Liverpool Hope University

Peer Enhancement Policy

(Learning and Teaching Development)

Peer Enhancement at Liverpool Hope University

Preamble

Liverpool Hope University intends and plans to maintain a highly supportive structure for the development of learning and teaching across the university. One part of this is the operation of a process of Peer Enhancement. The arrangements for this process are constantly kept under review and, where necessary, revised in the light of experience in ways designed to enhance overall provision.

The following document has been informed by feedback and consultation with the academic community of scholars with reference to the former Peer Observation (from 2014) process and represents an update of practice in line with contemporary inclusive enhancement processes. The process is intended to be carried out annually with a focus on mutual support, the enhancement of learning and teaching practice and the wider dissemination of good practice. In consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) it was determined that this document should be considered by Learning Teaching Development with a view to a recommendation being made for the adoption of this policy to Senate in December 2022.

It is important to note that this policy relates to Peer Enhancement. However, it is a core principle of governance at Liverpool Hope that a high degree of responsibility for academic quality lies with the relevant Heads of Schools and Subjects or those charged with similar seniority. It is therefore these individuals who must agree the particular arrangements for Peer Enhancement in his or her area of responsibility.

It is important also to note that the document here outlined is not part of formal performance management other than insofar as it may be used as evidence that a Peer Enhancement event has taken place. This document will hence not be made available as part of performance management unless the person reviewed wishes to submit it as part of their portfolio. In the relatively unusual cases where teaching practice becomes a matter of concern, a formal process of review, which will be by a line manager, is followed.

Please note that in the case of colleagues in Teacher Education a different process is used. This is because there are Ofsted-related requirements that govern Peer Enhancement and Observation of all those who are involved in the delivery of 'teacher training' (to use the Ofsted speak). Learning Teaching Development periodically reviews those arrangements, so as formally to approve them as an alternative to what is outlined in this policy.

For clarity, those who will see the completed record/reflection sheet are:

- Both parties involved in a Peer Enhancement event;
- Their immediate line managers;
- The annual performance reviewer (though this will again normally be the immediate line manager) if the relevant academic staff member indicates that it is their desire;
- The University Executive Manager or someone appointed by them, who is responsible for collation of completed forms;
- The co-ordinator for staff development (who is based in the Personnel Office), who may use this information in the context of staff development planning;
- The Chair of School/Department Academic Committees who will present a timely (before the end of the academic year) anonymised overview report for discussion, highlighting good practice and innovation, [Form below] within the relevant School/Department, within Learning and Teaching Development and the wider in the University.

Peer Enhancement: Policy and Practice

Introduction

In the continued pursuit of teaching excellence, Liverpool Hope University operates a Peer Enhancement scheme based on collegiality and reflectivity which is developmental in nature. The purpose is to provide constructive feedback to individual academic staff to enable them to develop and enhance their teaching (rather than make evaluative judgements about teaching quality) and for teams to develop and share best practice. It is important that the University is clear about the purpose of the Peer Enhancement Scheme as there are many different aims.

The University sees Peer Enhancement as integral to meeting the targets set out in its Learning and Teaching Strategy and there is recognition of peer enhancement processes as an essential factor in staff development which should help academic staff to develop their own learning as well as enhance the learning of others.

While the University has operated a form of Peer Observation process for many years, it considers that now (December 2022) is a good time to bring its practice up-to-date and to respond to feedback from a wider consultation of university leadership and the academic body itself in creating a revised process. It is reinforced that all teaching staff (full-time, part-time, associated lecturers, hourly paid, new, and experienced, on all campuses) are involved in a Peer Enhancement event at least once in an academic year.

The University needs to assure itself that all teaching staff take part in the Peer Enhancement process regardless of their employment contracts to ensure that we are providing both the most supportive environment for our teaching staff and also the best possible learning experience for our students by providing this opportunity for continuing professional development.

1. Benefits

The University supports Peer Enhancement because a well-thought-out process can potentially deliver a wide range of benefits. It can:

- place teaching in the public domain;
- be a supportive and constructive, practical, collegial activity;
- motivate all those involved;
- develop awareness that 'problems' in teaching are shared by others and that solutions can be found with others;
- provide new ideas and skills;
- build awareness of the value of, and skills in, critical reflection and reflective practice;
- reveal 'hidden' or unconscious behaviour;
- stimulate discussion about teaching and learning within teams;
- develop a sense of collegiality and an environment which values the sharing of experiences and ideas through teaching discourse;
- promote self-reflection and self-assessment;
- provide new insights and ideas;

- open up the private teaching space to others;

- support continual improvement;

- reassure highly self-critical teachers;

- provide feedback on innovative teaching methods;

- allow changes to be made based on evidence;

- provide evidence of teaching teams as self-critical and reflective communities.

- contribute to the dissemination of good and innovative practice

- provide new impetus and focus within the Communities of Practice

- build a strong foundation to improve NSS and TEF contributions

2. Overarching Objectives

Peer Enhancement at Liverpool Hope is designed therefore to:

- assist in providing a high-quality educational experience for students;

- emphasise the importance attached to the quality of teaching;

- encourage all staff to reflect on the effectiveness of their own teaching and identify their development needs;

- foster discussion and dissemination of good practice;

- increase staff awareness of the student learning experience;

- identify any issues and put in place an action plan to address them;

- help staff prepare for external inspections and review/audit.

