University of
Reading

Reflecting on practice with colleagues

Contents

Introduction

1. This policy sets out the purpose, scope and requirements in respect of reflecting on practice with colleagues at the University. It should be read in conjunction with the *Guidance on reflecting on practice with colleagues.*

2. The policy and guidance are informed by the UK Quality Code, and in particular the Advice and Guidance: Learning and Teaching, which states that, "Effective learning and teaching is informed through reflective practice and providers enable staff to engage in relevant, timely and appropriate professional development that supports students' learning and high-quality teaching […] Providers ensure that staff engage in self-reflection to appropriately inform their learning, teaching and assessment design and practice […] Providers offer opportunities for all those involved in learning and teaching to inform each other's practice and experience. […] throughout their careers, staff engage with CPD to develop and extend their teaching capabilities and reflect critically on their teaching practice."

3. They are also underpinned by the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), and the expectation that all colleagues involved in teaching and supporting learning should be engaging in continuing professional development (CPD) and evaluation of their pedagogic practice (UKPSF Dimensions of Practice: A5, K5 and V3).

Scope and purpose of reflecting on practice with colleagues

4. The primary focus of reflecting on practice with colleagues at the University is individual development as part of CPD. It should be viewed as a collaborative process that promotes reflection about learning and teaching practice linked to an individual's personal and professional development as an educator. The process aims to nurture a culture of colleagues supporting each other, discussing ideas, debating evidence and engaging in non-judgmental dialogue about their teaching and students' learning, which can be mutually beneficial and can help build a sense of belonging to a T&L community.

5. Within the agreed local structure, the 'practitioner' will choose an area of their practice they wish to focus on. They will work collaboratively with one or more 'facilitators' (within or beyond their discipline) to identify ways in which their individual practice can be enhanced. Experience has shown that facilitators can learn as much, if not more, from this process as the practitioners.

6. The process may take the form of a 'direct observation' of a taught (face-to-face or online) session, or go beyond direct observation to encompass a 'teaching conversation' on any of the wide range of learning and teaching practices. For example, design and planning of learning activities/modules/programmes; enhancing inclusive practice; decolonising the curriculum; design of assessment tasks/criteria; assessment feedback; effectiveness of supervision; or management and structure of online learning materials in Blackboard.

7. Reflecting on practice will enable colleagues to compile evidence of their effectiveness and impact in teaching and learning which can inform applications for internal and external teaching awards, promotion, and fellowship via the University's Advance HE accredited FLAIR CPD Scheme.

8. It should also result in the sharing of good practice and innovation at School and University-level and lead to tangible outputs such as teaching and learning enhancement activities. In this way, reflecting on practice will lead to the enhancement of teaching and learning more widely and to improvements in the student learning experience. An effective system will also provide clear evidence for quality assurance (QA) purposes, including (re-)accreditation by external bodies.

9. Reflecting on practice with colleagues should not involve summative judgements and is separate from formal performance management processes. However, the practitioner may use the outcomes of their reflection to inform Performance and Development Review Scheme (PDR) discussions.

University requirements

10. All Schools (or intra-School Departments where relevant) are required to operate a local structure for reflecting on practice with colleagues.

11. School Directors of Teaching and Learning (or Departmental Directors of Teaching and Learning as designated by the relevant School Directors of Teaching and Learning) (DTLs) will oversee the process at School level. At branch campuses, this responsibility is delegated to Heads of Section, who will report to DTLs.

12. All colleagues involved in delivering teaching and learning activities[1] must reflect on their own practice at least once each year.[2]

13. Colleagues enrolled on the University's Academic Practice Programme (APP) are required to provide evidence of 'direct observations' in their assessed work. In addition, colleagues who regularly contribute to the delivery of apprenticeship programmes are required to reflect on their practice specifically for this provision on an annual basis. These requirements should be considered when determining a local structure for reflecting on practice with colleagues.

14. Schools are free to choose an appropriate local structure for reflecting on practice with colleagues, taking into account their particular context.[3] Local structures must be clearly communicated to colleagues. For further information and advice, please refer to the *Guidance on reflecting on practice with colleagues*.

15. Teaching conversations should include opportunities to discuss and reflect on existing sources of student evaluation e.g. module evaluation data.

