

Title: **Peer Observation of Teaching in Higher Education: policy development trajectories, mediation by lecturers and development in response to professional standards**

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Abstract:

Peer Observation of Teaching (POT) policy and practice in higher education is varied and often contentious with challenging questions around implementation and impact. This workshop focuses on the current and future possible position of 'peer observation of teaching' policy and practice as an element of the 'learning architecture' (Dill 1999) of higher education institutions.

As a starting point critical analysis of the development trajectories leading to the current policy for POT in two contrasting higher education institutions will be briefly presented in relation to existing models of peer observation approaches (Gosling 2002). This will provide an opportunity for participants to reflect on and discuss their own institution's POT policy development, current position and possible future change in response to the introduction of professional standards.

The findings of qualitative investigations into the implementation and mediation of POT policy by lecturers will be presented and will help to inform debate amongst participants on the impact of current POT practice in terms of professional learning and enhancement of the student learning experience. The variations in response to POT policy between and within different institutions and especially between different subject discipline departments will be an element of this debate.

The appropriate place of peer observation in relation to professional standards and the risks of different approaches will be critically considered through discussion: from evaluation of teaching as part of quality assurance, through development of teaching (including its role within courses for new lecturers), and on to peer review of teaching and learning as a mutually beneficial professional development and enhancement activity.

The aim of the workshop is to help participants to plan for the position of peer observation in relation to the professional development framework and the introduction of professional standards within their own institutions.

References:

Dill D.D. (1999). Academic accountability and university adaptation: The architecture of an academic learning organization. *Higher Education*. Vol. 38, pp127-154.

Gosling, D. (2002). *Models of Peer Observation of Teaching* [Online]. LTSN Generic Centre. Available from: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources.asp?process=full_record§ion=generic&id=200 [Accessed 22:07:05]