



Peer-Supported Review of Education (PSRE)

Scope

This policy applies to all who are involved in any education activity on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes i.e. including Visiting Lecturers and PhD students. *All references to 'staff' in the policy are to be read as including everyone within this scope*

Date approved/re-approved

Approved by Senate 2010, re-approved 15 July 2016

Date for review

To be evaluated and reviewed on a periodic basis, with allowance for minor annual updates and changes by Education and Student Committee, as required

To be read in conjunction with

Guidance on Peer-Supported Review of Education

Equality and Diversity statement

City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.

Policy on Peer-Supported Review of Education (PSRE) with attached Guidance and Templates

CUL Policy on Peer-Supported Review of Education

Rationale

Peer-supported review of education is a collaboratively developmental activity which focuses on improving/developing/ sharing aspects of performance through non-judgmental peer input or advice. The review focuses on practice (i.e. what is observed) rather than on the individual; and each partner to the reviewed event reflects on the review to draw conclusions for improvement of his/her own practice.

The benefits of this process are that there can be:

- recognition of aspects of teaching and/or assessing that are working well
- identification by individual staff/teams of their development needs
- dissemination of good practice and expertise amongst colleagues through dialogue on education practice
- evolution of a mutually-supportive environment for the development of education skills and a focus on teaching excellence.

In addition staff may use evidence from their review when applying for promotion and for internal and external teaching awards.

Model

Staff who have engaged previously in peer review of teaching know that a person may learn as much from observing another's teaching as from being observed. The present model of PSRE recognises this, being an explicitly collaborative process engaged in equally by both partners in the review, with a view to enhancing the education practice of each partner.

Scope

The focus of peer observation of teaching is often only on face-to-face classroom activity. However this does not take into account the complexity of a modern lecturer's role, which includes much input outside the seminar/lecture room such as:

- designing and planning learning and assessment activities
- providing transferable and timely feedback to students on their performance
- developing responsive learning environments in which students can (individually or in teams) work effectively and with flexibility
- managing online, flexible and distance learning

There are a range of activities within each area that might be explored: guidance is available on these, as explained below. Further guidance is available from LEaD on request.

Managing the Process

Guidance for Schools is provided in Appendix A and here <http://www.city.ac.uk/lead/learning-teaching-support/peer-review>; Schools may also publish additional guidance on local implementation. PSRE applies to all staff involved in activities facilitating students' learning ie

including hourly paid/visiting staff and research students as well as lecturers at all levels of seniority. Staff training will be available.

It is recommended that Schools (through a designated manager) identify pairs for this process early in each academic year to ensure that staff are able to plan their review(s) throughout the year. However, recognising that staff may wish to obtain peer support from someone with specific expertise, managers should respond positively to any reasoned request from staff to use a specified substitute review partner (whether or not the substitute is within their own School). Pairings may be reciprocal in successive PSRE events within the same academic year; this may be desirable where the relevant staff are engaged in longer term collaboration in relation to an aspect of their education practice.

Timing

In order for this process to be developmental in its effect it should not be viewed as a one-off event but as an on-going process which may involve a series of reviews throughout the year. It is expected that all academic staff would engage in at least one review annually.

Process

1. Briefing

This is a very important stage. Both partners should decide on the scope and manner of the review and record this: see optional template at Appendix B Form 1. It is essential that both review partners have a clear idea of which aspects of the education-related work/practice are to be reviewed and **how**. Where a face-to-face education event (ie seminar or lecture) is chosen for review, the observing partner should be provided at this briefing stage with all necessary information and documents. In relation to all review events, a clear brief should be provided at this stage as to which areas to concentrate on in the review, and the nature of the outcomes sought. A date should be fixed for the event to be reviewed and for the de-briefing discussion.

2. Reviewing

- *Seminar/lectures*: the review should be of sufficient duration (normally, the whole seminar/lecture). The observing partner should approach the task as 'objectively' as possible, focusing on 'facts' (e.g. description of behaviours), bearing in mind that judgmental evaluation is *not* what is required. The review should adopt the perspective agreed in the briefing session. An optional template for the reviewing partner's use during the review may be found at Appendix B Form 2.
- *Review of documents, processes, online material, etc*: all relevant documents/links should be made available to the review partner at least two weeks before the de-briefing session (see below) takes place. It is likely that review of documents etc will take place by each partner individually in his/her own time (although depending on the nature of the task, this may be done jointly).

Peer-supported review may be based on a collection of evidence, so available student feedback or other forms of evidence on the reviewed event/artefact may be considered also.

3. De-briefing

Confidentiality must be guaranteed (except where something occurs that could place City at risk of legal proceedings – for example, abuse or discrimination - in which case the reviewer should seek advice from their line manager). Since the review is a supportive partnership aimed at benefiting the practice of each partner, both partners should adopt a questioning, non-judgmental approach, thus generating discussion of

points arising from the review. Discussions should centre on the matters identified in the briefing, although each partner may also raise other aspects that are appropriate for debate in this context. Both partners should remember that their focus is on stimulating and supporting the review **by the other** of his/her own education practice.

