NPR QS05 Teaching Observation

Version 26_01

Document

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Brief Description of Policy	This document sets out the Navitas University Partnerships Europe (UPE) policy and procedure for Observation.

Version Control

Date	Version	Summary of changes	Approver
January 2023	2023/01	• Initial policy version	NUKH Academic Board
June 2024	2024_01	• New template used	NUKH Academic Board
June 2026	2026_01	• Included Observation Strengths • Included types of Observation Activities • Teaching standard benchmarked to Advance HE Professional Standards	NUKH Academic Board

Key Related Documents

Document Name	Location
QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form	College website, Policy HUB
QS05_02 Learning Walk Form	College website, Policy HUB
QS05_02 Learning Walk Form – Microsoft Form	NPR_QS05_02 Learning Walk Form – Fill out form
QS04 Teaching, Training and Development	College website, Policy HUB

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Introduction

This document sets out the Navitas University Partnerships Europe (UPE) policy and procedure for the Observation activities of Learning and Teaching. Navitas UPE has, as part of its corporate code of practice, a commitment to continuous improvement and the UPE College* network has demonstrated its adherence to this commitment through the implementation of an Observation of Learning and Teaching procedure in each College. Navitas UPE has a long history of, and commitment to, the provision of quality services and support to students. It recognises the importance of engaging students early in their learning experience and places immense value on the Student Voice. Working together with students, our teaching and support staff are committed to providing an education and student experience that is shaped, reviewed and enhanced in spirit of partnership and co-determination.

**Please interpret 'College' as 'Campus' where applicable*

Observation Process

Navitas UPE is committed to ensuring that classroom observation and learning walks are developmental and supportive and that those involved in the process will:

- Carry out the role with professionalism, integrity and courtesy
- Evaluate objectively
- Report accurately and fairly

- Respect the confidentiality of the information obtained

This policy and associated **QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form** may be used by senior staff or line managers as part of an academic's professional development cycle, or it may be used as part of the College's peer review procedure to share good practice.

An observation (probation/induction, peer, management or learning walk) refers to a process of collecting initial data on a teacher's current strengths and areas for development, before any specific training or improvement interventions are implemented.

The Observation and Feedback process provides an opportunity to benchmark teaching practices and expectations and will serve as a central reference point for quality assurance, ensuring standardisation and consistency throughout. The benchmark criteria used in the Navitas UPE Observation process is taken from the Advance HE's Professional Standards Framework (PSF 2023). Professional Standards Framework (PSF) 2023 | Advance HE

It is recommended that academic teaching staff (labelled in this policy as 'teachers') have at least **one** observation (one hour) as part of their initial probation/induction period. A management observation should take place **once** a year (one hour), alongside a peer observation (thirty minutes), which should also take place at least **once** per year. Learning Walk activity (up to thirty minutes) is structured as informal, so can take place as many times as needed - **QS05_02 Learning Walk Form**.

All observation framework proposals should be agreed by Academic Registry and planned for implementation at the beginning of every academic year. Observation activity may also be informed or supported by student feedback.

Types of Observation Activities

Classroom Observations:

- Teachers may be formally observed during teaching lessons to assess their classroom management, teaching strategies, and student engagement

Peer Observation:

- A collaborative, non-evaluative process where teachers or staff, observe each other to improve skills and share good practice

Learning Walks:

- A short informal visit to a classroom that provides a snapshot of College teaching practice, by observing/focusing on a key area/theme. It should be a structured way of gathering information against a clearly defined issue/opportunity for enhancement, to then plan for improvement

Review of lesson plans:

- Analysing lesson plans can reveal how teachers are structuring their lessons, planning for student needs, and incorporating learning objectives

Analysis of student work:

- Examining student work can provide insights into the effectiveness of teaching strategies and identify areas where students may need intervention

Interviews with teachers:

- Teachers can be interviewed to gain a better understanding of their perspectives on their teaching practices and challenges

Standardisation:

