



Learning and Teaching Policy

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Introduction

1. Acquire Learning College is committed to providing high quality teaching, learning and assessment to enable all learners to achieve their full potential. This will be achieved through high quality teaching and learning opportunities, rigorous assessment, feedback and the sharing of good practice. The Learning and Teaching Policy aims to provide an effective framework for the delivery of high-quality teaching and learning. This policy and procedure applies to all College staff engaged in facilitating, supporting and managing learning. It applies to all learning offered through the College.
2. Acquire Learning College delivers a wide range of courses across the areas of Further Education and Higher Education. The Learning and Teaching Policy aims to provide a holistic overview of processes to support the effective delivery of teaching and learning across all these specific remits, while recognising that each remit has its own external policy drivers and influences.
3. The key external policy drivers for Higher Education include the QAA Quality Code, Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework and UK Professional Standards Framework. The key external policy drivers for Further Education include the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework and the Education and Training Foundation Professional Standards for Tutors and Trainers in Education and Training.

Policy Context

4. The Learning and Teaching Policy aims to ensure that teaching at the College is professional, engaging and of the highest quality by:
 - a. Placing the learner at the centre of the learning process
 - b. Ensuring all learners having the opportunity to succeed and be empowered to fulfil their potential
 - c. The self-esteem and aspirations of all learners being raised through mutual support and commitment
 - d. All staff and learners having high expectations and working together to develop high levels of achievement and success
 - e. Ensuring learners are retained and achieve their qualification
 - f. Developing employability skills as part of the curriculum
 - g. Taking opportunity to develop Maths, English and digital skills as appropriate
 - h. providing excellent progression opportunities, to employment, apprenticeships, or further and higher learning
 - i. Recognising and celebrating success, of both learners and staff
 - j. Using assessment to provide effective learning opportunities through feedback
 - k. Ensuring levels of student satisfaction and learner voice feedback are high across all courses
 - l. Using research to inform and inspire students

- m. Promoting a culture of academic challenge, scholarly activity and research informed teaching
- n. The subject expertise and pedagogic content knowledge of staff leading to excellent teaching and learning
- o. Actively promoting best practice in terms of embedding sustainability, particularly in the areas of resource efficiency, recycling, energy efficiency, use of renewable energy, conservation of natural resources, and welfare
- p. Meeting the targets identified in the College Strategic Plan 2023 to 2028
- q. Provide excellent teaching, applied research and scholarly activity that creates curious and aspirational learners, improves achievement and transforms lives
- r. enable students at all levels and contexts to develop their personal development and employability skills to enable them to achieve their aspirations and full potential
- s. Develop high level technical, creative and digital skills in staff and students
- t. Promote and embed a culture of ambition, innovation, resilience and high performance supported by coaching and supportive challenge

Learning: Our delivery will be high quality and innovative with students at the heart of decision making.

People: We will enable staff and students to fulfil their potential whilst promoting resilience, leadership, accountability and teamwork.

Sustainability: We will provide a happy, healthy, safe, supportive and sustainable environment in which to live, work and study.

FREDIE: We will advance FREDIE - **F**airness, **R**espect, **E**quality, **D**iversity, **I**nclusion, **E**ngagement.

Roles and Responsibilities for Teaching and Learning Practice

5. The College will provide:

- a. An induction and on-going professional support for all staff who deliver teaching and learning
- b. A clean, tidy and well-maintained environment
- c. A safe environment following College health and safety procedures
- d. Access to resources that enable effective teaching, learning and assessment to take place and appropriate learning outcomes to be achieved
- e. A stimulating environment with displays of learners' work, research activity, posters and relevant learning materials
- f. A welcoming environment for all learners promoting **FREDIE** principles
- g. Access and promotion of digital technology

- h. Curriculum delivery that provides interaction, flexibility and encourages a wide range of teaching and learning activities
- i. Opportunities for teaching and learning to be discussed and promoted with good practice and techniques being shared
- j. Information regarding learners with SEND and necessary adjustments, including access arrangements for assessments, to be shared with all members of teaching teams
- k. Support for teaching staff through the Teaching and Learning Coaches
- l. Appropriate Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities for teaching staff
- m. Tutors will ensure that all lessons are prepared and delivered to the highest standard

