The background features a large, stylized 'TEC' logo. The 'T' is blue with a white outline, the 'E' is light blue with a white outline, and the 'C' is purple with a white outline. There are also faint, larger versions of the 'TEC' logo in the background.

Evaluation of HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy 20/21

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Revision History

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V1	Full Replacement		

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1. Introduction

This policy supports the TEC Partnership strategic priorities as identified within the 20/21 Strategic Plan and the 20/23 HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy:

- Outstanding learner success is our number one priority
- To sustain and enhance a high performing organisational culture which embraces accountability and ownership
- To ensure the group is financially strong and able to invest in enhancing the Group's infrastructure and student resources
- To ensure the offer meets the needs of the local and regional economy

We provide Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment across the Partnership by inspiring our HE learners to achieve, and in turn to develop them as practitioners and employees with the skills to succeed. This policy outlines a professional and developmental process that encourages sharing of good practice and an action planning process that empowers HE staff to be the best that they can be.

We aim to be:

Recognised locally, regionally and nationally for providing exceptional teaching and learning which enables learners at all levels and in all phases to excel technically, vocationally or academically, grow as individuals and be ready for the next phase of their educational or industrial journey.

We are committed to aligning all courses, teaching, learning and assessment so that all graduates have developed the attributes expected of a 'TEC Partnership Graduate', namely:

Fortitude and Criticality <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adaptability to changing situations• Being productively disruptive• Preparing for unknown futures• Resilience• Finding alternative solutions to problems	Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confidence in communication• Digital skills and adaptability• Time Keeping• Self-Presentation
Teamwork <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human interaction skills• Leadership and followership skills• Project development and/or management	Personal Values <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional attitudes and values• Ethics and morals• Self-Care and care of others

2. Context

The Office for Students (OfS) recognised the TEC Partnership as ranking TEF* Silver in 2019. In order to consolidate that status and improve to TEF Gold this policy will enable us to create an environment where innovation is pursued; creativity is the norm and technology enhanced learning is embraced by all HE teachers. This Policy focuses on developing the quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment in HE. The rationale behind this policy is in alignment with the current UK Quality Code for Higher Education and leading edge thinking in quality improvement.

**Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework*

It is the TEC Partnership's aim to ensure that all students have an excellent learning experience with staff and students having high expectations and aspirations to be successful. The principles of inclusion and fairness underpin our work on teaching, learning and assessment and the learner involvement strategy is a key component in developing our approach.

3. Purpose

Learners are at the heart of every TEC Partnership initiative and this is reflected in our mission: 'To enrich the lives of all by providing high quality education and training'. The purpose of this policy is as follows:

- To improve HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment throughout the TEC Partnership in order to provide a consistently exceptional learning experience for students
- To recognise, disseminate and promote innovative and outstanding practice in pedagogy and research
- To support the creation of individual, team and Curriculum Area staff improvement plans
- To foster a culture of transparency, trust and innovation so that staff feel empowered and able to work together to develop a community of practice which enriches teaching, research and scholarship and improves student outcomes
- To ensure exceptional practice in the development of graduate employability skills including digital skills
- To ensure strong practice in promoting and embedding inclusion and valuing diversity
- To ensure technology enhances, improves and elevates learning, teaching and scholarship.
- To ensure the HE Learner voice is a driving force for quality improvement
- To provide a broad and rich evidence base for evaluation of the quality of Higher Education across the TEC Partnership
- To evaluate the quality of education with our staff and students as partners.
- To ensure that our practices are fully compliant with the UK Quality Code for HE and our conditions of registration with the Office for Students.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all types of HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment within the Partnership, this may include:

- Distance learning
- Classroom based provision including work related learning
- Work based and commercial
- Subcontracted provision
- Online and remote provision
- Additional learning support
- Tutorials
- Enrichment/ enhancement activities
- Taster sessions/ pre-induction activity
- Formative and summative assessment and feedback to learners

5. Procedure

The TEC Partnership recognises that to retain its strong performance there needs to be a comprehensive and rich evidence base upon which we can draw to evaluate the quality of the HE education we provide. This evidence will be drawn principally from the following activities.

