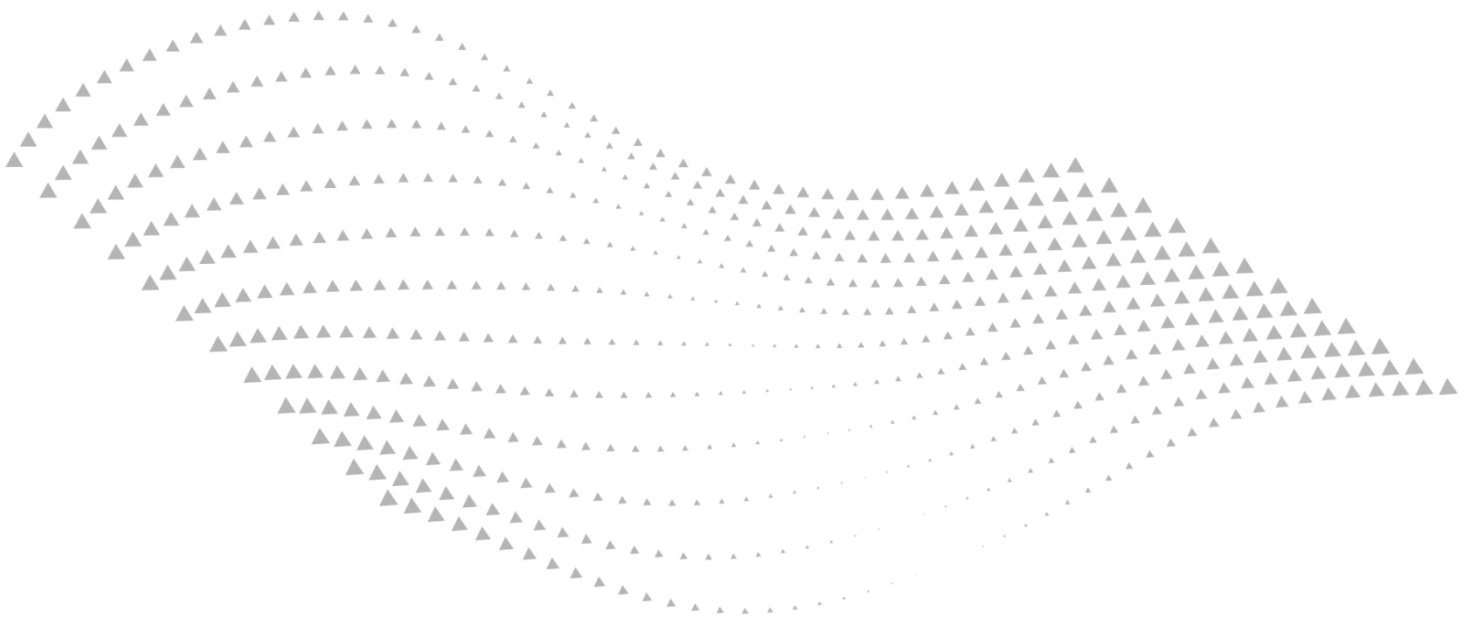


BIMM  
UNIVERSITY

A university  
for the creative  
industries

# Academic and Professional Services Staff Professional Development Handbook



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## Policy Statement

- BIMM University is committed to continuing professional development; this document lays that out.
- This policy applies to all academic and professional services staff who have passed their probation period and have over six months of continuous service.<sup>1</sup>
- We will review it every year.
- This policy does not form part of any staff member's employment contract, and the University may amend it at any time.

## Expectations – our Educational Values

Our [Higher Education Strategy](#) commits to the development of our academic faculty.

**Valuing our educators:** *We will recognise, develop and reward excellent educators across the University, at all career stages, through shaping our structures, policies and resources to achieve this. In addition, we will create an environment that fosters evidence-based innovation in educational practice, thus building both individuals and the University's reputation for educational leadership.*

We base our approach to faculty appointment and development on the following principles:

- Equality in the treatment of all faculty, regardless of job function, age, gender, ethnicity or disability.
- Effective selection and development of academic faculty that leads to the enhancement of the student experience.
- Transparency in procedures relating to appointment and development opportunities.
- Flexibility to allow faculty to maintain and develop their industry profile and to engage in scholarly activity and research.

