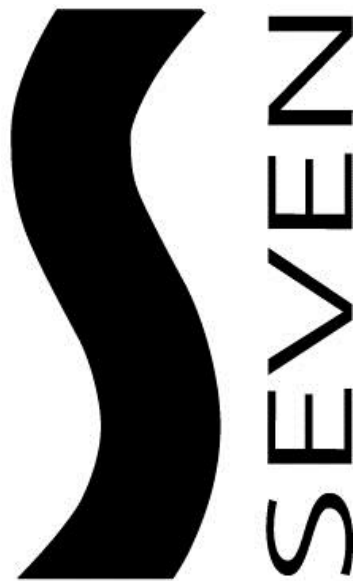


Peer Review and Development Handbook 2018

S7 Consortium of Sixth Form
Colleges



Peer Review and Development Handbook

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Introduction

This document is designed to set out the basic framework and principles within which the transfer of ideas and expertise between S7 Colleges is facilitated.

Principles

- All S7 Colleges can ask for help, ideas, support and advice for any process, system, subject area 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.
- Within any one academic year, each S7 College is entitled to at least 5 days of support, consultancy and advice to be sourced from S7 College resources.
- 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

- When a request is received from a particular College, all other 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 (for example as support for a calendared internal process) then that date should be explicit from the outset with as much notice provided as possible.
- Once an offer to fulfil a request has been made, then liaison over the date(s), details and processes will take place with the requesting College.
- The S7 Consortium Director and S7 Consortium Officer will keep a record of requests and offers made and fulfilled, and will work to broker and ensure equity across the consortium.
- All 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.

Protocols

- All discussions, decisions and disclosures remain confidential between the host College and the visitor, unless agreement has been mutually reached that benefits would be gained from a wider sharing of outcomes.
- All observations and suggestions under the quality sharing framework should be made and received in accordance with the principles of sharing good practice.
- 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.

Dual Observation Procedure

The person acting as external observer will follow the protocols below to provide moderation of a College's lesson observation procedures, as a critical friend, based on 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 observer will support the College's internal process of lesson observation by participating in dual lesson observations and will provide a constructive external viewpoint on the collected judgements, evidence-base and lesson observation procedures.

The format should be as follows:

- Lesson observation paperwork should be sent to the visiting observer in advance.
- 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 may be included as part of the moderation process.
- There will be a brief written outcome from the visiting observer in a standard format (***See Appendix A for Verification Report***).
- 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 relevant Senior Manager at the conclusion of their visit/s.
- 1 day of moderation would be the expected standard. This would include probably 3 to 4 hour long observations, allowing sufficient time for briefing / discussion / feedback around those lesson times.
- Time must be built into the beginning of each dual observation day for the host Senior Manager to have briefing time with the visiting observer.
- The completed paperwork should be sent to the relevant Senior Manager within two weeks of the visit.

SAR Process Validation

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 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 reviewer will support the College's internal process of self-assessment by participating in the College's own moderation process and providing a constructive external viewpoint on the collected judgements, evidence-base and development issues.

In undertaking this task the moderator will consider:

- The internal consistency and comprehensiveness of the SAR process
- The quality of evaluation and analysis
- The appropriateness and use made of available evidence
- The range and relevance of evidence used to support judgements
- Whether grading is consistent with underlying judgements
- The accuracy with which key strengths and areas for improvement have been identified and articulated
- The extent to which actions for continued improvement have been clearly and accurately identified and have had an impact

Wherever possible external reviewers will be expected to identify, promote and share good practice.

The external reviewer should not be seen as an expert reference point within the moderation panel they join in the host College, nor should 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 external reviewer will be expected to maintain the confidentiality of the College in which they act as a reviewer.

The external reviewer will be expected to debrief his/her experience of the process to the relevant senior manager.

Each reviewer will be expected to undertake one such SAR review each year. To maintain neutrality the next year's review should be at a different host College.

Peer Subject Support

Peer subject support (PSS) is a tool which is available for use if an S7 College deems it helpful for a particular subject. Typically this would be to support improvement in outcomes, but other thematic or specific emphases could be used, e.g. enrichment, ILT, staff development etc.