Learning sessions at the College will:

- a. Show clear evidence of planning with learning outcomes appropriate to the level and used to monitor student/learner progress
- b. Meet the needs of all individuals with where appropriate, the full involvement of inclusive learning in the planning and delivery of the session
- c. Meet all course/programme objectives and requirements
- d. Build on learners' prior knowledge and understanding, using formative assessment to monitor progress and inform future learning
- e. Have strong links between theory, practical and industry practices
- f. Promote independent learning
- g. Be informed by current research and scholarly activity
- h. Have completed up to date Risk Assessments
- i. Follow relevant procedures in relation to Health and Safety
- j. Adhere to College policy regarding safeguarding
- k. Use findings from learner feedback to improve planning and delivery
- l. Generate learner confidence through the sound subject knowledge of tutors
- m. Use learning methods that inspire and challenge learners
- n. Actively promote the development of digital skills, Maths and English and British Values in lessons
- o. Promote and demonstrate **FREDIE**
- p. Provide a teaching schedule that shows the outline plan for the module and provides opportunity for learners to plan ahead
- q. Promote the use of the VLE and other learning resources such as the library in the support of learning and the provision of additional learning opportunities Allow learners to participate in module or course evaluation surveys to gather feedback for assessment and potential future enhancements
- r. Promote best practice in sustainability
- s. Enable tutors to reflect on and develop their practice using the Education and Training Foundation Professional Standards for Tutors and Trainers in Education and

Training and the United Kingdom Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education

- t. Include marking of assessments that is accurate, consistent and diagnostic, identifies incorrect spelling and grammar and provides effective feedback that brings improvements
- u. Expect staff to manage the learning environment in line with College policies on attendance, discipline and quality. Registers will be completed for each timetabled session:
 - i. Poor attendance and punctuality will be monitored and action promptly taken
 - ii. Learners will be expected to use time effectively and take responsibility for their own learning in timetabled sessions and throughout the College
 - iii. Discipline issues will be dealt with promptly by staff with the appropriate reporting procedures followed

Observation of Teaching and Learning

6. The lesson observation process is fundamental to enhancing and improving the learning experience and supporting staff in the development of their teaching and management of learning.

Roles and Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to:

- a. Be familiar with and maintain the standards of performance expected of them
- b. Comply with, and undertake, appropriate CPD relating to improving teaching, learning and assessment
- c. Comply with any action plans that are developed because of the Observation Teaching and Learning (OTL) process

It is the responsibility of lesson observers to:

- a. Attend lesson observation training and standardisation meetings
- b. Be familiar with policies and procedures associated with lesson observation
- c. Ensure that the lesson observation procedure is fairly and consistently applied
- d. Ensure that standards of performance and are clearly understood
- e. Ensure that the professional discussion is timely, supportive and appropriate

It is the responsibility of the Quality Team to:

- a. Undertake the responsibilities of observers as detailed above
- b. Liaise with the appropriate Department Heads and Quality Team to support the management of the OTL process
- c. Support staff on the completion of action plans following observation
- d. Liaise with the Head of Quality on the implementation and development of this policy

- e. Support the development of Teaching, Learning and Assessment through the provision of appropriate and timely CPD.

It is the responsibility of the Department Heads to:

- a. Communicate expectations and set standards relating to Teaching and Learning with all teaching staff
- b. Ensure that all staff in their areas have an allocated observer
- c. Ensure that individual action plans following observations are completed to a satisfactory standard
- d. Liaise with the Head of Quality and Department Heads regarding relevant CPD in relation to teaching and learning
- e. Make judgements and report on the outcomes of the lesson observation process as part of the annual self-assessment process
- f. Invoke the Supporting Improved Performance Policy where performance in OTL does not meet the expected requirements (see separate Supporting Improved Performance Policy/Guidelines).

