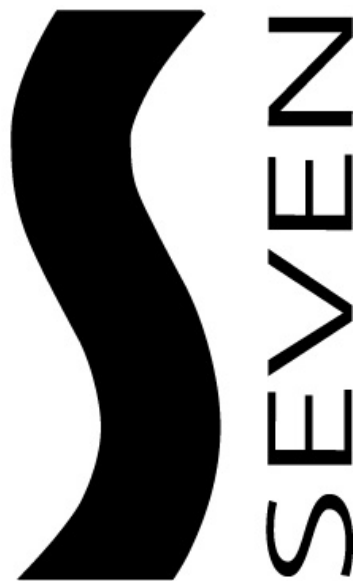


Peer Review and Development Handbook

S7 Consortium of Colleges

2008-9



Peer Review and Development Handbook

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S7 EXTERNAL PEER REVIEWER: ROLE DESCRIPTION

The person acting as external reviewer will follow the protocols below to provide input into the moderation of the college's self assessment report as a critical friend, based on the appropriate knowledge and experience of leadership and management within the FE and SFC context and a firm understanding of the Common Inspection Framework.

The External Peer Reviewer will support the college's internal process of self assessment by participating in the college's own moderation process and provide a constructive external viewpoint on the collected judgements, evidence-base and development issues encapsulated in the draft self assessment report – particularly relating to leadership and management and the capacity to improve.

In undertaking this task the moderator will consider:

- The internal consistency and comprehensiveness of the commentary provided for leadership, management and the capacity to improve.
- The degree of evaluation, rather than description provided by the commentary, evidence-base and judgement statements.
- The appropriateness and use made of available evidence.
- The range of evidence used to support judgements.
- The relevance of evidence used.
- Whether grading is consistent with underlying judgements or supporting commentary.
- The robustness of statements contained in the self assessment and the degree to which they are evaluative.
- The accuracy and comprehensiveness to which key strengths and areas for development have been identified and articulated.
- Whether improvement gains have been substantially identified.
- Whether actions for continued improvement have been clearly and accurately identified.
- It is expected that each college in the scheme will put forward one senior manager from their college who have substantial experience of leadership and management within a college context and have a clear and detailed grasp of the CIF and supporting documents such as the Inspection Handbook.
- Wherever possible External Peer Reviewers will be expected to identify, promote and share good practice in issues of leadership, management and capacity to improve.
- The External Peer Reviewer should not be seen as an expert reference point within the moderation panel they join in the host college; neither must they attempt to act as such. In all cases the decisions regarding grades and evidence within the self assessment process should be seen as the responsibility of the college.
- The person will be expected to maintain the confidentiality of the college to which they act as a reviewer and will be expected to feedback on the process of self assessment moderation to develop the protocols and improve the practice of peer review.

- The reviewer will be expected to debrief his/her experience of the process following an assignment, solely for the purposes of developing the process of peer review and sharing/establishing good practice in this aspect of self assessment.
- Each reviewer will be expected to undertake one such whole organisation review each year and - to maintain a studied neutrality - the next year's review should be at a different host college.

PROTOCOLS

- Each college in the Peer Review and Development group will identify one senior manager to act as an External Peer Reviewer to other colleges in the group.
- Every effort will be made to avoid a pairing of colleges and the same reviewer will not review a college twice in a row.
- The CIF and supporting documents will be the basis for review activities.
- Moderators will be notified directly by the host college of the timing of their moderation processes and will be sent relevant documentation two weeks prior to the moderation taking place.
- Each college is responsible for agreeing an External Peer Reviewer and for providing all the administration to support the effective engagement of those reviewers.
- Each External Peer Reviewer will attend briefing and debriefing events to develop the process and role of the Peer Reviewer and to share good practice across the group.

