

# UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

## Peer Dialogue on Teaching Policy

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| Policy Name: <b>Peer Dialogue on Teaching Policy</b>             |            |  |                       |
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| Date issued  |            | 03 July 2019   |                       |
| Approving body/ bodies   |            | SLEEC, 10 April 2019<br>Education Committee, 11 June 2019<br>Senate, 03 July 2019  |                       |
| Related Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations, Policies and Guidance |            | Good practice guidance to follow   |                       |
| Equality Screening Form submission date and outcome              |            | To follow  |                       |
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| Current Version Number   | 1.0        |  |                       |
| Date of Last review  | April 2019 |  |                       |
| Date of Next review  | April 2021 |  |                       |
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| Amendment History  |            |  |                       |
| Version No.  | Date       | Summary of amendments (if no change, write NA)   | Author                |
| 1.0  | 04/2019    | Original policy developed by the WIHEA Learning Circle and recommended by SLEEC for Senate's approval.   | WIHEA Learning Circle |
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### Context

The University puts in place a number of mechanisms to support the initial and ongoing development of individual teaching practice. One such mechanism commonly recognised in UK higher education is the observation of teaching practice by peers in order to inform a member of staff's own reflection and enhancement. This policy sets out the University's approach to and expectations around this following a period of policy development undertaken by a WIHEA Learning Circle on Peer Observation and as approved by Senate in June 2019.

### Policy expectations

The University has formally agreed the following as minimum expectations:

1. The University shall operate 'Peer Dialogue on Teaching' schemes in each academic department to support the development of individual teaching practice. Academic departments may include peer observation of teaching or learning resources within their Peer Dialogue on Teaching schemes but this may be supplemented or replaced by other forms of discussion around teaching and teaching practice.
2. The University requires all staff who teach on foundation, undergraduate or postgraduate taught courses to participate at least annually in Peer Dialogue on Teaching activities, either as an observee, an observer, a participant in discussions relating to enhancement of teaching practice, or similar, or any

combination of these. It is normally expected that hourly paid staff and PGR students who teach and make a substantial contribution to a module are included in peer dialogue arrangements.

3. Each academic department shall articulate and agree the detail of its Peer Dialogue on Teaching scheme, ensuring that the scheme meets the policy expectations above and is informed by the guiding principles below. Details of the scheme shall be communicated effectively to both students and staff to ensure confidence in peer dialogue as the basis for enhancing quality, and shall be shared with the University's Education Policy and Quality team when established and when changed.

### **Guiding principles**

Based on extensive research of academic literature on peer observation and consultation within the University, the following guiding principles have been formally agreed and should normally inform the nature and operationalisation of each academic department's scheme:

4. Peer Dialogue on Teaching schemes should be formative in nature and place emphasis on their potential for staff development in an environment where individuals learn from each other, and the wider teaching community, to enhance the student experience. There should be a clear separation between Peer Dialogue on Teaching as a formative, teacher development process and other, separate systems of quality assurance and performance management.
5. Peer Dialogue on Teaching schemes should be embedded within a culture that values teaching, and such schemes should sit alongside other measures designed to enhance teaching practice and provide support for members of staff who teach.
6. Peer Dialogue on Teaching reports should be kept confidential to participants, although a record that Peer Dialogue on Teaching has taken place should be required by the Department.
  - a. Departments could consider using a form to record Peer Dialogue on Teaching participation that allows participants to record an agreed statement of examples of good practice or requests for further support/development.
  - b. Participants should be permitted to use Peer Dialogue on Teaching reports in applications for promotion, HEA fellowship and similar, and in nominations for the Warwick Award for Teaching Excellence (WATE), provided this is done with due respect for the other participants in the Peer Dialogue on Teaching process.
7. Examples of good practice emerging from Peer Dialogue on Teaching could usefully be disseminated, with the consent of participants, across the department within which the activity took place, and more widely.
8. Participants should be encouraged to reflect upon the insights gained from Peer Dialogue on Teaching and to discuss developmental opportunities and further support for teaching, for example, in their annual Personal Development Review (PDR) meeting.

### **Relationship to policy on academic probation**

The University's employment policy framework includes a requirement that some newly appointed academic staff complete a probation period as a condition of employment. Where a member of staff is required to complete a formal development programme which includes an observation of their teaching, this may count as fulfilling the requirements of this policy where such a provision is explicitly detailed in the hiring department's Peer Dialogue on Teaching scheme.

### **Implementation**

In initially developing and approving this policy, the University recognises that its implementation will occur gradually over a period of time and that academic departments will be starting from different points. While some departments will progress at a faster pace, it is expected that all academic departments will, as a minimum, have agreed and published their scheme by January 2020, and that all staff who teach will have engaged at least once by the end of the academic year 2020/21.

The University will publish guidance and resources for departments and staff involved in designing, managing and participating in Peer Dialogue on Teaching schemes. This will provide further detail on how schemes can be operationalised in line with the guiding principles set out above.

The Academic Development Centre will develop support above and beyond guidance documents for those staff wishing to establish or enhance their approach to observing and constructively feeding back on their colleagues' teaching practice.

The University's quality assurance and enhancement processes will be used to monitor engagement with this policy and to support the continuous improvement of each department's scheme. In the first instance, this will include consideration of each department's progress towards the publication of its scheme during the autumn term Teaching Excellence Group meetings in 2019/20.

### **Policy ownership and maintenance**

This policy is ultimately owned and sanctioned by Senate. Senate's Student Learning Experience and Engagement Committee (SLEEC) has responsibility for reviewing the policy at least every two years and for making recommendations to Senate on any revisions required. SLEEC has delegated authority on Senate's behalf to issue and revise guidance on the operationalisation and interpretation of this policy, which it may discharge through its Chair(s) or Secretariat at its discretion.