PGCAP Mentoring Guide

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1. Introduction

The Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) is a discursive, interdisciplinary and critically reflective programme, designed primarily for early career academic members of staff at the University of Suffolk and its partner colleges, who are engaged in teaching and the support of students’ learning in Higher Education. It is also available to other University professional staff with a more limited teaching in HE role and staff in roles supporting HE students’ learning.

As initial professional development, the PGCAP is set within the national context of increasing professionalisation of teaching and academic practice in HE. The basis for national standards in HE teaching and learning are set out in the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) (see www.heacademy.ac.uk/psf). The UKPSF is a national, flexible framework with a descriptors-based approach for those involved in teaching and support of students’ learning in HE. The UKPSF acknowledges and accommodates great variety in teaching, learning and assessment practices, both across the HE sector and across disciplines, in supporting and enabling student learning.

The University supports also the aims of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in seeking to enhance the status and scholarly nature of learning and teaching. The PGCAP is accredited by the HEA as a programmatic pathway to HEA professional recognition, in Fellowship of the HEA.

PGCAP has accord with the following set of principles, outlined briefly below:

- It is fully in alignment with the UKPSF and Descriptors 1 and 2, for the award of HEA Fellowships (Associate Fellowship and Fellowship)
- The PGCAP enables academic and relevant professional services staff to gain a qualification and recognition of their academic practices as committed and scholarly professionals, engaged in HE teaching and/or the support of students’ learning
- The PGCAP benefits the institution by offering a credible means whereby relevant staff can achieve national and professional recognition for the quality of their HE teaching and support of student learning

This Guide for PGCAP Mentors seeks to explain the role of a mentor in relation to supporting a colleague(s) who is participating in the PGCAP. In the sections below, we identify some of the values and benefits from the mentoring process not only for the mentee, but also for you as the mentor, as well as for the University.

We appreciate the contribution of all mentors to the development and recognition of colleagues’ teaching expertise and pedagogical understanding, and hope you find mentoring a rewarding experience and valuable addition to your own professional profile.

If you will be making a claim for a higher category of Fellowship of the HEA yourself eg for Senior (or Principal) Fellowship in the future, the experience of mentoring others will provide an excellent evidence base.

So, we commence this Guide by setting out the key principles of the PGCAP mentoring role.
2. Principles of the PGCAP mentoring role

Mentoring is considered to be a highly effective tool for continuing professional development; providing opportunities for sharing best practice and developing effective subject pedagogy. Those who are new to teaching in a higher education context or who are engaged in updating and refreshing their practice may be better able to formulate their own concepts of, and approaches to, teaching when they have had the opportunity to review aspects of their practice with a mentor.

Mentoring, for the PGCAP, is visualised as a multi-dimensional process which may involve discussion and analysis, opportunity for reflection, pedagogic discussion, research and action planning – as well as in observing your mentee’s teaching. It is this multi-dimensional process that is a key element of professional development on the postgraduate programme and takes place especially during study on the Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE) module of the PGCAP.

During the LTHE module, the participant is required to be observed by you as their mentor (and also to reciprocally observe with a peer) during their teaching and/or support of students’ learning. The observations act as important developmental opportunities to authenticate the participant's practical evidence for professional standards purposes. (See also Appendix 1 for the PGCAP observation proforma; and https://www.uos.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Reflective-Peer-Review-Scheme-Code-of-Practice.pdf for information on the broader but associated, University’s Reflective Peer Review Code of Practice.)

Mentor support is therefore an integral and essential part of the PGCAP, and in this role you are likely to:

- Provide practical information and guidance to the PGCAP participant, as your mentee, on HE teaching and students’ learning within your School/professional area/College and within the institutional context
- Discuss the teaching and learning policies, strategies and practices (both formal and informal) of the School/professional area/College and/or of the University
- Participate in observing your mentee's teaching or support of students’ learning while on the LTHE module
- Act in part to confirm and authenticate the practice of your mentee as demonstrating alignment with relevant aspects of the UKPSF
- Provide or direct your mentee to teaching and other relevant resources especially in relation to the subject area/discipline and to any relevant professional standards
- Help your mentee to link to relevant people, services and/or resources related to their academic role
- Encourage your mentee to critically reflect on the links and connections between their professional role, their academic study on the PGCAP and their engagement and understanding of the UKPSF
- Liaise with the PGCAP course leader, as needed
3. **What is mentoring, in general terms?**

Mentoring is essentially about helping people to develop more effectively. It is a relationship designed to build confidence and to support the mentee, so they are fully able to take control of their own development and work.