Useful Websites:

www.aoc.co.uk
www.feselfregulation.org.uk
www.learningproviders.org.uk
www.natspec.org.uk
www.niace.org.uk
www.sfcf.org.uk
www.157group.co.uk

DUAL OBSERVATION STANDARDISATION AGREED PROCEDURES 2008-9

- Lesson observation paperwork pertaining to each College should be available on the S7 website for observers to download.
- External observers should work with a range of staff members from the regular observation teams and not simply moderate the work of the person responsible for internal standardisation.
- The feedback to the teacher will be included as part of the moderation process, with the right to exempt a particular feedback from moderation if specific issues arise and the host college judges that a third party presence would be detrimental to the quality of the feedback or its outcome.
- There will be a brief written outcome from the moderator with a standard form of wording. This wording is as follows:

- 1) *Do you agree with the observation judgements that were made?*
- 2) *Was there a consistency of approach in reaching judgements in each of the observations that you saw?*
- 3) *Do you have any additional comments to make?*

- The above statement will be completed per visit and not per moderated observation.
- It would be appropriate for the moderator to provide some verbal feedback to the host Quality Manager at the conclusion of their visit/s.
- If it seems appropriate and host Colleges would welcome it, then some informal verbal feedback to SMT might also take place.
- 2 days of moderation within a two week time window would be the expected standard. This would include probably 6 hour long observations over the two days, allowing sufficient time for briefing / discussion / feedback around those lesson times.
- Completion of the moderation paperwork would most logically happen at the end of the second day, but some interim thoughts might helpfully be reflected back to the host QM at the end of the first day.
- The basic protocol and procedural issues for the dual observation programme are as follows:

PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS FOR S7 DUAL OBSERVATION STANDARDISATION

- *The moderator should have contact with the host QM approximately 2 weeks ahead, probably by phone, to talk through the proposed programme. This conversation should cover whether or not moderators will be sitting in on feedback sessions.*
- *All Colleges' lesson observation paperwork should be available on the S7 website for moderators to be able to download and familiarise themselves with prior to the visit/s.*
- *Time must be built into the beginning of each dual observation day for the host QM to have briefing time with the moderator.*
- *This briefing would include (as agreed by previous phone conversation) whether or not the moderator will be sitting in on feedback, and, if so, whether there will be any exceptions.*
- *The planned schedule of observation must include sufficient reflection / discussion time for the moderator, and in particular for the moderator to have discussion time with their co-observer ahead of any planned feedback.*
- *The planned observation schedule must allow for the moderator to meet all the staff with whom he/she will be dual observing prior to that observation taking place.*
- *The host college is responsible for informing the moderator of any college cultural or contextual issues pertaining to any given lesson of which they should be aware. This includes any thematically-based observations.*
- *All moderators should be clear that they are only commenting on the accuracy and consistency of the judgements reached based on the criteria of the host College's system. There is no scope within this agreement for commenting on the efficacy of any College's observation system.*
- *Feedback to the College observation team members should cover only those points which are to do with accuracy and consistency.*

S7 VISITS PROGRAMME

Visits to other Colleges can be a hugely informative and valuable exercise for all parties given proper preparation, due professionalism and clear expectations. This outline suggests a loose format that might enable S7 staff to get best value from an S7 Visit.

1) Setting up an Opportunity

The S7 website at www.s7colleges.com should be your one-stop-shop for arranging a visit to another S7 College. There is a dedicated section of this site, called *Visits and Exchanges* for arranging an S7 Visit, where you can key in the opportunity you are looking for and can specify preferred dates or days of the week and await a host partner 'match'. The process will then be tracked through for you from the S7 website with email alerts at appropriate points.

2) Setting the Date/s

The date chosen should be one when the host is able to arrange cover for a substantial part of the day in order to spend time with the S7 visitor. If this is a teaching and learning visit, it should also be a date on which a range of learning experiences are taking place within the area to provide a potential observation offer to the visiting S7 colleague. Once a date has been agreed: stick to it!

