

A joint statement from the Department of Education and the Queensland Teachers' Union

January 2024

Collaborative Capability Development: Classroom observations and feedback

This joint statement outlines the protocols and expectations related to classroom observations and feedback. This will be known as Collaborative Capability Development – Classroom observations and feedback (previously known as Collegial Engagement in Classrooms).

The Queensland Department of Education (DoE) and the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) are committed to a supportive and professional approach to capability development. Central to this endeavour is a culture of supported professionalism. Strategies and processes consistent with the Queensland Public Service positive performance management directive are crucial to the development of this culture. Collaborative capability development supports teachers and school leaders to be individually and collectively committed to continuous improvement to enhance teacher and student learning and wellbeing.

The development and strengthening of effective classroom practices is a career-long undertaking for teachers. DoE and the QTU acknowledge that the use of classroom observations and feedback is valuable in this endeavour.

This joint statement is to be used by teachers, heads of program and school leaders who engage in the classroom observations and feedback processes in schools. The approach outlined in this joint statement is underpinned by professional respect and trust.

Fundamental principles

Classroom observations and feedback processes:

- are collaboratively developed and agreed upon on an annual basis
- are supportive and focused on building teacher confidence and capability
- take place in a supportive environment whereby all participants know and understand expectations and protocols
- are based on genuine engagement by all participants in all aspects of the process
- respect teachers' professional experience and what they bring to the role, and value their professional judgements in the use of a range of classroom practices

- occur as part of the teacher's normal routine
- require no additional workload to participate in the process and do not require the preparation of specific lessons or provision of data in advance
- are not intended to evaluate teacher performance
- are separate to any performance management processes.

Essential elements of classroom observations and feedback

- There will be two observation-with-feedback cycles for each teacher each year. Any additional cycles must be approved by the Local Consultative Committee (LCC)*.
- Each cycle comprises of a scheduled classroom observation and a feedback session.
- Participants are to be advised of the schedule at the commencement of a semester, with at least two-weeks' notice of the planned observations.
- Feedback should be formally provided as soon as practical after the classroom observation and outside of non-contact time (NCT) within the school day.
- Observations and feedback should be reciprocal and where appropriate, observers should provide modelling opportunities and enable others to observe their practice.
- Agreed protocols should be honoured, including upholding any 'opt in' practices endorsed by the LCC.

Consultation

The LCC plays an essential role in informing and endorsing the following aspects of classroom observations and feedback:

- **Who?** – Determining which staff will observe teachers' practice. This might involve education leaders or peers, or might alternate between the two.
- **When?** – The timing of the scheduled observation/ feedback loop. Any more than two observation per year can only occur via LCC consultation.
- **Where?** – The locations where observations and feedback are to occur. For example, in the teacher's usual classroom environment or an alternative setting.
- **Why?** – The purpose or focus of the observations in consideration of school priorities and teacher capability development needs

* For schools that do not have an LCC, extensive consultation on proposed additional cycles of classroom observations and feedback should take place prior to the additional cycles occurring.

- **How?** – The forms of observation to be undertaken (e.g. observation, coaching, instructional rounds) and the collaborative development of observation and feedback protocols.
- **Follow up** – The nature and form of feedback underpinned by the principle that timely, individualised and specific feedback has the greatest impact on building capability and changes in practice.

The LCC will endorse how long the agreed approach to classroom observations and feedback should be in place. Schools are encouraged to keep the same classroom observations and feedback protocols in place for two years, prior to a LCC review. This provides certainty and consistency of expectations for all participants.

Walkthroughs

‘Walkthroughs’ are a common practice across Queensland state schools. For the purpose of this joint statement, walkthroughs are considered informal classroom interactions, for short durations, that are routinely undertaken by education leaders or their delegates. The purpose of walkthroughs are to gain a line of sight over student engagement and learning in classrooms as well as a sense of key aspects of the school’s culture.

Classroom observations and feedback processes are separate to these informal and/or ad hoc interactions by school leaders in classrooms. As such, walkthroughs should not be the subject of formal feedback processes with teachers. Principals and their delegates should continue to enjoy the opportunity to engage with their colleagues and students via walkthroughs. Teachers value this informal engagement by education leaders in their classrooms.

Performance management matters

Classroom observations are not to be used for the purpose of assessing teacher performance. As such, this process is entirely separate to the procedures for managing performance. Please note that teachers who are participating in a performance management process may be required to participate in other observations processes, and discussions should have occurred with them about that matter.

Beginning and probationary teachers

Beginning and probationary teachers may be involved in other classroom observations as part of their probation period.



QUEENSLAND
TEACHERS' UNION
OF EMPLOYEES

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'K. J. Ruttiman'.

Kate Ruttiman
General Secretary
Queensland Teachers' Union



Queensland
Government

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael De'Ath'.

Michael De'Ath
Director-General
Department of Education