- Standardisation tools may be used to assess specific skills or knowledge areas

Observation Process

Observation Type	Method	Length	Owner	Action
Management or Induction	Pre Observation Discussion		Observer	Schedule meeting
			Observee	QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form (Section A)
	Formal Observation	One Hour	Observer	QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form (Section B)
	Post Observation Discussion	1 hour	Observee	QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form (Section C)
			Observer & Observee	QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form (Section D) Schedule feedback meeting
Peer Observation	Pre Observation Discussion		Observer & Observee	Schedule meeting QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form (Section A)
	Informal Observation	Thirty Minutes	Observer	QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form (Section B)
	Post Observation Discussion		Observee	QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form (Section C)

			Observer & Observee	QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form (Section D)
Learning Walk	Informal Observation	Up to Thirty Minutes	Observee & Observer	QS05_02 Learning Walk (Section A)
	Discussion		Observee & Observer	QS05_02 Learning Walk (Section B)

Teaching Observation Strengths

Identifying needs:

- The observations can highlight specific areas where teachers require support or training, allowing for targeted interventions

Informing professional development:

- By understanding the standards of teaching practices, observers can tailor developmental feedback, identifying needs and improvements **see Baseline Standards NBS01_01, NBS01_02, NBS01_0302**
- Support with setting achievable goals for continuous professional development

Measuring impact:

- Using the standards of teaching practices in observations allow for comparisons with post-intervention practice, providing evidence of the effectiveness of any changes or improvements in teaching **see Baseline Standards NBS01_01, NBS01_02, NBS01_0302**

The Teaching Observation Process

The Induction, Management and Peer observation process has three stages: pre-observation, observation and post-observation. All processes are to be recorded on the **QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form.**

Pre-Observation Stage

Prior to an observation, the observer and the observee (teacher) will arrange to meet to discuss and agree the following:

- The location, date, time and duration of the session to be observed
- The aims and objectives of the session to be observed

- Any potential challenges anticipated by the observee
- Any specific aspects of the session on which the observee would welcome feedback
- The time and date for the post-observation meeting

After the pre-observation meeting, the observee should record the details of the session on the **QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form: Section A** and provide a copy for the observer along with any supporting documentation such as a lesson plan and handouts to be used during the session. The observer should read these closely prior to the observation, paying particular attention to any requests for specific feedback.

Observation Stage

The observer should arrive before the start of the session. At the start of the class, the students should be introduced to the observer, making clear that the observer is not there to observe them. During the observation the observer should:

- Be discreet and unobtrusive at all times, sitting behind students wherever possible
- Try to experience the session from the students' perspective as well as from that of a teaching colleague. This may include circulating the teaching space during student-based activities
- Take notes recording areas of good practice and areas which they feel could be improved see **NBS01_03** for question bank

During the observation the observee should:

- Teach as usual, as if they were not being observed
- Refrain from involving the observer in the lesson

As part of the observation, the observer should complete the **QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form: Section B**, detailing any areas of good practice observed, and areas which could be improved. These observations should be expressed in objective and constructive terms together with suggestions for improvement whenever possible. This form should then be provided to the observee prior to the post-observation meeting.

Post-Observation Stage

Shortly after the session, the observee should complete the **QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form: Section C**, reflecting on the observed session.

Informal feedback should be provided to the observee as soon as reasonably possible, ideally no later than the **next working day**.

Within **five working days** of the observation, the observer and the observee should meet to debrief. They should ensure there is sufficient time given to thoroughly discuss the observed session. It is vital that both observer and observee treat this as a positive and developmental process, focusing on elements of good practice and constructive feedback.

Individuals should have access to all written records relating to their feedback and may request copies. Sufficient time should be allocated within working hours for documentation and review of agreed outcomes.

Commented [CW1]: As this covers sessionals, this will be contested - need to be specific about 'sufficient time' during working hours as they'll be paid to do this. So, 30 minutes?