It is the responsibility of Inclusive Learning Staff to:

- a. Liaise with teaching staff to ensure learners' individual needs are met in each lesson

It is the responsibility of the Head of Quality to

- a. Review and update all processes and documentation relating to the lesson observation process
- b. Provide a robust OTL process that meets the needs of learners, teaching staff, College Management and relevant external bodies
- c. Report the outcomes of lesson observations at College level
- d. Support and train lesson observers in all aspects of the Lesson Observation process
- e. Ensure that timely advice and support is readily available to managers and staff on the implementation of this policy
- f. Provide detailed analysis of lesson observation outcomes to inform the planning of appropriate CPD
- g. Liaise with Heads of Area on the delivery of an effective teaching and learning CPD programme
- h. Provide moderation of the process to ensure that standards are maintained and improvements in the process identified and acted upon
- i. Make OTL support materials available.

The Observation Process for staff teaching timetabled lessons:

- a. All staff who deliver timetabled or planned teaching sessions will be observed.
- b. Observations, other than peer observations, will be carried out by appropriately experienced and trained members of staff
- c. Staff will have three unannounced observations each year. Each observation will be at least 30 minutes in duration

- d. Feedback should be completed on the Observation Form and codes allocated to the strengths, areas to develop and action plan
- e. The same code cannot be both a strength and an area to develop
- f. Each document should have no more than 3 or 4 strengths/areas to develop identified.
- g. Observers should distinguish lesson strengths and norms. I.e. learners working safely really should be the norm, not a specific strength
- h. A professional discussion must take place following the observation, enabling the tutor to reflect on their practice, strengths, and areas to develop and actions agreed by the observer and tutor
- i. Tutors should be offered relevant CPD opportunities to develop their practice and share good practice with others
- j. The observer must decide if the observation met the expected standards for teaching and learning at the college
- k. The definition of expected standards is that learners develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours, enabling them to make appropriate progress for their course of study. This judgement must be clearly marked on the observation form
- l. It is usual for observations to have at least one area for development, identified by the tutor/observer during the professional discussion - this is where sharing of effective practice could be highlighted
- m. The observation form should be returned to the Quality Office with coding complete for data reporting from the observation process
- n. Observers have the right to extend the length of the observation to gather more evidence to inform their judgements on the strengths and areas to develop the lesson
- o. Observations will be conducted on all types of lessons including group tutorials and samples will be observed
- p. External Standardisation will take place at a time decided by the Senior Management and Head of Quality
- q. All observers will have a minimum of one joint observation per year with a member of the Senior Management Team or Head of Quality to validate the judgements made and subsequent action planning
- r. The Head of Quality will chair report standardisation meetings, which will be held termly. The purpose of the meeting is to ensure the quality of judgments and reporting, identify good practice and areas for improvement in the process
- s. All observers should attend all standardisation meetings
- t. Lesson observation outcomes will be used to inform staff reviews and CPD for all academic staff.
- u. The College recognises that there may be times when, for a variety of reasons, it is inappropriate to observe a member of staff at that point in time. In such situations, the appropriate Department Head should request to the relevant Head of Quality that alternative arrangements are made

- v. Deep dives of provision will take place annually, but may take place more often if there are risk indicators raised at Quality Performance Management meetings. These deep dives are in addition to the OTL process.

The Observation Process for Apprenticeship and Skills staff working remotely:

- a. Staff performance will be monitored at quarterly Quality Performance Management Meetings. A range of performance metrics will be reviewed including success rates of learners, caseload management, at risk learners, learner reviews, use of OneFile and learner voice feedback.
- b. Twice a year, in November and March, two learners will be sampled for each assessor tutor and a detailed review of their teaching, learning and assessment activity will take place.
- c. Strengths, weaknesses and areas to develop will be identified and agreed with staff. Staff should be offered relevant CPD opportunities to develop their practice and share good practice with others.
- d. All Apprenticeship and Skills staff working remotely will receive a planned professional visit by an appropriate manager once per year. This visit will include an observation of teaching, learning and assessment where appropriate and will also include meetings with apprentices and employers.
- e. Deep dives of provision will take place annually, but may take place more often if there are risk indicators raised at Quality Performance Management Meetings