- Learning Walks
- Thematic Reviews
- Observations of teaching and learning

In addition, in order to support continuing professional development and the sharing of best practice we will also support and enable;

- Developmental observations
- Peer Observations

5.1. Evaluation Activity types:

Observation Type	What are these?	How often will these happen?	When will these happen?	Who will undertake these?	How and when will I get feedback?
Developmental Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ungraded holistic or specific evaluations of teaching, learning and assessment booked by you. • These can be no notice or pre-booked at your discretion and last for approximately 30-60 minutes. • These can be non-continuous (i.e. review the beginning and end of the session) if you wish • These will identify the positive and developmental aspects of the teaching, learning and assessment observed, or specifically relate to an aspect of the lesson as determined by you. • Could involve the observer interacting with the students and sampling student work and views • Can be undertaken as a digital activity 	Upon request	Upon request	A member of the learning evaluation team	You will be given verbal and written feedback within 24 hours.
Peer Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are ungraded developmental tools to create an ethos of sharing best practice. • These may have a particular focus agreed by both involved or may be exploratory. 	Recommended at least once a year	Throughout the year	Peers/ colleagues	Feedback for peer observations will be based on a professional discussion between the observer and

Observation Type	What are these?	How often will these happen?	When will these happen?	Who will undertake these?	How and when will I get feedback?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be organised by tutors themselves, or managers. Feedback should go to the quality team. • Can be undertaken as a digital activity 				observee about the practice they have seen and how they may choose to deploy it.
Learning Walks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of individual 10-15 minute visits to multiple learning and student environments chained together to form a continuous activity for around 40-90 mins • These may be no notice • These may be themed e.g. Tutorials, safeguarding, scholarship, assessment, etc • There may be interaction with students. • Can be undertaken as a digital activity 	Throughout the year	Through-out the year	Learning evaluation team	General feedback only to be given to managers within 48 hours. No specific feedback to individual staff provided.
Thematic Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are a focused evaluative review of a cross section of learning from the learners' perspective • Typically lasts 1-4 days depending on the scale of the area in scope • 2 working days' notice • Could be horizontal slice of activity i.e. a review on Admissions or Complaints and Appeals or student support across the partnership or a vertical review i.e. a specific curriculum area or faculty. • Could include meetings with students, managers and teachers, review of scholarship, observations of teaching and learning for staff, observation of the quality of learning support, case studies, joint observations and co-reviews with students, review of graduate attributes and leadership and management 	Monthly on average and never twice in the same area annually.	Through-out the year	Learning Evaluation Team	<p>Holistic feedback provided to the manager within 48 hours of the close of the thematic review. No individual feedback provided to teachers.</p> <p>Four-point TEF scale used to make judgements: Gold. Silver. Bronze. Below Quality Standards.</p>

Observation Type	What are these?	How often will these happen?	When will these happen?	Who will undertake these?	How and when will I get feedback?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be undertaken as a digital activity 				
Observations of Teaching and learning practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal evaluative observations • For staff who are new to teaching HE or new to teaching HE at the Partnership • Experienced practitioners (3 years plus) would be usually exempt unless concerns are subsequently raised about their teaching practice. • No notice • Minimum of 30 mins • Student interaction and work scrutiny as standard • Developmental feedback provided • Can be undertaken as a digital activity 	Once per term in year 1. Twice per year in Year 2, once in year 3.	As specified with no notice	Learning evaluation team	<p>You will receive developmental feedback within 48 hours. Three possible judgements:</p> <p>Exceeds expectations</p> <p>Meets expectations</p> <p>Does not yet meet expectations</p>

5.2. Staff new to teaching or new to teaching HE at the Partnership

All HE staff new to the Partnership will be allocated a mentor for support and development within their first week of employment. New staff will work with Quality Managers (or equivalent at each site) to agree a support and coaching plan based on their prior experiences and skills. All new staff will complete the Teacher Essentials programme as part of their induction to the Partnership. All staff new to the Group will participate in at least one ungraded developmental observation and peer learning opportunity within their first 6 weeks and one formal observation in the first term. Further observations throughout the year will then be undertaken to support and inform progress and development.

5.3. The Feedback Cycle

Feedback is the most important element of any evaluative activity and should be used as a vehicle for development. All formal observations and thematic reviews will have an action plan. These action plans will be working documents that are regularly reviewed. Observation feedback and action plans will be discussed and updated during 1:1 and appraisal reviews and action plans updated on a regular basis by CMs and QMs (or site based equivalent roles) working with the individuals and teams.

The purpose of the feedback is to ensure our learners receive an exceptional education. As a result, it will be honest and evidence based and it should be accepted in the spirit in which it is intended.

Staff members engaging in evaluative activity will be asked for feedback on the performance of the evaluation team. The evaluation is therefore mutual.

5.4 Appeals/Complaint on evaluative activity

There is no complaints or appeals process for developmental observations at your request, peer observations or learning walks. If there are concerns about the conduct of a member of the learning evaluation team during an evaluative activity alert the Executive Director of Quality and Learner Success in the first instance.

