

LESSON OBSERVATION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

This is a core policy that forms part of the induction for all staff, volunteers, and trustees. It is a requirement that all members have access to this policy and sign to say they have read and understood its contents.

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Scope

This policy is to:

- provide regular developmental feedback to staff on the impact of their teaching.
- gather a wide range of information to support judgements about the quality of teaching over time; and
- provide information to support personal and school wide CPD priorities.

Objectives and Quality Assurance

Circomedia is fully committed to maintaining the highest standards of teaching and learning. All teaching staff will undergo regular observations to ensure they are meeting the requirements set by Ofsted, Circomedia and our partners City of Bristol College (COBC) and Bath Spa University (BSU).

All teaching observations are for the support and development of teaching staff. Staff will be given relevant feedback to enable them to improve their skills. Lesson observations aim to:

- identify and share good practice and highlight and action any professional development needs (teaching observations will therefore not be awarded a grade); provide teachers with formative feedback about the impact of their teaching;
- re-focus lesson observations away from teaching and onto learning, building on the lesson study approach (ref: <https://tdtrust.org/what-is-lesson-study>); and
- make the process of lesson observation more collaborative.

All observations will be carried out against the most recent relevant framework – OFSTED for the BTEC course. Higher education teachers will work under the guidance of the programme lead.

Observation Process

Observation Format

Observations may be conducted in one of two ways:

1. as part of a 'Learning Walk;' or
2. as a pre-arranged observation for part of a lesson.

Observations will be conducted by a suitably qualified member of the Academy team. This may be the BTEC Course Leader or for HE, a peer observer, in some cases, more than one person may be present at the observation. At COBC or BSU's request, a member of their staff team may also be present at lesson observations.

For the BTEC observations observers must hold a PGCE, PGCHE or DTLLS teaching qualification and undergo annual observation training with COBC when requested.

Teachers are welcome to request other Circomedia stakeholders to be present in their lesson observations, such as another colleague, a student, or a group of students.

Observation Frequency

Lesson observations will be carried out at least once per year. Reasons for more frequent observations may include, but are not limited to:

- quality management
- specific complaint
- following changes to the curriculum
- staff changes
- implementing new ways of working
- for good practice.

Some observations will be short 'Learning Walk' observations; others will be for part of a lesson.

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Observations may be carried out in a random order, or by order of risk rating (starting with the highest-scoring risk rating).

Observation process

1. Teaching staff will be given at least two weeks' notice of their observation, including the time and date of the observation. This will consider teachers' working patterns.
2. Prior to an observation, teachers should provide the observer(s) with:
 - a. a scheme of learning for the entire term in which they are being observed;
 - b. any other relevant planning documents
 - c. A suggestion of particular students or themes on which the observer may wish to focus their feedback
 - d. The learning goals that students should achieve during the session
 - e. any records and resources which would normally be taken into or be accessible in, the learning area.

If the observer is the BTEC Course Leader or a member of Academy staff, then they will have access to the group profile. If it is an external observation undertaken by a member of COBC, Ofsted or other agency then it is the responsibility of the teacher to provide the observer with a profile of the group giving context for the learners who may have additional needs.

3. During the observation, the observer(s) will be seated discreetly towards the back of the teaching space.
4. Following the observation, the feedback will be provided in a meeting within 10 working days of the observation, including:
 - a. specific feedback on the teaching of specific pupils
 - b. recommendations, along with a supportive action plan stating the impact on the learners; and
 - c. if applicable, plans to carry out another observation in future.

The BTEC teacher's line manager is responsible for storing this feedback in the employee's CPD plan and in Breathe HR. For higher education staff the feedback will be kept by the individual and discussed in annual appraisal and used as the basis for improvement in teaching.

5. If a further observation is arranged and there is little progress against the action plan following a re-observation, the Course Leader (BTEC) or Higher Education Programme Leader will implement a more intensive improvement plan and keep the Academy SMT informed. In this case, advice and support may be sought from COBC or BSU as appropriate.

Appeals

A teacher may contest their feedback in the event of a disagreement by following these steps.

1. The appeal should be made in writing to the BTEC Course Leader (BTEC) or Higher Education programme Leader, regardless of who conducted the observation, within 10 working days of receiving feedback.
2. If the teacher feels unable to address the disagreement with the BTEC Course Leader/ Higher Education programme Leader, then they can speak to any member of academic leadership team.
3. The observation report will be reviewed by another member of the Academic team. In most cases, a re-observation will be arranged without the implementation of any kind of supportive action plan. The teacher can request for another member of staff – providing they are appropriately qualified – to undertake the observation. teaching staff will be given at least two weeks' notice of their reobservation, including the time and date of the reobservation. This will consider teachers' working patterns.