## The Primary Objectives of Continuing Professional Development are as follows:

- To reflect the priorities of the University's strategic educational values and priorities.
- To enable faculty to perform their current roles with greater effectiveness and efficiency.
- To equip faculty for new and changing roles and facilitate career progression.
- To promote reflective practice, team building and successful sharing of best practice.
- To foster a positive culture of professional self-development, allowing faculty to achieve their full potential.
- To assure and enhance the quality of learning and teaching for our students.

## Leadership: BIMM University's Faculty Development Plan

The University's Higher Education Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee (HELTEC) formulates and oversees a University-wide staff development plan for academic faculty and staff interacting with students as part of professional student service teams. This plan is updated annually and overseen by the Associate Dean of Academic Staff Development, working closely with the Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching and collaborating with campus school teams.

The plan sets out aims, activities and outputs designed to achieve those aims, anticipated outcomes, and impact measures. Our stated policy is to take a flexible and holistic approach to faculty development to achieve an appropriate mix of qualified and experienced faculty in each school. To

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the Introduction to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (ILTHe), which is specifically designed as an induction for new teaching staff and staff required to undertake the PG Cert in their first year as a condition of employment.

enable this aim, we ask schools to aim to work towards and then maintain an overall average of 70% or above of teaching faculty holding a Postgraduate teaching qualification. The remainder of the faculty in each school holding other appropriate academic or professional qualifications/and or demonstrating significant industry/teaching experience. HELTEC will oversee a strategic approach to planning faculty development at the school level through CPD and at the group level through the provision of centralised training and the PG Cert. In addition, the Research & Enterprise Committee (REC) oversees the award of Postgraduate study bursaries to eligible staff.

## **Recruitment and Selection of Faculty**

The University takes the process of recruiting new staff very seriously. This process starts with a job description (describing the primary purpose, tasks and scope of the job) and a person specification (describing the person best suited to the role). The University will then advertise in one or more of the following ways to attract potential candidates:

- Post the vacancy internally.
- Advertise via the internet, including the University website.
- Advertise through local/national newspapers/ specialist or professional journals/specialist recruitment agencies.
- By introduction through existing members of staff.

The format for applications for all posts is online via [People HR](#), and candidates will be shortlisted by the relevant senior managers or their nominees. Successful candidates will be invited for an interview with the relevant school management team. Any offer made to a candidate will normally be subject to receiving satisfactory references and proof of qualifications. Interviews should include a pre-prepared presentation or, for teaching faculty, a micro-teaching session observed by interview panel members.

## **Induction**

Once recruited, you will be given details of your induction and initial development programme. As part of this induction, new teaching faculty will spend time with their Head of School and the relevant Course Leader(s). They will cover essential information with you and have a detailed discussion of your role and responsibilities.

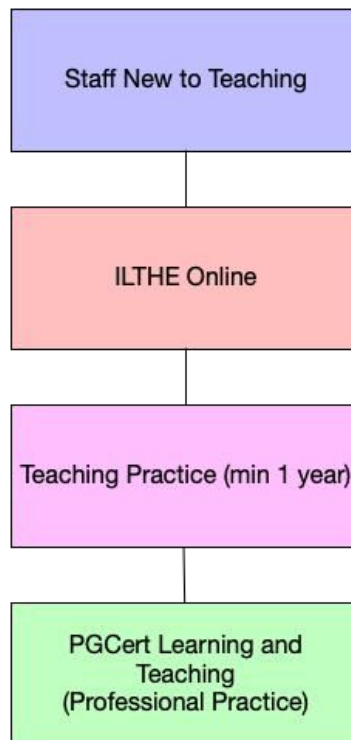
## **Appraisal of Faculty**

The University staff appraisal system links staff development and teaching practice, ensuring that your developmental needs are captured and acted upon. The appraisal system is owned, monitored and operated by the University's People Team, under the oversight of the People Director, and uses an externally provided online system, [People HR](#). The Faculty Deans hold responsibility for implementing staff development objectives, supported by the Heads of Schools throughout the University. Senior Managers may also draw on the expertise of the Associate Dean of Academic Staff Development/Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching, the University's People Team, and/or professional HR consultants where required.

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

It is customary in creative/performing arts and education fields that practitioners continue to develop their skills and knowledge throughout their professional careers. To meet our commitment to developing you, we provide a range of faculty development activities and programmes across the University, as detailed below. The University is also committed to supporting your personal and professional development by establishing peer support networks within and between the University's schools and campuses.

### Developmental Pathway for Faculty New to Teaching



The diagram above indicates the formal developmental pathways for faculty new to teaching within the University.