For Formal observations:

Stage 1 – Informal discussion between observer and observee

Stage 2 – Director/AP for that area to investigate whether further observations may be required to resolve the issue

Stage 3 – Assigned to Executive Director of Quality and Learner Success whose decision will be final

For Thematic Reviews:

1. Concerns raised with the Executive Director of Quality and Learner Success by the manager of the area under review
2. If unresolved, referred to the Deputy Chief Executive whose decision is final

6. Ensuring consistency in approaches to evaluative activity

6.1. Licence to Observe

Observation and evaluative activity must be conducted with skill and care by people who are credible and have relevant HE expertise. Each formal observer will be required to complete a number of competencies in order to achieve and retain the licence to observe for 1 academic year and is subject to withdrawal based on performance and standards maintained at moderation. This is called a 'License to Observe'

All members of the evaluation team are expected to maintain the highest professional standards at all times and deliver evidence-based evaluative feedback only.

In order to retain their licence to observe for the current academic year, observers must:

- Complete any actions that emerge from the Moderation of Observation feedback panel
- Complete any Licence to Observe update training
- Demonstrate continuous high quality and effective practice
- Remain credible in their own teaching practice and scholarship

The licence to observe must be applied for on an annual basis to ensure currency of skills.

6.2. Joint learning observations and evaluations (JLOEs)

- Every member of the Observation team will undertake JLOEs in order to demonstrate consistency in evaluations made during observations, written and verbal feedback.
- All JLOEs will be undertaken with a suitably qualified member of SMT or the AP team with HE expertise.
- The number of JLOEs an observer has to complete can vary on the basis of experience and will be agreed by the observer and their reviewer.
- Any CM or manager whose area in scope for a thematic review can request to complete JLOEs to test and verify the findings of the team during the review. This request should not be unreasonably denied.
- Any CM, Manager or programme leader (or campus equivalent) can request to serve on a thematic review as an observer for the purposes of professional development.
- All Observers will undertake a JLOE before undertaking any solo observations annually.

6.3. Moderation of Observation feedback

- Each observer will have a sample of their written feedback moderated by a Partnership manager and a cross section sample will be moderated by a panel led by the Chair of the HE Quality and Improvement Committee (HEQIC), the Executive Director of Quality and Learner Success and the Partnership Academic Registrar.
- The moderation panel will meet on a termly basis to review feedback reports.
- This panel will provide feedback to observers and will manage any actions emerging from moderation. Line managers will be included in the feedback loop.

6.4. Observation and Links to Performance Management

The Partnership recognises that individual observations of teaching learning and assessment are not always the best way to holistically assess HE practitioner performance. This is why the focus of this policy is primarily team based and developmental in nature.

Evaluative activity must be done FOR staff and not TO them. It must be done from the perspective of ensuring HE learners have an excellent standard of education and not from a bureaucratic power-based perspective. It should always be honest and evidence based and it should never pre-suppose there is a right way or a wrong way to teach. There is no requirement for practitioners to have specific planning documentation in the sessions, but there will be an expectation that planning can be clearly seen and evidenced. Practitioners will be expected to be professionally reflective, willing to take ownership of their own CPD and scholarship and open to receiving feedback.

We are clear that we do not evaluate the quality of or teaching practice for outside agencies such as the QAA– we do so only to improve the experience and achievement of our learners. We are united in this goal.

As a result, there is no *automatic link between the outcome of a lesson observation and the Partnerships Capability or Disciplinary Policy.

*We reserve the right to do so in cases where serious professional misconduct or significant health and safety breaches are observed.

Individual practitioners will be required to improve performance if any significant issues arise within observations and scrutiny of their work and will be given support to do so if required. Where there is a sustained failure to improve over time the Executive Director of Quality and Learner Success, the Associate Principal and the line manager will discuss the next steps with the HR team. This may lead to the use of formal performance management processes.

6.5 Support Mechanisms

The Support to Improve (S2I) process can be deployed to assist a manager with entrenched quality improvement issues. The process assigns a senior manager with specific pertinent experience to review the provision in partnership and remove any barriers to improvement that the manager is experiencing. Notice to Improve (N2I) is an allied process to support individual programme leaders with challenges to quality at local level and is operated by the quality team.

