

Teaching Observation Policy 2025-27

LCCA Governance

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Section 1: Introduction and Strategic Framework

1a. Introduction and Context

This policy establishes the framework for teaching observations at London College of Contemporary Art, designed to support excellence in teaching and learning. Teaching observations are a cornerstone of our quality enhancement approach and align with the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration, and Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) expectations.

1b. Governance

This policy operates within the institution's broader academic governance framework:

- Reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee, which oversees implementation and effectiveness
- Aligns with institutional policies on performance management, staff development, and quality assurance while ensuring compliance with OfS regulatory requirements, particularly regarding teaching quality (B1-B5)
- Supports the institution's Annual Monitoring, Evaluation and Enhancement processes
- Contributes to the institution's Academic Standards and Quality Framework
- Interfaces with programme approval, monitoring, and review processes
- Links to School quality assurance mechanisms

1c. Vision

Our vision for teaching observations is to create a culture of continuous improvement in learning and teaching where:

- Excellence in teaching is recognised, celebrated, and shared
- Academic staff are supported in developing innovative pedagogical approaches
- Professional dialogue about teaching practice becomes embedded in academic culture
- Students benefit from consistently high-quality learning experiences
- The institution is recognised for sector-leading teaching enhancement practices
- Data-informed decision-making drives strategic improvements in teaching quality
- All academic staff engage in reflective practice and continuous professional development

1d. Strategic Context

This policy supports the institution's strategic objectives by:

- Enhancing the student learning experience in alignment with sector priorities for widening participation and inclusive education.
- Contributing to positive National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes, particularly regarding teaching quality, and positive impact on student attainment through enhanced teaching practice in support of OfS condition B3.
- Supporting the institution's ambitions for TEF ratings and league table positioning
- Aligning with the UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning
- Addressing sector priorities including inclusive teaching, digital education, and active learning
- Supporting the institution's commitment to educational research and pedagogical innovation
- Contributing to the sector's collective understanding of effective teaching practices
- Enabling compliance with OfS conditions of registration relating to academic quality and standards
- Supporting institutional responses to external reviews including QAA quality processes

Section 2: Policy Framework

2a. Purpose and Goals

The Teaching Observation Policy has dual aims:

(i) Quality Assurance Purpose

- Verify that teaching meets institutional standards and regulatory expectations
- Enable systematic evaluation of teaching quality across programmes and Schools
- Inform performance reviews, probationary assessments, and annual monitoring processes
- Provide evidence for OfS conditions of registration (B1-B5) and TEF submissions

(ii) Enhancement Purpose

- Identify exemplary practice for institutional dissemination
- Diagnose individual and collective development needs to inform CPD planning
- Generate evidence-based insights to improve pedagogical approaches
- Facilitate peer learning and professional dialogue about teaching effectiveness

2b. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All full-time academic staff
- Hourly-paid lecturers (HPLs)
- Visiting lecturers with substantive teaching loads

Teaching observations may take place in lectures, seminars, tutorials, laboratory sessions, practical demonstrations, field trips, or online learning environments.

2c. Types of Observations

(1) Management Observations

- Conducted by Academic Deans, heads of department, or designated senior colleagues
- Formal assessment purposes
- Contribute to performance reviews and probationary assessments

(2) External Observations

- Conducted by qualified observers from outside the immediate School or institution
- Provide objective assessment
- Inform quality assurance processes and performance evaluations

(3) Peer Observations

- Conducted by colleague lecturers
- Primarily developmental and collaborative purposes
- Focus on shared learning and enhancement rather than formal assessment

(4) Additional Observation Types

- May be introduced as appropriate
- Example: thematic observations focused on specific institutional priorities

2d. Frequency Requirements

- All teaching staff must be formally observed at least once per academic year through a management or external observation
- New staff members will be observed within the first 6 weeks of commencement, with further observation during the probationary period only if additional support needs are identified
- Staff identified as requiring additional support may be subject to more frequent observations

Section 3: Observation Process

3a. Pre-Observation Process

For Management and External Observations:

- Scheduled with appropriate notice (typically one week minimum)
- Formal pre-observation meeting between observer and observee
- Discussion of session context, learning objectives, and specific focus areas
- Review of relevant materials or resources
- Agreement on the session to be observed

For Peer Observations:

- Arranged collegially between peers
- Informal pre-observation discussion encouraged
- Observee may specify particular aspects for feedback
- Greater flexibility in scheduling and approach

