

Skills and Training Services (STS)

Local Operating Procedure

Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) Policy

Version Control Sheet

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Approval

Name	Job Role	Date	Signature
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Change Control

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Contents

Introduction 3
Objective 3
Responsibilities 3
Developmental Observations 3
Moderation 6
Appeals Procedure 6
Supportive Professional Discussions 7

Introduction

Skills and Training Services aims to provide all learners with high quality teaching, coaching and assessment. Skills and Training Services recognises that improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment will have a positive impact on the learner's attainment and their learning experience. This policy makes clear Skills and Training Services' commitment to quality: it demonstrates its commitment to implementing a formal programme of observation of the key learner processes and how evidence for continuous improvement is obtained. Reference to learner throughout this document includes apprentices.

From this point forward the terms observee and delivery staff relate to the member of staff and supply chain staff that are being directly observed, including tutors/teachers, assessors, and coaches.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the IQA policy, specifically around observations of assessments/examinations.

Objective

The Skills and Training Services Observation Programme is designed to:

- improve learner and employer experience.
 - continually improve achievement rates.
 - identify and share good practice across the provision, including with supply chain partners.
 - inform and improve staff's performance.
 - support staff in their development via continuous professional development (CPD).
 - give learners, employers, funding agencies and awarding bodies confidence that Skills and Training Services is aiming for excellence.
 - provide a measure of the quality of training, coaching and assessment provision, enabling Skills and Training Services to benchmark internally and externally, which will be used alongside other evidence and data to gain a holistic picture of the provision for quality improvement planning.
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Responsibilities

All observation activity will be carried out by Skills and Training Services' Observation Team, which is comprised of experienced personnel from Skills and Training Services Quality Team. This will ensure informed, objective, evidence-based judgements will be made as part of the observation process.

Developmental Observations

Developmental Observations are direct observations of activity stated below, which may be completed face to face or remotely/online. An annual observation schedule is implemented, which provides the planned and actual timescales for conducting the range of Developmental Observations of key learning processes including:

- Induction/CEIAG and Initial Assessment
- Learner Progress Reviews
- Coach Reports
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Progress made against the observation schedule is formally monitored by the Skills and Training Services Observation Team and management. The focus of these Developmental Observations is on the development of the observee, which will in turn inform the CPD activity required going forwards. It is the responsibility of the observee and observer to agree on any development activities following the observation and commit to following through with these. Updates on progress towards the agreed development activities will be communicated to management via monthly management meetings.

Any good practice identified will be shared with all delivery staff.

Development Observation Process

Observees will receive five working days' notice of their observation window, however the Observation Team and Management reserve the right to carry out unannounced observations. Reasons for unannounced observations can include (but not exhaustive), complaints, learner feedback, low achievement rates and increased withdrawals and concerns over learner progress.

Observees must provide the Observation Team access to their calendar where possible, if this is not possible the Observation Team will access the delivery schedules saved on the local SharePoint site.

Where the development observation is of a supply chain partner, these must be completed as joint observations with a representative from the supply chain partner. During such observation the Serco observer will also be reviewing the supply chain partner's quality processes.

Observees will be offered the chance for a pre-observation discussion with the allocated observer, which will provide the observee the opportunity to discuss any concerns or opportunities, for example: group profiles, any significant differentiation planned for certain learners, trailing new delivery methods.

If the observee believes the session selected would not be appropriate to observe, for example due to the learner or environment, then this must be discussed with the observer in the pre-observation discussion.

If the occasion occurs where the Developmental Observation could not take place, for example the learner cancelled, then the observee must ensure they work with the observer to find an alternative opportunity to observe within the next 5 working days. Where two or more cancellations occur in succession this will be escalated to management.

Before the Developmental Observation the observer will:

- Review the observee's CPD over the last 12 months, requesting an updated version as required.
- Review the observee's subject related qualifications and 'teaching' qualifications held, requesting updates as required.
- Where the details of the learner/s are known, review the MIS data/E-Portfolio evidence to identify progress to date.
- Review the lesson plan, requesting update as required.
- Review the scheme of work, requesting update as required.
- Review any group profile/summary of learners and individual needs, requesting update as required.
- Send a copy of the observation template and policy to the observee.

During the Developmental Observation the observer will:

- Be unobtrusive within the session.
- Sit in a position where the session can be viewed and heard clearly.
- Take notes which will help identify any strengths and areas for development.
- Talk to learners, when appropriate without interrupting the session, asking open questions about their learning and experience.
- Review documentation used within the session, included completed attendance registers, worksheets, presentations, and lesson plans (as examples).
- Where appropriate, review the work that learners have produced in the session and look at previous work produced in terms of the quality of written feedback received by the 'tutor'.
- On the rare occasion that during the Developmental Observation, a health or wellbeing incident occurs the observer reserves the right to step in to minimise the risk to learners,

observee and anyone in attendance.

Following the Developmental Observation, the observer should (where possible) provide brief verbal feedback as soon as practically possible, with the focus on the wellbeing of the observee, as it is appreciated that observations can be a stressful situation. Where the observation is being carried out on a supply chain partner, it is the responsibility of the supply chain partner's observer to provide the verbal feedback to their delivery staff.

The observer will write the observation report within 5 working days of the Developmental Observation taking place, and discuss with the observee either face to face, via telephone or online during an observation feedback meeting (within 10 days of the observation date).

Where the observation is being carried out on a supply chain partner, it is the responsibility of the supply chain partner's observer to provide the verbal feedback to their delivery staff. It is good practice that the Skills and Training Services observer also attends this feedback meeting, where possible and with agreement from the observee.

During the observation feedback meeting the observee must take prime responsibility in designing their action plan following the Developmental Observation, working closely with the observer.

The action plan will be recorded on the observation report and signed by all parties in agreement and commitment in working towards the development activities agreed.

All Developmental Observations must have an agreed action plan in place, even if the observee obtained a Green (low risk).

Any concerns with progress against the action plans agreed will be raised within the Skills and Training Services Observation Team in the first instance in order to provide additional support, where this additional support has been unsuccessful the concerns will be escalated to management.

Sampling Strategy

New delivery staff will receive a Developmental Observation within six weeks of commencing delivery (or the second session of leading delivery). The grade from this observation will determine the timeline for the next.

Delivery staff returning from extended leave or a leave of absence exceeding 3 months (including the full allowance of maternity/paternity leave) will receive a Developmental Observation within six weeks of commencing delivery (or the second session of leading delivery). The grade from this observation will determine the timeline for the next.

All delivery staff will receive a minimum of one Developmental Observation per year for each of the key learning processes (as stated in section 4) they deliver.

Developmental Observations will be risk banded in line with the Skills and Training Services issued observation forms as follows: Red (High Risk), Amber (Medium Risk), Green (Low Risk).

Frequency of additional Developmental Observations will be as follows:

RAG Rating	Next Developmental Observation Due
Green (Low Risk)	6-12 Months
Amber (Medium Risk)	3 Months – the same key learning process
Red (High Risk)	1 -3 Months or next available session, whichever is the soonest – the same key learning process

The Skills and Training Services Observation Team and management reserve the right to carry out

additional Developmental Observations when required, which will be informed by exceptional circumstances, for example based on data/feedback received.

Delivery staff also reserve the right to request an additional Developmental Observation to support their own development.

Moderation

The purpose of moderation is:

- To ensure the validity and reliability of the observation process.
- To ensure Skills and Training Services takes a systematic and consistent approach to observation.
- To ensure standardisation in judgments.
- To ensure judgements support the observation grades.
- To agree observation risk bands awarded.
- To provide and identify additional professional development needs for observers.
- To ensure action planning is based on judgments and is SMART.
- To provide qualitative and quantitative information that informs self-assessment.
- To identify and share good practice.

Desk based Moderation Process

The Skills and Training Services Observation Team are required to moderate a sample of at least 20% of completed Developmental Observation reports completed in that period, covering all key learning activities. Observation moderations will take place at least every 3 months.

The outcome of the moderations will be used to advise on the Observation Team's own CPD, as well as identifying any trends across the provision. Any good practice trends will be shared with all delivery staff. Any trends in areas for improvement will result in standardisation/support sessions being carried out by the Observation Team, which all delivery staff (including supply chain partner representatives) will be invited to attend.

Supply chain partners must have their own moderation processes in place, which will be discussed with them during quality monitoring activity conducted by the Skills and Training Services quality team.

Joint Observations Moderation Process

Observers will receive at least one joint observation per year. In addition, further joint observations may be required where:

- A new observer joins the team.
- An observer's grade judgement is questioned on more than one occasion through moderation.
- An observer's report does not demonstrate good practice.
- An observer wants a second opinion.
- An observer wants the support of a specialist practitioner.
- Management request to sample observation practice.

Supply chain partners must have their own moderation processes in place, which will be discussed with them during quality monitoring activity conducted by the Skills and Training Services quality team.

Appeals Procedure

An observee has the right to appeal against the findings and/or grading decisions made in an observation. An observee may submit an appeal if they do not agree with the grade awarded or if they consider that the process within this document has not been followed.

The appeals process should ensure a fair and rigorous processes which is supportive and inclusive:

- If an observee considers that the judgements made and feedback given is not a true reflection of the session, they should initially raise their concern with the observer.
- If, after discussing the judgement with the observer, the observee is still of the opinion that the judgement is not a true reflection of the session they should lodge an appeal via an email to the Quality Improvement and Audit Manager clearly explaining the reason for their appeal. This email must be submitted within 10 working days of receiving the written observation feedback
- An investigation will be undertaken by the Quality Improvement and Audit Manager and an appeal hearing held within 10 working days.
- If an appeal is upheld the observee will be required to action any requirements of the original observation and the grading will remain the same.
- The investigation may require a second observation. This will be a paired observation involving two members of the Observation Team. It will not include the original observer.
- The results of the second observation will be sent to the observee within 5 working days of the observation.
- If the observee is a member of staff, if they are not satisfied with the outcome then any further action should be through the [Serco Group Grievance Procedure](#).
- If the observee is a supply chain partner, they make a final appeal to the Director of Skills – who will make a final decision.

Supportive Professional Discussions

In addition to Developmental Observations, all delivery staff will be required to attend supportive professional discussions (face to face, telephone or online - either 1-2-1 or group as appropriate) at least every 6 months. The Observation Team and management reserve the right to increase the frequency of the supportive progression discussions as required, informed by previous observations, discussions, data, and feedback. The professional discussion provides the observee the opportunity to discuss:

- Any concerns they have
- Any additional development needs they have
- Progress against their current action plan, from the last Developmental Observation

The observer will provide support and guidance to the observee during the session, however if more specialist support is needed the observer will take this back to the Observation Team for discussion on how to provide the support required/requested.

The supportive Professional Discussion must be recorded in minutes (in writing), which will also be in scope for the deskbased moderation as outlined in section 4.4.