Mentoring is not the same as training, teaching or coaching, and a mentor doesn’t need to be a qualified trainer or an expert in the role that the mentee carries out. A mentor needs to be able to listen and to ask questions that will challenge the mentee, including to help the mentee identify a course(s) of action to take in regards to their own development.

A mentor is different from a line manager in that they will not have direct responsibility for the mentee’s work performance but they are likely to be involved in: encouraging the mentee to work towards their own individual objectives; and acting as a motivating guide for the mentee on their professional journey.

Mentoring is used in higher education for a wide variety of situations and different points in a person’s working life, for example:

- As part of induction for a new starter at the University
- For individuals working towards promotion
- For staff who have changed roles in a department or across the institution
- For staff participating in structured learning programmes such as the PGCAP
- When changes to job roles occur, eg following a restructure
- As part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) towards professional recognition eg within the University’s HEA-accredited PASSPoRT scheme’s PGCAP and e-PASSPoRT’s (CPD) pathway

4. **What is a PGCAP Mentor?**

A mentor is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as an “experienced and trusted adviser”. This description reflects how we would like to see PGCAP mentors working with their mentees, here at the University of Suffolk *and* at any collaborative partner institution eg partner Colleges.

The role as a PGCAP mentor is likely to cover at least some of the following:

- Observing a mentee’s teaching and/or support of students’ learning in order to authenticate their practice as aligned with the UKPSF
- Active listening and being a sounding board for ideas development
- Asking questions to help develop your own and the mentee’s understanding of a situation or problem
- Offering different perspectives on a situation
- Providing collegial support and encouragement
- Being a critical friend
- Encouraging self-reflection and critical analysis by the mentee of their practice and experiences
- Helping the mentee identify areas for further development
• Acting as a champion and advocate for the the PGCAP across the University of Suffolk and within its partner Colleges, and beyond

As a mentor, you will have the opportunity to use your own experience and knowledge as an active, academic practitioner. You are encouraged to use this experience in a facilitative manner, to support the development of your mentee. As a PGCAP mentor, you will need to have Fellowship of the HEA and will be able to draw on your own engagement with, and good understanding of, the UKPSF in relation to the PGCAP. It is important that PGCAP mentors are fully up to date with not only the PGCAP design and structure, but also with the UKPSF in both the Dimensions of Practice and the relevant Descriptors (D1 and D2 in particular).

As a mentor you should be prepared to continue to prompt your mentee to reflect on their own experience where appropriate, and their understanding of the wider pedagogy that informs their practice. However, please be assured the responsibility for your mentee’s progress and achievements on the PGCAP lies with the participant and the PGCAP programme team, not you.

5. Why do we need PGCAP Mentors?

We believe there are a number of mutual benefits offered by colleagues acting as mentors on the PGCAP at the University of Suffolk, including:

• Mentoring offers flexibility in giving support and guidance around academic practice within a specific discipline, subject or professional area – mentoring can happen in so many ways and under lots of different circumstances
• It is an off line activity - it is not a role carried out by the mentee's line manager
• It is individual – each relationship will be unique to those two individuals involved
• It is people-centred and can promote collegiality and understanding between colleagues around important areas of academic and pedagogical practice
• It provides a feedback system- feedback is central to mentoring for both the mentor as well as the mentee, and is a great tool to enhance and embed critical learning and professional development
• It is broad in focus – it should meet the needs of the mentee and mentor

6. Authenticating the participant’s practice for HEA Fellowship

As part of the PGCAP and the LTHe module in particular, we ask you to observe your mentee. The LTHe observation proforma is used to record from the observation and the succeeding debriefing between you and your mentee (in Appendix 1). In completing the proforma we ask you to confirm that the participant (your mentee) was able to demonstrate practice in teaching and support of students’ learning that is in alignment with the UKPSF. This completed proforma is submitted as an appendix to the participant’s Assignment 2 on the LTHe module (along with the completed peer observation proformas).
As an active and engaged HEA Fellow yourself, we ask for your confirmation from the observation as evidence to confirm the participant’s teaching as (at least) satisfactory in terms of aligning with the UKPSF. This is a requirement for the participant to gain recognition in award of HEA Fellowship.

If there are any concerns arising from you undertaking this observation, please contact the PGCAP course leader as soon as possible.

7. Support for PGCAP Mentors

We offer an induction programme for all those commencing as mentors. The annual development event, normally held in November, is also a required activity for all mentors in which we review the mentoring process including the observation for LTHE module, as well as looking at the current policy and guidance associated to the UKPSF and HEA accreditation. It is an opportunity for networking among mentors and for sharing good practice. We also discuss connections across the PGCAP and e-PASSPoRT scheme, within the University of Suffolk’s PASSPoRT Scheme.

