



# Learning, Assessment & Teaching

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*Strategy 2016 – 2018  
(including observation of learning)*

Achieving the vision of inspiring delivery and exceptional learning for all

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# 1. The vision of **LEARNING, ASSESSMENT** and **TEACHING**

*Inspiring delivery and exceptional learning for all.*

## **The vision:**

The cornerstones of *LEARNING, ASSESSMENT* and *TEACHING* at Lincoln College are that:

- Learners enjoy challenging, well-paced and dynamic sessions, where their progress is celebrated and subsequently attendance is high.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors demand that learners have high aspirations and expectations regarding their achievement, behaviour and personal development.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors set challenging learning outcomes strategically for the learners that promote deep learning and raise learning aspirations for all.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors set engaging activities for learners to complete outside of lessons/sessions in order to extend their learning opportunities and to promote the development of the independent learner.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors involve stakeholders within the planning, monitoring and development of progress within every setting.
- Learners are able to make clear links to the skills, knowledge, understanding and attributes required by employers or higher academic progression routes and are able to apply these skills in the work place.
- Learner's progress is checked using a range of carefully considered assessment methods.
- Learners engage with their feedback effectively to continually develop and progress their academic knowledge and skills.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors are confident in selecting and utilising a range of effective learning, assessment and teaching strategies, including relevant digital technologies that support multi-sensory learning.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors share resources and working effectively within learning, teaching and assessment community of practice.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors engage enthusiastically in peer observations to support their and others' continued professional development.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors confidently embrace '*teachable moments*' that support the development of core and employability skills as well as an understanding of British values and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors model high standards of honesty, fairness and integrity, and expect the same of learners.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors value and stimulate independent critical thinking and creativity and empower learners with confidence.

## 2. Learning, assessment and teaching relationship

This strategy recognises that learning, assessment and teaching are not mutually exclusive and the effectiveness of each is dependent on the others.

Learning is at the centre of all pedagogical principles and the teacher facilitates learning by providing appropriate opportunities and strategies; assessment is integral to learning as it evaluates the effectiveness of these opportunities and strategies.



### 3. Key Principles for inspiring delivery and exceptional learning at Lincoln College

KP1. **Learning is inspiring**, challenging and relevant to the needs and aspirations of *each* learner.

KP2. **Learning is planned** effectively, including stakeholders contribution, to monitor and assess progress and develop core and employability skills however teachers, trainers and assessors have the confidence to adapt and react in the learning environment to maximise learning opportunities.

KP3. **Effective pedagogical strategies** (including the use of appropriate technologies) are used within the learning environment, and extend beyond it, to ensure all students' skill development and understanding is exceptional and learners develop independence.

KP4. A wide range of **challenging assessment methods** are used that have a broad focus (academic, personal, employability skills etc.). This ensures learners have to think for themselves to demonstrate their understanding and/or skills and assessment is not merely based on meeting the minimum requirements or criteria.

## 4. Relationship with Professional Standards in Education and Training.

[The Education and Training Foundation Professional Standards](#) (ETF PS) and [Higher Education Academy UK Professional Standards Framework](#) (UKPSF) set out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training.

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) is specially focused on improving standards in teaching and learning in the FE sector whilst the Higher Education Academy provides the benchmark for practitioners and institutions involved in the delivery of HE. The aim of both organisations is to drive improvements and raise the profile of learning and teaching through the setting of clear professional expectations for practitioners within the sector.

Continuous support and development of professional practice is pivotal to raising standards and improving learning, assessment and teaching at Lincoln College; therefore the importance of evaluating individual and organisational practice against these standards should not be overlooked.