3b. Observation Process

- Observations typically last 45-60 minutes
- Observer role is primarily non-participatory
- Focus on evidence-based assessment against established criteria
- Consideration of student engagement and learning
- Collection of both quantitative and qualitative evidence as appropriate to the observation type

3c. Drop-in Observations

- Management may conduct drop-in observations without prior notice
- Purpose is to ensure consistency of teaching quality across programmes
- These observations may be shorter in duration
- Abbreviated feedback process may apply

- Results will not normally be used for formal performance assessment unless significant concerns are identified

3d. Teaching Areas for Assessment

Observations will assess teaching practice against the following criteria, aligned with the UKPSF and OfS requirements:

- Clarity and communication of learning objectives
- Organisation and structure of the session
- Student engagement and participation
- Effectiveness of teaching methods and resources
- Appropriateness and currency of module content
- Integration of technology where appropriate
- Assessment of learning (formative and summative approaches)
- Classroom management and student interaction
- Subject knowledge and currency
- Inclusivity, accessibility, and differentiation
- Alignment with programme and institutional learning outcomes
- Condition of physical classroom environment and available equipment

Section 4: Feedback and Development

4a. Post-Observation Feedback

For Management and External Observations:

- Formal post-observation meeting scheduled within one week
- Observer provides detailed and specific feedback against established criteria
- Observee reflects on their practice
- Collaborative identification of strengths and areas for development
- Agreement on professional development actions
- Documentation of the observation using the standard Teaching Observation Form
- Submission of completed documentation to relevant managers and the Learning and Teaching team

For Peer Observations:

- Feedback discussion in a collegial, supportive environment
- Focus on developmental aspects and sharing of practice
- Mutual professional dialogue rather than one-way feedback

- Optional use of simplified documentation
- Confidentiality maintained between peers if requested
- Only summary information (that observation occurred) shared with Learning and Teaching team unless both parties agree otherwise

4b. Documentation Flexibility

- Standard Teaching Observation Form required for management and external observations
- Simplified, optional documentation for peer observations
- All forms to capture key strengths and development areas
- Recording of agreed development actions appropriate to observation type
- Documentation signed by both parties

4c. Follow-up Process

- Implementation of agreed development actions
- Review of progress at subsequent observations
- Integration with annual staff development plans for formal observations
- Peer observation insights may inform individual development goals
- Completion of teaching observation report documenting outcomes and agreed actions

Section 5: Quality Assurance and Data Protection

5a. Roles and Responsibilities

Learning and Teaching Team

- Overall coordination of the observation process
- Provision of training for both observers and observees
- Collation and analysis of observation data
- Preparation of institution-wide reports
- Identification of common development needs

Observers

- Conducting observations in accordance with this policy
- Providing constructive and evidence-based feedback
- Supporting colleagues' professional development
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality
- Completing required documentation

Observees

- Engaging constructively with the observation process
- Providing necessary pre-observation information
- Reflecting on feedback received
- Implementing agreed development actions
- Contributing to the evaluation of the observation process
- Completion of all required documentation

Senior Leadership/Line Managers (Deans and Course Directors)

- Ensuring observations take place as required
- Addressing any identified performance concerns
- Supporting staff development needs
- Including observation outcomes in annual reviews

5b. Training and Support

- All observers receive training on observation techniques, feedback approaches, and documentation requirements
- Observees receive guidance on the observation process and how to maximise its developmental benefits
- Training materials are recorded and made available on the institutional Teaching and Learning SharePoint site
- Refresher training is provided annually
- Specialist support is available for staff requiring additional development

5c. Quality Assurance and Reporting

Individual Level

- Teaching observation forms are stored securely
- Outcomes inform individual professional development plans
- Peer observations facilitate mutual learning and sharing of effective practices
- Recurrent issues trigger additional support

School Level

- Anonymised summaries shared with programme teams
- Common themes identified from anonymised data inform departmental development activities
- Best practice examples disseminated

Institutional Level

- Annual Teaching Observation Report compiled
- Thematic analysis of strengths and development needs
- Report informs institutional staff development strategy
- Outcomes contribute to Teaching Excellence Framework evidence
- Links to institutional Key Performance Indicators

5d. Data Protection and Confidentiality

- All observation records are processed in accordance with GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Management and external observation feedback is shared only with the observee, relevant management team members, and line managers

- Peer observation confidentiality: Peer observation feedback remains confidential between observer and observee by default, unless both parties explicitly agree to share outcomes
- Only the fact that peer observation has occurred (not its content) needs to be recorded for quality assurance purposes
- Anonymised, aggregated data is used for institutional reporting and enhancement purposes
- Clear distinction maintained between observations for performance management and those for development
- Observation records are retained in line with the institutional Records Retention Schedule

Section 6: Policy Governance

6a. Policy Review Process

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Learning and Teaching Committee. The Review will consider:

- Feedback from observers and observees
- Alignment with external regulatory requirements
- Effectiveness in enhancing teaching quality
- Administrative efficiency

Proposed amendments will be approved by Academic Board.