As a mentor commences to support a new mentee, the Quality team also ask for an update on the mentor’s own engagement in CPD activities linked to the UKPSF, to teaching and support of students’ learning. We do this to ensure all mentors are fully up-to-date in their own understanding and engagement with the UKPSF and with HEA policy/guidance for accreditation.

At times you may feel that you need a little support yourself as a PGCAP mentor. You may have faced or be dealing with a situation with your mentee and be unsure how to approach it or what guidance to offer the mentee. There is support available to mentors, including:

1. The PGCAP course leader is always happy to offer guidance and advice – email: christine.smith@uos.ac.uk; tel: x38684
2. Dr Mark Lyne, Head of Quality Enhancement, oversees the quality assurance of the PGCAP scheme. If you have any concerns or questions, you may contact Mark in confidence – email: m.lyne@uos.ac.uk or tel: x38682
3. Dr Ruth Strudwick chairs the Assessment Boards for the PGCAP and can be contacted if you have any concerns or questions relating to assessment processes or regulations – email: r.strudwick@uos.ac.uk
4. The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Administrator can assist if you are looking for specific information or resources – email: h.smith4@uos.ac.uk, tel: x38622

8. What are the benefits of PGCAP mentoring?

We strongly believe there are benefits offered in mentoring for not only the mentee, but also for the mentor, for your School, professional area or College, and for the University of Suffolk. We list some of the key points of benefit below.
Benefits for the Mentor

- Job and personal satisfaction from seeing and enabling others to develop in their academic practice
- Helping to identify the future potential of the person they are mentoring
- Learning and personally developing yourself from engagement in the process, including in continuing engagement with the UKPSF
- Satisfaction at the success and achievements of the mentee
- Recognition of your mentoring skills by your School, professional area or College, and the University
- Motivation from self-development and responsibility

Benefits for the mentee

- Disciplinary-focused challenge and stimulation
- Increased self-confidence and motivation, collegiality
- Support and challenge in formulating a clear sense of personal direction
- A sounding board to discuss ideas and approaches before action is taken
- An opportunity to think about things in different and critically-reflective ways
- A richer understanding of the formal and informal culture and structures of the School, professional area, College and within the University
- A source of scholarly knowledge and experience to tap into

Benefits for the School/professional area/College and the University of Suffolk

- Increased levels of motivation and collegiality among those involved
- Employees who have a clear direction and clear objectives
- Improved communication at all levels and across levels
- Sharing of scholarly, disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge and experiences and best practice as standard working practice
- Innovation and continuous improvement in the way that relevant professionals approach their work
- Engagement with and understanding of the UKPSF: the national standards for teaching and support of students’ learning, across the HE sector

9. What kinds of skills, attributes and experience are useful to be an effective PGCAP Mentor?

We suggest the following skills and attributes will help ensure effectiveness in the PGCAP mentoring role:

1. **Self-Awareness** – you should have a good understanding of your own strengths and development needs
2. **Organisational know-how** – you should know how to get things done at the University of Suffolk
3. **Credibility** – you should have personal and professional credibility
4. **Accessibility** – you should be willing and able to commit time to your mentee to offer support and guidance
5. **Communication** – you need good communication skills and be able to understand and listen to the ideas and feelings of others. You need to be an active listener.
6. **A desire to help others develop** – you should reflect on how you have, as an individual, developed and have or wish to gain, experience of supporting and developing others
7. **Inventiveness** – be open to new ways of doing things and different ways of working
8. **Empathy** – having the ability to empathise with others
9. **Understanding** – you need to be prepared to try to understand the diversity in perspectives, approaches and possibly backgrounds of different mentees

10. **Making the meetings work with your mentee**

    We offer the following suggestions in terms of engaging with your mentee:

    1. **Have a clear structure and purpose.**

       Before the first meeting, consider the structure and the time parameters available for you to work with your mentee. The scope and timeframe should be agreed during this initial meeting with the mentee. Having a clear structure in mind will be the best and most effective use of both your own time and your mentee’s time.

    2. **Think about the content of the meetings.**

       There should be a balance of reviewing the mentee's progress on the PGCAP, discussing current issues and thinking about the future steps and ensuring the mentee sets realistic objectives for their ongoing action plan.

