

Policy name	[Observation of Teaching]		
Policy number	[AC0012		
Contact Person	[Dean of College of Arts and Humanities]		
Approval Authority	[Board of Directors/Trustees		
Date first approved	[March 2018]	Last substantive review]
Policy Review Cycle	[3 years]	Next review	[2021/22]

1. Definitions

Terms / Abbreviations	Definition
]]

2. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy describes the scope and basic rationale of observation at ASU, which is underpinned by ASU teaching competencies employed at ASU in relation to any teaching activity at the University. ASU competencies that relate to teaching form part of all ASU employees' role descriptions and in turn should also guide employees in their personal and professional growth. HR has developed these to help describe a framework for performance management; role descriptions, job plans, self-evaluation, student feedback and line manager appraisals in relation to teaching activity.
- 1.2 Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to provide a simple rationale for teaching observation, explain observation activity in detail (through the Observation Guidelines document that accompanies this policy) and to describe the approaches and deployment of observations in order for feedback from formative, summative and evaluative observational contexts to improve the quality of teaching delivery in the University.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all teaching staff at the University including technician staff who may deliver lectures on an occasional basis. It should be noted that the expressions *peer review* and *peer observation* are used interchangeably at A'Sharqiyah University.

4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 Observation of teaching is a requirement of all teaching staff at the University. It is an essential aspect of continuing professional development for all academic and teaching staff.
- 4.2 Observation of teaching is one element in the evaluation of teaching quality. Other elements include evaluation by the Head of Department or Dean of College, quality of the course folder(s) and student course evaluation reports.
- 4.3 Every member of academic and teaching staff should participate in observation at least once a year as an 'reviewer' and at least once as a 'reviewee'.
- 4.4 Observation is not a form of surveillance aimed at undermining academic freedom. The objective of teaching observation is to help all academic staff by giving them opportunities to listen to and get meaningful feedback from colleagues which can help them become better teachers and to improve their abilities. This will, in turn, help students understand and achieve their learning outcomes and study performance [Sachs and Parsell, 2016].
- 4.5 Observation of teaching shall apply to all forms of teaching including lectures, tutorials, laboratory classes, research supervision, capstone design projects, supervision of summer internship courses, online teaching, etc.
- 4.6 Observation of teaching shall help to re-affirm and share best practices and to identify areas for improvement [Klopper and Drew, 2015].

5. Key Stakeholders

6. Procedures

- 6.1 At the beginning of each semester, the Dean of College, Director of CLFS or Head of Department will publish the observation of teaching schedule. In addition, they will make the 'Observation Guideline' that accompanies this policy available to all staff within the first few teaching weeks of semester 1, in which teaching will be peer reviewed. In semester 2, the teaching observations will be formal. The peer observation of teaching schedule will identify all teaching staff in the College or department and their nominated reviewers.
- 6.2 A member of teaching staff may raise objection against a nominated reviewer by appealing

University Policy: OBSERVATION OF TEACHING

- 6.3 to the Head of Department or Dean of College. Where the objection is deemed reasonable by the Head of Department or Dean of College, an alternative reviewer will be named.
- 6.4 Peer teaching observations will start not less than two weeks from publication of the peer observation of teaching schedule and must be completed within a period of five weeks from publication of the schedule.
- 6.5 As soon as the peer review of teaching schedule is published, the reviewer and the reviewee will hold a pre-observation meeting and agree when and where (date, time, course, room number, etc.) the review will take place.
- 6.6 The reviewee is responsible for informing the class in advance about the purpose and timing of the class observation.
- 6.7 The reviewer shall attend the scheduled lecture or class and keep detailed notes with clear examples. The 'Peer Observation of Teaching' form should thereafter be completed by the reviewer.
- 6.8 The reviewer and the reviewee shall meet post observation to discuss what went well during the observation session, areas of good practice that can be disseminated across the College or University and areas for potential improvement. The peer evaluation form should also be signed by both parties to signify that the peer review process has taken place.
- 6.9 Where the class observation is carried out by the Head of Department or Dean of College, the relevant teaching evaluation form shall be completed and will constitute part of the formal record of appraisal of one's quality of teaching delivery.
- 6.10 Where a faculty member is evaluated by the Head of Department/Dean, the total mark shall be normalized out of 100 points and the following interpretation shall apply:

90-100% Excellent

80-89% Very Good

70-79% Good.

Less than 70%: The instructor requires training and support.

