# Record of Observation or Review of Teaching Practice

Session/artefact to be observed/reviewed: Advanced Applied Strategy Assessment and Scheme of Work

Size of student group: 150 students

Observer: Carys Kennedy

Observee: Nina Van Volkinburg

Part OneObservee to complete in brief and send to observer prior to the observation or review:

What is the context of this session/artefact within the curriculum?

*This is the Scheme of Work and Assessment brief for the Block 2 unit, Advanced Applied Strategy taken by MA Strategic Fashion Marketing students.*

How long have you been working with this group and in what capacity?

*As their course leader, we’ve worked together since September 2024 but for this unit, since February 2 when we launched Block 2.*

What are the intended or expected learning outcomes?

*LO 1 - Evaluate current issues and the key external factors influencing the fashion industry*

*(****knowledge****);*

*LO 2 - Interrogate the complexity and dynamics of the fashion industry (****enquiry****);*

*LO 3 - Demonstrate a critical understanding of complex decision-making processes at a strategic*

*and tactical level (****process****);*

*LO 4 - Present a professional case study with clear and actionable recommendations*

*(****communication, realisation****).*

What are the anticipated outputs (anything students will make/do)?

*They will produce a 3,000 word case study.*

Are there potential difficulties or specific areas of concern?

*Students are placed into 1 of 4 pathways*

How will students be informed of the observation/review?

*N/A*

What would you particularly like feedback on?

*On the structure of the course and how the assessment could be clarified*

How will feedback be exchanged?

*Online Via TEAMS*

## Part Two

### Observer to note down observations, suggestions and questions:

Thank you Nina for talking through this scheme of work with me. I really enjoyed hearing about it.

You shared that this scheme of work is in Block 2. Whereas Block 1 is foundational, Block 2 is more creative and practical. You said that you have been teaching on the unit for 3-4 years. The delivery of the unit used to be a lecture-seminar format. This year, it is workshop based; you provide a 20-minute or so introduction, and then students complete activities. You explained that part of the rational is to enable students to meet and collaborate with peers they may not have spent time with before. I noted that the workshops sit alongside some pre-recorded content, similar to a ‘flipped classroom’ approach, which provides a good mix of tutor and student led activities. You also referred to the consistency in how taught sessions are organised (e.g. pre-lecture reading; post-lecture activities) which supports students to know what is expected of them, and to manage their time.

You shared that the unit begins with a unit briefing. We spoke about your unit brief documents, and I commented that these seemed clear and easy to follow. You explained that the LOs had been stripped back recently, and this looked successful to me; the LOs seemed clear, and are well-supported by the mode of assessment and teaching methods. We talked about the ‘Make the Grade’ checklist, and the optimum timing of when to share this. You explained that you share the checklist some way into the unit, to avoid overwhelm; this seemed like a good strategy, especially given that the unit brief and supplementary documents are so clear.

You shared the overarching structure of the unit, which moves between introductory sessions about the four areas (so all students get a ‘taste’ of each area) before moving into a series of 6 pathway sessions. The students then come back together for a symposium, where they can share their projects. You asked for feedback about the structure of the unit, and I felt this was really nicely balanced; I particularly like how the 6 pathway workshops are ‘bookended’ by whole group activities, so all students are exposed to each pathway yet still get the opportunity to specialize.

You explained that, collectively, the teaching team has noted that different students respond best to different forms of feedback. You have therefore built in a range of different ways to feedback to students, and for them to ask questions of you. This includes Padlets, office hours, and small group discussions. I was impressed with the range of choice offered to students, and agree that this can be really helpful in supporting student inclusion.

You also talked about the rationale for not talking about the assessment within the pathways. You want students to focus on the learning rather than the assessment, and try to encourage this within the student cohort. I think the potential risks to this approach are well mitigated against by the way you begin the unit with the unit briefing, which refers to the assessment; you do introduce the assessment, but ‘park’ it during the pathways. You do also offer unit leader office hours, so students can ask questions outside the content of the pathways if they want.

We talked about alternative forms of assessment. You explained that the assessment replicates what students might be asked to do in industry (a form of ‘authentic assessment’?), and I asked whether other activities might happen in industry, such as presentations. We then talked about the potential benefits of offering a choice of assessment methods aligned to the same learning outcomes, so students could perhaps either do a 3000-word written case study or a 20-minute recorded presentation (for example). You expressed interest in this, and the revalidation of the unit is perfect timing to consider what flexibility there might be in modes of assessment.

You explained that you bring in your own research into your Marketing 4.0 pathway (research-informed teaching), which allows the content of sessions to be ‘cutting edge’. I imagine this is particularly important in this unit, which is very much focused on contemporary concerns which are (I imagine) in a state of rapid change.

Finally, we talked about the level of ‘competition’ for students to work on each pathway. You explained that priority is given depending on the student’s overarching course, and the justification they provide when choosing their first and second choice pathways. You said that last minute requests may also be factored in (although not often). I commented that marginalised students (for example, disabled students) might possibly submit their requests later than others, and you paused to reflect on this while we were speaking, also noting that it is unusual for the timing of the choice to be factored in to the allocation.

## Part Three

### Observee to reflect on the observer’s comments and describe how they will act on the feedback exchanged:

I really enjoyed this conversation about our Block 2 unit Advanced Applied Strategy which has allowed me to reflect on current practice and certain elements can be improved upon; especially in regards to inclusivity. I really appreciated how Carys provided such encouragement and positive comments on how the unit was structured and developed. Having taught on this unit for 4 years, I am constantly trying to improve content, format and assessment and it can be frustrating at times as there is never one perfect solution! As a course team, the direction we are heading is to lead a proactive student body who are using workshops to research, engage in activities and as said “flip the classroom” to arrive at an answer opposed to myself purely lecturing. Through my reflection and engagement with the Fellowship and Senior Fellowship process last year, I have a newfound appreciation for a constructivist lens when teaching and do see myself as an activity organizer more than telling learners “truth”. One comment made which was particularly helpful was a point on assessment and how to make this more inclusive. I agree entirely that a 3,000 word case study is limiting and disadvantageous some learners. Also in a world which prioritizes imagery and concise presentations/verbal communication one needs to ask if a written output is preferred. This discussion on types of assessment outputs allows me to question and challenge our current re-approval process in order to cater to our student body and the needs put forward by industry. Thanks so much Carys for a fantastic discussion and helping me on the journey to improve teaching practice!