

# OBSERVATION FOR AUTHENTICATION OF PRACTICE

## SECTION 1 GUIDANCE

This form is required to authenticate practice for the award of Fellow of the HEA. It is also to be used by PGR students when applying for the award of Associate Fellow via the CPD route (See CPD Route Handbook).

You may choose the context for your observation. Whether you teach a large group in a lecture or a smaller group in a seminar, lab or practical session. The focus is to observe the teaching activity and process.

The observation process has four distinct phases:

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### 1. PRE-OBSERVATION

Before the event, you (the applicant) should discuss the following with the observer who will be a Fellow or Senior Fellow of the HEA and has received training on this process for authentication of practice:

- The context and objectives of the session, learner characteristics, level of teaching (L4-8)
- You should provide a plan for the session which identifies the learning outcomes and the teaching and learning activities to be used to enable learners to meet the outcomes
- Confirm the date, time and location of the session

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### 2. OBSERVATION

The observer makes notes on the observation form (section 2) during the session. The observer notes the things that went well and things that might be improved so that these can be discussed at the feedback meeting. The observer does not need to stay for the entire session but should stay long enough to be able to make a judgement on whether the objectives for the session have been achieved.

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### 3. FEEDBACK

A feedback meeting should be arranged for as soon after the observation as possible. The observation notes (including the UKPSF dimensions observed) are given to the applicant. Feedback should be constructive, honest and sympathetic. Section 3 is completed at this meeting by both parties.

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### 4. REFLECT, PLAN, ACT:

To complete the process the applicant should reflect on the process and what they have learned, identifying any actions for their future CPD.

The complete document is e-mailed by the applicant to the observer. The observer signs the document, converts it to a pdf and e-mails it back to the applicant.

The applicant uploads the file to their e-portfolio which is submitted for assessment.

**Failure to submit this form with the portfolio means that the portfolio is incomplete and will not be marked.**

## SECTION 2 TEACHING OBSERVATION (COMPLETED BY THE OBSERVER)

Please write a few comments in the sections below identifying the good practice demonstrated and any areas for further development. The prompts in italics are not intended to be prescriptive but will help to focus the observation on to the teaching, rather than the subject content. They may also be covered in the discussion/de-brief after the observation.

### 1. DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES IDENTIFIED BY THE OBSERVED COLLEAGUE

These will have been identified in the pre-observation discussion and should be recorded here.

To receive feedback on a training session on Mahara delivered to staff on the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP).

### 2. INTRODUCTION, CONTINUITY AND INTEGRATION OF THE SESSION

*Were the following explained? Aims and learning outcomes of session; continuity with past and future sessions; overall integration within the module; contribution to student's knowledge, skills or understanding is explained.*

The aims and learning outcomes of the session were clearly explained at the start of the session (K2). The aim was to train staff how to create the basic structure of a Mahara portfolio and then understand how to populate it. The training also included how to create a collection of pages and how to generate a unique URL. Although this training is a required element of the PGCAP course as staff must submit their portfolio using Mahara, Abigail made clear links to the other benefits of the training i.e. that staff could consider using Mahara as an assessment tool for their own students (K4). She also emphasised that the TEL team recommends Mahara thus reinforcing university commitments to digital literacy.

### 3. METHODS AND APPROACHES

*Were the methods appropriate to the group of learners and achievement of the LOs? Were the activities and resources helpful for learning? Were learners encouraged to take responsibility for their learning? Was feedback provided? Links to research where appropriate?*

After stating the objectives of the training, Abigail showed staff a finished Mahara portfolio. This was very useful as it enabled staff to see the end point and to start to imagine how they would structure their own portfolios. The mixture of verbal explanation and practical demonstration enabled Abigail to communicate the basic principles of Mahara extremely effectively (K1, K2).

#### 4. DELIVERY AND COMMUNICATION

*Was the presentation clearly audible and well-paced? Was the presentation structured and sequenced appropriately? Were key points emphasised, linked, sign-posted and summarised? Did audio-visual resources / media enhance communication? Were opportunities presented to clarify understanding? Was the environment managed effectively (health& safety, time-keeping, contributions, disruptions)?*

Abigail has a clear, positive delivery style. Her manner is warm and approachable and she dealt with questions well. The atmosphere of the session was appropriately informal and Abigail integrated instruction with essential recommendations such as the importance of keeping a backup of documents in Word (K2, V1).

#### 5. LEARNER ENGAGEMENT

*Was the general approach learner centred? Was there evidence of active learning? Was the learning environment generally positive and productive? Were different perspectives considered and respected? Was dialogue encouraged? Were learners engaged in all parts of the room and throughout the whole session?*

As this was a practical session in a computer room, staff were engaged throughout working on setting up their portfolios. Abigail gave individual support where needed, circulating the room to support less confident learners (V1).