- 6.11 If a member of staff achieves a score of less than 70% in the teaching evaluation conducted by the Head of Department or Dean, that member of staff shall be given training and support; and shall be re-evaluated again at a future date.
- 6.12 Confidentiality
- 6.12.1 The notes and the completed peer observation of teaching form shall remain confidential between the observer and the observed. However, factual information regarding the time and place when the class observation took place shall be forwarded to the Dean of College or Head of Department and shall be recorded.
- 6.12.2 All academic staff, Heads of Department and College Deans are reminded that the peer observation process and all related information is confidential between the observer and the observed. Utmost confidentiality must

therefore be maintained as the peer observation process is fundamentally part of staff professional development in the University.

7. References

Klopper, C and Drew S (Editors), (2015), *Teaching for Learning and Learning for Teaching: Peer Review of Teaching in Higher Education*, Sense Publishers, London.

Sachs J and Parsell M (Editors), (2016), *Peer Review of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: International Perspectives*, Springer, London.

8. Revision History

Version	Author/Reviewer	Revision(s) made and justification	Date

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT / DEAN'S EVALUATION OF TEACHING FORM			
Lecturer/Teacher:	Semester	Week:	Day
Course Code:	Lesson length:	No. of Students	Date
Lesson Learning Outcomes:			Feedback Date:

Things that went well:

Things I'm unclear about

Things to re-think and try out a different approach

Observation Criteria	Excellent 90 -100%	Very Good 80-89%	Good (Standard) 70-79%	Requires rethink 0-69%
• Ability to plan and deliver engaging lessons in relation to lesson Learning Outcomes				
• Ability to describe lesson objectives and how they fit into real life applications				
• Materials presentation (adherence to Academic Integrity policy at ASU) /ability to teach the lesson with engaging and motivating activities				
• Setting tasks appropriate to stage and lesson aims and ability to achieve lesson objectives				
• Selecting appropriate teaching techniques in relation to lesson content				
• Grading, volume and speed of speech – keeping explanations clear with good use of questioning to clarify understanding				
• Pace, timing and clear staging of lesson with focus on feedback to students				
• Attention to level of students, challenge and variety of task types				
• Ensuring the lesson uses the correct language of instruction				
• Making use of resources (IT) & teaching aids in order to enhance learning and increasing students' motivation				
• Classroom management skills – e.g. giving and checking instructions managing behavioural issues etc.				
• Attention to students individual needs/interests and strengths /weaknesses				
• Rapport and Nomination – friendly and warm atmosphere - smiling				
• Ability to maximise student involvement and clarifying concepts through student led discussion and analysis				
• Evidence of careful monitoring and response to mistakes/wrong answers is encouraging, appropriate and friendly				
• Ability to carry out administration duties; class attendance, lesson timing etc.				
• Ability to stay on topic and stay focused on lesson aims				
• Teaching is informed by research.				
• Total Score				
• Overall Percentage Score = Total Score/1800 =				

Feedback to the Observee

1. I felt the following areas demonstrate strength or good practice.

2. I felt the following are areas for potential improvement.

General Comments to the Observee

By affixing their signature to this form, both the reviewer and the reviewee confirm that the teaching observation process has actually taken place and that the post observation meeting has been conducted to discuss the outcome of the teaching observation. Signing this form does not imply that the observee agrees with the comments or scores of the observer.

Observee's Name: _____ Observer's Name _____

Signature of Observee _____ Signature of Observer _____

Date _____ Date _____

PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING FORM

Lecturer/Teacher:	Semester	Week:	Day
Course Code:	Lesson length:	No. of Students	Date
Lesson Learning Outcomes:			Feedback Date:

Things that went well:

--

Things I'm unclear about

--

Things to re-think and try out a different approach

Observation Criteria	Excellent 90 -100%	Very Good 80-89%	Good (Standard) 70-79%	Requires rethink 0-69%
• Ability to plan and deliver engaging lessons in relation to lesson Learning Outcomes				
• Ability to describe lesson objectives and how they fit into real life applications				
• Materials presentation (adherence to Academic Integrity policy at ASU) /ability to teach the lesson with engaging and motivating activities				
• Setting tasks appropriate to stage and lesson aims and ability to achieve lesson objectives				
• Selecting appropriate teaching techniques in relation to lesson content				
• Grading, volume and speed of speech – keeping explanations clear with good use of questioning to clarify understanding				
• Pace, timing and clear staging of lesson with focus on feedback to students				
• Attention to level of students, challenge and variety of task types				
• Ensuring the lesson uses the correct language of instruction				
• Making use of resources (IT) & teaching aids in order to enhance learning and increasing students' motivation				
• Classroom management skills – e.g. giving and checking instructions managing behavioural issues etc.				
• Attention to students individual needs/interests and strengths /weaknesses				
• Rapport and Nomination – friendly and warm atmosphere - smiling				
• Ability to maximise student involvement and clarifying concepts through student led discussion and analysis				
• Evidence of careful monitoring and response to mistakes/wrong answers is encouraging, appropriate and friendly				
• Ability to carry out administration duties; class attendance, lesson timing etc.				
• Ability to stay on topic and stay focused on lesson aims				
• Teaching is informed by research.				
• Total Score				
• Overall Percentage Score = Total Score/1800 =				