4. Reflective record

Either at the end of the de-briefing or shortly afterwards, each partner to the review should write a brief paragraph recording his/her reflective thoughts and conclusions for his/her own future education practice (including details of any enhancements s/he will make and/or other steps s/he will take) and send a copy of this electronically to LEaD via the [\https://forms.city.ac.uk/forms/54931 the link in Appendix B, Form 3]. Returns filed in this way will be anonymous. The reflective records will be reviewed by LEaD to identify transferable learning points which will feed into a future CUL teaching and learning event.

An optional template for the individual's own record is available in Appendix B Form 3.

Monitoring

When participating in annual appraisal, the member of staff should confirm to his/her appraiser that s/he has participated in peer review, together with the date(s). Entirely at the option of the member of staff being appraised, if s/he would like to discuss any aspect of the review (e.g. particular strengths or areas for development), s/he may include this in his/her appraisal form.

The appraiser does **not** need to be given the staff-member's reflective record of the review.

Again entirely at the option of the member of staff, s/he may include details of his/her PSRE in his/her standard academic CV in a box designated for this purpose. (This should be copied and pasted from the template available here <https://www.city.ac.uk/staff-hub/human-resources/organisational-development/appraisal>)

Professional and School Requirements; Issues of Concern

For some departments/Schools, there may be professional body or other School policy requirements that senior staff are engaged in reviewing education practice. Separate, explicit arrangements for this should be made where relevant.

Likewise, if concerns have been raised about an individual's education practice (e.g. through student evaluations), then additional review arrangements may be required by managers in accordance with existing related procedure.

Continuing Professional Development

Engaging in PSRE constitutes continuing professional development and for any level of fellowship of the Higher Education Academy would count as an activity contributing to good standing.

APPENDIX A

Guidance on Areas for Peer-Supported Review

The guidance outlined is broad so that it can suit a range of activities including, face-to-face contact, designing, planning and management of learning and assessment activities etc. It is, however, indicative only: other elements may be defined for review, as relevant to teaching excellence in the review context. Staff are reminded that what follows are merely possible prompts for reflection and collaborative discussion on the education practice of each party to the review.

Face-to-Face Class Activity

- Lecturer arrived on time, students arriving late/unprepared dealt with appropriately
- Objectives and context and structure of session clearly stated
- Students involved in learning activities as early as possible in session
- Issues raised by students dealt with appropriately and student questions received appropriate responses
- Links between present session and other parts of the programme made clear
- Level of class appropriate (e.g. clearly post-graduate if masters or professional programme)
- Lecturer audible, appropriate balance between control and flexibility, session led at an appropriate pace
- Good rapport established with the students, lecturer addressed students by name
- Sensitivity to the different cultural backgrounds of the students and any special needs
- Lecturer communicated enthusiasm to students, making appropriate attempts to motivate them
- Effective management of the group dynamic, appropriate level of student participation/performance
- Key points summarised at end of session, students told what preparation is needed for any relevant later session(s)
- Session finished on time

Design, planning and management of learning and assessment activities

- Session organisation (opening, closing, signposting, structuring)
- Preparation (content, handouts, planning of activities, etc)
- Learning outcomes for session (explicit, achievable, achieved)
- Time management (also allocation of time to various activities)
- Appropriate teaching methods/approaches
- Use of resources/teaching materials (extent, types, effectiveness, etc)
- Alignment of learning activities in which students are engaged, with learning outcomes; activities appropriate to the level (eg UG or PG)
- Instructional material is well designed and packaged
- Appropriate instructions are available for each task
- Critical thinking is facilitated through activities such as journal writing, interactive reading, discussion, constructive feedback
- Learner feedback is integrated into the teaching process

Providing useful and timely feedback to students on their performance

- Alignment with learning outcomes and teaching methods
- Account taken of student workload (and assessment activities spread out appropriately)
- Use of a variety of assessment instruments
- Actively discouraging plagiarism
- Inclusivity (e.g. dealing with disability/racial awareness)
- Content of oral/written feedback given to students (tutor feedback is substantial not just ticks in boxes; constructive and transferable)
- Timing of feedback to students (work returned to students as quickly as possible)
- Support for students prior to assessment
- Nature of assessment tasks, Marking criteria, Grading scheme
- Availability of self-assessment

Developing responsive learning environments in which teams and students can work effectively and with flexibility