### Introduction to Learning & Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE)

If you are new to teaching, when you join us, we will provide you with a formal introduction to Learning & Teaching in Higher Education – the ILTHE Programme. This flexible, peer-supported online programme introduces you to the skills and knowledge required to teach at the Higher Education level. In addition, it ensures that you are fully aware of the University's approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. The ILTHE aims to support you to:

- Engage with core principles and practices for learning and teaching in the Creative Industries.
- Design and deliver a range of learning experiences, considering active and visible learning.
- Explore fundamental principles and practices of feedback.
- Evaluate your initial teaching experiences.

The ILTHE runs prior to and across the first Semester and is delivered via our Canvas VLE as a primarily asynchronous distance learning programme consisting of eight units covering the following topics:

- Community and values.
- Learning environments.
- Engaging your students in feedback processes.
- Lesson planning.
- Teachers as reflective practitioners.
- Peer observation.
- Challenging and visible learning.
- Expert teaching.

### **Annual School Based Professional Development**

The purpose of school-based professional development is to facilitate team building and address particular faculty development themes that have emerged from our quality assurance processes, including faculty and student feedback. School professional development events will be scheduled at the beginning and middle of each academic year, and it is expected that, where possible, you will make yourself available to participate in these opportunities to update your skills and knowledge and continue your professional development.

### **The University's Teacher Training Programme: PG Cert Learning & Teaching (Professional Practice)**

The University expects that teaching faculty with significant teaching hours (five or more hours per week averaged over their first year) will typically enrol on our in-house PG Cert at the beginning of their second year of employment with us. In addition, faculty on full-time, part-time or fractional academic contracts are expected as part of the requirements of their role to either have a Postgraduate teaching qualification or be willing to study for one. If they do not hold such a qualification, they will typically enrol on the PG Cert in their first year of employment at the University. Heads of School will oversee these expectations, and a conversation regarding this commitment will be conducted during your induction. Placement on the PG Cert is arranged by Heads of School, who can nominate faculty to enrol on the course.

The PG Cert is accredited by the [AdvanceHE](#) (the UK's member-led, sector-owned professional body that works with institutions and higher education worldwide to improve higher education for teachers, students and society) to provide a route to Advance HE Fellowship status for the University faculty. AdvanceHE Fellowship recognises a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education that meets the requirements of the [UK Professional Standards Framework for Higher Education](#) (PSF). Completing the PG Cert allows faculty to achieve recognition against Descriptor 2 (D2) of the PSF: recognising effectiveness in substantive teaching and supporting learning roles and demonstrating a broad understanding of effective approaches to learning and teaching support as a critical contribution to high-quality student learning. There are four categories of Fellowship: Associate Fellow (D1), Fellow (D2), Senior Fellow (D3) and Principal Fellow (D4).

## **CPD for More Experienced Faculty**

For more established and experienced faculty at the University, there is a range of CPD opportunities, as detailed in the following sections. Access to these opportunities can be arranged via Heads of School in consultation with the Associate Dean of Academic Staff Development, who manages the available places' allocations and the programmes' delivery schedule.

### **BIMM University CPD (AdvanceHE) Fellowship Programme**

Senior Fellowship is for those who demonstrate achievement of Descriptor 3 of the PSF. It is awarded in recognition of the sustained and effective work undertaken by individuals in the leadership of learning and teaching and in supporting the development of the practice of others in higher education.

Our CPD Senior Fellowship Programme is accredited by Advance HE and designed to support very experienced teaching practitioners (i.e., those who have been teaching in HE for more than six years) and who have leadership or mentoring roles within learning and teaching to gain recognition of their expertise. The support programme for this route is not a taught route (i.e., teaching you how to teach) but a space to reflect on your experiences, engage with other teaching practitioners and provide you with a Continuing Professional Development route to gain professional recognition as a Senior Fellow (SFHEA).

The CPD Fellowship Programme spans nine months. You will be required to assemble a 6,000-word written submission of reflective work that provides evidence of fully meeting the D3 descriptor statement of Senior Fellowship and is endorsed by the supporting statements of two referees.

There will be group workshops and one-to-one mentoring to support your application. The approach in both the workshop(s) and the mentoring support facilitates your reflection. There are no taught sessions or prescribed content. Instead, the approach is to guide scaffolded discussions to strengthen your reflection on your practice and assist you in making clear and direct connections between this and the dimensions of the PSF at the D3 descriptor level; to provide compelling evidence to support your application.