Review of Online Courses

- a. Online modules will be reviewed for quality with particular focus on the range of content, quality of content, student participation and student learning experience and in line with normal FE and HE expectations for the delivery of a quality teaching and learning experience
- b. Online reviews will be coded in line with on-site observations and subject to actions plans and support as described above

7. Probationary Observations

Observations of new teaching staff will take place as follows:

- a. Within three weeks of starting to teach, an unannounced observation undertaken by a member of the Quality Team will take place. The purpose of these observations is to provide support and identify any concerns/issues
- b. The new member of staff then continues to have at least three unannounced observations a year. Observers have the right to extend the length of the observation to gather more evidence to inform their judgements on the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson

8. Trainee Tutors

Trainee tutors undertaking their PCGE/Certificate in Education are supported by the tutor training team through teaching observations that are an assessed part of their course. These observations involve pre and post observation discussion and support with planning. Trainee tutors will be observed as part of the college observation process in addition to their formal course observations. This provides them with developmental feedback and enables their departmental observer to offer subject-specific support and expertise through professional discussion, as well as providing an overview of their teaching performance.

9. Peer Observations

All teaching staff are required to observe another tutor at least once per academic year. The purpose of the observation is for the mutual benefit of both the observer and the observe, with the aim of encouraging dialogue on teaching, learning and assessment and the sharing of good practice. The main aim is to encourage self-reflection of the tutor observing another tutor. They are not graded, nor judgements made and there is no central monitoring of the outcomes.

Records of the observation will be held by the CPD Team to monitor completion, via the CPD document. All staff are required to log the completion of their peer observations in this document. Observations will last at least 45 minutes and with reflection and dialogue count to at least two hours mandatory CPD.

10. Outcomes from OTL

The following will pertain.

- a. Observed tutors who demonstrate consistent strengths will be encouraged to share good practice with their appropriate team through the Quality Team
- b. Observed tutors, with significant areas for improvement over a minimum of three observations, will be identified by the observer and referred to the Quality Team. Staff will be supported with an action plan initiated by the Quality Team and their Line Manager
- c. To assist the member of staff in achieving the necessary improvements the plan must cover:
 - i. The areas for and strategies how to achieve the desired improvement
 - ii. The measurable improvement required
 - iii. The time scales within which the improvement must be achieved, and any additional support required
 - iv. The date on which progress will be reviewed

11. Appeals Procedure

Informal

It is hoped that the procedures guidance and information provided will ensure that the situations are avoided where a formal procedure is required, and every effort should be made to resolve any issues arising from lesson observations 'informally' through positive dialogue and clarification.

Formal

If a dispute cannot be resolved informally, the member of staff should appeal in writing to the Head of Quality, stating the grounds for the appeal within five working days of receiving feedback. The appeal process will take the form of a panel meeting, conducted by; the Head of Quality, an independent Department Head and an independent member of the observation team. The member of staff will be given the opportunity to state his or her case at the meeting and will be entitled to be accompanied by a work colleague as observer. If the member of staff chooses not to attend, the panel will undertake a paper review of the evidence.

There are three possible outcomes from an appeal:

- a. The Appeal is upheld, and no record of the observation is retained
- b. The Appeal is upheld and the outcomes of the observation, in terms of areas for improvement and actions, are retained and the member of staff is required to respond to them accordingly
- c. The appeal is NOT upheld, the outcomes of the observation are retained and the normal procedure, as identified in this policy, is followed

The decision of the panel will be made in writing within five working days of the meeting and will be final.

12. Analysis of Lesson Observation Outcomes

All outcomes relating to lesson observation and online reviews will be processed, analysed and reports produced to meet the requirements of the College's quality cycle. Outcomes from lesson observations and online reviews will inform the relevant area's self-assessment process and will be monitored at the Quality of Education Strategy team.