

 **FIREBRAND** | Apprenticeships

Observation Policy

June 2017

1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy sets out the Observation Framework in respect of all contracted provision that is delivered by Firebrand.
- 1.2. This document is designed to complement our over-arching Quality Framework
- 1.3. The observation process and management of the schedule will be the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Team and Quality Manager

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a formal framework for observations within Firebrand
- 2.2. Successful implementation of this policy will ensure that:
 - quality of provision is monitored and a consistent standard of delivery is maintained across the business.
 - outstanding practice is identified and shared.
 - weak practice is identified and addressed through the Quality Improvement Plan in order to ensure continuous improvement.

3. Frequency of Observations

- 3.1. Each staff member will be observed a minimum of twice in a 12-month period.
- 3.2. New members of staff will be observed within 3 months of their starting date.
- 3.3. Observations will be planned within an appropriate timeframe and indicated by a previous grade using the following rationale:
 - Grade 1 or 2 awarded will require an observation every 6 months.
 - Grade 3 awarded will require an observation every 3 months.
 - Grade 4 will require an observation monthly.
- 3.3 On completion of the observation, results including the date, grade and next planned observation must be entered on the Observation Schedule. The schedule will be monitored monthly by the Quality Manager to ensure that the observations are completed in a timely manner.

4. Preparation for Observation

- 4.1. The observer must give 48 hours notice to the staff member and the appointment must be confirmed in an email. This is also the opportunity to request any documentation that must be presented on the day of the observation.
- 4.2. Documentation may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Customer Initial Assessment
 - ii. Individual Learning Plans
 - iii. Action Plans
 - iv. Scheme of Work
 - v. Delivery materials
 - vi. Customer portfolio
- 4.3 If a staff member is absent on the scheduled day of observation a further 48 hours' notice is not required. An observation will be scheduled at the first available opportunity on their return to work.
- 4.4 The staff member must inform the learner/s that the session will be observed and inform of any adjustments that will be made to accommodate the observation. The observer may request some time to talk to the learner/s about their experience, time must be allowed for this to minimise disruption to the session.

5. Conducting the Observation

- 5.1. The observer must discretely position themselves during the session and must not interrupt unless there is a specific safety or contractual concern. The observation will last 45 minutes to 1 hour. If at this stage the observer feels that they have not seen sufficient evidence they may continue to observe up to a period of 90 minutes. During the observation detailed notes will be entered onto the observation document.
- 5.2. The staff member must introduce the observer to the learner/s before starting the session.
- 5.3. The observer may want to clarify some areas with the staff member. If time allows, this will happen during or straight after the observation, otherwise the observer will arrange an appropriate time to have a discussion.

6. Feedback following the Observation

- 6.1. The observer must provide verbal feedback at the earliest opportunity following the observation. If it is not possible to do so immediately, verbal feedback must be given within 48 hours.
- 6.2. A written observation report must be provided within 5 working days. At this stage a formal grade must be awarded to support the evidence recorded on the report.
- 6.3. Both the observer and the staff member will agree targets for ongoing development and sign and date the observation report. For tutors this may be trying out different materials or making adaptations to teaching methods. The staff member may decide to 'shadow' another tutor in their curriculum area or enrol for a teaching qualification. The observer will discuss the possibilities and agree the actions. Targets will be supported through ongoing staff reviews and observations.
- 6.4. Based on the grade awarded, the appropriate timeframe for the next observation will be agreed with the staff member.
- 6.5. If a staff member is awarded a grade 4, they will be revisited at an early stage, potentially within 4 weeks and a development observation will take place. After completion of the developmental observation the staff member should prepare for a graded observation by continuing with agreed development activities. The grade observation will take place within a further 4 weeks.
- 6.6. All documentation from observations will be sent to the Quality Manager and Lead IQA and the observation schedule updated.

7. Appeals

- 7.1. Staff members who wish to appeal an observation must do so initially with the observer. It is envisaged that immediate discussion will help to justify the grade and therefore reach a resolution.
- 7.2. Where a staff member is still not satisfied, a written appeal must be submitted to the Quality Manager. The written appeal must outline the rationale for appealing and include a copy of the observation documentation. The correspondence must also confirm that an initial meeting has taken place with the observer.
- 7.3. The observation will be moderated by the Quality Assurance Team and a response will be given in writing, within 1 month of the appeal submission.
- 7.4. If the member of staff is still not satisfied, a further observation will be conducted by a member of the Quality Assurance Team following the same process.

8. Moderation

- 8.1. Following completion of observations, reports and related documentation will be sent to the Quality Manager and Lead IQA. A sample of 10% of monthly observations will be moderated and feedback will be provided. Feedback will comment on the quality of documentation, evidence provided and the overall grade given.

9. Feedback

- 9.1 General feedback from staff members about their experience of the observation can help to improve and develop the process, as well as highlighting areas for further development of observers. A Feedback Form will be sent to all staff members who are observed, completion of the document is optional.

Annex 1: Observation Schedule

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Authorisation & Document Control

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Authorisation	
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Version History

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Draft	Barbara Turner	22/05/17	Draft for Approval (to replace previous policy)
V1	Barbara Turner	June 2017	Approved and branded