UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Peer Observation of Teaching

Observation option 1

What to do/look for when observing a peer's teaching or reflecting on your own teaching

One way of carrying out peer observation is to adopt a **directed** approach. This is good for those with less experience of observing teaching, and may take various forms, including:

- A checklist of pre-determined questions or global categories, for example see: ESCalate (http://www.escalate.ac.uk/resources/peerobservation/04.html) and The University of Nottingham (http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sedu/peerobs/checklist.php)
- A form with a tick list of criteria and/or open categories, such as the form provided here (which is designed with lectures and seminars in mind)
- Focus on a particular issue, for example use of visual aids, question techniques, pace and timing, interaction patterns with / between students.

You do not have to use the form given here if you prefer to use a different one, or if you have agreed to focus on a specific area. However, you should agree on your approach **in advance** of the observation session, and if necessary, source or prepare your own checklist or observation categories.

If this approach to peer observation is new to you, or you want to know more, go to http://www.prodait.org/approaches/index.php

See also Directed Observation options 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Note: The current (June 2005**) University Guidelines on Peer Observation of Teaching** state that '**All forms of teaching activity** should be subject to observation' (section 3), so you can interpret 'teaching' in its broadest sense, to include not only lectures and classroom teaching, but seminars, research and professional supervision, online tutoring, lab supervision …

The University Guidelines (section 2) also state:

'Enhancement of an individual's teaching performance is always the primary purpose of peer observation of teaching'

- The process should be such that the observer has an opportunity to identify good practice from the observee, and that particularly good practice can be disseminated in the Department/School or beyond.
- Self-evaluation and formative feedback are normally confidential to the observer and observee.
- Observation should primarily consider the delivery of teaching, rather than the content.

You can view the Guidelines in full at: http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/peerguide.htm

You will also need a copy of the peer observation report form, available from http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/peer.htm

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
This part to be completed by the observer during / after the observation

School of _____

Peer Observation of Teaching

Observer record of a Teaching Session

Lecturer/tutor: Observer:

Date:

Title of Teaching Session:

Degree programme: Year of programme:

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

Did the lecturer/tutor.....	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Identify key learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and skills?	☐	☐	☐
2. Place the session in context (eg within the degree programme, the module or the series of lectures)?	☐	☐	☐
3. Pitch the content at an appropriate level?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

START OF THE SESSION

Did the lecturer/tutor.....	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Secure attention of the students	☐	☐	☐
2. Introduce subject in an interesting way	☐	☐	☐
3. Make the aims and learning outcomes of the session clear to the students	☐	☐	☐
4. Link the subject to previous sessions	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
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EXPLANATION OF THE SUBJECT

Did the lecturer/tutor.....	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Demonstrate a firm grasp of the subject area	☐	☐	☐
2. Adopt a logical, structured approach	☐	☐	☐
3. Move clearly from stage to stage	☐	☐	☐
4. Emphasise key points	☐	☐	☐
5. Provide alternative explanations of difficult points	☐	☐	☐
6. Make good use of audio-visual materials	☐	☐	☐
7. Make good use of handouts	☐	☐	☐
8. Make reference to additional reading materials	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

PRESENTATION OF THE SESSION

Did the lecturer/tutor.....	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Use legible and clear audio-visual material	☐	☐	☐
2. Show enthusiasm	☐	☐	☐
3. Control the pace of delivery	☐	☐	☐
4. Control the timing	☐	☐	☐
5. Speak clearly and concisely	☐	☐	☐
6. Maintain an appropriate level of class control and discipline	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
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LEARNER BEHAVIOUR

Did the learners.....	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. As a cohort, attend the session	☐	☐	☐
2. Arrive on time	☐	☐	☐
3. Pay proper attention	☐	☐	☐
4. Undertake any tasks given to them	☐	☐	☐
5. Respond to the lecturer's questions	☐	☐	☐
6. Ask questions	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

FINISHING THE SESSION

Did the lecturer/tutor.....	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Identify how well the learning outcomes had been achieved	☐	☐	☐
2. Reiterate and summarize key points	☐	☐	☐
3. Identify links with following sessions	☐	☐	☐
4. End the session positively and clearly	☐	☐	☐

Comments:

Other Comments:
Include here and overleaf reference to any issues affecting the session that were outside the control of the lecturer/tutor e.g. accommodation, resources, or that were of concern under Health and Safety legislation. These comments may be communicated by the observer to the Head of School or Head of the appropriate academic unit.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
This part to be completed by the observee after the observation

School of _____

Peer Observation of Teaching

Lecturer / tutor record of a Teaching Session

Lecturer/tutor: Observer:

Date:

Title of Teaching Session:

Degree programme: Year of programme:

PREPARATION AND PLANNING

Did I	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Identify key learning outcomes in terms of knowledge and skills?	☐	☐	☐
2. Place the session in context (eg within the degree programme, the module or the series of lectures)?	☐	☐	☐
3. Pitch the content at an appropriate level?	☐	☐	☐

Comments:
Why (not)?

START OF THE SESSION

Did I	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Secure attention of the students	☐	☐	☐
2. Introduce subject in an interesting way	☐	☐	☐
3. Make the aims and learning outcomes of the session clear to the students	☐	☐	☐
4. Link the subject to previous sessions	☐	☐	☐

Comments:
Why (not)?

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
This part to be completed by the observee after the observation

EXPLANATION OF THE SUBJECT

Did I	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Demonstrate a firm grasp of the subject area	☐	☐	☐
2. Adopt a logical, structured approach	☐	☐	☐
3. Move clearly from stage to stage	☐	☐	☐
4. Emphasise key points	☐	☐	☐
5. Provide alternative explanations of difficult points	☐	☐	☐
6. Make good use of audio-visual materials	☐	☐	☐
7. Make good use of handouts	☐	☐	☐
8. Make reference to additional reading materials	☐	☐	☐

Comments:
Why (not)?

PRESENTATION OF THE SESSION

Did I	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Use legible and clear audio-visual material	☐	☐	☐
2. Show enthusiasm	☐	☐	☐
3. Control the pace of delivery	☐	☐	☐
4. Control the timing	☐	☐	☐
5. Speak clearly and concisely	☐	☐	☐
6. Maintain an appropriate level of class control and discipline	☐	☐	☐

Comments:
Why (not)?

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
This part to be completed by the observee after the observation

LEARNER BEHAVIOUR

Did the students	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. As a cohort, attend the session	☐	☐	☐
2. Arrive on time	☐	☐	☐
3. Pay proper attention	☐	☐	☐
4. Undertake any tasks given to them	☐	☐	☐
5. Respond to the lecturer's questions	☐	☐	☐
6. Ask questions	☐	☐	☐

Comments:
Why (not)?

FINISHING THE SESSION

Did I	Entirely / always	Partly / sometimes	Not at all / never
1. Identify how well the learning outcomes had been achieved	☐	☐	☐
2. Reiterate and summarize key points	☐	☐	☐
3. Identify links with following sessions	☐	☐	☐
4. End the session positively and clearly	☐	☐	☐

Comments:
Why (not)?

Other Comments:
Include overleaf reference to any issues affecting the session that were outside the control of the lecturer/tutor e.g. accommodation, resources, or that were of concern under Health and Safety legislation. These comments may be communicated by the observer to the Head of School or Head of the appropriate academic unit.