



## **Observation of Teaching Scheme**

**June 14**



## **What is the observation of teaching scheme?**

The aim of this Observation of Teaching Scheme is to promote excellence in teaching, learning and assessment and to enhance continual professional development of academic staff at the Royal Veterinary College.

This scheme is designed to allow excellence in education to be recognised and rewarded in the same way that research contributions are recognised and rewarded.

In most cases the observation of teaching scheme will build upon the experiences of a Postgraduate certificate in education course, but all staff are eligible to have their teaching observed and obtain feedback under this observation of teaching scheme.

## **Relationship to PG Certificate courses**

All probationary staff involved in teaching are required to complete the RVC's Postgraduate Certificate in Veterinary Education (PGCert Vet Ed) if they do not already possess a PGCert in education. Most PGCert in education courses include a requirement for students to have their own teaching observed summatively as part of the assessment for the course.

The RVC observation of teaching scheme is designed to build on these existing assessments to allow Probationary Lecturers to demonstrate progression in their teaching beyond the PG Certificate.

## **Probationary Lecturers**

Probationary Lecturers will be observed by an assessor during the third-year of their probationary period (the "assessed observation"). The assessor will either be the HOD or a nominee (for example the second advisor or a tutor on the PGCert Vet Ed course).

The purpose of the assessed observation of teaching is to provide evidence to the probation board of the staff member's contribution to learning, teaching and assessment in the same way that publications provide evidence of contribution to research. Probationary lecturers select the session that they wish to be observed and agree this well in advance with their HOD or nominee.

Probationary Lecturers can also be observed formatively by a peer, at any time. Although this is optional, it is highly recommended as it enables academic staff to reflect upon their own teaching skills with a colleague and to explore and share ideas with each other in order to improve the learning opportunities provided to their students.

### **Relationship to the appraisal process**

As part of the RVC appraisal process, the HOD or second advisor will meet with the Probationary Lecturer at least once a year to discuss and record progress against agreed teaching objectives. This meeting should include planning for observation of teaching and discussion of the outcomes of the process.

HR will hold a record of lecturers that are required to enter the Observation of Teaching scheme and notify the staff member and their Head of Department in advance of their September appraisal meeting. Return of the completed observation of teaching form and appraisal forms to HR will enable the college to keep track of the progress of the scheme.

### **Guidance for Observing Teaching**

the recipient to agree or disagree and highlights how actions may be interpreted. A time-log review page divided into two columns with events on the left and interpretations on the right (Appendix 2) allows the observer to record these events and interpretations.

To maximise the benefits of the session, the Observer should assess the teaching in relation to the educational framework that the staff member being observed has provided.

### **Step 3: The De-briefing**

Feedback should be given as soon as possible after the observed session. It is advisable to ask the observed member of staff to comment on how they felt the session went first, allowing them to say what they felt went well, and where the session could have been improved.

When the Observer is giving feedback, emphasis should be placed on the strengths identified, as well as sharing ideas for how the student experience might be improved. The feedback given should be constructive, i.e. focussed on behaviours and actions exhibited by the observed member of staff as evidenced by specific examples from the Observation Session. Generalisation should be avoided.

The Observer should be selective in offering feedback on areas for improvement. More than a few items of negative feedback can be de-motivating, reducing self-esteem and self-efficacy.

If, from the discussions, general points arise about the content of a module, the member of staff being observed should feed these back to the Module Leader.

The Observer should keep a record of the de-briefing and the outcomes agreed on the de-briefing form (Appendix 3). The pre-briefing, observation and de-briefing notes can then be used to complete the summary of observation form (Appendix 4).

A signed record of the pre-briefing form and the signed summary of the observation form should be forwarded to HR, within two weeks of the de-briefing taking place.

### **Training requirements for scheme**

All observers are required to attend the staff development course "Observation of teaching" before observing any teaching session.

Training for formative (peer) observation is strongly recommended.

## **References**

Mackinnon, M. (2001). Using observational feedback to promote academic development. (1), 21-28.

## **Status of this document**

SMG meeting 2008: Peer Review of Teaching Scheme early draft

Input from Stephen May and Paul Probyn

22/04/09: Final Draft Circulated by Ian Darker

28/04/09: Discussed at Academic Teaching Meeting

12/05/09: KW Circulated comments re summative/formative combination

18/05/09: Meeting to discuss implementation - discussion of above comments (KW and RC to re-draft in light of discussion

12/06/09: First draft (Version 3.0) of " Observation of teaching Scheme" discussed by KW/RC

## Appendix 1: Template for pre-observation session (for discussion)

Pre-observation form

Lecturer:

Date:

Observer:

## Appendix 2: Templat



**Appendix 3: De-briefing meeting (Observer only)**

<b>De-briefing form</b>	
<b>Lecturer:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Observer:</b>	



## **Appendix 5: An example educational framework for observation**

Further frameworks for various teaching modalities are available from:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/edudev/cedresources/peerobservationofteaching#observation>

### ***Teaching and Learning Strategies and Management***

Identifies and responds to individual learning environments and student populations and sets appropriately demanding expectations for learning performance

Establishes and effectively manages a good learning environment that motivates and sustains students' involvement and interest

Plans and employs a wide range of teaching strategies (including the use of

## **Appendix 6: Overall Assessment Guidance**

that students (and clients where appropriate) were aware of (and had agreed /consented to) the observation taking place  
that they have met the prior 'briefing' requirements  
appropriate and effective design and implementation of at least one prepared teaching/supervision session which is likely to enable most students to achieved the intended outcomes<sup>2</sup>  
appropriate professional values and behaviours<sup>3</sup>  
the ability to provide a considered rationale for the approach(es) adopted