3. Principles For Practice

- The Peer Enhancement system is based on a developmental model recognising that professional practice can always be further improved and that there is benefit in the wider sharing of good practice;

- Colleagues are encouraged to discuss arrangements for Peer Enhancement with the HOD, or other senior manager in the case of Education, who will approve the match up of individual academics;

- The why, when, what and how of the Peer Enhancement should be agreed in advance, between the parties involved;

- The process is threefold, a pre-meeting (either Face-to Face or Virtual) where the parties agree the agenda for the enhancement event, the Enhancement event itself, and a follow up event to discuss issues deriving from the event and the agreed agenda. Feedback and developmental needs should be formally recorded on the relevant form to support the participants' continuing professional development and planning;

- As noted above, Peer Enhancement is not linked to appraisal, promotion or performance review although it is a requirement of the Performance Review process that all teaching staff have participated in a formal Peer Enhancement event during the year;

- New staff may also have observations by their mentor or Head which do not form part of this process.

- What constitutes good teaching and what creates an effective learning environment should always be debated and diversity should be valued.

4. Procedure

The process outlined here, represents a development of the Peer Observation system that has been operating in a large section of the University. It has as its goal to be something academics and leadership see as useful and fit for purpose.

We are recommending this for approval at the next meeting of Senate.

1. All staff who teach should be involved in two Peer Enhancement events annually with different partners, alternatively as host (the person running the session or activity) and guest (the person attending the session or activity). These could be lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, performances, or relate to other important teaching activities e.g. assessments, support materials developed, blended activities, use of Moodle etc.

2. The Peer Enhancement Event will probably work best if staff from cognate subject areas are matched up, though we propose that once every three years a wider mix across subjects and Schools is organized, allowing for broader influences and exposure to different practices.

3. Peer Enhancement is a threefold process: a pre-meeting, the event itself and a follow-up meeting. We recommend that all three 'meetings' are face-to-face, though the pre-meeting and follow-up meeting may be conducted virtually, if workload or timetabling make meeting in person difficult. The main Peer enhancement Event must be Face-to-Face. All parts of the process must be officially scheduled with dates and times and recorded on the proforma.

4. No staff will be linked up with someone from their own subject for Peer Enhancement except by exceptional permission by the Head of School or chair of School Academic Committee.

5. Hourly paid staff will be expected to be part of Peer Enhancement.

6. There is no hierarchy within the process. Staff of different grades will be matched up according to the discretion of the Head of School or Chair of School Academic Committee, or someone appointed by them for this process.

7. Selection should normally be done randomly within each School/Department and the process will be monitored by the School or Departmental administrators.

8. Staff will be notified of their pairing and, broadly speaking, when the Enhancement event should be completed.

9. Once the members of staff are paired they will be expected to make contact and arrangements for the threefold Enhancement process, initially agreeing the date and time of pre-meeting, which will be communicated to the Dean's office for monitoring purposes.

10. At the pre-meeting the two members of staff should agree what aspects of teaching and learning that they wish to focus on. The two members of staff may have different things they wish to learn and discuss. Section1 of the form should capture this;

11. The main Enhancement Event itself should be a mutual learning and enhancement event, not an

observer/observee session.

12. Following the Enhancement event there should be a follow-up meeting to review the session and complete Sections 2 and 3 of the form. Please note that the purpose of the meeting is to enter into a mutual dialogue about what both parties learned from the session not to appraise or assess it;

13. The completed form should then be returned via email to the School/Departmental Administration Office;

14. The completed forms will be analysed by the School/Department Academic Committee who will then abstract key themes which will be presented in a report for wider dissemination across the School/Department and forwarded to the Director of Learning and Teaching Development. The overview report will be based around the following areas:

- Identify development and training needs
- highlight good practice
- raise learning and teaching issues of relevance across the University

15. The data will also be used as part of the Annual Monitoring Process of each Subject/School/Department and for university Quality Assurance purposes;

16. Data will be anonymised and no individuals will be named in these reports;

17. If you have any questions about the Peer Enhancement process, then you should discuss these with your Head of Subject or the Chair of your School Academic Committee.

Peer Enhancement Record and Reflections

Host name and title: *[insert here]*

Guest name and title: *[insert here]*

Section1 – Pre-meeting

Date and time of pre-meeting

Provide a short summary of the agenda and goals for the forthcoming Enhancement Event	What type of teaching activity will form the main Enhancement Event, *e.g, lecture, seminar, tutorial, workshop, lab, on-line learning, VLE learning*
Host: What specific areas of your teaching and learning would you like to discuss or receive feedback on? *e.g. My posture, pacing, slide clarity, a demonstration of effective small group work; an insight into online teaching principles; an understanding of the structure of an effective lecture;*	**Guest:** What specific areas of teaching and learning would you like to learn from by attending the session? *e.g. my own ability to encourage group discussion and sharing ideas from elsewhere; feedback on the structure of my lecture, pacing, inclusive classroom, and suggestions on how to improve students' contributions;*

Section 2 - Reflection following the Enhancement Event

Date of main Enhancement Event:

Date of Follow-up Meeting   8

HOST Reflections on your own practice from the conversation following the Enhancement Event.	**GUEST Reflections** on your own practice from the conversation following the Enhancement Event.
e.g. I learned that I have a tendency to hurry when students do not answer my questions – we discussed about taking longer pauses and feeling he silence	*e.g. I learned that I pack too much into my own lectures and should use more space for exploration with students*

Section 3: Agreed ideas, practices and innovations for wider dissemination and training

Peer Enhancement School/Departmental Report Form
School/Department:
Development and training needs:
Good practice:
Learning and teaching issues for the wider university
Other issues you wish to raise with L & T as a result of the Peer Enhancement Process:
Signature of Chair of Academic Committee:
Date: