



OSC Teaching and Learning Framework 2021/22

Philosophy, Pedagogy, Professional Development and Quality Improvement

Orbital South Colleges' primary strategic aim is to deliver *excellence in teaching and learning*. At the heart of our core mission is to provide high-quality learning to meet the needs of all student groups. Leaders and managers are committed therefore to providing a dynamic and flexible curriculum offer that meets the diverse needs of students, employers, and other stakeholders within the wider community. Aligned to this is the need to establish the right environment so that students can feel safe and supported in their learning journey. As such we endeavour to provide inclusive, respectful, and aspirational learning spaces in which all our students can thrive and where positive behaviours and attitudes are actively promoted.

1. Learning Philosophy

- We believe learning is the opportunity that makes a difference, giving our students real career options and a pathway to future success.
- Providing the best vocational and technical education means focusing not just on *what* students learn, but *how* they develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare them for the next progression steps into further study or employment.
- Underpinning the above intent is a sustained focus on teacher professional development that is personalised, purposeful and target driven.

We believe the professional development of our teaching workforce lies at the heart of learning excellence. As such our teacher practice improvement is closely linked to the College Group's set of corporate values:

- ***Innovation:*** Teachers are encouraged to experiment with new ideas to establish and sustain creative and curious learning environments for their students.
- ***Openness:*** The evaluation of teaching and learning is open and transparent, with feedback on practice highly supportive and developmental in nature.
- ***Quality:*** Teaching excellence is defined and informed by evidence-based research irrespective of the subject, level and delivery context.
- ***Clarity:*** Coherence of messaging is a vital part of professional development with verbal and written feedback being unambiguous, evidence based, and action orientated.
- ***Responsibility:*** Teachers take ownership of their professional development and are expected to engage with personalised and collective CPD opportunities throughout the academic year.
- ***Aspiration:*** Teachers are role models, inspiring a sense of self-belief in their learners, setting motivational targets linked to academic achievement, personal growth and wellbeing.

2. Pedagogy in Practice

- At OSC we believe learning is a continuous process of improvement beginning with clear identifiable starting points founded upon an effective partnership between teacher and student.

- We expect students to reflect on and evaluate their own learning, develop autonomy and strive for improvement in knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Providing the best experience for our learners means investing in the professional development of our teachers, supporting them to reflect on and evaluate their own pedagogical expertise.
- To enhance teacher subject pedagogical knowledge several models and concepts are being introduced and developed. These include:

Cognitive Load Theory: a recognition that content overload is not conducive to effective learning

Metacognition: an approach that teaches students how to plan, monitor and evaluate their own learning

Assessment for Learning: learner centered practice whereby students are used as the key instructional tool for giving feedback to themselves and their peers

Embedded Practice: integration of naturally occurring opportunities to reinforce wider skills and attributes such as numeracy, team building, critical thinking and digital literacy.

The Spiral Curriculum: learning through regular recall so that students make meaningful connections between different parts of the curriculum.

Value Added (stretch and challenge): a 'teach to the top' mindset for both teachers and students so both have high expectations for what can be achieved.

3. Teacher Professional Development

- Methodology for assessing the quality of teaching and learning is reviewed on a yearly basis, and our current Framework reflects the Education Inspection Framework for FE providers (2019) as well as recognising the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The former has seen a change to a more holistic qualitative view of curriculum provision, and the latter has meant a shift in the developmental needs of teacher skillsets.
- However, the key organisation objectives for teaching and learning retain the same focus and emphasis:
 - Teaching, learning to be of a consistently high quality across all areas of provision
 - Staff to be recognised for the quality and reputation of their work
 - Retention and achievement rates to reflect the high calibre of learner experience
 - Learners to be empowered to make excellent progress relative to their starting points

In response to the above, we aim to ensure that teacher professional development provision is fit for purpose. This means that CPD opportunities for teachers should wherever possible be accessible, inclusive, differentiated, supportive, collaborative, action focused and accountable.

To support a culture of peer collaboration OSC have invested in a team of Advanced Practitioners (APs) to work with their teaching colleagues on a weekly basis. Using recognised coaching-mentoring methods the APs prioritise support for probation teaching staff, as well as provide structured assistance to those who require bespoke support to improve their practice. As such they can offer support to teachers from right across the learning community.

The OSC Teacher Performance and Appraisal Process

- 2021/22 sees the introduction of a new process for measuring teacher performance, a design model that also links to how formal line management appraisal will take place.