16. The detailed content of teaching conversations should remain confidential between the practitioner and facilitator, unless the practitioner chooses to share the information (for example, in the context of their PDR or as part of a case for promotion or qualification/membership of a professional body). Suggested pro-formas for completion by the facilitator are provided as Appendices 1 and 2 of the *Guidance on reflecting on practice with colleagues*. Use of these pro-formas is entirely optional, and Schools/Departments and colleagues may wish to adapt them for local use.
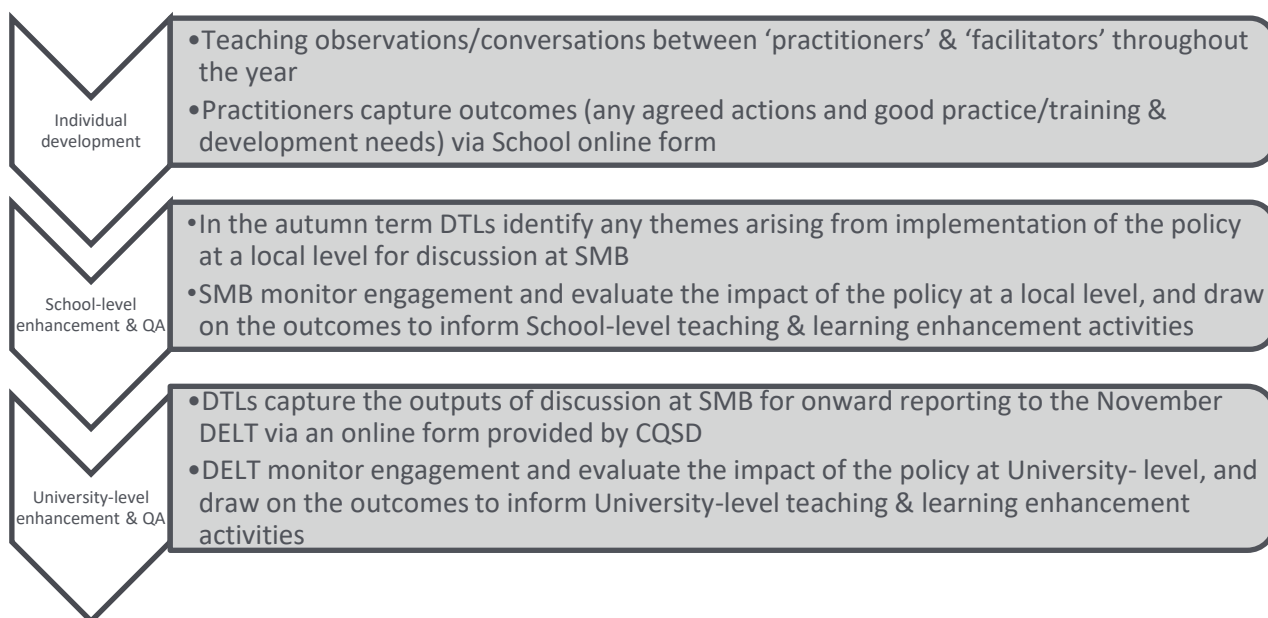
---

[1] For these purposes, involvement in teaching and learning activities should be understood in a broad sense to incorporate any activities which colleagues deliver to support student learning and assessment (see the UKPSF Areas of Activity undertaken by teachers and supporters of learning within HE), the precise nature of which will depend upon the teaching and/or learning support role of colleagues.

[2] This includes colleagues at branch campuses, part-time and sessional colleagues, graduate teaching assistants and postgraduate research students with regular and substantive roles in teaching and supporting learning, but excludes visiting staff. Colleagues in professional student support roles, for example technical staff, Liaison Librarians and Study Advisers are also encouraged to participate in order to promote reflection on their practice.

[3] For example, Schools could highlight a cycle of strategic themes aligned to the School Teaching Enhancement Action Plan (STEAP) priorities, from which colleagues could choose an area of focus. This could provide a mechanism for implementing local and university-wide priorities and provide evidence of impact but should not detract from the focus on individual development.

Reflecting on practice with colleagues

17. The practitioner must complete a brief online form which captures the activity that formed the focus of the discussion and the main outcomes (any agreed actions, good practice and training/development needs identified). A Microsoft Form template which DTLs should duplicate and adapt to their context enables automated collation of the information. Separate pro-formas are provided for Apprenticeship Tutors and colleagues on the APP.

18. During the Autumn Term, DTLs will complete an online form (provided by CQSD) which provides a short summary of the outcomes and impact of reflecting on practice in their School/Department during the previous academic year. An initial draft of overarching themes (rather than information relating to specific individuals) will be shared with, and discussed by, School Management Boards (SMB), who are responsible for ensuring that colleagues are engaging with the process at least once per year and for planning School-level teaching and learning enhancement activities.

19. School/Department-level reports will then be finalised and submitted online. A summary will be submitted by CQSD to the November meeting of the Sub-Committee on Delivery and Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (DELT) alongside School Teaching Enhancement Action Plans (STEAP) and other key quality assurance/enhancement reports. DELT will monitor the uptake and impact of the policy and discuss the wider dissemination of good practice and training and development needs at University level.

20. Summary: Purpose & Reporting of Reflecting on Practice with Colleagues

Individual development	• Teaching observations/conversations between 'practitioners' & 'facilitators' throughout the year • Practitioners capture outcomes (any agreed actions and good practice/training & development needs) via School online form
School-level enhancement & QA	• In the autumn term DTLs identify any themes arising from implementation of the policy at a local level for discussion at SMB • SMB monitor engagement and evaluate the impact of the policy at a local level, and draw on the outcomes to inform School-level teaching & learning enhancement activities
University-level enhancement & QA	• DTLs capture the outputs of discussion at SMB for onward reporting to the November DELT via an online form provided by CQSD • DELT monitor engagement and evaluate the impact of the policy at University- level, and draw on the outcomes to inform University-level teaching & learning enhancement activities

Version control

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Effective from	Next review	Keeper (responsible for policy maintenance and review)
1.0	14 July 2015	UBTL	2015-16 academic session		CQSD
2.0	August 2016	UBTL	2016-17 academic session		
3.0	8 June 2021	UBTLSE	2021/22 academic session	June 2024	