Teaching Observation Policy and Process

Version 8.0

Approved by the Board of Governors

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This policy sets out the London School of Science and Technology (LSST)'s commitment to continually enhancing the standards of teaching and learning, through structured observation of teaching and learning practices in the School.

It has been developed with due regard for *England's Regulatory Framework for Higher Education* and need for institutions offering higher education to ensure that the academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.

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*The document owner is responsible for maintaining and updating the content of this document and ensuring that it reflects current practice at the School.

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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1.1. This policy sets out LSST's framework for the observation of teaching on higher education programmes. It applies to all staff who teach, assess or support learning on programmes leading to LSST awards, across all LSST campuses.

1.2. Teaching observation serves two purposes. First, it is a quality assurance mechanism through which LSST satisfies itself that teaching meets the standards required for the award of its qualifications. This is central to LSST's responsibilities under the ongoing conditions of registration with the Office for Students, particularly conditions B1 and B2. Second, it is a developmental process that supports staff in reflecting on and improving their teaching practice.

1.3. The policy covers two distinct but related processes: graded lesson observations conducted in Semester 1 and developmental peer observations conducted in Semester 2. Both operate under common institutional standards and use the same observation criteria, though they differ in purpose, method and consequences as set out below.

1.4. This policy applies to the observation of teaching on higher education programmes only. Where LSST delivers further education provision subject to Ofsted inspection, separate observation arrangements apply. Staff who teach on HE should be observed under both frameworks as appropriate.

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1. **Institutional consistency:** All campuses operate the same observation process, use the same grading scale, apply the same criteria and follow the same reporting requirements. There are no campus-level variations to this policy.

2.2. **Criteria-referenced assessment:** All graded observations are assessed against the published criteria in this policy. Grades reflect the quality of the teaching observed against these criteria, not comparative ranking between staff.

2.3. **Developmental purpose within a quality assurance framework:** Observation is not a punitive process. Its primary purpose is to support the development of good teaching. However, where observation identifies teaching that falls below expected standards, the institution has a responsibility to act in the interests of its students.

2.4. **Transparency and fairness:** All staff have access to the observation criteria before being observed. The process, timelines and consequences are set out in this policy. Staff have the right to receive constructive feedback and to discuss the outcome of their observation. Where a staff member has concerns about the outcome or the process, the moderation and resolution provisions in Section 6.6 apply.

2.5. **Reliability through calibration:** Graded observation is only as reliable as the observers who conduct it. All observers are trained and participate in annual calibration exercises to promote consistency of judgement across the institution.

3. TYPES OF OBSERVATION

3.1. Lesson Observations (Semester 1 – Graded)

3.1.1. Lesson observations are formal, graded observations conducted during Semester 1. Every member of teaching staff is observed at least once per academic year through this process. Lesson observations are conducted by trained observers using the institutional grading criteria and result in a grade and written report.

3.1.2. Each lesson observation is conducted by two observers. At least one must be a senior academic (Campus Dean, Course Leader or designated senior lecturer). Where possible, one observer should be from outside the observed staff member's immediate teaching team. The use of external observers for a sample of observations each year is encouraged and should be coordinated by the Dean of Learning and Teaching.

3.1.3. Each observer independently assigns a grade for each observation domain and an overall grade using the criteria in Section 4. Where both observers agree on the overall grade, that grade stands. Where they disagree, the protocol in Section 6.5 applies.

3.2. Peer Observations (Semester 2 – Developmental)

3.2.1. Peer observations take place during Semester 2 and are primarily developmental. Staff are paired, normally across different modules or subject areas within their campus, and observe each other's teaching. The emphasis is on reflective dialogue, sharing good practice and identifying development opportunities.

3.2.2. Peer observations are not formally graded. The observer uses the same observation criteria (Section 4) as a reference framework and provides structured written feedback against the five observation domains. The observer does not assign a grade but identifies areas of strength and areas for development in narrative form. This approach ensures that peer observation is informed by the same standards as lesson observation while keeping its developmental character.

3.2.3. Peer observation reports are shared between the observed staff member and the observer, with a copy provided to the Campus Dean and the Quality Office. The Campus Dean reviews peer observation reports to identify campus-level themes for discussion at Learning and Teaching Forums.

3.3. Enhanced Observation

3.3.1. Enhanced observation applies to the following categories of staff:

- **Newly appointed staff** are observed through a lesson observation within their first term of teaching at LSST, with a follow-up observation before the end of their first year. The first observation is primarily supportive, though it is graded using the standard criteria. Staff who are new to higher education teaching may be paired with an experienced colleague as a teaching mentor.

- **Staff on probation** are observed at least twice during their probationary period. Observation outcomes form part of the evidence considered at probation review.

- **Staff on an improvement plan** following a Satisfactory or Below Expected Standard grade receive additional observations as specified in their action plan (see Section 5).