Key Information	
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Version	Author	Date	Summary of Changes
Draft V 0.1	QA Manager; Associate Dean (L&T)	09-04-2025	First draft
Draft V 0.2	QA Manager	19-04-2025	Minor updates across whole document following L&T feedback
V 1.0	QA Manager	30-09-2025	Document formatting and publishing

Appendix A: Teaching Observation Form Planning

1. Observee Information

Name	
Email	
Job title	
School	
Line Manager	
Line Manager Email	
Line Manager Job title	

2. Observer Information

Observer Name	
Observer Email	
Observer Job title	
Department	

3. Session Details

Date of observation			
Start time			
End time			
Module code			
Module name			
Level			
Programme			
Timetable Type	Weekday ☐	Weekday Evening ☐	Weekend ☐
Section observed	Start ☐	Middle ☐	End ☐

4. Rubric Scoring

Observers asked to provide rating. N/a option will be available.

Themes			
Session Design and Planning	Teaching Practice	Student Engagement and Interaction	Inclusivity and Accessibility
Use of Resources and Technology	Assessment and Feedback	Classroom Environment and Management	

Session Design & Planning

Criterion	N/A	1 – Unsatisfactory	2 – Needs improvement	3 – Meets expectations	4 – Strong	5 – Exemplary Practice
Learning Outcomes	Not applicable to session type.	Not communicated or unclear.	Stated but not clearly linked to activities.	Communicated with some alignment to activities.	Clearly communicated and well-integrated.	Seamlessly embedded; students clearly understand and engage with them.
Level & Discipline Appropriateness	N/A	Content not suited to level or discipline.	Some mismatch in pitch or relevance.	Mostly appropriate with minor adjustments needed.	Well-pitched for level and discipline.	Expertly tailored to cohort needs and disciplinary context.
Session Structure	N/A	Disorganised or lacking flow.	Some structure evident but lacks coherence.	Mostly coherent with minor gaps.	Logical and coherent structure.	

Teaching Practice

Criterion	N/A	1 – Not Evident	2 – Limited	3 – Developing	4 – Effective	5 – Highly Effective
Teaching Methods	N/A	No clear methods used.	Methods used inconsistently or ineffectively.	Some effective methods used.	Methods support learning effectively.	Methods are varied, inclusive, and highly engaging.
Explanation of Concepts	N/A	Concepts unclear or confusing.	Some clarity but lacks depth or scaffolding.	Mostly clear with some scaffolding.	Clear explanations with appropriate scaffolding.	Complex ideas made accessible through expert explanation.
Use of Examples / Case Studies	N/A	None used or irrelevant.	Used occasionally but not always effective.	Relevant examples used with some impact.	Examples enhance understanding.	Examples are highly relevant, diverse, and deepen learning.

Student Engagement & Interaction

Criterion	N/A	1 – Unsatisfactory	2 – Needs improvement	3 – Meets expectations	4 – Strong	5 – Exemplary Practice
Encouraging Participation	N/A	No attempt to engage students.	Some effort made, but limited success.	Students encouraged with moderate success.	Students actively encouraged to participate.	High levels of participation through varied, inclusive strategies.
Active Involvement	N/A	Students passive throughout.	Some students involved; limited interaction.	Moderate involvement across the group.	Students are actively involved in learning.	Widespread, enthusiastic engagement and collaboration.
Checking Understanding	N/A	No checks for understanding.	Occasional checks, not always effective.	Regular checks with some responsiveness.	Regular and effective checks with appropriate responses.	Responsive, adaptive teaching based on real-time student feedback.

Inclusivity & Accessibility

Criterion	N/A	1 – Unsatisfactory	2 – Needs improvement	3 – Meets expectations	4 – Strong	5 – Exemplary Practice
Inclusive Practice	N/A	No evidence of inclusive approaches.	Some awareness but inconsistently applied.	Inclusive strategies are evident but not fully embedded.	Inclusive strategies consistently applied.	Proactively inclusive, anticipating and addressing diverse needs.
Diverse Perspectives	N/A	No diverse perspectives included.	Limited or tokenistic inclusion.	Some integration of diverse perspectives.	Diverse perspectives are integrated appropriately.	Rich, meaningful integration of diverse voices and contexts.

