

Classroom Lesson Observation Policy

Introduction

The aim of observation is to raise the quality of learning to be outstanding throughout the service.

It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that scheduled courses run according to Skills South Tyneside records or notify Skills South Tyneside that the courses are not running.

It is the responsibility of the provider to run internal observations to meet their own quality assurance standards – and that of external bodies such as qualifications bodies.

Rationale

1. To demonstrate The Skills Service' core principles of openness and transparency through collaborative working.
2. To develop a closer relationship between Skills South Tyneside OTLA criteria and a providers self-evaluation outcomes.
3. To build a provider's capacity for self-evaluation leading to improvement.
4. To heighten the awareness of the senior management on the importance of focusing more clearly on the learning within the lesson/session that occurs as a result of the teaching.

OTLA Process

Joint Observations

Skills South Tyneside will joint observe with providers at regular intervals to confirm provider arrangements for internal observation and quality assurance. When the joint observations concur, Skills South Tyneside will ratify all indirect observations of the tutors covering Skills South Tyneside contracted learning.

Skills South Tyneside report format and observation criteria will be shared with all providers at the beginning of each year and again, as required. The criteria will be updated to reflect themed aspects and changing Ofsted emphasis.

Direct Observations

Direct observations will be continued when:

- the joint observation does not produce agreement
- Skills South Tyneside believes the provider internal QA processes to be insufficiently well embedded
- the provider grade profile continues to 'require improvement'.

For direct observations Skills South Tyneside will notify providers a minimum of 24 hours in advance that observations will take place, naming the course and tutor.

At the start of the observation, the tutor/assessor should be prepared and direct the observer to:

- Scheme of work / delivery model / lesson plan /resources
- Group profile, attendance register, personal learning plans

The observation will last a minimum of 40 minutes and no more than 60 minutes. Observation may include classroom learning or work-based coaching, assessment and reviews.

Learner voice

After the observation, the tutor/assessor may be asked to leave so that the observer can ask the learners a series of standard questions (Learner Voice). The results may influence the grade of the observation.

Providers conducting their own observations are to conduct a learner voice survey.

Feedback to Tutor/Assessor

Verbal feedback will be given as close as possible to the actual observation, either face-to-face or by telephone within 24 hours.

A written report will be sent within 5 working days.

For sessions graded unproductive, the tutor/assessor is to be re-observed. Should there be no improvement, then Skills South Tyneside will raise their concerns with the provider and may request the tutor/assessor to be withdrawn from the contracted provision.

OTLA Outcomes

Results of observations are fed into a confidential central database of overall grades and sub-grades. This identifies areas for improvement for Skills South Tyneside and providers.

Results also feature on the provider's scorecard and will form part of the monthly contract meeting and the priority actions from the SAR template.

Results of learner voice are analysed and highlighted for further improvements for The Skills Service.

Penalties

The provider is responsible for ensuring timetables are up to date. Failure to notify Skills South Tyneside of changes may result in observation costs being incurred. Costs may be passed on to the provider.

For tutors that are graded unproductive, Skills South Tyneside reserves the right to request that the tutor/assessor is withdrawn from the contract.

If there is insufficient evidence of internal quality assurance of provision through observation, and the provision demonstrates persistent unproductive grades at observation, then Skills South Tyneside reserve the right to remove the contract fully.

Complaints/Appeals

Providers may raise a concern on behalf of their staff about the conduct of an observation. Complaints/concerns must be supported with sufficient evidence. A panel of observers will evaluate the complaint/concern.

Moderation

All observations and grades will be validated at a moderation panel once per year (minimum).

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