3.4. Pre-Appointment Micro-Teach

3.4.1. All appointments to teaching posts at LSST include an observed micro-teach as part of the selection process. The micro-teach is assessed by a panel that includes at least one trained observer using the institutional observation criteria. Where practicable, a student panel may also be involved in the selection process.

3.4.2. The micro-teach is not a formal observation under this policy and does not result in a grade being assigned under the institutional grading scale. Its purpose is to assess teaching quality as part of the appointment decision. The relevant Campus Dean coordinates the micro-teach arrangement in consultation with HR. This requirement also applies to internal appointments and to the renewal of fixed-term teaching contracts.

4. GRADING FRAMEWORK

4.1. The Institutional Grading Scale

4.1.1. LSST uses a four-point grading scale for lesson observations. This scale is mandatory across all campuses. No campus may use a different scale, different grade labels or different criteria.

4.1.2. The four grades are:

- **Excellent** – teaching of a consistently high standard across all observation domains.

- **Good** – effective teaching with no significant weaknesses. This is the expected standard for experienced, competent staff.

- **Satisfactory** – teaching that meets minimum expectations but with clear areas requiring development.

- **Below Expected Standard** – teaching that does not meet LSST's minimum expected standard and requires formal intervention.

4.2. Observation Domains and Criteria

4.2.1. Observers assess teaching against five domains. For each domain, the criteria describe what characterises teaching at each grade level. Observers should use these criteria as a reference framework, applying professional judgement to the overall quality of the observed session.

Table 1: Observation Domain Criteria by Grade

Domain	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Below Expected Standard
1. Planning and Preparation	Session is carefully planned with clear, appropriately challenging learning outcomes. Resources are well designed, varied and accessible. The plan shows awareness of student needs and prior learning, with differentiation strategies in evidence.	Session is well planned with clear learning outcomes at the appropriate level. Resources are suitable and support learning effectively. Planning shows awareness of the student group.	Session has a plan with identifiable learning outcomes, though these may lack specificity or challenge. Resources are adequate but limited in range or accessibility. Some awareness of student needs but not consistently addressed.	Planning is inadequate: learning outcomes are absent, unclear or inappropriate for the level. Resources are insufficient or poorly matched. Little evidence that student needs or prior learning have been considered.
2. Teaching Methods and Delivery	Teaching shows confident subject expertise and uses a range of methods that actively promote deep learning. Explanations are clear, well-paced and skilfully adapted in response to student understanding. The session is well structured with effective transitions.	Teaching shows sound subject knowledge and uses appropriate methods that support learning. Explanations are clear and well-paced. The session has a logical structure with effective use of time.	Teaching shows adequate subject knowledge. Methods are limited in range but functional. Explanations are generally clear though may lack depth or responsiveness. Session structure is evident but pacing may be uneven.	Subject knowledge is insufficient or inaccurate at points. Methods are ineffective or inappropriate. Explanations are unclear or poorly structured. The session lacks coherent structure or significantly over- or under-runs.
3. Student Engagement and Learning	Students are actively and purposefully engaged throughout. The teaching creates opportunities for dialogue, questioning and collaborative learning. Students	Students are engaged for the majority of the session. There are meaningful opportunities for student participation and interaction. Most	Students are generally attentive but engagement is largely passive. Opportunities for active participation are limited or not fully used. Some students may be	Student engagement is poor: significant numbers are disengaged, confused or off task. There are few or no opportunities for active participation. The learning

	show deepening understanding during the session. The learning environment is inclusive, supportive and intellectually stimulating.	students are making visible progress. The environment is supportive and inclusive.	disengaged. The learning environment is adequate but could be more inclusive or stimulating.	environment does not support effective learning or may feel unwelcoming to some students.
4. Assessment and Feedback Integration	The session integrates assessment for learning effectively, using questioning, tasks or other methods to check and extend understanding. Feedback is timely, specific and developmental. There is clear alignment between session activities, the assessment strategy and module learning outcomes.	The session includes effective checking of student understanding through questioning or tasks. Feedback is constructive and supports learning. Session activities are clearly aligned with module learning outcomes and assessment requirements.	Some checking of understanding takes place but it is superficial or inconsistent. Feedback is given but may be generic rather than developmental. The connection between session activities and assessment is present but not made clear.	There is little or no checking of student understanding. Feedback is absent or unhelpful. The relationship between teaching activities and assessment or learning outcomes is unclear.
5. Inclusive Practice and Learning Environment	The session actively promotes an inclusive learning environment. Materials and methods are accessible and reflect diverse perspectives where appropriate. The teaching anticipates and responds to different learning needs. Students are treated with respect and encouraged to contribute.	The session shows attention to inclusive practice. Materials are accessible and methods accommodate different learning needs. Students are treated equitably and encouraged to participate.	Some attention to inclusive practice but inconsistent. Materials may not be fully accessible. The teaching approach accommodates some but not all student needs. Opportunities for all students to participate are limited.	Little or no attention to inclusive practice. Materials may be inaccessible or methods may exclude some students. Different learning needs are not accommodated. The learning environment may feel unwelcoming or inequitable.

4.3. Holistic Grade Descriptors

4.3.1. In addition to the domain-level criteria, observers should consider the following holistic descriptors when assigning an overall grade. The overall grade should reflect the observer's professional judgement of the session as a whole, informed by but not mechanically derived from the domain grades.

Table 2: Holistic Grade Descriptors

Grade	Holistic Descriptor
Excellent	Teaching of a consistently high standard across all observation domains. The session shows pedagogic expertise and creates conditions in which students are challenged, engaged and making clear progress. This grade should not be the default for competent teaching; it is reserved for sessions that are genuinely exceptional.
Good	Teaching that is effective across all domains with no significant weaknesses. Students are learning effectively and the session is well organised, appropriately paced and inclusive. This represents the standard LSST expects of experienced, competent staff and should be the most frequently awarded grade in a well-functioning institution.
Satisfactory	Teaching that meets the minimum expected standard but with clear areas requiring development. The session achieves its basic purposes but there are identifiable weaknesses in one or more domains that limit the quality of the student learning experience. Staff receiving this grade will be provided with targeted developmental support and are expected to show improvement at their next observation.
Below Expected Standard	Teaching that does not meet LSST's minimum expected standard in one or more domains. The session has significant weaknesses that materially compromise the student learning experience. This grade triggers a formal improvement process including a structured action plan, enhanced support and a follow-up observation within a defined timeframe. Continued performance at this level is not compatible with ongoing teaching responsibilities.

4.4. Assigning Grades

4.4.1. Observers assign a grade for each of the five domains and an overall grade for the session. The overall grade need not be a mathematical average of the domain grades; it is a holistic professional judgement. However, where domain grades are mixed, the observer must provide a clear rationale for the overall grade in the written report.

4.4.2. As a guide, a session is unlikely to be graded Excellent overall if any domain is graded below Good. A session with one or more domains graded Below Expected Standard is unlikely to be graded above Satisfactory overall. These are guidelines, not mechanical rules.

4.5. Expected Grade Distribution

4.5.1. LSST does not impose a fixed grade distribution. However, a well-functioning observation process should produce a distribution where the majority of sessions are graded Good, a smaller proportion are graded Excellent, some are graded Satisfactory and a small number are graded Below Expected Standard. A profile in which almost all sessions are graded Excellent, or in which no sessions receive the lower grades, would raise questions

about the rigour of the process. Campus Deans and the Dean of Learning and Teaching should monitor grade distributions and discuss any unexpected patterns.

5. OUTCOMES AND CONSEQUENCES

5.1. The consequences of each grade are set out below. These apply to lesson observations. Peer observations, being developmental and ungraded, do not carry formal consequences, though significant concerns identified through peer observation should be raised with the Campus Dean.

Table 3: Observation Outcomes and Consequences by Grade

Grade	Outcome	Follow-up
Excellent	Good practice noted and shared. Observer records specific examples of excellent practice for dissemination through Learning and Teaching Forums and the Enhancement Plan.	Standard observation cycle. Staff member may be invited to contribute to peer mentoring, observer training or Forum presentations.
Good	Positive outcome recorded. Developmental recommendations may be made but are advisory. Strengths and areas for continued development noted in feedback.	Standard observation cycle. Staff member may wish to take up recommended CPD opportunities.
Satisfactory	Developmental action plan agreed between the staff member and Campus Dean, identifying specific areas for improvement and CPD activities. Action plan shared with the Dean of Learning and Teaching.	Follow-up observation within one semester. If graded Good or Excellent, staff member returns to standard cycle. If graded Satisfactory or below, the matter is escalated to the Dean of Learning and Teaching.
Below Expected Standard	Formal improvement plan produced by the Campus Dean in consultation with the Dean of Learning and Teaching. The plan specifies required improvements, support to be provided, CPD to be undertaken and a clear timeline. The staff member's teaching load may be adjusted during the improvement period.	Follow-up observation within six to eight weeks. If graded Satisfactory or above, the staff member moves to the Satisfactory follow-up cycle. If graded Below Expected Standard again, the Dean of Learning and Teaching refers the matter to HR under LSST's capability procedures.

6. THE OBSERVATION PROCESS

6.1. Before the Observation

6.1.1. Staff are informed of their observation at least one week in advance. The observer contacts the staff member to confirm the date, time and session to be observed. The staff

member provides a session plan (or equivalent documentation setting out learning outcomes, planned activities and resources) and any relevant contextual information about the student group.

6.1.2. Observers should familiarise themselves with the module specification and its learning outcomes before the observation. This helps the observer to assess alignment between the session and the broader module and programme design.