### **Postgraduate Study Funding Scheme**

The University is learning-focused and, as such, is committed to the support of its faculty in developing their expertise through appropriate and relevant training and study. However, this aim must be balanced with the need to allocate staff development funds carefully to ensure the most significant impact and that we treat all faculty equitably and fairly. Support for professional development may include financial support (contribution to course fees or fee waiver for a BIMM University course), study time allowances or other support arrangements that facilitate faculty engagement with Postgraduate study. In addition, we are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging applications from women and faculty from other underrepresented groups.

All current academic and academic support staff may be eligible for support, subject to qualifying application and approval. Decisions to support Postgraduate study will be made by a panel comprising members of the Executive Management Group, People Team, Finance Team and an academic faculty representative, drawn from the Research and Enterprise Committee (REC), using a set of written criteria (below) approved by REC. Their funding decisions are final and subject to budgetary approval. Conditions may also be attached to any offer of support.

## Criteria for Making Postgraduate Study Funding Awards:

- Funding is available to all academic and academic support staff members who have worked for the University for at least six months, and the employees' line manager must support applications.
- All applications for funding must be submitted using the application template, which must be completed in full and include all required signatures. Any incomplete applications may be returned to the applicant for completion or may be rejected.
- Applicants must provide sufficient detail on the course of study and what benefits its completion will bring to the University, and their role at the University, to allow the committee to make a judgement. Applicants should bear in mind that the committee has a diverse membership. Therefore, a clear and detailed explanation of the course or research proposed and its value to us as an institution is much more likely to lead to a successful outcome. If sufficient information is not provided, the application may be returned to the applicant for re-submission or rejected by the committee.
- Funding will be allocated proportionally based on the contractual status of each member of staff on a case-by-case basis. The committee will look to balance financial and other support bearing in mind the time staff will be required to commit whilst undertaking Postgraduate study.
- Funding is allocated on a reciprocal basis. In other words, although the University may benefit from staff undergoing further study, the individual staff member will also benefit and, therefore, both parties should contribute to the overall cost.
- Strategic objectives and financial constraints must also be considered when granting funding. For example, Postgraduate study not aligned with the core areas of scholarly or Student Life activity at the University may not be funded. Likewise, the committee may look to prioritise funding in specific priority areas or in particular campuses where funding levels have previously been low.
- The University is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, and the committee will bear this in mind this mission when making all funding allocations.

Application Forms for Postgraduate Study Support are available from [pgstudysupport@bimm.co.uk](mailto:pgstudysupport@bimm.co.uk).

## BIMM University CPD: MALT CI Modules:

Faculty can apply via their Head of School to enrol on specific modules from the MA Learning & Teaching in the Creative Industries course. More information on this can be found [here](#).

## BIMM University CPD: Advance HE External Examiner Professional Development Course

The External Examiner [PDC](#) is an online course designed and developed as part of the [Degree Standards Project](#), which is led by Advance HE and managed by the Office for Students on behalf of England and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland and Wales. The project has explored sector-owned processes focusing on the professional development of external examiners and is delivered by BIMM University faculty who Advance HE has accredited as trainers. The course is a stimulating opportunity for faculty to enhance their contribution to safeguarding UK higher education standards and improving the student experience through external examining. It is open to faculty who wish to become external examiners and experienced external examiners alike.

## AdvanceHE Fellowship - Direct Application at D2 (Fellowship)

As outlined above, the usual route for faculty to achieve recognition of Fellowship is completing the PG Cert programme. However, in some instances, faculty who hold a PG Cert from a non-accredited institution, or a University of Sussex or University of Middlesex PG Cert awarded before accreditation, may seek to apply for Fellowship via the direct application route. Faculty should contact their Head of School, who will work with the Associate Dean of Academic Staff Development to see if this route suits the individual concerned.

## **Peer Observation of Teaching Policy**

Our approach allows you to reflect and evaluate your learning, teaching and assessment practice. It, therefore, ensures alignment with the regulatory requirements of the Office for Students (OfS). As an organisation, the University places very high value on the quality of learning and teaching within its campuses. It utilises peer observation of teaching to provide opportunities for feedback, reflection, mentoring, and sharing good practice. We aim to develop a culture of critical self-reflection effectively supported by peer feedback. Written criteria on crucial aspects of practice to consider are provided to accompany feedback forms for use in peer lesson observations.

