

Bangor University Peer Observation Scheme

What is the Peer Observation Scheme and why do we need one?

Bangor University needs to reflect best teaching and learning practice set out by the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education (Chapter B3)¹ and the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education (UKPSF)². Peer Observation of teaching is recognised as an excellent way of sharing good practice in line with these standards and of identifying areas that need support. As such, Peer Observation was introduced at Bangor in 2001.

Peer observation is a professional dialogue not a judgmental process. It is an opportunity for both observee and observer to engage with creative thinking about developing educational practice. Being able to receive feedback from a colleague in relation to teaching, and being able to reflect on the overall process, is an important tool for academic professional development.

Who is required to participate in the scheme?

Bangor's Peer Observation Scheme is open to all staff who teach and/or support learning. It is expected that all academic staff with a teaching role will engage with the scheme once each academic year. This includes part time lecturers and professional practitioners who regularly contribute to teaching. PhD students who teach will be observed as part of their requirement to undertake School-specific training or the PgCertHE. External speakers will not be required to participate in the full scheme but module leaders should arrange for a nominated colleague to attend their sessions and provide verbal feedback.

What sort of teaching is observed and when?

This is an annual event, with staff required to have completed the process by the end of each academic year. The scheme now offers two options. It enables you either to continue the established practice of engaging each year in a pair-based observation of a taught session (Option A) and/or to engage in a collaborative enhancement of a specific area of practice (Option B). Both options invite you to engage annually in a constructive dialogue with colleagues about enhancing student learning and/or the wider student experience in your subject.

All staff are required to have undertaken Option A before undertaking Option B in any two-year period. In the first year of this new scheme (2017/18) all staff will engage in Option A in the first Semester. Option B will only be available from 2018/19.

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b>

² <https://www.bangor.ac.uk/celt/documents/ukpsf.pdf>

How is the scheme managed?

The scheme will be implemented by School Directors of Teaching and Learning (DTLs) working closely with Heads of School who will designate staff to the scheme and keep a record of engagement across their School. It will be supported and monitored centrally by the Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CEL) in liaison with College Directors of Teaching and Learning.

Guidance on the process for Observer and Observee

1. Each academic colleague should engage in at least one peer observation per academic year
2. School DTLs will be responsible for oversight and implementation of the scheme and will allocate staff into Peer Observation pairs/triads for Option A. When Option B is implemented, DTLs will agree the focus and participants of the collaborations proposed. Guidelines for Option B are attached in Appendix 1.
3. Once agreed the pairs for Option A should liaise to arrange a convenient date and time for the peer observation.
4. The Observee should complete and forward 'Pre-Peer Observation' form (**Part 1**) to the Observer at least one week prior to the date of the peer observation, accompanied by a copy of any relevant session plan / notes.
5. During the session, the observer should complete Observation Notes (**Part 2**). In providing feedback, Observers may wish to refer to the UKPSF. The feedback checklist is arranged to reflect the dimensions of the UKPSF Descriptor 2 (HEA Fellowship standard).
6. The feedback should be given as part of a dialogue with the Observee as soon as possible following the observation. Both parties will sign and date Part 2 of the form following the dialogue. The College/School does not require a copy of Part 2 of the form. It is recommended that the Observee maintain a copy as part of their own professional portfolio and development. The Observer should email the School Director of Teaching and Learning, to inform them that peer observation has taken place to enable a central record to be maintained.
7. Post observation, both the Observee and Observer should complete and exchange a 'Peer Dialogue Reflection' (**Part 3**) and may keep this to transfer to their PDR dialogue. The observee should submit this section to CELT within 2 weeks of the observation-taking place, details can be found on the CELT website on how to do this.