6.6. Monitoring mechanisms

- TLA evaluation activity will be monitored using the above mechanisms in addition to regular reporting through relevant meetings at local colleges within the partnership, e.g. SMT, CQS, team meetings, CQOps and local governance meetings.
- The Quality Team will provide regular reports which are used to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in HE via the deliberative committee structure and HEQAC in particular.
- At Faculty and Curriculum levels, Managers will use information provided to develop CPD strategies, interventions and sharing of good practice.
- At Faculty level observations are prioritised in accordance with identified need
- The Student Services Team will provide regular reports on the quality of HE student support.

7. Responsibilities

7.1 Partnership CEO

- Ensure conditions of registration are met across the partnership
- Ensure this policy is applied across the Partnership

7.2 Deputy CEO

- Act as final arbiter for thematic review disputes
- Ensure Conditions of registration are met across the partnership
- Ensure this policy is applied across the Partnership

7.3 College Principals

- Chair the core meetings of the HE deliberative committee structure
- Ensure standards of HE are excellent at their respective colleges and improve if this is not the case
- Ensure the observation policy is applied fairly and equitably at each college
- Work collectively to ensure conditions of registration are met across the TEC Partnership

7.4. Principals, Vice Principals and Associate Principals

It is the responsibility of the Principal and Vice Principals to:

- Engage with the observation process in their own HE teaching practice and scholarship and by leading on evaluation activities if they have an academic background
- Achieve and maintain a 'Licence to Observe' if they are qualified to do so
- Approve any policies and processes related to teaching, learning and assessment at their local college so that they are appropriately focused on developing quality and are aligned with the Strategic Objectives of the partnership
- Support improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in HE across the TEC Partnership
- Oversee the self-assessment and Quality Improvement Planning (QIP) processes in ensuring that improvements in teaching, learning and assessment are the focus
- Undertake JLOE's
- Lead on Thematic Reviews

7.5. Executive Director of Quality and Learner Success

It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to:

- Engage with the observation process in their own teaching practice
- Lead on the organisation of the evaluation processes in conjunction with the GIFHE Senior Team.
- Ensure that the observation process leads to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (demonstrated in improvements in learner outcomes measures)

- Ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is self-assessed accurately and manage those responsible for actioning the Teaching, Learning and Assessment QIP.
- Keep abreast of leading-edge practice in teaching learning and assessment and inform the GIFHE Senior Team
- Lead on the GIFHE staff development cycle
- Act as final arbiter on observation complaints.
- Ensure this policy is implemented robustly and report on its outcomes monthly to SMT.
- Undertake JLOEs

7.6. Quality Managers (or Equivalent)

It is the responsibility of the Quality Managers to:

- Engage with the observation process in their own teaching practice
- Ensure that the observation process leads to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (demonstrated in improvements in learner outcomes measures)
- Work with the Executive Director of Quality (or campus equivalent) to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is self-assessed accurately at all levels and in all parts of the Partnership and contribute towards completion of the QIP
- Organise the observation processes and ensure that all observers are appropriately trained and achieve a 'Licence to Observe' (demonstrated by all appropriate observers having a Licence to Observe in place by 30th October 2020)
- Use reports on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to develop interventions and QIPs at Faculty and Curriculum level (demonstrated in improvements in learner outcomes measures at Curriculum level)
- Ensure that the observation process is well monitored, that observations are of a high quality and processes that develop high quality feedback are in place (demonstrated by timeliness of Licence to Observe completion and reduction in actions from moderation panels)
- Undertake JLOE's
- Undertake the duties of an observer in undertaking a case load of observations across varying curriculum areas and other areas at the Group
- Review and sign off Observer feedback
- Achieve and maintain a 'Licence to Observe'
- Approve Observation staff lists and schedules for their Faculty/ Area
- Provide effective feedback to staff on sessions observed
- Ensure that all action plans are completed by Curriculum and other managers and 1:1 reviews and appraisals are effectively using observation feedback to inform CPD and target setting
- Coach and support any staff who require so in terms of teaching, learning and assessment
- Conduct monthly themed Learning Walks within their area
- Validate the Curriculum/ Area evaluation position and use this to support Curriculum and other managers to develop appropriate sharing of good practice forums and/or interventions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

7.7. Managers/ Curriculum Managers

It is the responsibility of the Manager/Curriculum Manager to:

