

Teaching Observation Policy

1. This paper sets out the policy of Walbrook on teaching observations at higher education (HE) level. Reference should also be made to Walbrook's Code of Practice chapter 12 on staff development.

Context

2. In line with the HE sector requirements, where organisations holding degree-awarding powers must have staff development and appraisal opportunities, Walbrook has formal processes for staff development and appraisal as set out in The Walbrook Code of Practice chapter 12 on staff development. Walbrook recognises that teaching observation, whether administered centrally for coaching, or more informally in the context of peer observation, comprises a significant developmental opportunity, enabling the identification of best practice, and promoting dialogue relating to higher education learning theory and instruction.

Aims

3. The aim of the policy on teaching observations is to establish the context within which they're undertaken, and the purposes for which they're undertaken. The policy also aims to identify the different forms of teaching observation undertaken at Walbrook.

Principles

4. Observations are supportive and developmental. The broad purpose of observation is to identify and share best practice in learning and teaching. The observer is present to support the observed, offering encouragement of their existing practice, while identifying areas the observed may wish to reflect upon and, if applicable, areas where there is scope for improvement. The observer may also share with the observed examples of good practice they've witnessed in other observations, or current research that may be relevant to the lecturer's practice. Academic community members can expect to have their teaching observed at least once every year regardless of their mode of delivery.

Definitions

5. Observations involve the observer either attending a lecture, seminar or workshop for between one to two hours or reviewing the teaching experience on the Virtual Learning environment (VLE). In most circumstances, it will be sufficient for the

observer to look at one session, though they'll have the option of looking at more than one session. The observations may be face-to-face or digital and will be arranged by the Head of Academic Development.

6. Coaching observation will be undertaken for each member of academic faculty at least annually by the Academic Lead, or, on occasion, the Academic Dean. (NB. Academic Leads will be observed by each other or another member of the faculty management team). A document will be completed by the Observer and Observee and shared with all parties mentioned above. This will be followed up by discussions around enhancing skills / developing knowledge and expertise within 1-1s. Those colleagues who teach but are not members of academic faculty (eg. Librarians and Careers Professionals will also be offered an observation each year).

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7. Peer observation will be undertaken for each member of teaching staff at least annually. Therefore, everyone should expect to observe, and be observed, at least once every year. It comprises academic community members observing each other's classes to enable reflective learning, the sharing of best practice, and on-going professional dialogue relating to learning and teaching. A document will be completed by both parties for their own reflection / action – though they may choose to discuss the outcomes with their Academic Lead in relation to developmental conversations.

Policy Review

8. This policy is subject to review approximately every 12 months by the Academic Dean.