    3. **Keep to dates and times set.**

       It is easy to let the day job get in the way but try to focus on the benefits to everyone (including the organisation) of engaging in this process. Please try to give it the priority it requires to be successful.

11. **Resources for Mentors**

    We have a range of resources that we make available to participants and would be delighted to share also with mentors, including on the PGCAP area of Brightspace and in the PGCAP reading list.

Table 1: Central themes of teaching excellence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Design</td>
<td>• Up-to-date knowledge and understanding of discipline</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ability to design intended learning outcomes most suited to both discipline and needs of students undertaking the discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the subject</td>
<td>• Superior command of the subject matter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ability to facilitate development of understanding and knowledge of relevance outside the discipline as well as within</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Challenging students’ presuppositions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to inspire and motivate</td>
<td>• Inspiring through one’s affect, enthusiasm and presence in the learning environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Motivating students to become intellectually independent through identifying learning that is necessary and meaningful for students in the present and the future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect and care for students as individuals</td>
<td>• Recognising diverse learning needs and having the capacity to personalise the teaching environment in the light of these</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Respect for equality and diversity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Addressing learners’ prior knowledge and experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active and group learning</td>
<td>• Using methods which promote interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fostering student engagement and participation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group, problem-based and peer-to-peer learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical and scholarly</td>
<td>• Contributing to students’ critical thinking and scholarly attitude</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Raising awareness among the students of the nature of scholarship including links between research and teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fostering understanding of critical thinking and research skills in a wider social sense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement in assessment</td>
<td>• Conscientious use of formative feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Creative and innovative approaches to feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Offering students a range of assessments to assess their mastery</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 outlines the Dimensions of Practice in the UKPSF and asks you to consider these dimensions in relation to your mentee meeting these standards eg when you are observing them as part of the LTHE module.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 2: Supporting participants to meet the standards of the UKPSF (in the Dimensions of Practice)</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Areas of Activity</strong>&lt;br&gt;Does the participant demonstrate engagement with the following areas of activity?</td>
<td>1. Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study&lt;br&gt;2. Teach and/or support student learning&lt;br&gt;3. Assess and give feedback to learners&lt;br&gt;4. Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance&lt;br&gt;5. Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Knowledge</strong>&lt;br&gt;Does the participant demonstrate application of the following aspects of Core Knowledge?</td>
<td>1. The subject material&lt;br&gt;2. Appropriate methods for teaching, learning and assessing in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme&lt;br&gt;3. How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)&lt;br&gt;4. The use of appropriate learning technologies&lt;br&gt;5. Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching&lt;br&gt;6. The implications of quality assurance and enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Values</strong>&lt;br&gt;Does the participant demonstrate active engagement with the Professional Values?</td>
<td>1. Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities&lt;br&gt;2. Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners&lt;br&gt;3. Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development&lt;br&gt;4. Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Supporting your mentee in meeting Descriptor 1 and Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF

The PGCAP is an HEA-accredited pathway to professional recognition against Descriptor 1 and Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF. Participants on the PGCAP undertake three Level 7 20 credit modules:

1. Learning and Teaching in HE (LTHE)
2. Curriculum Design, Assessment and Feedback (CDAF)
3. Small-Scale Research Inquiry (SSRI)

We have gained re-accreditation from the HEA against Descriptor 1 for the LTHE module and all participants at the end of the LTHE module are required to submit a Critical Review Summary of their engagement and understanding aligned to fully meeting Descriptor 1 (D1). We also ask them to undertake a gap analysis at this point of their evidence and understanding against Descriptor 2 (D2): to help participants shape and foreground areas for attention as they progress to take the second and third modules (CDAF and SSRI) and to complete the full PGCAP. At the point of completion of the LTHE module and in submission of a satisfactory D1 Review, any participant not intending to continue to the full PGCAP will be considered for the recognition of Associate Fellowship of the HEA, against D1 of the UKPSF at the PGCAP Assessment Board.

We have gained HEA re-accreditation against Descriptor 2 for the PGCAP and at the completion of the third module (SSRI), Assessment 3 explicitly requires the participant to both synthesise and critically reflect upon their experiences across the PGCAP, and to evidence their explicit engagement and understanding of Descriptor 2. Therefore, upon successful completion of all modules, the PGCAP Assessment Board will both confer the award of the PGCAP and recognition of HEA Fellowship to the participant, against D2 of the UKPSF.