The main objectives of the post-observation meeting are:

- For the observee to gain feedback on their teaching practice
- For the observee to ask the observer to explain any comments made on **QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form: Section B**
- For the observer and observee to agree on areas of good practice and how these could be disseminated to other teaching colleagues
- For the observer and observee to agree on areas for development and how these could be addressed

At the end of the post-observation meeting, the observer and observee should jointly complete the **QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form: Section D**. Both observer and observee should:

- Ensure that they reflect on the best ways to share good practice with other colleagues. Some suggestions are:
    - Invite other colleagues to also observe teaching
    - Offer to give a demonstration of good teaching practice to other colleagues. This could be especially useful if the good practice is based on using technology in the classroom
    - Propose to lead a session at a professional development workshop
    - Create a short handout to send to other academic staff
- Ensure that they agree on concrete action points for how the observee can continue to develop their teaching. Some suggestions are:

- Concentrate on certain areas for improvement and consciously change teaching tactics in class
- Concentrate on building new / different activities into lesson plans
- Speak to other colleagues to give suggestions
- Ask whether they can observe other colleagues teaching
- Attend professional development workshops at the University Partner and/or at the College

The Learning Walk Process

As the Learning Walk is an informal activity, all commentary and discussion are to be recorded on the **QS05_02 Learning Walk Form**, this will be used as a collaborative support tool. The Learning Walk process has three areas for consideration, comments and open discussion related to the Advance HE Professional Standards Framework (PSF2023): Areas of Activity (A), Core Knowledge (K) and Professional Values (V).

Guidelines for Feedback

The observer should:

- *Listen to the observee* – first give the observee opportunity to talk about the observed session, what they felt went well, what they felt did not go so well, and how they felt about the comments made by the observer on the **QS05_01 Teaching Observation Form: Section B, QS05_02 Learning Walk Form: A, K & V**
- *Be positive* – focus on giving positive feedback first, emphasising aspects of good practice. Even if there were negative elements, try and focus on the positive first. If the observee is new to teaching, it is particularly important to focus on the positive in order to build up confidence
- *Be specific* – give concrete examples from the observed session and try not to generalise. For example, instead of saying "You are good at giving explanations", say "When you explained XX theory, the students clearly related to the examples you gave"
- *Be constructive* – approach areas for development in a constructive manner, having regard to the observee's opinions, and highlighting practical ways in which these areas can be addressed

- *Be realistic* – do not provide commentary on every minute aspect of the observed session. Even if you do observe many areas for improvement, choose one or two areas for the observee to work on and give realistic and practical suggestions on how they can improve
- *Be objective* – always focus on process rather than personality. For example, try to avoid saying "If I were you, I would have done XX activity like this…..". Instead, acknowledge that the observee may have a different teaching style and make sure your comments are sensitive to this

The observee should:

- Treat the post-observation meeting as a discussion rather than a summative assessment of their teaching
- Be open and receptive about what was observed during session
- Value the opportunity to have an in-depth discussion about the teaching from a colleague who may be able to suggest ways of improving
- Appreciate that the observer will also have learned from observing the session and be willing to explain their approach and teaching methodology

Using the C.L.E.A.R model: Context – Listening – Evaluation – Action – Review

Context	Clarify the situation	What happened? When did it happen? In specific situation, the goal was to.....
Listening	Make it a two-way conversation	How do you feel it went? What challenges did you face? Is there anything I may not be seeing?
Evaluation	Focus on behaviour & Impact	What worked well? What did not work? This impact of this was.....
Action	Agree on next steps	What will you change? What support is needed? "Moving forward, we will....."
Review	Close the loop	Set a follow up date Track progress "Let's review this on....."

Monitoring and Reporting

This policy outlines the processes for all Teaching Observation activity, where all elements will be fully monitored by the Academic Registry. The main activity oversight will be collected in the **QS05_01 Observation Form** and **QS05_02 Learning Walk Form**. Academic Registry requires Colleges to provide the volume of observations conducted on a monthly basis by the Quality Assurance Protection and Oversight (QAPO) activity.

Colleges are expected to store documents related to the teaching observation processes securely in their local protected online storage facilities. It is also expected these documents are referred to during annual performance review activity and should be provided to Human Resources where appropriate. These documents will also be used to monitor the adherence to regulatory requirements for Office for Students (OfS) and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

During the Observation process, if any member of staff would like to discuss performance related concerns, please contact the College HR Partner.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years unless there are internal or legislative changes that necessitate an earlier review.