A decision will be made and communicated to the observee within 14 working days to uphold the original grade or to carry out a second observation with the individual using an alternative observer as soon as possible.

The decision of the Quality Director at the end of the appeals process is final.

Appendix

Teaching Judgments

This section outlines the Teaching Standards Tags (TST) system that will be used during the OTLA process.

TST's are a series of short pedagogical statements in a wide spectrum of different area. Observers will select the TST's most applicable, and these will act as a summary of the observed practice and serve a reference list for where practice is strong or requires improvement.

The only exception to the above is Safeguarding, which, in line with the Education Inspection Framework, is deemed as effective or ineffective.

The overall grade of observees is in accordance to the amount of TST grades give. They are set as per the below:

Exceeding Expected Standards	85+% of TSTs highlighted are a strength. - Safeguarding is effective.
Meeting Expected Standards	50 - 84% of TSTs highlighted are a strength. - Safeguarding is effective.
Working Towards Expected Standards	>49% of TST's highlighted are an Area for Improvement. - Safeguarding is ineffective.

Reobservations will take place in accordance to the timescale set out below:

Exceeding Expected Standards	1 Year
Meeting Expected Standards	
Working Towards Expected Standards	1 Month to 3 Month which is decided by the observer's professional judgement.

Teaching Standards Tag (TST)	TST Context
Active Teaching	Ability to engage through dynamic and interactive teaching methods.
Activities and Tasks	Creating and delivering meaningful learning activities and tasks to promote learning.
Adaptive Teaching	Ability to adjust teaching strategies based on learners' needs and learning styles.
Assessment for Learning (Formative)	Use of formative assessment to identify learners' strengths and areas for development.
Assessment for Learning (Summative)	Use of summative assessments to evaluate learners' progress and achievement.
Attendance	The lesson is well attended, and learners' attendance is managed effectively
Behaviour and Attitudes	Fostering a positive and respectful learning environment
Behaviour Management	Maintaining a positive learning environment, where poor behaviour is challenged effectively.
Careers, Information and Guidance	Providing learners with information and guidance on career pathways.
Communication	Clear and effective communication with learners, colleagues and stakeholders.
Digital Skills Development	Integrating technology and digital resources into teaching and learning.
Dual Professionalism	Combining industry expertise with teaching skills.
Employer Engagement	Building and maintaining effective relationships with employers. Employers are actively involved with learner reviews.
English Component	Developing learners' spelling, grammar and technical vocational language.
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Promoting a culture of diversity, inclusion, and equality.
Feedback (Verbal)	Providing learners with good quality verbal feedback to support their learning.
Feedback (Written)	Providing learners with timely and constructive written feedback to support their learning.
Fundamental British Values	Promoting fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect. Learners demonstrate the ability to articulate and contextualise these well.
Group Profiles	Understanding and responding to the needs of diverse learner groups.
Industry Placement	Facilitating work-based learning and industry placements
Initial Assessment	Conducting initial assessments to determine learners' starting points. Using information of learners' starting points to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours.
Learner Centred Communication	Ownership is put onto the learner to contribute to sessions.

Learner Progress	Monitoring and tracking learners' progress towards their learning goals.
Learner Support	Providing additional support and resources to help learners succeed.
Learners with High Needs & SEND	Supporting learners with High Needs and/or Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
Lesson Intent	Having clear objectives and goals for each lesson or session.
Links to Industry	Preparing learners for the world of work and career success
Links to Previous Training	Building on learners' previous knowledge and experience
Maths Component	Developing learners' mathematical skills.
Mentoring	Providing learners with guidance, support and advice.
Open Listening	Effective open listening skills including, effective use of pauses, summarising, evaluating, open and probing questions etc.
Planning	Effective lesson and session planning to support learning.
Prevent	Promoting and embedding the knowledge of the Prevent Duty with learners to safeguarding them from radicalisation and extremism. Learners' ability to articulate and contextualise the Prevent Duty.
Professional Behaviours	Professionalism within the learning environment, including professionalism with the learner and any other stakeholders involved.
Reasonable Adjustments	Making reasonable adjustments to accommodate learners' needs.
Resources	Effective use of teaching and learning resources.
Safeguarding	Promoting and contextualising Safeguarding in lessons. Learners' ability to articulate Safeguarding, and awareness of how to report any safeguarding concerns (DSO name etc)
Sequencing of Learning	Planning and delivering learning in a logical and progressive way.
Stretch and Challenge	Providing learners with opportunities to stretch and challenge themselves.
Study Skills Development	Development of learners' study ad soft skills to give a wider range of academic support.
Target Setting	Setting clear and achievable learning goals for learners.
Wellbeing	Promoting learners' physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing.