Use of Resources & Technology

Criterion	N/A	1 – Unsatisfactory	2 – Needs improvement	3 – Meets expectations	4 – Strong	5 – Exemplary Practice
Use of Materials	N/A	Materials absent or unhelpful.	Some materials used, but not well integrated.	Materials support learning with some limitations.	Materials support learning effectively.	Materials are engaging, accessible, and enhance learning.
Use of Technology	N/A	No or inappropriate use of technology.	Technology used with limited impact.	Technology supports learning in some areas.	Technology supports learning appropriately.	Technology enhances interactivity, accessibility, and engagement.

Classroom Environment & Management

Criterion	N/A	1 – Unsatisfactory	2 – Needs improvement	3 – Meets expectations	4 – Strong	5 – Exemplary Practice
Learning Environment	N/A	Environment not conducive to learning.	Some issues affecting learning.	Mostly positive environment with minor issues.	Positive and supportive learning environment.	Highly inclusive, respectful, and stimulating environment.
Classroom Management	N/A	Poor management; disruptions unaddressed.	Some control, but inconsistent.	Mostly effective management with minor issues.	Classroom managed effectively.	Proactive, respectful management that fosters engagement.

Assessment & Feedback

Criterion	N/A	1 – Unsatisfactory	2 – Needs improvement	3 – Meets expectations	4 – Strong	5 – Exemplary Practice
Opportunities for Feedback	N/A	No feedback or reflection opportunities.	Limited or unclear opportunities.	Some opportunities provided.	Clear opportunities for feedback or reflection.	Feedback is timely, constructive, and encourages deep reflection.
Formative Assessment	N/A	No formative assessment observed.	Some use but lacks clarity or purpose.	Formative assessment used with moderate impact.	Formative assessment supports learning effectively.	Assessment is well-integrated and informs teaching adaptively.

5. Free-text responses

Provide responses to the following observation themes, using the provided prompts.

Session Design & Planning

- How effectively were the learning outcomes communicated and addressed during the session?
- Was the session appropriately pitched for the level and discipline?
- Comment on the coherence and flow of the session structure.

Teaching Practice

- Describe the teaching methods used. How well did they support student learning?
- How did the lecturer explain complex ideas or concepts?
- Were examples or case studies used effectively to enhance understanding?

Student Engagement & Interaction

- How did the lecturer encourage student participation and engagement?
- Were students actively involved in the learning process?
- Comment on the strategies used to check understanding or respond to student questions.

Inclusivity & Accessibility

- How did the lecturer ensure the session was inclusive and accessible to all students?
- Were diverse perspectives or examples incorporated into the teaching?

Use of Resources & Technology

- Comment on the use of teaching materials (e.g. slides, handouts, digital tools).
- Was technology used effectively to support learning?

Classroom Environment & Management

- Describe the learning environment. Was it conducive to learning?
- How did the lecturer manage the classroom dynamics and student behaviour?

Assessment & Feedback

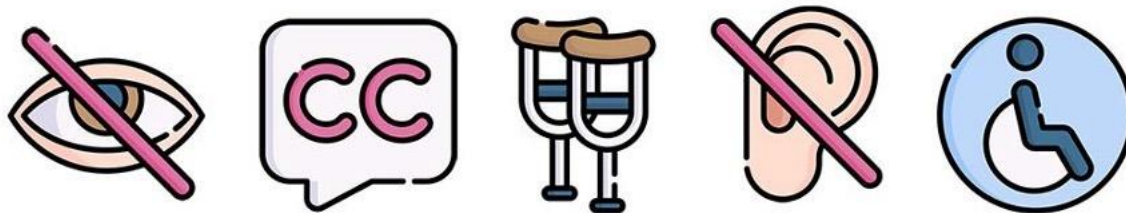
- Were opportunities provided for students to receive feedback or reflect on their learning?
- Comment on any formative assessment strategies observed.

Overall Strengths

- What were the key strengths of the session?

Overall Areas for Development

- What areas could be developed further to enhance teaching effectiveness?



6. Accessibility statement

This document has been prepared following recommendations outlined in the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1](#). This framework aims to ensure digital content is accessible to everyone. Examples of the recommends followed, include the use of headings, providing alternative text (alt text) for images, appropriate colour contrast, and use of tables for data presentation.

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