Feedback to the Observee

3. I felt the following areas demonstrate strength or good practice.

4. I felt the following are areas for potential improvement.

General Comments to the Observee

By affixing their signature to this form, both the reviewer and the reviewee confirm that the teaching observation process has actually taken place and that the post observation meeting has been conducted to discuss the outcome of the teaching observation. Signing this form does not imply that the observee agrees with the comments or scores of the observer.

Observee's Name: _____ Observer's Name: _____

Signature of Observee: _____ Signature of Observer: _____

Date _____ Date _____

ASU Observation Guidelines

1. Observation Types and their Principles

Type	Use	Description	Frequency	Observer
1.1 Probation Observation	New teachers only – initial assessment (evaluative)	A short 20 – 30 minute observation with feedback	Obligatory - Within the 1 st two months of service	Director, Line manager, HOD, or Dean
1.2 Formal Observations	Teacher Development and forms a large part of staff's summative evaluation (summative and evaluative)	60 – 90 minutes, lesson plans (where appropriate) to be handed in ahead of time with scheduled feedback and follow up	Obligatory - Up to twice a year – Minimum of 1 per year	Director, Line manager, HOD, or Dean
1.3 Drop-in Observations	<p>A. Teacher Development (formative and evaluative)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>B. Follow up on a Formal Observation or Probation Observation (evaluative)</p> <p>Or</p> <p>C. Manager/Dean/Director development – e.g. New HODs might request staff give them the opportunity to visit classrooms to ascertain the types of learning environments at ASU (formative)</p>	10 – 30 minutes depending on the focus of the observation	<p>Optional</p> <p>or</p> <p>As requested</p> <p>or</p> <p>As requested</p>	<p>Director, Line manager, HOD, or Dean</p> <p>or</p> <p>Director, Line manager, HOD, or Dean</p> <p>or</p> <p>As required</p>

ASU Observation Guidelines

1.4 Reactive Observations	Teacher development (formative) e.g. Teacher requests feedback based on student feedback Or A manager's follow up on student complaints/performance concerns (evaluative)	Up to one hour depending on the focus of the observation	As required As scheduled by the Dean Director or HOD	Director, Line manager, HOD, or Dean
1.5 Peer Observations /Peer Review	Teacher development (formative and/or evaluative if requested)	20-60 minutes depending on the focus of the observation	As scheduled by the Dean Director or HOD or as scheduled by colleagues	Teachers/Lecturers
1.6 Collaborative Observations / Unobserved observations	Teacher development (formative)	20-60 minutes depending on the focus of the observation	Optional - scheduled by colleagues	Teachers/Lecturers
1.7 Student Observations	Monitor student behaviour from complaints (evaluative - students)	Up to one hour	As required and scheduled by the Dean Director or HOD	Director, Line manager, HOD, or Dean
1.8 Recorded Observations	Training purposes/ Samples of best practice to be recorded on video and stored in a shared location	Up to 2 hours	Optional - scheduled by colleagues	All staff

Table 1. Types of Observation at ASU in detail

ASU Observation Guidelines

2. Observation Types and their Principles explained

2.1 Probation Observations

Corresponding to the ASU HR manual, the first three months of an employee's service are considered as 'probationary'. During that time, according to the policy, the HoD or Department Head shall submit an evaluation of the employee's performance. ASU believes because a teacher's main role is delivering lessons, then that evaluation would best come in the form of a 30-minute observation.

The line manager (HoD, Dean or Director) should schedule the probation observation with the 'observee' within the first 2 months of the contract beginning. The observation feedback should form part of the evaluation being submitted to HR by the relevant line manager.