Mapping ETF to policy

The ETF standards are used to inform areas of our OTLA Policy for 23/24. These are outlined in the table below. It should be noted that not all ETF standards are directly applicable to the OTLA policy and may be used in other policies and quality improvement initiatives.

ETF Number	ETF Standard	Link to Policy
1	Critically reflect on and evaluate your practices, values, and beliefs to improve learner outcomes.	Pre/Post observation discussions.
2	Promote and embed education for sustainable development (ESD) across learning and working practices	During Observation (Resources)
3	Inspire, motivate, and raise aspirations of learners by communicating high expectations and a passion for learning	During Observation
4	Support and develop learners' confidence, autonomy and thinking skills, taking account of their needs, and starting points.	During Observation
5	Value and champion diversity, equality of opportunity, inclusion and social equity.	During Observation // Lesson planning documentation
6	Develop collaborative and respectful relationships with learners, colleagues, and external stakeholders.	During Observation // Pre/Post Observation discussions.
7	Engage with and promote a culture of continuous learning and quality improvement.	CPD Records // Previous Observation Records
8	Develop and update knowledge of your subject specialism, taking account of new practices, research and/ or industry requirements.	OTLA Action Plans
9	Critically review and apply your knowledge of educational research, pedagogy, and assessment to develop evidence-informed practice.	Engagement with observation records and actions // Post observation discussion.
10	Share and update knowledge of effective practice with colleagues, networks and/or research communities to support improvement.	OTLA actions for peer observations.
11	Develop and apply your knowledge of special educational needs and disabilities to create inclusive learning experiences.	During Observation // Group Profiles // Learner Voice
12	Understand your teaching role and responsibilities and how these are influenced by legal, regulatory, institutional and ethical contexts.	During Observation (Wrap around, Learner code of conduct)
13	Promote ad support positive learner behaviour, attitudes and wellbeing.	During Observation // Learner Voice
14	Apply motivational coaching and skill development strategies to help learners progress and achieve.	During Observation // Learner Voice
15	Plan and deliver learning programmes that are safe, inclusive, stretching and relevant to learners' needs.	Pre-Observation Discussion // During Observation // Planning Documentation
16	Select and use digital technologies safely and effectively to promote learning.	During Observation *(where applicable)*
17	Develop learners' mathematics, English, Digital and Wider Employability skills.	During Observation

18	Provide access to up-to-date information, advice and guidance so that learners can take ownership of their learning and make informed progression choices.	During Observation
19	Apply appropriate and fair methods of assessment and provide constructive and timely feedback to support learning and achievement.	During Observation
20	Develop enrichment and progression opportunities for learners through collaboration with employers, higher education and/or community groups.	During Observation // During Progress review discussions / observations.

Version 1.1 OTLA main policy changes

1. **Grading** – Clarification of the Grading process and how to achieve each of the overall grade boundaries.
2. **Time between observations** – Meeting Expected Standards now extended to a year between observations.
3. **ETF –** An error in ETF standards publication date changed from 2014 to 2022.
4. **Teaching Standard Tags** – Simplification of process to remove confusion. TST's are now either a Strength or and Area for Improvement
5. **Job Titles** – Job titles have been updated throughout.
6. **Version Number** – Version number corrected on front page.

Version 1.0 OTLA main policy changes

1. **Implementation Paragraph** – The minimum and maximum OTLA times have changed from 40 and 60 minutes to 30 and 45 minutes.
2. **Implementation Paragraph** – Changes to announced observations outlined.
3. **Implementation Paragraph** – Pre-Observation requirements outlined, inclusive of documentation to be shared with observer ahead of observation.
4. **Procedure of OTLA** – OTLA Logistical information added, inclusive of pre/post observation discussions.
5. **Procedure of OTLA** – Learner voice logistical information added.
6. **Teaching Standards Tags** – Added the list of Teaching Standards Tags (TSTs)
7. **Learner Voice** - Lessons will be paused and the tutor will be asked to leave the teaching space, to conduct learner voice with full groups.

Version Control

Version 1.1

Description	Name / Title	Signature	Date
Updated & prepared by	Jack Higson / Quality of Education Manager	J. Higson	04/08/2023
Reviewed by	Sharon Mehta / Quality Manager – Teaching and Learning	S. Mehta	04/08/2023
Approved by	Helen Stevenson-Miller / Director of Quality	H. Stevenson-Miller	04/08/2023

Version 1.0 (May 2023)

Description	Name / Title	Signature	Date
Prepared by	Jack Higson / Quality Manager	J. Higson	25/05/2023
Reviewed by	Emma Thorpe / Performance and Impact Manager Sharon Mehta / Quality Manager	E. Thorpe S. Mehta	25/05/2023 25/05/2023
Approved by	Helen Stevenson-Miller / Director of Quality	H. Stevenson-Miller	2/05/2023