Aims

- To identify the strengths and area of development of a department using an outside specialist, proven in his/her field from another S7 College
- To review current procedures and processes within the department/area
- To give recommendations as to how that department may improve its teaching, learning and assessment in order to improve learner outcomes

Criteria for a peer supporter

- Recommended by their College's SLT
- Already leading a team
- Data analysis experience
- SAR writing experience
- At least 2 years in post
- Usually listed as a strong department on the directory of good practice

Process

At the beginning of the academic year, S7 Colleges identify one or more subject area(s) would benefit from support. Using the Alps register of good practice, the College identifies another S7 College that has a strong department. They agree with that College one or two half day visits, usually one before autumn half term and one before spring half term (after mid-year exams and / or College reports).

The peer supporter would receive two weeks in advance, relevant departmental documentation, which could include:

- Departmental SAR and Quality Improvement Plan
- In-year achievement data (for second visit)

Between Colleges, further data could be agreed.

The first visit could include:

- Meet with the Head of Department to discuss the SAR and Quality Improvement Plan and review other data and materials
- Undertake one lesson observation activity eg. Learning walks and/or lesson observation and or discussion with students/learner voice.
- Agree strategies for improvement with the Head of Department and relevant Senior Manager

The second, optional visit could include:

- Meet with the Head of Department to discuss progress against agreed strategies
- Agree further strategies for improvement with the Head of Department and relevant Senior Manager

Visits

Visits to other Colleges can be a highly 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

You can start your query by sending an email to the S7 Consortium Officer (s7enquiries@gmail.com), providing particular details regarding the opportunity you are looking for. S7 will then contact the other Colleges and send details to you of any positive responses. You will be put in contact with the host department(s) so that you can organise a date.

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 it should be adhered to.

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 as to the type of areas it would be useful to see during the time. For cross-College roles, this might be quite complex and 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 LRC provision, embedding of ICT, admissions policies, etc., it would be a good idea to plan a schedule for the visit 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 discussed in advance. Other likely requests might include a tour of area resources and wider College resources where appropriate, also time with the host Head of Department perhaps to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. This is by no means intended as prescriptive, only as an indication of the details that might be thought through in order to maximise the learning experience.

5) Following up

With good preparation, the visit will hopefully 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 continuing 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 and for S7 to check that the process is running smoothly (*see Appendix B*).

Exchanges

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

Exchange visits are a highly informative and valuable exercise for all parties given proper preparation and due professionalism. Exchanges that have taken place in the past have provided an excellent platform on which to build closer collaborative links and on which to raise quality through the sharing of good practice.

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 prescriptive as each exchange will be different.

1) Identifying the need

If you are new to a role in College, have been doing it successfully for some time, or would just welcome a fresh view, 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 effective.

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

You can start your query by sending an email to the S7 Consortium Officer (s7enquiries@gmail.com), providing particular details regarding the opportunity you are looking for. S7 will then contact the other Colleges and send details to you of any positive responses. You will be put in contact with the host department(s) so that you can organise dates.

3) Setting the dates

These exchange opportunities are usually 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 could 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 it should be adhered to.

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 might be the area's SAR and current Development Plan, which it might also be useful to share ahead of the exchange taking place.

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 will not 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 LRC 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.

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.

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 a 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 important 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 expectations 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 polite and appropriate.

10) The return visit

Once one leg of the exchange has been completed, then a date will need to be set for the return visit and steps 2) – 9) above repeated for the colleague who initially hosted. The expectation 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 good preparation, these exchanges should 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 and for S7 to ensure the smooth running of the process (**see Appendix C**).

Appendix A

Verification Report for Dual Observation Procedure

College:

Date:

Verifier:

Evidence base:

-

Key Findings:

- 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?

Appendix B

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 on s7Colleges@googlemail.com **within two weeks** of your visit taking place.

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 on another sheet if necessary).

Appendix C

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?	

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 on s7Colleges@googlemail.com **within two weeks** of your exchange taking place.

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 on another sheet as necessary)