3) Preparing Effectively

In order to maximise the benefit from a Visit, it would be sensible for the visitor to alert the host College well in advance to the type of areas it would be useful to see during the time. For cross-college roles, this might be quite complex to do with understanding processes and procedures rather than just straight forward observation or information gathering

4) Drawing up a Programme

Where there are issues of particular interest to a visiting colleague, for example library provision, embedding of ICT, admissions policies etc, it would be a good idea to plan a schedule for the Visit/s to include coverage of these areas and to have a chance to talk to other staff in the college whose work might be of significance. It may well be that some lesson observation is a priority for a teaching and learning visitor, in which case, this will need to be thought about and discussed in advance. Other likely requests might include a tour of area resources and wider college resources where appropriate, and time with the host department team head, perhaps to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. Obviously, this is by no means intended as a prescription, only as an indication of the details that might be thought through in order to maximise the learning experience.

5) Following up

With luck and good preparation, the Visit will prove hugely valuable, perhaps not only to the visitor, but also to the host department. It may well be that both parties would like to maintain contact and swap ideas going forward: indeed, if there is a particular project that the host could provide ongoing input and support for, it would be well worth approaching S7 to see what further facilitation could be available.

6) Evaluation Form

A very brief follow-up analysis of your Visit will be requested for your staff development records in the hope that we can establish this type of experience as a funding priority going forwards, based on its value to staff.

Wishing you a very successful experience with your S7 Visit!

S7 VISIT – EVALUATION

Visitor (name)	
Visited College Area (e.g subject area)	
Host College	
Host (name)	
Date of Visit	

S7 is unique as an organisation in providing facilitation for a huge range of formal, semi-formal and informal CPD opportunities. In order for these to continue to be funded and supported, we rely on the evaluations of S7 staff undertaking such opportunities to provide us with feedback on their experience.

Please try to include as much useful information as possible to provide an evaluation of your experience and return this form to the S7 Consortium Officer **within two weeks** of your Visit taking place. You can email the return to: s7colleges@googlemail.com Many thanks.

Three key things that you learnt as a result of taking part in the visit:

- 1)

- 2)

- 3)

Three things that you will be doing differently as a result of taking part in the visit:

- 1)

- 2)

- 3)

Reflections that you have on the process and how it might be taken forward / improved upon
(Please continue below if necessary)

S7 EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

This document is designed to facilitate S7 Exchange arrangements between S7 College staff.

Exchange visits are a hugely informative and valuable exercise for all parties given proper preparation and due professionalism. Exchanges that have taken place have been providing an excellent platform on which to build closer collaborative links and on which to raise quality through sharing qualities.

This framework is designed to be a suggested format that might enable S7 staff to get best use from an S7 Exchange opportunity and is not meant to be entirely prescriptive as each Exchange will be different.

1) Identifying the Need – Starting, Struggling or Succeeding?

If you are new to a role in College, have been doing it successfully for some time, or would just welcome a fresh take, the opportunity to have a look at how someone else tackles related issues to yours in a neighbouring institution can be a helpful catalyst to further improvement in your own performance and approach.

Throughout the S7 Colleges, staff are engaged in tackling broadly similar issues with broadly similar cohorts of students. If you have identified that the opportunity for a creative look at the issues you face would be a valuable development step, then an S7 Exchange opportunity may be for you.

An S7 Exchange is predicated on the understanding that learning is never just one-way in any situation. So an S7 Exchange looks to pair together two colleagues working within the S7 Colleges who would appreciate being given time to explore the detail of one another's roles and priorities, supporting that enquiry with evidence and data as appropriate to inform understanding.

2) Setting Up an Opportunity

The S7 website at www.s7colleges.com should be your one-stop-shop for arranging an Exchange with an S7 colleague. Not unlike a dating agency, although probably less fun, there is a dedicated section of this site, called *Visits and Exchanges* for arranging an S7 Exchange, where you can key in the opportunity you are looking for and can specify preferred dates or days of the week and await a host partner 'match'. From that point onwards, your progress will be tracked from the site and you will receive email alerts to support that progress.

3) Setting the date/s

These Exchange opportunities have been funded as two day visits – one for each of the pairing to visit the other. Planning dates well in advance to ensure that the day chosen is appropriate in terms of the schedules of both Colleges will be vital to a successful outcome.