- Ground rules exist for framing engagement of learners
- Student responses (participation, attention, note-taking, etc)
- Guidance to students on learning activities
- Communicating with international students
- Effective support provided to students
- Dealing with specific issues raised by students
- Investigating support networks available to students
- Review and enhancement of group work
- Adequate time and support provided for student to tackle tasks
- Adequate guidance / understanding of management of the learning process
- Communication is easy with provision for reasonably prompt response
- Communication and collaboration amongst all students is fostered, monitored and positively encouraged
- Adequate attention paid to diversity and different learning styles

Managing online, flexible and distance learning

- Navigation is easy
- Connections between flexible components and the overall programme are made clear
- Keeping on-line discussions targeted and stimulating debate when student contribution lapses
- Organisational skills (agenda for discussion/activities, objectives, timetable, procedural rules, managing interactions)
- Encouraging reflection and creativity in students
- Strategies are in place to compensate for the lack of 'tone' in on-line exchanges (tone of voice, facial expressions, humour, etc)
- Material is made available on how to communicate successfully via distance learning
- The programme is fully functional (e.g. all links work, images appear as planned, classes appear on line as scheduled)
- Assessment design is appropriate to this mode of delivery (e.g. relies on discussions, interpretation, comparison tasks to encourage deep learning)
- Working relationship established between distance learners and the tutor

APPENDIX B – Suggested templates; link to submission portal for written reflection

Form 1 – PSRE Pre Meeting Record (for use only by parties to the review)

Name of Reviewee Partner		Department/School	
Name of Reviewing Partner		Department/School	
Date of Pre Meeting	Session/activity to be reviewed	Module (optional)	Level
Nature of Review Identify what is to be reviewed (class room, online, assessment activity, documents) and why , with an indication of what you would like the reviewer to concentrate on			
(Empty space for notes)			
Areas you would like feedback on This might include, for example, your style of communication with students or your management of a specified situation (see guidance notes [link here] for further prompts)			
(Empty space for notes)			

The above outline has been agreed as the focus of the review.

Agreed date and time of review:

Reviewing Partner: Signature: Date:

Reviewee Partner: Signature: Date:

Form 2 - Suggested template for Reviewer's notes during Review

The prompts outlined below are broad in order to suit a range of activities including face-to-face contact, designing, planning and management of learning and assessment activities. They are, however, indicative only: other elements may have been defined for review, as relevant to teaching excellence in the review context.

Introduction

Were the objectives of the session/materials made clear to students? Were the anticipated learning outcomes identified? Was the structure of the session/materials clear? (For face-to-face delivery) did the class begin on time? Reflections on own practice?

Planning and Organisation

Was the session/were the materials related expressly by the tutor to previous sessions and set in the overall context of the Unit/Module? Was the structure of the session/materials set out at the beginning? Did the session/the materials appear to be well-planned and organised? Reflections on own practice?

Methods/Approach

Were the methods/approach taken suitable to achieve the learning objectives set? What alternative approaches could have been taken? Reflections on own practice?

Delivery and Pace

Did the pace and delivery seem appropriate for the student audience? Were any aspects, in your view, dealt with too briefly/with too much elaboration? Did the session/materials seem rushed/too drawn out? Reflections on own practice?

Content

Where you feel qualified to make comment, did the content seem accurate, up-to-date? Were examples given? Was the session/materials pitched at the appropriate level for the student audience? Did the content match their needs? Reflections on own practice?

Student Participation

Were students invited to participate? How was participation managed (re materials, to be managed)? Did it appear to be carefully planned? Did participation enable the tutor to check the students' understanding of the content/approach? Reflections on own practice?

Use of Learning Resources

Were powerpoints/videos/other visual aids used? Were they produced to a professional standard and free from error? Were they clear and in a suitable font size? Did the students receive hand-outs? Were they well-produced? Did the resources contribute to the session or detract from it? Reflections on own practice?

Use of Accommodation (face-to-face sessions only)

Was the accommodation suitable for the session? Were the seating arrangements appropriate? Did there appear to be any Health and Safety issues? Reflections on own practice?

Overall style and ambience

(For face-to-face/online delivery) Did the tutor appear confident in delivery? Did s/he convey enthusiasm? Was s/he clear and audible? Did the tutor have good presentation skills? (Face-to-face delivery) Did the session seem to "go well"? Was there good rapport with the students? Were students attentive/bored? Did they seem to engage with the session? Was there good eye contact with students? Did the tutor seem sensitive to the "mood" of the students? Reflections on own practice?

Summary

Summarise the main points which you wish to feed back to the reviewee. Identify key strengths and any areas that need attention.

Summarise points which occur to you during the review, in relation to improving **your own** education practice

Form 3 – Reflective Record of Peer-Supported Review of Education

**TO BE COMPLETED SEPARATELY ONLINE BY EACH PARTNER TO THE REVIEW
AND SUBMITTED TO LEaD here: <https://forms.city.ac.uk/forms/54931>**

You may wish to save a copy of your reflective record below, for your future reference and use:

