

Peer Observation of Teaching at Uva Wellassa University-Policy Document

1. Introduction

Peer observation is an integral part of the Internal Quality Assurance process of Uva Wellassa University (UWU) and it provides a means of obtaining feedback on the quality of teaching. It takes place between the Lecturer (Observee) and another colleague (Observer) who will attend the teaching session on invitation. Observer can provide feedback on what went well and suggest changes that might improve the teaching session. Observee also has the opportunity of asking questions from the observer on specific areas during the evaluation process.

The whole process of Peer observation aims at improving the quality of delivering of a particular degree program. The following sections of this document have been written in support of the implementation process of peer observation of teaching at UWU.

2. Peer observation- The policy

Peer Observation of Teaching at UWU is designed to maintain high standards of teaching through a process of self-regulation and mutual support within the Faculty/Department. The main focus of the process is professional development of staff through reflection and constructive feedback on academic teaching. The process also facilitates exchange of views, providing opportunities for staff to learn about and discuss new strategies alternative teaching approaches and participation in further training programs associated with the process. Peer observation process is facilitated and monitored by Faculty Quality Assurance Cell and report to the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU).

The process of Peer Observation of Teaching at UWU is based on the following principles:

1. Peer Observation is an evolving rather than a judgmental process.
2. Feedback given should be formative, not summative.
3. The process should be sufficiently flexible to respect the pedagogical differences between disciplines.
4. Outcomes are confidential to observer and observed and must be disengaged from rewards and penalties.

3. Peer observation- Implementing

Who will be observed?

The peer observation policy of UWU encourages its entire academic staff to participate in the process at least once a year. Where there is doubt, the decision should rest with the Dean of the Faculty/Head of the Department.

Who will observe?

There should be an element of choice for both observed and observer. Volunteers from within the Faculty will act as observers and should receive sufficient training and/or support before the peer observation process. Temporary Lecturers, Probationary Lecturers and Senior Lectures would expect to be observed by their peers. It might be appropriate in some instances to request an observation session from the Head of the Department in an event a suitable alternative was not found within the Department.

What will be observed?

The UWU peer observation policy recognizes “lectures” to be the form of teaching normally observed. However, other forms of teaching such as, tutorials, laboratory and field visits might alternatively be observed depending on circumstances.

4. Peer observation- Process

Observer and observee shall involve in the following process:

1. Initiating the process

The process initiate by a Lecturer (Observee) inviting a peer academic staff member (Observer) to sit on a teaching session by the Observee at a time convenient to both.

2. Pre-observation meeting

The Observer uses this meeting to discuss the purpose and structure of the teaching session and to agree on areas for comment, how to explain the observer's presence to the

students and whether the observer may ask students about their learning experiences. The outcome of this meeting should be a comprehensive plan to the peer observation process to avoid any distrust, embarrassment or confusion.

3. Observing the teaching session

The Observer should arrive on time and act as agreed in the pre-observation meeting. The Observer should use *Peer Observation of Teaching –Form for documentation* provided by the Department for the observation process, though the Observer may take additional notes if deemed necessary. If the observer desire further clarifications on the teaching session, those queries should be reversed for the post-observation meeting.

4. Post-observation meeting

This meeting should take the form of a friendly discussion and should not be viewed as a moment of delivery of a judgment. The conversation is likely to cover the following topics:

- What went well in the session? Why? How might the teacher build on this?
- What could be improved or developed? How might this be achieved?
- Other observations, comments, questions and suggestions from either party.

5. Record keeping

The UWU peer observation policy treat the outcome of the peer observation process as confidential and disengaged from rewards and penalties. All that will be recorded for Departmental is that x observed y on date z . Any other written notes, evaluation forms or checklists used during the observation process should be given to the Lecturer who has been observed at the conclusion of the Post-observation meeting.

6. Reporting

The Observer reports to the Head of the Department using *Peer Observation of Teaching - Form for reporting*, the conclusion of the process. This documented should be filed at the Department for future references.