Your own understanding as a Fellow, Senior Fellow or Principal Fellow of the HEA, gained from your direct and personal engagement with the UKPSF and in your own HEA recognition is invaluable in your role as a PGCAP mentor. It enables you to support the participant in their engagement with and in gathering relevant evidence to demonstrate their understanding and application of the UKPSF to their practice and professional role. It enables you to authenticate your mentee's practice through the observation you undertake and to confirm they were able to demonstrate satisfactorily effective approaches to teaching, learning and/or student support.

We share below, for ease of reference in your conversations with your mentee, the Descriptors 1 and 2 from the UKPSF.
**Descriptor 1 of the UKPSF**

Demonstrates an understanding of specific aspects of effective teaching, learning support methods and student learning. Individuals should be able to provide evidence of:

I. Successful engagement with at least two of the five Areas of Activity
II. Successful engagement in appropriate teaching and practices related to these Areas of Activity
III. Appropriate Core Knowledge and understanding of at least K1 and K2
IV. A commitment to appropriate Professional Values in facilitating others’ learning
V. Relevant professional practices, subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the above activities
VI. Successful engagement, where appropriate, in professional development activity related to teaching, learning and assessment responsibilities

**Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF**

Demonstrates a broad understanding of effective approaches to teaching and learning support as key contributions to high quality student learning. Individuals should be able to provide evidence of:

I. Successful engagement across all five Areas of Activity
II. Appropriate knowledge and understanding across all aspects of Core Knowledge
III. A commitment to all the Professional Values
IV. Successful engagement in appropriate teaching practices related to the Areas of Activity
V. Successful incorporation of subject and pedagogic research and/or scholarship within the above activities, as part of an integrated approach to academic practice
VI. Successful engagement in continuing professional development in relation to teaching, learning, assessment and, where appropriate, related professional practices

**Acknowledgements**

We are indebted to those who act as mentors for their important and valuable support of the PGCAP programme and its participants.
Appendix 1

PGCAP: Learning and Teaching in HE module

Proforma for observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART A: to be completed by the PGCAP participant (as the person <strong>being</strong> observed) in advance of a pre-observation meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of person being observed:</strong> <strong>Name of person observing</strong> <strong>Type of session for observation:</strong> e.g. teaching observation, practical session, supervision session, online tutorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department / professional area:</strong> <strong>Department / professional area:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contact info:</strong> <strong>Contact info:</strong> <strong>Proposed date for the observation:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Aims of the session being observed:** Briefly outline the broad purpose of the session

2. **Objectives:** Indicate what you might expect to gain from the session (including also what you expect students to gain)

3. **Observation focus:** Identify any aspect(s) of the observation of the session that you would like the observer to comment on in particular

**PART B: to be completed by the observer and to use in preparing for the post-observation debriefing with the observee**

4. **Aspects to consider during an observation** (with indicative mapping to UKPSF)
   - **Introducing the session** eg clarity of aims and learning outcomes, continuity with other sessions and checking of students’ prior knowledge Evidencing A1 and A2
   - **Structure and Organisation** eg evidence of planning and logical order to the session Evidencing A1 and A2
   - **Content** eg suitability of content, currency, accuracy, relevance, level, match to students’ needs, use of examples Evidencing K1
   - **Methods and Approaches** eg choice of learning activities, level of student participation/engagement, interactivity and interest of the students, stimulating and challenging learners, asking questions. Management of groups/group activity. Awareness of individual needs where appropriate. Evidencing K2, K3, and V1
   - **Presentation Style** eg pace, clarity of voice, intonation, volume, eye contact, non-verbal communication, inclusion, respect for and interaction with individuals. Evidencing A2 and V1
   - **Use of the learning space and learning technologies/resources** eg movement around the room, use of relevant technologies within the session or pre- and/or post-activity, use of discipline-specific equipment, management of seating/lighting Evidencing A4 and K4
   - **Checking learning** eg use of methods to gauge students’ understanding and their learning Evidencing K5
   - **Ending the session (if observed)** eg summarising, identifying key points, reviewing LOs, signposting future work or follow up reading/activities Evidencing A1
5. General observations / points of clarification

PART C: to be completed to record the post-observation dialogue, feedback and debriefing meeting, and action planning (for the observee and potentially also for the observer)

6. Strengths

7. Suggested areas for development

8. Additional comments in relation to observation focus in Section 3

9. Action Plan (to be discussed and agreed jointly by the observee and observer)

We agree this is a fair record of the observation and the debriefing discussion.

**The PGCAP Mentor, in observing the participant confirms the session observed is an authentic example of practice and that the participant was able to satisfactorily demonstrate effective approaches to teaching, learning and/or student support

Signature of observee>Date:

Signature of observer>Date: