



Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy



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1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Aspiration Training Ltd (ATL) strategy and procedure for conducting observations of teaching, learning and assessment (OTLA), OTLA moderation, and to demonstrate how these inform staff training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) planning. This policy has been developed to include:

- The transition for all apprenticeship sectors from delivering Frameworks to Standards (England)
- An increased focus on the quality of remote teaching, learning and assessment

2. Policy intent:

The key strategic aim of this policy is to provide high quality teaching, learning and support to all our learners through effective and sequenced face-to-face and remote teaching and learning. ATL will ensure, through robust observations, that the standard of teaching and learning is continually improved and challenged, ensuring learners receive a consistent and high-quality experience and the opportunity to achieve their learning goals and aims.

3. Scope of policy:

This policy applies to observations of ATL's teaching, learning and assessment practice for all areas of the business, across face-to-face and online delivery. This policy and procedure cannot be viewed in isolation and must be read in conjunction with the following documents and policies:

- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2019)
- Estyn Common Inspection Framework (2017)
- Complaints, Compliments and Comments policy
- Continual Professional Development (CPD) policy
- Equality and Diversity policy
- Malpractice and Maladministration policy
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) policy
- Whistleblowing policy

4. Impact on the learner:

The implementation of this policy will provide and ensure consistency, validity and rigour within the observation of teaching and learning across the whole provision, to ensure learners are receiving both a high and consistent standard of learning delivery and that the funding received for their learning programme is appropriately and effectively utilised to their benefit.

5. Glossary of terms:

ATL – Aspiration Training Limited

OTLA – Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

CPD – Continuing Professional Development

EIF – Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework

CIF – Estyn's Common Inspection Framework

EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

ESDGC – Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

IQA – Internal Quality Assurer / Assurance

QIP – Quality Improvement Plan

SAR - Self-Assessment Report

6. Procedure:

ATL has adopted a triangulated approach to observations of teaching, learning and assessment which includes observations conducted by members of the ATL management team and external consultants, alongside undertaking desktop activities which gather evidence of the effectiveness of curriculum intent, implementation and impact.

Observations will be conducted by the Quality Manager, the relevant line manager, members of the Quality team and external consultants. These will be scheduled on the observation planner.

Formal quality observations of teaching, learning and assessment will be conducted by the Quality Manager or the Director of Quality and Compliance, underpinned by desktop review activity in portfolios and learner interviews, focusing on distance travelled and impact on the learner over time. Coaches will have a minimum of one formal observation per year, and these observations will be undertaken with at least two working days' notice. Oral feedback will be given directly to Coaches on completion of the observation. A written report will be given to the Coach within 5 working days of the observation.

Informal support observations of teaching, learning and assessment will be conducted by Sector Managers. In some cases, this may include a detailed focused review of activity across portfolios, but will not be mandatory. The consistent focus will be on the observation of the session and the learning that is taking place within it. Sector Managers may be accompanied by the Quality Manager / Director of Quality and Compliance / External Consultant in some of these observations for quality assurance purposes. Coaches will have a minimum of one support observation per year and these observations will be undertaken with at least two working days' notice. Oral feedback will be given directly on completion of the observation. A written report will be provided within 5 working days of the observation.

Where instances of risk are identified, Coaches will receive a development plan and a further observation will be scheduled 6 weeks afterwards, to ensure time to access, assimilate and practise improvement strategies.

If, after the second observation, sufficient improvement has not been made, the relevant line manager will be informed and a 3rd observation scheduled 6 weeks afterwards. Should improvements still not have been made, the line manager will work with the Coach to develop a formal performance improvement plan.

If sufficient improvement has been demonstrated during the 2nd or 3rd observation, a further observation will be scheduled for 3 months' time to ensure that good practice is being maintained.

As a guide, and in accordance with the Ofsted EIF Inspection Handbook and Estyn CIF Inspection Handbook, risk factors are as follows:

- Limited evidence of planning and unclear learning outcomes.
- Learning activities are not sufficiently matched to the needs of learners, with learners either not being stretched or over-challenged or becoming confused.
- There is little evidence of individual targets
- There is little evidence of differentiated delivery.
- Learners with additional learning needs are identified but are not fully supported in their learning.
- Teaching approaches are satisfactory and engage most learners, yet tasks are not sufficiently challenging for all and, in some cases, there is evidence of repetition of work.
- Learners demonstrate some elements of enjoyment and occasionally show enthusiasm and interest, but can too often become disengaged / bored.
- Most learners behave, yet 'off-task' behaviour is not appropriately challenged or managed.
- Assessment is regular, yet is insufficiently challenging.
- Learners are unclear about the importance of English and maths / literacy and numeracy skills in relation to their future success. Learner work is not regularly corrected for errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar.
- Satisfactory use of learning technologies to support learning in the session, yet there is little evidence of direction to online resources to support independent learning.
- There is little consideration to how delivery reflects the culturally diverse nature of society. Consistent missed opportunities to discuss naturally occurring EDI, British Values, Welsh language and culture and ESDGC themes, where appropriate

Managers should encourage operational teams to participate in peer observations where possible. This will enable them to informally, but systematically, observe other teaching staff in practice, particularly those teaching in similar subject areas. Coaches can then reflect on their learning from observing colleagues and identify how their own practice might develop and improve as a result.

Monitoring observations will also be carried out on trainers new to an award via the Internal Quality Assurer (IQA). If a Coach delivers in more than one vocational area, the IQA observation matrix will reflect this.

In addition to the above, peer observations from Awarding Organisations, Inspectorate and other external organisations will also contribute to the process and be included in the quarterly evaluation report prepared by the Quality Manager.

6.1. Reporting:

The Quality Manager will report quarterly on any formal observations that have taken place over the previous quarter to the Operational Managers, and the Director of Quality and Compliance will report to the Management Team and Board of Directors. Reporting will include the following:

- Timely profile of observations taken place
- Strengths and/or sector leading practice
- Improvements/recommendations
- Trend analysis of frequent themes
- CPD/training identified

7. Training and Moderation:

ATL observers are supported and encouraged to undertake formal accredited observation training. Moderation and CPD workshops will also be arranged by the Director of Quality and Compliance and the Quality Manager for all ATL staff designated as observers. This includes the sharing of best practice and standardisation / moderation meetings.

Coaches may also receive updates through observation training packages which includes best practice, for example: giving feedback, conducting observations online and general best observation practice.

Prior to conducting observations of teaching, learning and assessment, observers are required to attend initial training on identifying good practice, writing effective and supportive judgements and the observation process. The session will give individuals the knowledge and tools to carry out observations and ensure a consistent approach is adopted by all.

The purpose of moderation is to ensure consistency of approach, identify areas of best practice and review key areas for improvement. In addition, the quality team meeting will also review external factors such as Ofsted and Estyn reports/updates and standard verifier visits, to ensure all individuals have the most up to date knowledge and skills.

All observations are subject to potential moderation activity. The moderation process consists of a two-tiered approach:

7.1 Moderation via peer observation

Informal observations will be undertaken by observers, supported by the Quality Manager.

Following the observation, both parties will discuss judgements formed based on the evidence seen in the session. On agreement, the observer will verbally feedback to the Coach directly. A copy of the final moderated report will be sent by email to the Coach and relevant manager within 5 working days. Should agreement not be made, a second peer observation should be scheduled as soon as possible.

The Coach will have the opportunity to discuss the observation further with the observer by phone, online or in a personal meeting. General and specific development needs identified through the OTLA process will be collated and discussed at Sector Review meetings, attended by the relevant Head of Operations, Managing Director, Director of Quality and Compliance and Quality Manager. Needs and actions will be included in the quarterly Quality Report completed by the Quality Manager.

Observations will be reviewed to ensure that:

- The document contains clear judgements
- The judgements clearly reflect the session observed by the observer
- Strengths and recommendations are clearly defined
- Potential areas for sector leading practices are identified
- The Coach has been given the opportunity to reflect on the observation and add comments

Following this method of moderation, the document is signed and recorded on the OTLA Planner & Tracker spreadsheet. Any outstanding sessions observed may be accompanied by a case study to use for future training purpose.