2.2 Formal Observations

ASU formal observations shall be conducted by a Head of Department/Dean or Director of CLFS. The process should recognize that an ASU teacher, lecturer or Professor is a professional who may or may not need guidance in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses in his/her teaching and planning development goals. The observer must adopt appropriate behavior in pre and post lesson discussions (listening, describing, probing or guiding as appropriate).

2.3 Drop-in

This type of observation is short (usually about 10 – 30 minutes). It can be used for a few different reasons, but mainly for a particular focus of enquiry related to a particular person. The following are the main reasons:

- A. Teacher Development (formative and evaluative) Here a teacher wants a colleague to drop in on their lesson to get feedback about a particular area of teaching. Usually, they would give the observer a task. This can be taken out of the task bank provided as an appendix. The feedback is not recorded on the staff file unless specifically requested and agreed by the line manager.
- B. Follow up on a Formal Observation or Probation Observation (evaluative). In this type of drop-in, observation, there are concerns based on the formal or probationary observation which are yet to be addressed. These concerns were previously documented and both parties agree that further drop-in observations are needed. The same feedback approach in formal observations may be followed here.
- C. Manager/Dean/Director development – Here, a line manager, Dean or director would like to visit a classroom and see how the classes are running in general. This is not evaluative in any sense on the part of a teacher and must be agreed and requested by the concerned party. There is no need for any feedback in this observation type.

2.4 Reactive Observations

This observation type is sometimes required to ascertain the environment in a classroom if there have been complaints raised by students that relate to the teaching of a class - These complaints must have followed ASU policy. i.e. there has been an attempt to raise these concerns with the teacher directly. If the student raises the complaint to the teacher's line manager, then the line manager and the teacher concerned may feel the best way to deal with the complaint is to schedule a drop-in in which evidence can be ascertained to verify the veracity of the complaint. This is would normally be an agreed solution between the line

ASU Observation Guidelines

manager and the teacher but in some cases where serious accusations are being levelled at a teacher, the line manager may choose to make the drop in observation unannounced. Feedback would also be shared in the same manner as the formal observation

2.5 Peer Observations/Peer Review

At the beginning of every semester, the Dean of College, Director of CLFS or Head of Department will publish the peer observation of teaching schedule. The peer observation of teaching schedule for a College will identify all teaching staff in the College and their nominated reviewers.

A member of teaching staff may raise objection against a nominated reviewer by appealing to the Head of Department or Dean of College. Where the objection is deemed reasonable by the Head of Department or Dean of College, an alternative reviewer will be named.

Teaching observations will start not less than two weeks from publication of the peer observation of teaching schedule and must be completed within a period of five weeks from publication of the schedule.

As soon as the peer review of teaching schedule is published, the reviewer and the reviewee will hold a pre-observation meeting and agree when and where (date, time, course, room number, etc.) the review will take place.

The reviewee is responsible for informing the class in advance about the purpose and timing of the class observation.

The reviewer shall attend the scheduled lecture or class and keep detailed notes with clear examples. The peer evaluation form should thereafter be completed by the reviewer. The reviewer and the reviewee shall meet post observation to discuss what went well during the observation session, areas of good practice that can be disseminated across the College or University and areas for potential improvement. The peer evaluation form should also be signed by both parties to signify that the peer review process has taken place.

2.6 Collaborative Observations/ unobserved observations

With this format, the teacher meets with the observer and talks through what he/she plans to do in the lesson. Then he/she teaches the lesson without the observer being physically present and meets up with the 'observer' soon (24 – 48 hours) after the lesson to discuss how it actually went. This is useful if the teacher is experimenting with methodologies, particular task types or resources and is a good way of developing reflection skills.

2.7 Student Observations

There will be times when a teacher feels that there are serious issues with student behavior that cannot be remedied without external help. These observations can be requested by staff so that line managers step into the classroom and watch the student interactions in order to be able to give support to the teacher.

2.8 Recorded Observations

In this format the teacher (or a colleague) films or records all or part of the lesson. This can be used as an example of good practice which is shared for all staff to access.

In addition, a teacher could also use this for formative development. Later, the teacher watches or listens to the recording either alone or with the colleague and reflects on the

ASU Observation Guidelines

lesson. This gives a teacher a chance to see him/herself from their students' perspective. This type of observation is good for a focus on for example

- features of communication /interaction
- class dynamics
- student participation
- teacher attention
- instruction giving
- teacher talk (questioning, language grading, amount and purpose of teacher talk)
- response times allowed to students

3. References

Malderez, A. and Bodoczsky, C. Mentor Courses (CUP) 1999 p 202)