The date chosen should be one when the host colleague has arranged cover for the majority of the day in order to spend time going through in detail the policies, procedures and learning experiences that his or her department or area offers that contribute to its

success. It should also be a date on which a range of learning experiences are taking place within the department to provide a potential observation offer to the visiting S7 colleague. Once a date has been agreed: stick to it!

4) Preparing Effectively

In order to make the most of the opportunity afforded by the Exchange, it would be best to be clear about precisely what issues the visiting colleague is hoping to discuss; what new ideas he or she would like to try out and what answers he or she is looking for to any current delivery problems.

In order to maximise the benefit from the Exchange, it would be sensible for the visiting department head to alert the host College well in advance to the type of data it would be useful to see. A baseline document ought to be the area's SAR and current Development Plan, which it might be useful to share ahead of the Exchange taking place. For cross-college roles, this might be quite complex to do with processes and procedures rather than just straight forward statistics.

In cross college areas there is likely to be greater emphasis on discussion with staff responsible for the activity, perusal of documents, assessment of resources and, in some cases, discussion with learners.

For a subject area, useful information might include the following:

- examination results, including trends in recent years and comparisons with other subjects in the college and with national data for similar colleges
- value added data
- learner retention rates, including comparisons with other subjects in the college
- information on progression of learners to further study or employment
- achievement of targets for example on attendance, punctuality, setting and return of work, completion of work by learners
- approaches to coursework delivery
- approaches to delivery of particular specification topics

5) Establishing the Scope

Once contact has been made and a date and initial host has been established, then parameters need to be set for the scope of the Exchange through direct contact between both parties.

These boundaries won't be the same for all Exchanges, but questions ought to be discussed and considered in advance, such as, will the visiting S7 colleague:

- be privy to all telephone conversations, 1:1 meetings, larger meetings, discussions with students etc?
- be allowed to copy and take away policies, procedures, forms and other resources?
- be given copies of work schemes, lesson plans and other learning materials?
- be given visitor access to the College intranet / VLE and networked resources?

- be allowed unlimited access to relevant cross-College documentation?
- be given total freedom to chat with students and staff as the opportunity arises?

Obviously, the hope is that the visiting S7 colleague will be accorded this sort of access in order to gain maximum benefit from the visit, but it may not be possible in all cases.

6) Drawing Up A Programme

Where there are issues of particular interest to a visiting colleague, for example library provision, embedding of ICT, admissions policies etc, it would be a good idea to plan a schedule for the Exchange to include coverage of these areas and to have a chance to talk to other staff in the college whose work might be of significance.

It may well be that some lesson observation is a priority for the visitor, in which case, this will need to be thought about and discussed in advance.

The following is a made-up outline programme. Real programmes will of course vary enormously in order to reflect the priorities of the visit:

Example Exchange Programme	
9.45	Arrival, coffee. Meet department host and team.
10.00	Tour of department resources and wider college resources where appropriate.
10.20	Interview with department host looking through schemes of work, delivery methods, success rates
11.00	Observation taster of two different lessons and levels with department team members.
11.30	Coffee with department team
11.45	Time with department host looking through student files, student handbooks, mark books, learning materials etc
12.45	Lunch with staff
1.30	Opportunity to chat with students from the department about their learning experiences.
1.45	Time with staff related to successful delivery outcomes e.g. learning support, IT support.
2.15	Further lesson observation or further time with department host including selecting / copying of materials to take away.
3.00	Final questions / queries with department host or visiting LRC resources etc
3.30	Depart

Obviously, this is by no means intended as a prescription, only as an indication of the level of detail it may be necessary to include in order to maximise the learning experience.

It may be that a particular college Principal or Senior Manager would also be a useful part of the visit programme if a particular initiative or success has required strong senior backing or funding.

When drawing up a programme, it is important to plan the time for writing notes and analysing and assessing information as it goes along, as there will be so much information received that it will be lost if there is no opportunity to write it down and reflect a little as the visit unfolds.

