

Document Title	Peer Review of Teaching Staff
Policy Area	Area 4: Staff Recruitment, Management and Development
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Applies to	<input type="checkbox"/> All <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specific (<i>Teaching Staff</i>)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff only <input type="checkbox"/> Learners only <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and Learners

Document Owner	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs
Approved by	Academic Council

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Related legislation, policies, procedures, guidelines and local protocols	<p>This policy has been designed with due regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI - Sector Specific Independent/Private Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines (2016), QQI - Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 - European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), et. al (2015), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) - Topic-Specific Guidelines for Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes (2023), QQI
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1. PURPOSE

This document outlines the purpose, scope, benefits, and process by which Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) is implemented within SQT. It is oriented towards the improvement of teaching and is a critical part of instructional mentorship and development. It complements the information gathered as part of the learner feedback process. This version has been updated to include provisions for both on-site and online programmes.

2. SCOPE/APPLICATION

Peer review of teaching was introduced at SQT for the following cohorts of Tutors with effect from 1st January 2018:

- All new Tutors recruited are required to participate in a peer review session within 6 months of commencement of training - **mandatory**
- A POT may be organised in the case of adverse course feedback. This is determined by the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs in consultation with the relevant Training Partner – **mandatory**
- Any Tutor can request a POT session. This process is managed by the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs who works with the relevant Training Partner to plan the POT session – **voluntarily**

3. RESPONSIBILITY

- The Training Partner Manager is responsible for:
 - o ensuring that Peer Review of Teaching sessions are conducted as set out in the scope above
 - o ensuring that specific developmental requirements are converted into appropriate staff developmental plans and for implementation of same.
- The Director of Quality and Academic Affairs is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

4. POLICY

The peer review system is a supportive process to assist Tutors in discovering and exploring different approaches to teaching within their specific discipline, using the structured assistance of a trusted Peer (Observer). The process will be used for formative purposes to promote personal development, generate discussion, and enhance teaching and learning. It also forges collegial relationships among Tutors, specifically those teaching within similar subject areas. The overall aim is to enhance the learner experience by continuously improving the teaching process.

The process must include direct observation of teaching activities (in an on-site or online setting). It may also involve a review of documentation (e.g., examination questions, new programme design, etc.) and an open discussion of any aspect of teaching and learning. The Observer should provide insights on material delivery, learner experience, and other important teaching-related factors including clarity, pace, learning outcomes, and other suggestions.

All peer review exercises should culminate in a reflective collegial dialogue between the Tutor and the Observer. Depending on the outcome of the review, the Peer Observer and Tutor may agree to carry out a further observation session within an agreed timeframe.

5. PROCEDURE FOR PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING STAFF

There are two forms to be completed during the process:

- The Tutor should complete the Teaching Observation Self-Assessment Form (F31), which serves as the basis for the pre-observation discussion, a prompt for reflection following the observation, and to record action points.
- The Observer should complete the Peer Review Observation Form (F32) during the teaching session.

These forms should be accessible and maintained by the Tutor and observer only. A short summary report, including the date of the observation, the course, reviewer, and reviewee, together with a summary of key actions, is provided to the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs within one week of the review taking place. This feedback informs the continuous review and improvement of the process.

- **Stage 1: Initial Briefing** The initial briefing establishes ground rules and practical matters associated with the planned observation. Items to be discussed and agreed upon include:
 - Learning objectives of the selected session.
 - Specific items for feedback.
 - Any new or experimental parts of the session.
 - Levels of engagement with learners.
 - Explanation of the observation process to learners.
 - Time/date for the debrief meeting.
 - The observer must be a peer subject matter expert or a training expert (generally the Programme Leader). The observation should take place for at least one hour or enough time to review one curriculum element. Both parties should be available for a discussion soon after the observation.
- **Stage 2: Teaching Observation** There are four stages in the teaching process, identified in any teaching session:
 - Planning prior to the session.

- Introducing the session.
 - Delivering and developing the session.
 - Conclusion.
 - Prompts and analysis for these stages are set out in the Peer Review Observation Form (F32).
- **Stage 3: Debrief** The debrief allows both parties to discuss how the session went and provide suggestions for improvement. The Teaching Observation Self-Assessment Form (F31) should be finalised at this stage.

6. OUTCOMES OF THE PROCESS

6.1. Record Keeping

1. As part of the Peer Review exercise, the Tutor and Observer should complete the written records of the process (F31 and F32), as per the above.
2. The Tutor and Observer should complete a joint written statement which should be submitted to the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs and Training Partner Manager. The following items should be recorded on this statement:
 - *Date of Review*
 - *Tutor Name*
 - *Observer Name*
 - *Focus / Scope of Peer Review*
 - *Example of Good Practice Noted*
 - *Actions Agreed (incl. timeline of follow-up review if applicable)*
 - *Unresolved Difficulties (if any)*

6.2. Action Plan and Developmental Requirements

1. The Observer and Tutor should identify ways in which the session / practices / materials reviewed may be enhanced or improved. A constructive dialogue between the Observer and Tutor may lead to an action plan for personal development and/or an agreement to carry out a further Peer Review of Teaching session.
2. Specific developmental requirements should be converted into appropriate staff developmental plans as per [QAP4-4: Professional Development of Teaching Staff](#), which is the responsibility of the Training Partner Manager with oversight from the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs.

6.3. Improvement of Poor Performance in Teaching

1. SQT will endeavour to provide the opportunity for the improvement of poor performance through mentoring and continuous review.
2. Should the Tutor continue to demonstrate ineffective teaching duties, procedures will be put in place to remove them from SQT's teaching staff as per [QAP4-3: Monitoring the Effectiveness of Teaching Staff](#).

7. POLICY MONITORING

Responsibility	Frequency	Methods
Director of Quality and Academic Affairs – Document Update	Per QA audit schedule	- Review of documentation as set out in QAP2-1: Ongoing Review and Update of QA Documents.
Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minutes of Programme Board meetings. - Feedback from those who have been involved in the peer review process. - Learner feedback regarding the effectiveness of teaching.

8. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version No	Approval Date	Description of Revision	Originator	Approved By
2.0	14/12/18	Policy and procedure updated to specify summary information to be provided to the Director of Quality and Academic Affairs and allow for peer reviews to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified peer (rather than a senior peer).	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	Academic Council
3.0	7/6/19	Policy and procedure updated to consider HR considerations, as well as oversight of procedure, and the potential outcomes and actions of the process.	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	Academic Council

3.1	8/12/21	Policy updated to incorporate reference to virtual training i.e. removal of classroom specific references.	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	NA
3.2	17/7/24	Policy updated to remove reference to NEBOSH	Director of Quality and Academic Affairs	NA
4.0	15/11/24	Purpose and policy updated to fully integrate provisions for online programmes.	Senior Management Team	Academic Council