6.2. During the Observation

6.2.1. Observers attend the full session and make contemporaneous notes using the institutional observation form (Appendix C). Observers do not intervene in the session. Both observers are present for the full duration and should note evidence against each of the five observation domains, recording specific examples that support their assessment.

6.3. Post-Observation Feedback

6.3.1. A feedback meeting takes place within 10 working days of the observed session. Both observers and the observed staff member attend. The meeting should be a professional dialogue, not a one-way delivery of a verdict. The observed staff member has the opportunity to reflect on the session, provide context and discuss the feedback.

6.3.2. At the end of the meeting, the lead observer confirms the domain grades and the overall grade. If both observers agree, the grade is confirmed. If they disagree, the protocol at Section 6.5 applies. The written observation report is completed and signed by the lead observer within five working days of the feedback meeting. The observed staff member receives a copy and may add a written response, which is appended to the report.

6.4. Documentation

6.4.1. The completed observation report, signed by the lead observer, is submitted to the Quality Office within 20 working days of the observation. Reports must include the date, time and location of the observation; the module and session observed; the names of both observers; the session plan; grades for each domain and overall; narrative feedback for each domain; developmental recommendations; and any action plan where applicable. The Quality Office maintains a central record of all observation reports. Individual reports are confidential to the observed staff member, the observers, the Campus Dean, the Dean of Learning and Teaching and the Quality Office.

6.5. Protocol for the Divergent Observer Grades

6.5.1. Where both observers agree on the overall grade, no further action is needed.

6.5.2. **Grades differ by one level** (for example, one grades Good and the other grades Satisfactory): the observers discuss the difference and try to reach agreement. If they agree, that grade stands. If they cannot agree, the Campus Dean reviews both sets of

notes and reasoning and determines the grade. The Campus Dean's determination is recorded in the report with a brief rationale.

6.5.3. **Grades differ by two or more levels** (for example, one grades Excellent and the other grades Satisfactory): this indicates a significant calibration issue. The Campus Dean reviews the evidence and determines the grade as above, and the matter is reported to the Dean of Learning and Teaching as a calibration concern. Both observers should take part in the next calibration exercise.

6.6. Moderation, Change of Observer and Process Concerns

6.6.1. LSST recognises that staff should have confidence in the fairness of the observation process. The following provisions apply.

- **Request for change of observer:** A staff member who has reasonable concerns about the impartiality of a designated observer may request a change of observer before the observation takes place. This might arise, for example, where there is a strained professional relationship or a prior disagreement that could affect the objectivity of the process. The request should be made to the Campus Dean. Where the Campus Dean is the observer in question, the request should be made to the Dean of Learning and Teaching. The request does not need to be elaborately justified; a reasonable concern is sufficient. The Campus Dean (or Dean of Learning and Teaching) assigns an alternative observer from the trained observer pool. Requests for a change of observer should be made promptly after the observation is scheduled and before the observation takes place.

- **Moderation of an observation grade:** A staff member who believes that the grade awarded does not fairly reflect the quality of the observed session may request moderation. The request must be made in writing to the Campus Dean within ten working days of receiving the observation report and should set out briefly why the staff member considers the grade to be unfair, with reference to the published criteria. The Campus Dean appoints an independent moderator. The moderator must be a senior academic who was not involved in the original observation and should, where practicable, be from a different campus. The moderator reviews the observation report, the observer's notes, the session plan and the staff member's written statement. The moderator may also speak to the observers and the observed staff member. The moderator cannot re-observe the session (since it has taken place) but assesses whether the grade is consistent with the recorded evidence and the published criteria. The moderator may confirm the grade, adjust it upwards or downwards or recommend that a fresh observation be conducted. The moderator's determination is final and is recorded in writing alongside the original report.

- **Concerns about the observation process:** A staff member who believes that the observation was not conducted in accordance with this policy may raise a concern with the Dean of Learning and Teaching. Examples might include the observer not attending the full session, the feedback meeting not taking place within the required timeframe or the session plan not being reviewed in advance. The Dean of Learning

and Teaching considers the concern and determines whether there was a procedural failing. If so, the Dean of Learning and Teaching may set aside the observation and arrange for a fresh observation to be conducted by different observers. The Dean of Learning and Teaching's determination is recorded in writing.

6.6.2. These provisions are not a formal appeals process. They are a quality assurance mechanism for the observation process itself, consistent with the developmental purpose of this policy.

7. OBSERVER SELECTION, TRAINING, AND CALIBRATION

7.1. Who May Observe

7.1.1. Observers must be members of LSST academic staff at Course Leader level or above, or designated senior lecturers approved by the Campus Dean. External observers (for example from partner institutions or the wider sector) may be used for a sample of observations and are coordinated by the Dean of Learning and Teaching.

7.1.2. Each campus must maintain a pool of at least three trained observers. No single observer should conduct more than 40% of observations at any campus in a given year. Campus Deans are responsible for maintaining a broad and sustainable observer pool.

7.2. Observer Training and Licence to Observe

7.2.1. All new observers receive initial training before conducting observations. Training covers the observation criteria, the grading scale, the observation process, providing effective feedback and completing documentation. Training is delivered by the Dean of Learning and Teaching or their nominee and is recorded by the Quality Office.

7.2.2. All new observers work towards an institutional Licence to Observe before conducting graded lesson observations independently. The pathway to the licence comprises: standardisation meetings with experienced observers; joint lesson observations in which the new observer shadows a licensed observer and independently assigns grades for discussion and comparison; and observation report moderation sessions in which the new observer's draft reports are reviewed for consistency of judgement. The Licence to Observe is awarded by the Dean of Learning and Teaching once the new observer has demonstrated sufficient and consistent application of the grading criteria. An observer who has not yet obtained the licence may participate in observations in a supporting role but may not lead an observation or assign a grade that stands. The Quality Office maintains a register of licensed observers.

7.3. Observer Standardisation and Calibration

7.3.1. All active observers take part in an annual calibration exercise at the start of each academic year. The exercise uses recorded or simulated teaching sessions and requires

observers to independently apply the grading criteria. Results are discussed collectively to identify and address inconsistencies. The exercise is cross-campus: observers from different campuses participate together to promote institutional consistency.

7.3.2. The Dean of Learning and Teaching organises the calibration exercise and reports its outcomes to ASQEC. Where calibration reveals significant inconsistencies, targeted follow-up training is provided before the observation cycle begins.

7.3.3. In addition to the annual calibration exercise, standardisation meetings and observation report moderation sessions are held throughout the academic year. These meetings are cross-campus and are coordinated by the Dean of Learning and Teaching. Their purpose is to ensure that observers across all campuses continue to apply the grading criteria consistently as the observation cycle progresses and to provide a forum for discussing emerging practice. Dates for these meetings are included in the Governance Calendar at the start of each academic year.

8. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1. **Dean of Learning and Teaching** has overall institutional responsibility for teaching observation. This includes maintaining and updating this policy; coordinating observer training, the annual calibration exercise, and ongoing standardisation meetings and observation report moderation sessions throughout the year; awarding the Licence to Observe; producing the annual Institutional Synthesis Report; reporting to ASQEC and Academic Board on observation outcomes and trends; coordinating external observer involvement; determining process concerns under Section 6.6; using aggregated observation data to inform the annual staff development and training calendar; and ensuring the observation process operates consistently across all campuses.

8.2. **Campus Deans** are accountable for the quality of teaching at their campus. This includes scheduling and overseeing the observation cycle using a risk-assessed approach and recording scheduling decisions; ensuring all teaching staff are observed within the required timeframe; maintaining a sufficient observer pool; coordinating observed micro-teaches for all teaching appointments in consultation with HR; reviewing observation outcomes and acting on them; producing the Campus Observation Summary; managing developmental action plans for staff graded Satisfactory; managing formal improvement plans for staff graded Below Expected Standard (in consultation with the Dean of Learning and Teaching); appointing moderators under Section 6.6; and ensuring observation documentation is complete, accurate and submitted to the Quality Office on time.

8.3. **Observers** are responsible for working towards and holding the Licence to Observe; completing observer training and participating in the annual calibration exercise and ongoing standardisation meetings and report moderation sessions; conducting observations professionally and in accordance with this policy; applying the grading criteria consistently and with integrity; providing constructive, evidence-based feedback; completing observation reports accurately and within the required timeframe; and raising calibration concerns with the Campus Dean.

8.4. **Quality Office** maintains the central record of all observation reports; maintains the register of licensed observers; provides data and analytical support for Campus Observation Summaries and the Institutional Synthesis Report; monitors completion rates and flags any gaps; and maintains records of observer training and calibration.

8.5. **Teaching staff** are responsible for engaging constructively with the observation process; providing session plans and relevant documentation to observers before the observation; attending the post-observation feedback meeting; implementing any agreed developmental actions; and raising any concerns through the provisions in Section 6.6.

9. REPORTING AND GOVERNANCE

9.1. Teaching observation data is reported through a clear governance trail from individual observation to Academic Board. This ensures that observation is not merely an operational exercise but informs institutional decision-making about teaching quality.

Table 4: Reporting Framework

Report	Produced By	Received By
Individual Observation Report	Observer(s), following post-observation discussion	Observed staff member; Campus Dean; Quality Office (copy for central records)
Campus Observation Summary	Campus Dean	Dean of Learning and Teaching; Learning and Teaching Forum
Institutional Synthesis Report (annual)	Dean of Learning and Teaching, with Quality Office analytical support	ASQEC; Academic Board; feeds into Enhancement Plan and Annual Monitoring

9.2. The Institutional Synthesis Report is a key document. It brings together observation data from all campuses, analyses grade distributions, identifies institutional themes and areas of strength, highlights areas of concern, compares trends across years and sets out enhancement actions. It is received by ASQEC and its findings inform the Enhancement Plan and Annual Monitoring. An executive summary is presented to Academic Board.

10. ANNUAL OBSERVATION CYCLE

10.1. Observation scheduling within each semester is risk-assessed. At the start of each observation window, Campus Deans review available evidence to identify staff who should be scheduled for earlier observation. Relevant factors include, but are not limited to: a Satisfactory or Below Expected Standard grade at the previous observation; concerns arising from course performance data; and patterns in student survey feedback suggesting teaching quality issues. Staff identified as higher risk are scheduled earlier in

the window so that any necessary support can be put in place promptly. Campus Deans record the basis for risk-assessment scheduling decisions.

Table 5: Annual Observation Cycle

Timing	Activity	Responsibility
September	Observer calibration exercise (cross-campus) and Licence to Observe pathway launched for new observers	Dean of Learning and Teaching
September	Campus observation schedules published (risk-assessed)	Campus Deans
October – January	Semester 1: Lesson observations (graded)	Observers, Campus Deans (oversight)
February	Campus Semester 1 observation summaries produced	Campus Deans
February – May	Semester 2: Peer observations (developmental)	Teaching staff (paired), Campus Deans (oversight)
June	Campus Semester 2 peer observation summaries produced	Campus Deans
July	Institutional Synthesis Report produced covering both semesters	Dean of Learning and Teaching
September	Institutional Synthesis Report received by ASQEC; informs Enhancement Plan and Annual Monitoring	ASQEC
Throughout the year	Cross-campus observer standardisation meetings and observation report moderation sessions (dates in Governance Calendar)	Dean of Learning and Teaching (coordinating); all active observers

11. CONNECTION TO CPD AND APPRAISAL

11.1. Observation outcomes feed directly into LSST's continuing professional development framework and are linked to the planned staff development and training calendar. Where an observation identifies a development need, the relevant Campus Dean draws the staff member's attention to the appropriate provision in the training calendar and records planned engagement in the action plan. The training calendar includes provision on themes including: lesson planning and session design; inclusive practice and accessibility; questioning and feedback techniques; supporting students with SEND and additional

learning needs; and setting high expectations across FHEQ levels. The Dean of Learning and Teaching uses aggregated observation data to inform the content and priorities of the annual training calendar.

11.2. Observation outcomes form part of the evidence base considered at annual appraisal. They should be discussed alongside other evidence of teaching effectiveness including student feedback, module evaluation data and contributions to pedagogic development. Appraisers should not rely solely on observation grades but should use them as one source of evidence within a broader professional conversation.

11.3. Staff who consistently demonstrate Excellent practice may be supported in pursuing recognition through the UK Professional Standards Framework (such as Fellowship of Advance HE), contributing to institutional teaching enhancement initiatives or taking on mentoring roles.

12. POLICY REVIEW

12.1. This policy is owned by the Dean of Learning and Teaching and is reviewed annually. Proposed amendments are considered by ASQEC before being recommended to Academic Board for approval. The review should take account of observation data and trends, feedback from staff and observers, changes to the regulatory environment and good practice in the sector.

12.2. Significant changes to the grading criteria or the consequences framework require consultation with teaching staff before submission to ASQEC.

APPENDIX A: Developmental Action Plan Template

For use with staff receiving a Satisfactory grade. A separate, more detailed improvement plan template is used for Below Expected Standard.

Staff Member: [Name]

Campus: [Campus]

Date of Observation: [Date]

Overall Grade: Satisfactory

Observer(s): [Names]

Campus Dean: [Name]

Area for Development	Agreed Action / CPD	Timeline	Evidence of Completion

Follow-up observation date: [Date – within one semester]

Signed (Staff Member): _____ Date: _____

Signed (Campus Dean): _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B: Mapping to Teaching Observation Review Actions

This appendix maps the actions identified in the Teaching Observation Review (KHL Consulting, February 2026) to the relevant provisions of this policy.