7.2 Quarterly moderation meetings

The quarterly ATL moderation meetings are chaired by the Director of Quality and Compliance or Quality Manager, and are attended by all team members that undertake peer observations. Attendance for observers is mandatory and no more than 2 sessions per year may be missed.

Each observer is responsible for attending the meeting with a minimum of one observation awarded during the previous 3 months or a minimum of one planned over the next 3 months. The focus of the meeting is to discuss and review observations undertaken by peers and providing an arena for rigour and challenge in order to develop and improve consistency and validity.

The outcomes of the meeting inform ATL Self-Assessment reports (SARs) and Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs), ensuring actions to secure improvement are monitored and achieved.

8. Support:

8.1 Newly appointed team members

Managers will ensure that newly appointed members of delivery teams are supported, including a developmental observation and a review of the teaching, learning and assessment strategies planned.

Regular support observations are available for newly appointed Coaches, particularly when delivering a new programme.

8.2 Employee learning and CPD process

Observations of teaching, learning and assessment identify additional staff learning and development needs, many of which will be required across all teams. Reporting to the ATL Internal Trainer will also take place on a quarterly basis to inform CPD and training schedules to ensure these are informed and responsive to need.

The Quality Manager and Internal Trainer will work together to produce a schedule of CPD events for all delivery team members, in which sharing good practice and teaching and learning strategies will be a central focus. Line Managers are expected to cascade the CPD in order to promote good practice and record and report on its impact.

8.3 Development plans

Development plans are to be implemented when:

- The team member is new to the business and is undergoing induction.
- The team member is new to teaching and has been transferred from another area of the business.
- The team member has been identified as needing support and training at their most recent observation of teaching, learning and assessment.

Development plans will typically last for four to six weeks and involve a weekly meeting with a member of the quality team and / or the line manager, dependant on identified development areas.

The development plan will include:

- The training and development need
- Support arrangements/processes in place
- Agreed objectives
- Timescale for improvement

The development plan will culminate in an observation of teaching, learning and assessment by the Quality Manager which will determine whether further action is required.

Where sufficient improvement has been demonstrated, the delivery team member will be provided with further development, but the formal development plan will no longer be in place.

8.4 Appeals

If the Coach disagrees with the observer's moderated report, this should be discussed with the observer in the first instance. If, after subsequent discussion, the Coach still disagrees with the moderated report contact must be made with the Quality Manager / Quality and Compliance Director by email within 5 working days. The OTLA report will again be reviewed, and the Quality Manager / Quality and Compliance Director will contact the Coach to discuss the issues within 5 working days.

Following the discussion and review of the evidence, the decision by the Quality Manager / Quality and Compliance Director will be made and communicated to the Coach within 5 working days.

9.0 Responsibilities:

9.1 The Board of Directors:

- Ensuring Aspiration Training is fully compliant with legal requirements
- Ensuring effective implementation of this policy
- Ensuring this policy is reviewed on a regular basis

9.2 Senior Managers:

- Evaluating performance of individual teams, taking proactive steps to address potential issues
- Ensuring this policy is fully supported by their team
- Ensuring that all employees are aware of this policy and receive adequate training to ensure its implementation

9.3 Quality Team:

- Monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning delivery across the company through key improvement mechanisms, such as observations, moderation events, IQA activities and learner feedback
- Support in delivery of training needs arriving from observations and learner feedback
- Reporting on trends of strengths and areas for improvement

9.4 Line Managers:

- Ensuring all internal observations are carried out and risk rated timely
- Attendance and active engagement during quarterly moderation events

9.5 Coaches

- Ensuring active participation in the process and acting upon recommendations and feedback from observations
- Ensuring improvements are made as documented by improvement plans and recommendations

10.0 Communication:

This policy is available on the Aspiration Training website and may be provided in hard copy upon request. This policy is available in Welsh on the Aspiration Training (Wales) website.

11.0 Monitoring and review processes:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis, or when statutory guidance changes, to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the organisation and its stakeholders. The review will be conducted by the Board of Directors.

12.0 Contact details:

If you would like to discuss this policy further, please contact:

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