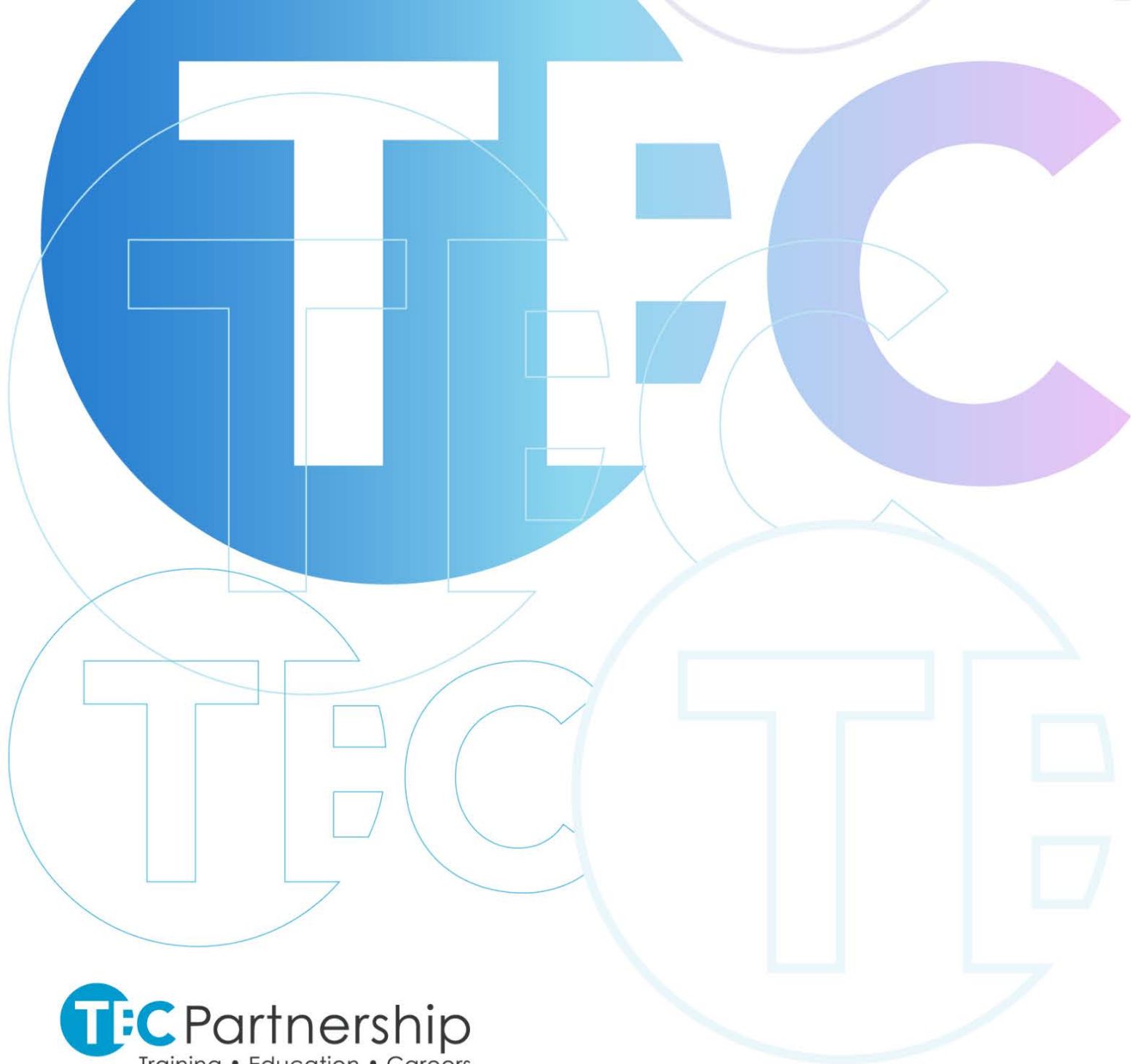
- Engage with the observation process in their own teaching practice and scholarly activity
- Write the staff list for observations and organise the schedule for new staff according to a risk-based system and send this to the HE Quality Manager
- Undertake a regular and significant number of Learning Walks within the area that they manage
- Provide effective feedback to staff on the activities observed

- Ensure that action plans are complete for every observation undertaken and these are reviewed in 1:1 and appraisal review
- Achieve and maintain a 'Licence to Observe'
- Fully understand the Curriculum/Area Observation position and use this to develop appropriate sharing of good practice forums and/or interventions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Refer any staff who require coaching and support in teaching, learning and assessment matter to the HE Quality Manager
- Conduct and manage the case-loading of themed Learning Walks within their area,

7.8. Delivery staff

It is the responsibility of delivery staff to:

- Effectively engage with the observation process
- Positively accept feedback and act on it to further improve teaching, learning and assessment
- Take responsibility for their own CPD, alongside their line manager
- Show a willingness to share good practice identified in their sessions
- Recognise that there is no expectation that anything different to normal practice is done during an observation



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