		ETF PS	UKPSF
• KP1	<b>Learning is inspiring</b> , challenging and relevant to the needs and aspirations of <i>each</i> learner.	1,3,4, 6,10	A1, A4, K3, V1, V2
• KP2	<b>Learning is planned</b> effectively, including stakeholders contribution, to monitor and assess progress and develop core and employability skills however teachers, trainers and assessors have the confidence to adapt and react in lessons to maximise learning opportunities.	2,4,5, 7,8,14, 16	A1, V1, K2, K3
• KP3	<b>Effective pedagogical strategies</b> (including the use of appropriate technologies) are used within the learning environment, and extend beyond it, to ensure all learners' skill development and understanding is exceptional and learners develop independence.	2,4,11 15,19	A1, A2, A3, K4
• KP4	A wide range of <b>challenging assessment methods</b> are used that have a broad focus (academic, personal, employability skills etc.). This ensures learners have to think for themselves to demonstrate their understanding and/or skills and assessment is not merely based on meeting the minimum requirements or criteria.	13,17, 18	K2,K4, K5

## **5. Observation of Learning Practices (OLPs) Policy**

### **5.1 Introduction and Rationale**

- 2.1.1 Lincoln College regards observation of learning, assessment and teaching as a key component of the quality enhancement and assurance activity, and has incorporated it into personal development and the self-assessment processes to support continuous improvement in the delivery of learning. The college encourages and supports a culture of critical self-evaluation, within which the process of observation is regarded as positive and progressive in the development of learning practices.
- 2.1.2 The OLPs policy and approaches are designed to provide one of a variety of measures which evaluates the standards of learning, assessment and teaching throughout the college curriculum. The outcomes of the OLPs process are intended to support the individual staff member and curriculum teams in the delivery of learning and assessment, and to promote continuous improvement as part of the performance review process and team meetings respectively. In addition it will inform the personal action plans and development plans in line with performance review and self-assessment procedures.
- 2.1.3 Learning standards identified by these procedures will be closely managed, rewarded and addressed in line with the college policies on performance review and where necessary the college's Capability and Disciplinary Policies.
- 2.1.4 The procedures attempt to ensure that the learning experiences observed are not 'special' or contrived for the purposes of the observer but rather reflect the normal standard of delivery throughout the college.

## **2.2 Aims**

2.2.1 The OLPs aims to be:

- A key contributory factor in improving the learners' experience, their outcomes and destinations.
- A key facilitator of reflection, coaching and personal development.
- A key tool in the identification and sharing of excellent learning practices.
- An approach which identifies and rewards the delivery of excellent learning practices.
- A method by which generic cross college development and individual training needs are identified.
- A contributor to LAT evaluation at a personal, Lead, Head and School level to ensure an excellent learning experience and challenge and support under performance.

## **2.3 Principles**

2.3.1 The OLPs policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- staff members of the college wish to provide the best possible learning experience for learners.
- staff members of the college take responsibility for their professional development with regards to learning, assessment and teaching.
- observations gather a rich variety of information from valid learning experiences.
- observations seek to understand not only the impact of the learning but also the context within which it is occurring.
- conclusions regarding learning are best drawn when triangulation of findings are confirmed from multiple sources and observations.
- feedback resulting from observation is employed in a respectful and non-judgemental manner to inform collaborative and collegiate professional development.
- evaluations of learning experiences are used to inform developmental coaching conversation between staff to facilitate personal and professional development.
- observations will facilitate the sharing of good practice between colleagues.



## 2.4 Procedures

### 2.4.1 The scope of OLPs is:

- any learning experience delivered by full time, fractional contract, hourly paid and agency teaching staff, instructors and assessors on behalf of Lincoln College.
- all areas of learning and units of Lincoln College responsible for the delivery of learning, assessment and teaching activities.

### 2.4.2 The OLPs can be undertaken via the following arrangements:

- *Learning walks*

Learning walks involve the observation of a learning experience, typically, for up to 20 minutes. During this time the observer shall notice the learning which is being experienced by those present and the contextual factors in which experience is occurring. No written or electronic record shall be taken whilst in the learning space as this may be disruptive to the lecturer and/or the learners. Any required notes shall be made outside of the learning space.

Subsequent to the learning walk, thematic non-personalised feedback shall be made available to the associated Learning/Training and Skills Lead via collaborative electronic means, for developmental discussion in local team meetings. Personal feedback shall be made available only where directly requested by the observed member of staff or in the, unlikely, event of learner safety being compromised.