- Using the Education and Training Foundations' Professional Standards (2014) teachers will be asked to self-assess their progress against each of the twenty standards throughout the academic year.
- Each teacher will be supported by the AP team and other relevant subject mentors to evaluate both their pedagogical knowledge and skills, and their commitment to upskilling their subject specific knowledge.
- At the end of the academic year an evidenced based online Professional Development Plan is produced that will identify where each teacher sits on the OSC Teacher Professional Development Pathway. There are four levels on the Pathway: *Probation, Engaged, Enhanced and Expert*.
- Departmental and whole college performance indicators will be set to monitor how the teaching workforce is performing against the Standards.

4. Quality Improvement

A range of methods are used at OSC to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning practice. Although there is a great deal of synergy between the two colleges, especially in respect to pedagogical values and approaches, each college has also maintained a degree of autonomy so that CPD activities and quality improvement processes reflect different local priorities. Evaluative methods include:

5. Themed Learning Walks

Themed Learning Walks (TLW) offer an opportunity for line managers to assess the quality of provision in their own curriculum areas. Many of the selected themes are of a cross-college focus i.e. attendance, health and safety, digital learning, with feedback to individuals and relevant course teams to ensure that college policies, processes and systems are consistently applied with.

6. Developmental Lesson visits

These are universal in scope and focus on the development of individual teacher practice using agreed performance indicators as a guide. At East Surrey College for instance, the focus on Intent, Implementation and Impact to improve pedagogical practice has been a priority, whereas at John Ruskin College teacher development has been led by key elements of the Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme. After the lesson visit, teachers take forward agreed action points for professional reflection and review.

7. Postcard Lesson visits

Piloted at East Surrey College, this method of evaluation gives the teacher immediate formative feedback with suggestions for further improvement. Again, the teacher can choose an aspect of practice they wish the lesson reviewer to observe in the lesson. The Postcard method has been particularly successful as a means of on-going Advanced Practitioner support for probation staff.

8. Peer Reviews

Peer Reviews have been used for several years to encourage cross-subject sharing of practice. In recent years, peer-to-peer lesson visits and resulting professional dialogue has been focused on specific pedagogical themes i.e. formative assessment, behaviour management etc, and involves all established FE and HE teaching staff. Findings from the process are collated and provide excellent evidence for self-assessment at departmental level.

9. Unseen Lesson Observations/Collaborative Lesson Reviews

This is a relatively new method for the evaluation of practice, based on initial research carried out in the sector by Prof Matt O'Leary. Piloted at East Surrey College in Autumn 2020, this approach, whereby two colleagues act as teacher and lesson reviewer, follows a structured collaborative journey of critical reflection. The reviewer does not visit the selected lesson in person, so that the process centres fully on the teacher's ability to self-reflect on their practice in the post-lesson discussion.

10. Online Lesson visits

As a direct result of enforced lockdowns due to the coronavirus pandemic, the focus on online learning remains a priority. Staff upskilling in the use of appropriate online platforms such as MS Teams and Google Classroom has led to a need to monitor the progress in which teachers and students at both colleges are making. Online Lesson visits are transparent, supportive and developmental in design, encouraging teachers to experiment with digital learning methods. Lesson reviewers provide structured written feedback that acknowledges the challenges of online learning but also reinforces the value of abiding by sound teaching and learning theory. Recent professional development activity has used the findings of Ofsted's own research into remote teaching (2019) but tailored towards specific OSC objectives.

11. Formal Lesson Sampling

In addition to the above qualitative methods, the Quality Team along with all Heads of Dept and Directors of Learning at both colleges will select a sample of teachers to more formally evaluate the quality of practice. This will be a sustained process from October through to May with a target of 50 lessons to be evaluated at ESC and 25 at JRC. Although no summative grade is given, the lesson reviewer will make a judgement nine performance indicators as part of the feedback. Each lesson report from this sample will be centrally logged so that an overall college profile of strengths and areas for improvement can be accrued. Outcomes from this process are reported to senior leaders to inform the college SAR. Curriculum managers will also be able to identify strengths and areas for improvement at departmental and course team level.

12. Graded Lesson Observations

In accordance with current HR policy, graded lesson observations first and foremost form part of the performance appraisal process for all probation teachers. As such each probationer will receive two graded observations from a member of the Quality Team, after approx. 2 months and 5 months from their starting date. Each probationer will be initially risk assessed, and appropriate support will be arranged, usually a combination of an Advanced Practitioner and an experienced subject specialist/mentor from the same department.

13. References

Current Policy linked to the above awaiting updating:
ESC5 Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy
Last approved 13/12/18

14. Further information:

None.

15. Produced/reviewed by:

Director of Teacher Development & Training (College Group)

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