7) Making the most of the opportunity – Visiting Colleague

Whatever your prior knowledge of an institution or department area's successes, try to go with an entirely open-mind about what you might find and how other college's might approach things. Open-mindedness, open ears and open eyes are going to be the best tools for a successful Exchange along with an exhaustive list of questions.

It might also be the case that you are particularly interested in listening to learners talk about their experience of a scheme / process / innovation that you are interested in replicating in your own college. Again, advance preparation and negotiation with your host could perhaps result in an opportunity being found for you to talk through questions and ideas you have with learners.

Discussion with learners can provide important perspectives on many issues. It is key that arrangements for meetings with learners are settled when the programme for the Exchange is agreed. The issues to be explored should be identified in advance and might include learners':

- interest and enthusiasm for a given subject / project / process
- level of knowledge and understanding of their course / project / process
- the variety of their learning experiences and their view of the appropriateness of them
- the extent to which they feel their needs are identified and met
- the amount and nature of the work expected of them and the timeliness and value of the feedback they receive
- the availability, appropriateness and take-up of learning support
- access to and suitability of library and other learning resources

This is not an inspection, so obviously any questions you address to learners should be for the purposes of your own learning about how successful delivery methods are experienced from the learner's perspective.

8) Protocol Issues – Visiting Colleague

It goes without saying that during any visit you are a guest of the host institution with all the behaviour norms that go with that role. However tempting it might be to reflect on perceived elements of practice within a college, that is not within the remit of a guest, nor within the intended function of an S7 Exchange.

The success of such Exchanges and their continuation will rely on good, honest standards of professional courtesy being maintained by all parties.

9) Feeding Back – Visiting Colleague

It may be that host institutions would value some informal feedback from you about your findings and do invite a response from you. If this is the case, then it is of course appropriate to offer your findings as long as these are based purely on the evidence base you have seen and not on surmise or assumption.

In any event, some form of feedback to your S7 host colleague and to the Principal to thank them for their time and openness would be appropriate.

10) The Return Fixture

Once one leg of the Exchange has been completed, then a date will need to be set for the return fixture and steps 2) – 9) above repeated for the colleague who initially hosted. The challenge is to complete the Exchange cycle within one academic year. This is not as easy as it sounds. Plan early to secure suitable dates and to complete the whole process!

11) Following Up

With luck and good preparation, these Exchanges will prove hugely valuable and it may well be that both parties would like to maintain contact and swap ideas going forward: indeed, if there is a particular project that both parties would like support for, it would be well worth approaching S7 to see what further facilitation could be available.

A very brief follow-up analysis of your Exchange will be requested for your staff development records in the hope that we can establish this type of experience as a funding priority going forwards, based on its value to staff.

Wishing you a very successful experience with your S7 Exchange!

S7 EXCHANGE – EVALUATION

Exchange Visitor (name)	
Visited College Area (e.g subject area)	
Host College	
Exchange Host (name)	
Date of Exchange	
Planned Date of Return Exchange? (Or is this 2 nd leg?)	

S7 is unique as an organisation in providing facilitation for a huge range of formal, semi-formal and informal CPD opportunities. In order for these to continue to be funded and supported, we rely on the evaluations of S7 staff undertaking such opportunities to provide us with feedback on their experience.

Please try to include as much useful information as possible to provide an evaluation of your experience and return this form to the S7 Consortium Officer **within two weeks** of your Exchange taking place. Evaluations should be sent via s7colleges@googlemail.com

Many thanks.

Three key things that you learnt as a result of taking part in the visit:

- 1)

- 2)

- 3)

Three things that you will be doing differently as a result of taking part in the visit:

- 1)

- 2)

- 3)

Reflections that you have on the process and how it might be taken forward / improved upon
(Please continue below / overleaf as necessary)

PRINCIPLES, PROCESS AND PROTOCOLS FOR RAISING AND SHARING QUALITY BETWEEN THE S7 CONSORTIUM COLLEGES

This document is designed to set out the basic framework and principles within which the transfer of ideas and expertise will be managed between S7 Colleges. It comes out of several debates amongst the Peer Review and Development steering group members and aims to capture the spirit of openness that underpins all the work of the consortium. At the same time, this document is designed to bring both transparency and security to processes that have essentially been *ad hoc* up to this point.