Learning walks shall, usually, be undertaken by related Heads of Learning and Skills, and Learning/Training and Skills Leads. However, all members of college staff who are qualified to do so (see section 2.3.1) or members of staff who are chaperoned by a trained person, are entitled to undertake learning walks and provide developmental feedback.

- *Virtual learning walk*  
Virtual learning walks involve the evaluation of a virtual learning experience undertaken through an electronic portfolio facility.
- *Developmental Observation of Learning (DOL)*  
A DOL involves the voluntary and negotiated observation of single learning experience, lasting for a minimum of 40 minutes. DOLs shall, usually, be

undertaken by the relevant Head of Learning and Skills, however, this may be delegated to a member of the Quality Improvement Unit or a similar qualified member of staff.

Teaching staff wishing to undertake a DOL, shall inform their Head of Learning and Skills at least one week prior to the intended observation and subsequently negotiate, with the agreed observer, which session is to be observed. The purpose of the observation could be, for example, to demonstrate outstanding practice; to seek support for a session or cohort that refuse to engage; to gain feedback for a new method or approach. Observers shall make notes on a standard pro-forma during the session; copies of which will be forwarded to the observed member of staff and the Quality Improvement Unit.

Feedback shall be given to the lecturer via a non-prescriptive coaching style, which aims to elicit sustained improvement in practice via reflection and meta-cognition. The member of staff shall also be recommended to engage in the sharing of practice via:

- *Peer review of practice (eg. observe a peer, plan a session with a peer)*
- *Share practice with others (eg. team meetings, peer obs./planning)*
- *Disseminate practice widely (eg. blog, action research, TeachFest)*

Following feedback, the observed member of staff will be strongly encouraged to undertake a follow up observation to explore the embedding of the ideas gained into practice.

#### 2.4.3 Observers must meet the following criteria to undertake independent OLPs:

- Minimum of 3 years teaching experience
- Hold a recognised teaching qualification
- Have undertaken approved lesson observation training in the preceding 12 months
- Have been approved by the college's Teaching and Learning Manager

Observers required to undertake OLPs in the workplace learning team must meet the following criteria:

- A minimum of 3 years' experience as a qualified WPL assessor and internal verifier
- Hold a recognised teaching qualification

- Have undertaken approved lesson observation training in the preceding 12 month
- Have been approved by the college’s Teaching and Learning Manager

All OLPs observers will be given formal training and peer mentoring, and will receive a “Licence to Observe” before they independently observe and provide feedback on sessions. All observers will undertake annual updating and standardisation activities.

## **2.5 Performance Management**

2.5.1 OLPs activity is intended to be developmental and cognate with routine Performance Management Review (PMR). OLPs outcomes will be recorded as one of the 23 elements of the Learning, Assessment and Teaching (LAT) scorecard, which shall be regularly reviewed, in line with the PMR policy, by the member of staff and their line manager.

As part of this process, all members of staff shall maintain an action plan which details personal activity to further develop their learning practices and will be uploaded to iTrent.

Where a Head of Learning and Skills or Learning/Training Skills Lead has more immediate concerns regarding the learning experience provided by a member of staff, as evidenced by repeated observations and triangulation with other sources of information (for example learner feedback or course level data), it is advised that the member of staff hold a meeting with their Learning/Training Skills Lead to discuss accessing the necessary support to develop their practice. This shall be recorded in an action plan as detailed above.

2.5.2 Following discussion of current LAT issues at team meetings and monthly reviews with Heads and Learning/Training Skills Leads, Directors of Schools and Employer Provision will be required to present summary findings of LAT performance to monthly review meetings, chaired by the Managing Director of Education and Skills. The college’s overall LAT performance shall be subsequently presented to the Quality Standards Committee and the Performance and Quality Committee of the Governing Board.

2.5.3 Heads/Leads of Learning and Skills, shall use summary evaluations of LAT scorecards as an evidence base for Lead and Head level self-assessment activity and reporting.

## **2.6 Review of OLPs Policy**

2.6.1 The Quality Standards Committee will review the OLPs policy and approaches on an annual basis and make recommendations for its development.