### **The Primary Objectives of Peer Observation are to:**

- Develop new teachers as pedagogical professionals in line with sector expectations and general and subject-specific educational scholarship.
- Ensure that experienced teachers are fully supported in their classroom practice and professional development.
- Maintain appropriate professional standards in line with the PSF and ensure and enhance the quality of the learning experience for all learners.
- Foster dynamic approaches to learning and teaching that are: student-centred, holistic, creative, and innovative.
- Recognise and value the variety and quality of learning, teaching and assessment practice.

## **Implementation**

The Higher Education Learning, Teaching & Enhancement Committee (HELTEC) holds responsibility for implementing these objectives in Higher Education delivery. HELTEC works with Undergraduate and Postgraduate communities to ensure that the criteria and approaches used are suitable and effective in achieving the goals of this observation policy, considering the relevant educational and legislative frameworks and approaches to teaching and learning specific to each area.

## **Observations - Operation**

The operation of local peer lesson observation schemes is the responsibility of the Heads of School. However, it is recommended that all University faculty will be provided with at least one observation opportunity during a three-year observation cycle. These observations will be undertaken by members of a team of observers on each campus, trained and supported by their Head of School.

## **Training**

Faculty acting as observers must undertake training and regular refresher sessions to ensure they are up to date with the current scheme and to develop their practice as observers in facilitating reflective dialogue in support of the teachers they observe. Faculty new to observation must co-observe until they can work autonomously. The Observations Working Group, chaired by the Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching, and reporting to HELTEC, will work to support the Head of Schools in their

approach to training and delivery.

## Reporting

Observers will share observation reports with their Head of School. In addition, key themes emerging from campus observations will be included in an annual report by the Head of School to the Observations Working Group, which will produce a report for Semester two and Semester three HELTEC meetings.

## Cross-Campus Collaboration and Sharing of Good Practice

School teams are encouraged to work collaboratively to find opportunities for faculty to observe teaching in other University campuses outside of their home campus, share good practices and enhance the connections between members of the broader University community of practitioners across subject areas and locations. All faculty are encouraged to observe their peers when they wish to, and colleagues at all organisational levels may drop in to observe teaching. Lecturers and Observers should also be encouraged to feed into the observation working group via their campus Head of School to contribute to the ongoing development of observation practice at the institution.

## Peer Observation Process

- Observers should contact the Lecturers they are observing and discuss the process with them, and agree on a lesson to be observed and a time when the Lecturer and Observer can meet to discuss the Observer's feedback and agree on developmental actions.
- The Lecturer should provide a lesson plan to the Observer ahead of the lesson. The observation should cover the entire lesson (unless there is a reason for not doing so) to ensure that there is a full consideration of all aspects of the student experience.
- In the follow-up meeting, the Observer and Lecturer will discuss the Observer's feedback (Medal and Mission) and agree on specific actions. The Observer will update the form and share this with the Lecturer. The Peer observation form and guidance are reproduced in Appendix 1.

## Self-managed Opportunities for Professional Development, Research and Consultancy

The University is committed to supporting all faculty in their continued personal and professional development, and often this development is self-managed with the support of line management. In line with the University's Higher Education Strategy, *'we will create an environment that fosters evidence-based innovation in educational practice, thus building both individuals and the University's reputation for educational leadership.'* Faculty are encouraged through self-managed professional development to gain academic qualifications at the Postgraduate level and thus engage with research and scholarly enquiry. Further faculty development to earn Master's Degrees and Doctoral qualifications is also valued and actively supported.

Faculty are also encouraged to take on roles such as external examiners, validation and approval panel members, and educational consultancy. We offer training for external examiners through the [External Examiner Professional Development Programme accredited by Advance HE](#) (PDP). The design of the PDP reflects an active learning approach, with an emphasis on valuing participants' experiences and prior knowledge. It is equally relevant for aspiring, new or experienced examiners. The course runs over two consecutive days online (in a blended mode requiring engagement with the AdvanceHE VLE to work through a number of preparatory exercises before the two days of intensive training) at least once each academic year. The Dean of Learning, Teaching and Research and the Associate Dean of

Academic Staff Development facilitate it. Course participants will:

- Gain an understanding of the role of the external examiner as articulated in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education.
- Consolidate their understanding of the nature of academic standards and professional judgement and explore the implications for external examining.
- Develop their ability to use evidence-informed approaches to contribute to impartial, transparent judgements on academic standards and enhance student learning.