Principles of Quality Sharing

- All S7 Colleges can ask for help, ideas, support and advice for any process, system, subject area, implementation or issue for which they would welcome support in assessing or addressing quality.
- These requests should be made by senior staff and will be shared regularly through the Vice Principals' meeting, becoming a standing item of that meeting. The records of these requests will be circulated separately from the minutes and will not be available at www.s7colleges.com
- Within any one academic year, each S7 College is entitled to up to 5 total days of support, consultancy and advice to be sourced from S7 College resources. If particular circumstances arose, this maximum could be exceeded with the agreement of all parties.
- **Within any one academic year, each S7 College is committed to offering up to 5 total days of support, if required, where resources allow.**
- All colleges should offer only those staff whose skill-sets, experience and knowledge fit them comfortably to meeting the needs of the requesting college.
- No College should seek to use staff from another S7 College to deliver difficult internal messages on quality issues that have not already either been addressed or are in the process of being addressed by the College itself.

Process of Quality Sharing

- To secure the best match between the identified need of one S7 College and an offered resource from another, Colleges should seek to be as explicit as possible in defining the need they have.
- When a request is received from a particular College, all four remaining Colleges will look to offer the best available resource that they can to meet the need identified and within the specified timescale.

- If a College has a very particular date or dates in mind for using the requested expertise (as a support for a calendared internal process, for example) then that date should be explicit from the outset with as much notice provided as possible.
- A two week window for S7 offers on requests made will be kept open, with all requests looking to be fulfilled within a four week timeline.
- If no suitable expertise is available, then the S7 Consortium Manager will liaise with other SFCs in the SE Region to secure appropriate input. Some subsidy for the cost of buying-in external college expertise may be necessary where costs per day exceed £200 + travel and expenses. Additional costs above this rate will need to be met by the requesting College. In any one academic year, the Quality Sharing budget will allow for one external input per S7 College, with amounts carried over where not needed.
- Once an offer to fulfil a request has been made, then liaison over the date/s, detail and process will pass to the requesting college.
- The S7 Consortium Manager and Administrator will keep a record of requests and offers made and fulfilled and will try to broker and ensure equity across the consortium.
- All S7 (and other) staff meeting a requested need should follow the brief that they have been asked to fulfil. The more specific colleges can be with the detail of this, the more beneficial the outcome is likely to be.
- In all cases, some sort of pre-visit briefing - **ideally a meeting on site** - to provide context, information and direction between the requesting college and the intended visitor is appropriate and should take place. This will be the responsibility of the requesting senior manager to ensure.
- Where a requested need includes the taking part in an established internal process of a particular college, a pre-visit briefing meeting will be appropriate.
- **At the end of a visit or process, a *Suggested Recommendations pro forma* should be completed by the visitor and could form the basis of a bid request to S7 for implementation funds of up to £200.**

Protocols of Quality Sharing

- The knowledge and expertise of S7 colleagues is offered in good faith to one another.
- All discussions, decisions and disclosures remain confidential between the host college and the visitor, unless agreement has been mutually reached that this is not necessary and that wider benefits would accrue from wider sharing of outcomes.
- S7 staff have not been trained as education consultants and none can therefore be expected to operate as such. All observations and suggestions under the Quality Sharing framework should be made and received in accordance with every established good principle of good practice sharing.
- All S7 staff working at another S7 College remain as visitors and should operate according to all the conventions of that role whilst on another college site.
- There will be no system put in place of appeal or redress against any unhappy, unhelpful or unforeseen outcomes in the pilot year. This decision can be revisited and reviewed at any point should it be deemed necessary.