Observation and Feedback

Observation notes: *Please comment on the session in relation to the following:
A = Area of Activity; K= Core Knowledge; V= Professional Values*

| Aspects for comment | Overall Comments |
|--|-------------------------|
| A1 Preparation and Planning. Use of resources/ Digital Learning | |
| A2 Teaching methods Links to previous learning | |
| A3 Use of formative assessment and feedback Links to previous learning | |
| A4 Learning environment and use of space | |
| A5 Evidence informed teaching. Links between theory and practice | |
| K1 Knowledge of subject material | |
| K2 Appropriate methods for subject and level Content / Delivery / Pace/ Structure | |
| K2 Clarity of and extent to which session learning outcomes were achieved | |
| K3 Student involvement, engagement and interaction | |
| V1 Meeting individual and diverse needs of students (including but not just about disability) | |
| V2 Promote participation and equality of opportunity | |
| Others as relevant and as identified / requested by Observee Others as relevant and as identified by Observer | |



Please summarise the key points from your observation for discussion with your colleague.

| | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Overall positive aspects and strengths of the session | | |
| | | |
| Suggestions for improvement and enhancement of teaching and learning | | |
| | | |
| Names | Signatures | Date |
| Observer | | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Observee | | |

Part 3 Observee and Observer

Peer Dialogue Reflection

Both parties will exchange reflections on the outcome of the peer observation, and indicate points of action / CPD for future practice. This form should then be submitted to CELT as a record of the event, and so that good practice can be disseminated and areas for enhancement identified across the University.

It is recommended that this personal reflection, along with Part 1 and Part 2 of the form, is maintained in the Observee's and Observers personal portfolios for use as they wish in Performance Development Review.

| | |
|--|--|
| Initial feelings and thoughts relating to Observer's overall comments and self-assessment: | |
| Evaluation of the session based on both Observers comments and self-assessment | |
| Action Plan / CPD Plan | |

Observer Reflection

| | |
|--|--|
| Has observing /dialogue with this colleague-influenced ideas about your own teaching practice? | |
| If so, how will you change your practice following this observation? | |

| Names | Signatures | Date |
|----------|------------|------|
| Observee | | |
| Observer | | |

Appendix 1 Overview and recommended observation practices.

Option A: Pair-based Teaching Observation (2017/18)

1. DTLs are encouraged to select new partners for the Peer Dialogue each academic year, so that they can draw on and contribute to the expertise of diverse colleagues.
2. When contacting the colleague you have been paired with, identify one or more aspects of face-to-face teaching on which you would like feedback. Plan times to visit each other's teaching sessions and exchange Part 1 of the form.
3. Spend time on preparation before the session. It will be very helpful if you understand the context of each other's teaching and the aim and content of the particular session
4. When observing, make notes on what you will feed back to your colleague and on what you can apply to your own teaching/course design. Observe how the students are responding to the session.
5. Engage in a constructive follow-up discussion, exploring how your practice can be mutually enhanced. Start with strengths and then emphasise areas of recommended development. Complete and both sign Part 2 of the form. Observer to email DTL to confirm the observation has taken place.
6. Both complete the Peer Dialogue Reflection (Part 3) summarising any changes or CPD you plan following the Peer Dialogue. Send a signed copy of Part 3 to the DTL. Keep your own record of the observation for transfer/discussion at PDR.

Option B: Collaborative enhancement of a specific area of practice (2018/19) Colleagues work in twos, threes or small groups (same subject OR interdisciplinary clusters as specified by DTLs).

1. Identify an area for development for the academic year; for example, assessment methods; feedback to students; e-learning materials and resources; flipped lectures; inclusive teaching for diverse groups; research-based teaching. Agree the focus with your DTL.
2. Support each other by:
 - a. visiting each other's teaching sessions, and/or
 - b. studying course design: face to face session plans; modules; programmes of study; the design of online learning activities, and/or
 - c. reviewing a wider area of practice for development.
3. Agree on your approaches to enhancement.
4. Try out the new approaches and then get together to review them.
5. Write a very brief account (50-150 words) of what you have done, of how practices have developed and of what impact this has had on your professional development and student learning and engagement.
6. Send a copy of your report to your DTL and keep a copy for your records and PDR discussion.

Peer Dialogue follow up (Options A and B)

You are invited to:

- Present and discuss your account of Peer Dialogue at your PDR
- Use evidence from your observation activity to develop an application for F/SFHEA via the Bangor CPD Scheme.
- Present your enhancement work to your departmental teaching committee
- Share with your departmental teaching committee any generic issues arising, for example suggestions for changes to the use of space or of technology
- Develop a case study for the CELT CPD Programme and/or CELT Conference
- Share your developments with colleagues beyond your College/School e.g. Higher Education Academy

For further information or guidance on how to engage with the Bangor Peer Observation Scheme, please contact your School Director of Teaching and Learning or celt@bangor.ac.uk