#### 6. CONTENT

*Were the teaching methods employed appropriate to the intended LOs and content? Was the amount of content appropriate for the time available?*

The teaching methods, a combination of verbal explanation and practical demonstration, were entirely appropriate for this type of session (K1, K2). The hour available was effectively used and by the end all staff had created a basic structure for their Mahara portfolio. Staff were able to ask questions throughout and these were dealt with well.

## 7. SUMMARY

*To what extent were the LOs for the session achieved? How relevant were the chosen learning and teaching activities to achieve these outcomes? Was communication effective? Was teaching inclusive and considerate of learner diversity?*

The overall goal of creating the underlying page structure for a Mahara portfolio was achieved by all staff. Staff also understood how to make their pages into a collection/portfolio and also noted how to generate a unique URL. Teaching was inclusive in the sense that individual attention was given where needed at relevant points in the session. Clear explanation was provided throughout. Abigail also emphasised that staff could access further support with the TEL team at any point.

### **SECTION 3 FEEDBACK**

**Name of applicant observed: Abigail Shaw**

**Name of observer: Laura Minogue**

**Date of observation: 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

**Teaching Environment: M1 (training session for 10 members of staff)**

Summary of good practice (completed by observer)

Clear delivery and communication throughout the session

Good mixture of verbal explanation and practical demonstration

Appropriately informal and encouraging manner with staff

Suggestions for further professional development activities (completed by observer and observed together)

Consider a slightly slower pace of delivery

Think about being a little bit more concise in your explanations – sometimes less is more

It would be useful to produce a follow up resource for this session so that staff can refresh their memories and/or develop their Mahara skills.

#### SECTION 4 REFLECT, PLAN, ACT (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT)

In this section, the applicant reflects on the observation process and the written and oral feedback and writes a **BRIEF** self-evaluation summary of their strengths and areas for development.

##### SELF-EVALUATION OF MY STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

This particular session is one I have most often delivered to students, so to have the opportunity to structure it for staff was an interesting challenge, which I am pleased to have by and large met, however, after discussing the outcomes with Laura, I have a number of areas I would like to develop in regard both to this session as I will deliver in it future, and to my teaching style as a whole.

For me, in terms of exercising my strengths, this was a positive session with engaged learners with a variety of levels of experience with the software. The learners were mostly familiar with myself and my teaching style, and I appreciated the comment on my 'appropriately informal' delivery, as I tend to work with staff as my peers, and talk about how the inclusive 'we' work at St. Mary's. The varied experience and technical competence in the room allowed me to work 'across' the cohort's understanding of the software, bringing in different existing uses elsewhere in the university, which helped me demonstrate the value of using this particular piece of software over others. At some points I also had to exercise a certain amount of control in the room to ensure that those who were familiar with Mahara remained engaged, and kept on-task; I actually found this a useful measure of my own pace and relevance. I was happy with the amount of questions and interactions the group had, and when we got to the practical part of the session, it was easy to spend appropriate amounts of time with each of the learners, addressing their specific queries, but it was also easy enough to go back to the room as a whole when necessary.

With regard to development; firstly, Laura noted that the start to the session was done without any visual aids, with a rather off-the cuff introduction to what would take place. This was actually because, when I went to log on at the start of my presentation, the computer proceeded to update for ten minutes, making it impossible for me to deliver exactly as planned. I'm pleased to have been able to cover this, but, in terms of making the most of the hour for my learners, it would have been best if I had made an effort to come into the teaching space prior to the session and set myself up.

Secondly, whilst it was felt that my demonstrations were clear and did the job, if I had been running this session as part of a taught course, I would have "here's one I made earlier"-d a template I'd created prior, formulated precisely as the one the students were expected to create at an early point in the session. In this instance, Laura had to write out the structure and headings expected on the board to communicate her expectations for the format – when I next run this session, I would gather the information ahead of time and integrate it into my demonstration. This would allow learners to easily understand what was being asked of them, and, as the early practical part of the session involves their creating their own shells, it would've given them the opportunity to visually succeed immediately, by replicating the template precisely.

Finally, I will create an additional resource for learners to lean on after the session: there are a few counter/non-intuitive steps in the creation of Mahara content, and an immediate resource would enable those who are not confident "clicking around" to feel secure in working with the software on their own.

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## MY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Plan each session independently, ensuring I have the correct resources and any session-specific information integrated into them for before, during and after the session.  
Wherever possible, assess and test the teaching space before each session to ensure timeliness.  
Be mindful of delivery style, especially when things go off-plan, ensuring pace and amount of information is kept even and tangible.

Applicant's Signature: Abigail Shaw

Send this completed form to the Observer, who will sign it convert it to a pdf and return to you.

YOU must include the complete form with your portfolio submission for Fellowship.

Observer's signature: **Laura Minogue** FHEA

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2020