Action	Issue Identified	Policy Response
A1	Multiple grading scales in use across campuses	Section 4.1 mandates a single institutional four-point scale. Section 2 prohibits campus-level variations.
A2	No published grading criteria	Section 4.2 provides detailed criteria across five domains at each grade level. Section 4.3 provides holistic grade descriptors.
A3	Policy says peer observations are ungraded but in practice they are graded	Section 3.2 clarifies peer observations use the criteria as a reference but are not formally graded. Observers provide narrative feedback without assigning grades.
A4	No institutional synthesis or governance reporting of observation data	Section 9 establishes a three-tier reporting framework through to ASQEC and Academic Board.
A5	Documentation errors and inconsistencies	Section 6.4 specifies documentation standards. Section 8 (Quality Office) includes monitoring completeness.
A6	Questionable grade distributions	Section 4.5 sets expectations for grade distributions. Section 8 includes monitoring by Campus Deans and Dean of Learning and Teaching.
A7	No observer calibration	Section 7.3 establishes mandatory annual cross-campus calibration.
A8	Observer pool too narrow at some campuses	Section 7.1 requires minimum three trained observers per campus with a 40% cap on any single observer.
N/A	No protocol for divergent observer grades	Section 6.5 establishes a clear protocol.
N/A	No mechanism for staff to challenge outcomes or raise process concerns	Section 6.6 establishes moderation, change of observer and process concern provisions.
N/A	No consequences framework linked to grades	Section 5 sets out outcomes and consequences for each grade with escalation pathways.
N/A	No enhanced observation for new staff	Section 3.3 covers newly appointed staff, probationary staff and staff on improvement plans.
N/A	Policy did not distinguish HE from FE	Section 1 limits this policy to HE, with separate arrangements for FE.
N/A	Policy review through Executive Committee not academic governance	Section 12 establishes ownership with Dean of LT, review through ASQEC, approval by Academic Board.
N/A	Weak connection to CPD	Section 11 establishes how observation connects to CPD and appraisal.

N/A	Campus Dean accountability	Section 8 specifies Campus Dean responsibilities for scheduling, oversight, acting on outcomes and reporting.

APPENDIX C: Teaching Observation Report Form

Section A: Session Details

Staff Member Observed:			
Campus:		**Date:**	
Module Title:		**Module Code:**	
Session Topic:		**Time:**	
Level (FHEQ):		**No. of Students:**	
Observer 1 (Lead):		**Role:**	
Observer 2:		**Role:**	
Session Plan Provided:	Yes / No	**Observation Type:**	Standard / Enhanced / Follow-up

Section B: Observation by Domain

For each domain, record evidence observed during the session, then assign a grade using the published criteria (Section 4.2). For peer observations, provide narrative feedback only and do not assign grades.

Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
Prompts: Are learning outcomes clear and appropriate? • Are resources well designed and accessible? • Evidence of awareness of student needs? • Differentiation in planning?
Evidence and commentary:

Domain Grade:	Excellent □	Good □	Satisfactory □	Below Exp. Std. □

Domain 2: Teaching Methods and Delivery
Prompts: Confident subject expertise? • Range of methods promoting deep learning? • Clear, well-paced explanations? • Coherent session structure?
Evidence and commentary:

Domain Grade:	Excellent □	Good □	Satisfactory □	Below Exp. Std. □

Domain 3: Student Engagement and Learning

Prompts: Active, purposeful engagement? • Opportunities for dialogue and collaboration? • Evidence of developing understanding? • Inclusive, supportive environment?

Evidence and commentary:

Domain Grade:	Excellent □	Good □	Satisfactory □	Below Exp. Std. □

Domain 4: Assessment and Feedback Integration

Prompts: Assessment for learning integrated? • Understanding checked effectively? • Feedback timely, specific, developmental? • Alignment with learning outcomes and assessment?

Evidence and commentary:

Domain Grade:	Excellent □	Good □	Satisfactory □	Below Exp. Std. □

Domain 5: Inclusive Practice and Learning Environment

Prompts: Inclusive learning environment promoted? • Materials and methods accessible? • Diverse perspectives reflected? • Different learning needs accommodated?

Evidence and commentary:

Domain Grade:	Excellent □	Good □	Satisfactory □	Below Exp. Std. □

Section C: Overall Assessment

Domain	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Below Exp. Std.
1. Planning and Preparation	□	□	□	□
2. Teaching Methods and Delivery	□	□	□	□
3. Student Engagement and Learning	□	□	□	□
4. Assessment and Feedback Integration	□	□	□	□
5. Inclusive Practice and Learning Environment	□	□	□	□
OVERALL GRADE	□	□	□	□

Overall Strengths

Areas for Development

Developmental Recommendations

Observer Agreement

Observer 1 (Lead)	Observer 2
Overall grade assigned: Signed: _____ Date: _____	**Overall grade assigned:** Signed: _____ Date: _____

Grades agreed? Yes □ No □

If No, divergent grade protocol applied (Section 6.5). Campus Dean determination recorded below:

Section D: Post-Observation Feedback Meeting

Date of Feedback Meeting:	
Staff Member's Reflections:	
Action Plan Required?	Yes □ (Satisfactory / Below Expected Standard) No □ (Excellent / Good)
Follow-up Observation?	Yes □ Target date: _____ No □

Staff Member's Written Response (optional)

The observed staff member may add a written response. Any response is appended to the report and held on file.

