

# Teaching Observation Policy

<b>Owner</b>	Associate Provost Teaching & Learning		
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<b>Changes</b>	Amendments to process, adding rating system, use of platform, clarity of observation as probation requirement, naming of 'formal' observations		
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<b>Implementation date</b>	June 2026	<b>Date of next review</b>	November 2028 or as required
<b>Related internal policy</b>	Education Strategy		
<b>Related external policies and regulations</b>	Partner requirements for observations		

## Contents

Introduction and overview .....	2
Purpose.....	2
Scope .....	2
Definitions .....	2
Policy statement.....	3
Procedures.....	3
Responsibilities .....	4

## **Introduction and overview**

This Teaching Observation Policy outlines the principles, procedures, and expectations governing the observation of teaching and support activities at Regent College London (RCL).

RCL is committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Formal teaching observation is a core component of the College's quality assurance and enhancement framework, promoting reflective practice, professional development, and compliance with regulatory and partner expectations. The impact of the formal observations is to highlight both training needs and high standards of teaching and learning, alignment with our statutory obligations and expectations of our internal and external stakeholders, and a culture of ongoing professional academic development.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of observations at Regent College London is to:

- Promote a culture of evaluation and reflection which can enhance teaching quality at the point of delivery
- Support continuous improvement in teaching, learning, and assessment practices
- Provide constructive feedback that underpins the Academic Staff Development (training) sessions at individual and institutional levels and fosters collaborative personal and professional growth.
- Assure the quality and consistency of student learning experiences across the whole of Regent College London (OfS B1, B2 and B4 conditions of registration)
- Ensure alignment with internal and external regulatory obligations and the College's strategic priorities
- Monitor adherence to the RCL Teaching and Learning Approaches, particularly implementation of Prepare, Collaborate, and Consolidate (PCC).

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all academic and teaching-related staff, including permanent, part-time, visiting, and associate lecturers, as well as academic support staff directly engaged in student learning or teaching activities. Observation includes all forms of engagement with students at RCL whether face-to-face or online.

This policy is designed to support academic management within schools to assure the quality of teaching and, thereby, also ensure an excellent student experience.

## **Definitions**

'Formal' observations are conducted by trained and standardised members of staff only, in line with the policy statement below. These can be distinguished from the informal peer observations, which are practitioner-driven, do not carry a rating and may be carried out by any member of faculty as part of expected continual professional development and standards.

### **Policy statement**

Formal Observation of teaching is mandatory and should take place at least once a year for each member of academic staff. Newly recruited colleagues will be observed twice in their first year: the first observation must take place within the first 6 months of them commencing teaching and forms part of the probation process. Formal observations all carry an outcome in the form of a rating and subsequent actions, which may include attending or delivering training to ensure best practice is shared across the institutions. Staff on probation must meet a minimum standard in their first observation to pass probation. There are 4 ratings, designed to indicate the level and time-scale of training in response. The lowest rating would indicate immediate training and a drop-in observation to follow-up. The other ratings indicate longer-term pedagogical development on which annual training schedules and foci are planned.

Informal peer observations, typically faculty-directed, do not carry a rating. It is recommended that all teaching faculty carry out at least one peer observation a year.

Observers will be standardised before commencing formal observations to ensure consistent application of the criteria and thresholds across modules, programmes and schools. In addition, standardisation ensures the observation data is accurately and consistently recorded using the relevant platform. RCL requires a clear and consistent record of observations that have taken place and that appropriate training interventions were implemented where appropriate.

Summary reports will be provided to identify intra-school and cross-college good practice, areas for enhancement and staff development. Reports will also comment on the observation of teaching process and criteria and identify the impact on both staff and student experience. The summary report should develop an action plan to inform planning and strategy at relevant school and institutional boards. Areas for enhancement will be monitored and actioned generally and at individual faculty level to meet staff development needs as an ongoing, responsive and flexible process.

### **Procedures**

Typically, the observation will be scheduled according to programme, school or probation requirements. The observe will be notified in advance of the observation, though they may reschedule if there is an appropriate reason. This can be done by replying to the observation notification with a suggestion for an alternative date and time.

The process of observation of teaching falls into three phases:

- a. Pre-observation
- b. Observation

### c. Post-observation.

Clear guidance and instructions for each part of this process, including templates and walk-throughs for the completion of the observations can be found on the internal staff sharepoint site dedicated to observations, navigable via the staff portal. The **pre-observation** form is mandatory and should be completed by the observee ahead of the observation. The **observation** form contains detailed criteria, comments thereon and an initial rating. This is completed by the observer(s) only. Finally, the **post-observation** form is completed in collaboration and carries the final rating of the observation as well as an action or actions to be completed before the next observation. Forms are visible by the faculty being observed, the observer and the line manager of the observee for PCD and quality assurance purposes.

Should a member of staff wish to appeal, they may do so by writing after their post-observation to their line manager, Head of Programme or an Associate Provost, who will discuss the appeal and, if necessary, arrange a re-observation with a different observer.

### **Responsibilities**

It is intended that this approach to observation of teaching both builds upon previous experience and practice at the College and represents best practice going forwards. This formal process will complement the informal peer practice approach and provide data that is clear and measurable for internal and external quality assurance processes.

The responsibility for record-keeping of teaching observation standardization processes lies with the Associate Provost Teaching & Learning, as does the creation of flexible and bespoke staff development sessions in response to classroom practice as seen in formal observations. Responsibility for record-keeping and following up attendance and participation in training as a formal observation outcomes lies with the management structures within the schools and departments.