

# Regular Observation and Enhancement of Teaching

## UPR HR11 version 08.0

### Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces version 07.01 of UPR HR11 with effect from 1 September 2025.

### Summary of significant changes to the previous version

This document has been significantly revised and should be read in full.

### Glossary

A glossary of approved University terminology can be found in [UPR GV08](#).

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the observation of teaching is to support the enhancement of personal practice. The process also provides the University with assurance as to the quality of education provision.
- 1.2 The purpose of peer review of teaching is to enhance the quality of learning, teaching and assessment and to improve practice through critical reflection and professional conversation in teaching teams. It should be used to complement and support the Continuous Enhancement Planning process for programmes. The University places a strong and active focus on learning from reviewing good practice in addition to being reviewed.
- 1.3 *The University is committed to protecting and promoting freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law. The University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (UPR FS01) sets out the rights and obligations inherent in supporting the principles of freedom of speech and academic freedom within the law, the University's values relating to freedom of speech and the procedure to be followed*

*by students and staff in connection with the organisation of events and meetings which fall under the Code of Practice. A copy of the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech (UPR FS01) can be found here [[Freedom of Speech - Code of Practice \(FS01\)](#)] on the University's Policies and Regulations webpage. In the event of any uncertainty about the University's approach to freedom of speech, the University's definitive and up-to-date statement of its approach is set out in the Code of Practice.*

## **2 Observation of academic staff**

- 2.1 There are several requirements for academic staff to be observed in their practice, detailed below, which are separate and additional to this process of regular observation and enhancement of teaching. This regulation should be read in conjunction with these and not as a replacement for them.
- 2.2 The process of review for new academic staff in their probationary period is stipulated in HR31 Academic Probation Policy, where they are observed before the four month review by their line manager. Some new academic staff have a probationary requirement to complete the full Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education programme, or part thereof. If so, this will include an assessed observation by a member of the University's Teaching Excellence Recognition Network.
- 2.3 Staff who teach on provision that is subject to inspection by Ofsted will be required to take part in a different process designed to prepare them for involvement in Ofsted inspections, as stipulated in AS17 Apprenticeship Policy.
- 2.4 Academic contracts stipulate that routine observations of work may be carried out by Heads of Department.

## **3 Policy**

- 3.1 The University requires all staff meeting the threshold criteria in 3.2 will have a mandatory, biennial observation of their teaching practice by their line manager. The outcomes of these observations will support the setting of objectives in their performance and development review process. Regular observations focus on enhancement of practice, supporting individuals in being critically reflective and providing a means through which they can improve the effectiveness of their teaching.
- 3.2 All staff with teaching responsibility from 0.2 full time equivalent upwards must be included in the mandatory biennial observations. Visiting lecturers will be automatically included in the process if they teach beyond the threshold of 0.2 full time equivalent or 110 teaching hours per academic year.
- 3.3 Peer review is a team-based and collaborative activity within programme teams to support actions in the Continuous Enhancement Planning process and based on student feedback, data, or innovations.

## **4 Process: Regulation observation of teaching**

- 4.1 Line managers will determine the cycle of teaching observations for those in their team according to timetables and inform colleagues at the start of each academic

year whether they are in scope for observation that year. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are observed in accordance with this policy.

- 4.2 Line managers must have a comprehensive understanding of the process, and it is essential to have appropriate development before carrying out the task. Training and guidance is available from the Centre for Education and Student Success.
- 4.3 Observations will be organised at a mutually convenient opportunity for both parties, and time set aside for discussion afterwards. In practice, there will be some negotiation between the manager and the observee to take account of availability.
- 4.4 Observations must be of live teaching sessions, and the manager must arrive in good time before the session commences and will stay for one (1) hour, unless the session is shorter, in which case they will stay for the whole session. The session may be on campus or online.
- 4.5 Feedback should be given directly after the observed session or as soon as is practicable thereafter, ideally in conversation. Both parties should critically reflect on the session, identifying points for consideration, areas of good practice and areas for development.
- 4.6 With the consent of the observed colleague, areas of good practice may be shared with colleagues in the School for the purpose of fostering teaching expertise and a culture of reflective practice.
- 4.7 The HR system must be used to record the outcomes of the observation.

## **5 Process: Team-based peer review**

- 5.1 Programme leaders will determine the focus of team-based peer review to support actions in the Continuous Enhancement Process plan and based on student feedback, data, or innovation. Team-based peer review should normally happen on an annual basis.
- 5.2 Colleagues should have a good understanding of the purpose of peer review, and it is recommended that all staff have appropriate development before carrying out the task. Training and guidance is available from the Centre for Education and Student Success.
- 5.3 Peer review may be of live teaching sessions (on campus or online), of assessment and feedback, or of online learning materials and module sites, as determined by the nature of the actions from the Continuous Enhancement Planning process. When based on live teaching sessions, peer review should normally last for one (1) hour.
- 5.4 Opportunities for a learning conversation should be given directly after the session or as soon as is practicable thereafter. Both parties should critically reflect on the session, identifying points for consideration and areas of good practice in relation to the focus of the review. These points should then be shared with the programme leader and team at a suitable opportunity.
- 5.5 Programme teams and Schools should keep local records of team-based peer review, and progress from reviews should be recorded against the relevant action in the Continuous Enhancement Planning process.

- 5.6 Schools should identify an appropriate forum for the sharing of good practice arising from team-based peer reviews.

## **6 Review of teaching on provision subject to Ofsted inspection**

Staff who teach on provision that is subject to inspection by Ofsted will be required to take part in a different process designed to prepare them for involvement in Ofsted inspections. At inspection, a lesson visit/s will involve an inspector plus a member of University staff attending a taught session. This is detailed in Ofsted ITE Framework and Handbook for initial teaching education, and the Ofsted Further Education and Skills handbook for apprenticeship provision. These staff will capture the learning from this process and may do so in place of their regular teaching observation.

## **7 Training and guidance**

The Centre for Education and Student Success will provide training and guidance relating to regular teaching observation and enhancement of teaching, both teaching observation and team-based peer review for all parties.

## **8 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Peer Review process and its appropriateness and acceptability will be monitored and evaluated by the Education and Student Experience Committee of the Academic Board.

Sharon Harrison-Barker  
Secretary and Registrar  
Signed: **1 August 2025**

### **Alternative format**

If you need this document in an alternative format, please email us at [governanceservices@herts.ac.uk](mailto:governanceservices@herts.ac.uk).