Signed (Staff Member): _____ Date: _____

Distribution

Copy to:	Date Sent
Observed Staff Member	
Campus Dean	
Quality Office (central record)	
Dean of Learning and Teaching (if Satisfactory or Below Expected Standard)	

APPENDIX D: Session Plan Template

This template supports staff in planning taught sessions on HE programmes. It can be used for any teaching session (lecture, seminar, workshop, practical) and should be provided to observers before any observation. Staff are encouraged to use it routinely, not only when being observed.

Session Information

Module Title:		**Module Code:**	
Session Title/Topic:		**Session Number:**	of
Level (FHEQ):		**Date / Time:**	
Tutor:		**Room / Location:**	
Expected Attendance:		**Session Duration:**	

Session Learning Outcomes

What will students know, understand or be able to do by the end of this session? These should contribute to the module learning outcomes in the module specification. Use active verbs appropriate to the FHEQ level (e.g. analyse, evaluate, create at Level 6; describe, explain, apply at Level 4).

By the end of this session, students will be able to: 1. 2. 3. 4.
Module Learning Outcomes addressed: *(reference the relevant MLOs from the module specification)*

Student Context and Prior Learning

Brief description of the student group, relevant prior learning, any specific needs to be accommodated and how this session connects to previous and subsequent sessions:

Session Structure

Plan the session in phases. Include timing, what you will do, what students will do and the resources needed. Not every session needs all phases; adapt to your context.

Timing	Phase / Activity	Tutor Activity	Student Activity	Resources
e.g. 5 mins	**Introduction and orientation**	Outline session purpose, connect to	Listening, asking clarifying questions	Slides, VLE

		previous learning, state outcomes		
	Development phase 1			
	Development phase 2			
	Active learning / application			
	Checking understanding			
	Summary and forward look			

Assessment Integration

How does this session connect to the module's assessment strategy? Consider: formative assessment within the session, how session content relates to summative assessment, any assessment preparation or feedback incorporated.

Inclusive Practice Considerations

How have you designed this session to be accessible and inclusive? Consider: accessibility of materials, variety of learning activities, accommodations for known student needs, opportunities for all students to take part.

Post-Session Reflection

To be completed after the session.

What went well?
What would I do differently?
Were the learning outcomes achieved? How do I know?
What do I want to develop or try next time?

VERSION HISTORY

Version	**1.0 – 2.0**	
Original author(s):	Principal	
Reviewed by:	Executive Committee / Board of Governors	September 2017 January 2018 September 2018
Version	**3.0 -3.2**	
Revised by:	Quality Unit	
Revision summary:	*Name change from Peer Review Policy to Teaching Observation Policy. Combined peer observation policy and graded lesson observation procedure. Revised formatting and version control applied.*	
Approved by:	Board of Governors	September 2019
Version	**3.3**	
Revised by:	Quality Unit Principal	
Revision summary:	*Annual review; minor factual corrections throughout.*	
Approved by:	Board of Governors	October 2020
Version	**3.4**	
Revised by:	Quality Unit Dean of Teaching and Learning	
Revision summary:	*Annual review and update; ownership of policy transferred to Dean of Teaching and Learning.*	
Approved by:	Board of Governors	October 2021
Version	**3.5**	
Revised by:	Quality Unit Dean of Teaching and Learning	
Revision summary:	*Annual review; minor factual corrections throughout.*	
Approved by:	Board of Governors	September 2022
Version	**3.6**	
Revised by:	Quality Unit Dean of Teaching and Learning	
Revision summary:	*Annual review*	
Approved by:	Board of Governors	June 2023
Version	**4**	
Revised by:	Quality Unit Dean of Teaching and Learning	

Revision summary:	*Annual review; version control applied.*	
Approved by:	Board of Governors	October 2023
Version	**5**	
Revised by:	Quality Unit Dean of Teaching and Learning	
Revision summary:	*Annual review and update, minor grammatical corrections, document format applied, version control applied.*	
Approved by:	Board of Governors	October 2024
Version	**6.0**	
Original author(s):	Principal	
Revised by:	Quality Unit	
Revision summary:	*Annual review and update –* *Minor grammatical corrections, document format applied, version control applied.*	
Reviewed by:	Publications Committee	October 2025
Approved by:	Board of Governors	October 2025
Version	**7.0**	
Original author(s):	Principal	
Revised by:	Quality Unit	
Revision summary:	*Policy was updated to ensure that staff have informed feedback on their practice and advice on how to continuously improve. Revised grading criteria and forms, strengthened monitoring and committee oversight.*	
Reviewed by:	Academic Board	April 2026
Approved by:	Board of Governors	March 2026
Version	**8.0**	
Original author(s):	Principal	
Revised by:	Quality Unit	
Revision summary:	***Annual review and update*** *–* *Version control applied.*	
Reviewed by:	Publications Committee	October 2026
Approved by:	Board of Governors	October 2026