Academic faculty may also research as part of the PG Cert or outside of that programme if appropriate ethical and professional standards are met. Any research projects involving University students and/or faculty should be put forward for ethical approval through the Ethical Review Process, managed by the Ethical Approval Sub-Committee of the Research and Enterprise Committee (REC). Our ethical approval policy is [here](#), and ethical approval forms can be downloaded [here](#). The University is not externally research-funded. Still, we offer research support through a small budget to buy faculty time for approved research projects. Such projects should also be submitted for approval to the Research Funding Approval Panel using the appropriate form. Forms are available from: [researchfunding@bimm.co.uk](mailto:researchfunding@bimm.co.uk).

Arrangements for individual professional development/consultancy/research/Postgraduate study are negotiated individually between faculty and their Head of School. Once faculty have discussed their proposal with their Head of School and received formal confirmation of support, the submission is then reviewed by the appropriate committee or panel as laid out below:

- **Research project funding and Classroom-based action research projects** – Research Funding Approval Panel: [researchfunding@bimm.co.uk](mailto:researchfunding@bimm.co.uk)
- **Postgraduate study funding applications:** [pgstudysupport@bimm.co.uk](mailto:pgstudysupport@bimm.co.uk)
- **PG Cert Learning & Teaching (Professional Practice), BIMM University CPD Fellowship Programme, and external examining or consultancy** - please speak to your Head of School/ line manager, who will advise you on the process.

## APPENDIX 1:

### BIMM University Peer Lesson Observation Form

<b>Lecturer:</b>					
<b>Observer:</b>					
<b>Subject / class taught:</b>		<b>Type of observation:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Seminar/workshop <input type="checkbox"/> Other practice	<b>Date:</b>	

The main aims of our teaching observations are:

- To give the observed Lecturer the opportunity to share and discuss their teaching in a safe, supportive space with an experienced observer
- To help the observed teacher identify their next area for deliberate practice.

The focus of the activity is on how effectively students are learning, and we suggest giving specific examples from the observed session to support feedback comments.

<b>General reflection</b>	<p>How was the learning experience for the students overall?          What was helpful or interesting from the feedback conversation with the Lecturer?</p>
<b>Medals</b>	<p><u>What worked well in the lesson?</u>          What strengths (big or small) did you see?          Why?          What effect did these actions have on student learning?</p>
<b>Mission</b>	<p>What didn't work so well in the lesson?          Why?          What effect did this have on learning?  <u>What specifically can be done to improve, in future practice?</u>          What might be getting in the way of improvement?</p>

<p><b>Deliberate Practice - this is a guide for the discussion between Lecturer and Observer.</b></p>	<p><i>What have you agreed is the one most significant area for development to deliberate practice?</i></p> <p><i>Why?</i></p> <p><i>What benefits might this have compared to other things?</i></p> <p><i>What are the agreed recommendations as specific actions for improvement in this area?</i></p> <p><i>How and where can these be practiced?</i></p> <p><i>How will the Lecturer know when they have improved?</i></p> <p><i>Where could the Lecturer get feedback / support in this?</i></p>
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**Criteria: key aspects of practice for Observers:**

The criteria below guide observers and are aligned with the key dimensions of the UK [Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education](#).

- **Subject knowledge**  
Students and Lecturers communicate using a sound and appropriate degree of subject knowledge to enable and support learning.
- **Student engagement**  
Students are interested, engaged and motivated to give appropriate attention and effort.
- **Learning Outcomes and Alignment**  
The session is demonstrably linked to the module learning outcomes and has clear lesson outcomes which are explained to the students.
- **Student Learning and Activities**  
Students are actively engaged in learning through an appropriate range of learning activities: student learning is differentiated where appropriate, and learning checks occur throughout the session.
- **Formative Assessment and Feedback**  
Students are provided, where relevant, with appropriate opportunities for tutor/peer feedback and self-assessment.
- **Level of Challenge, Rigour and Stretch**  
The content and delivery of the session are intellectually stimulating and/or technically demanding and challenge students to do their best work.
- **Learning Environment and Classroom Culture**  
The Lecturer establishes an appropriate classroom culture and etiquette, including managing the room and ensuring all students are positively engaged in the learning experience.
- **Physical resources**  
The session takes place in a location that is appropriate to the requirements of the session and conducive to effective learning, including being equipped with the required specialist learning resources (note – this aspect will often be outside the Lecturer’s control, so concerns regarding resources should be raised directly with the Campus Head of Learning & Teaching or Head of Education).

