Good Practice Series

Training Observations – to identify and promote good practice in teaching

	Good Practice examples
Why are observations important?	SCT is committed to providing world-class training and opportunities; being at the forefront of innovation in terms of delivery methods and quality improvement; and the highest levels of service and partnership working with apprentices and employers working in the horse industry.
	SCT uses a variety of methods to quality assure and continuously improve the provision, including:
	• analysis of success rates overall and for different learner groups
	• learner and employer feedback
	• internal and external verification
	• internal audit
	• professional development activities with world-class trainers
	• observations of all activities.
	A system of observations enables training to be evaluated and improved, and to accurately inform self assessment at an individual and organisation level. Observations also enable examples of good practice to be identified and promoted to help continuously raise the standards of training for all trainees.
What does the observation involve?	• SCT will identify an appropriate person to observe. The observer will be highly qualified, experienced as an observer, and trained in the characteristics of training at all grade levels. This will often be someone with an Ofsted inspector background.
	• The observer will attend one of your training sessions on the Portfolio Workshop programme.
	• When they arrive, briefly introduce them to the group – say who and what they are doing. Ensure there is a spare chair. After the introduction do not include them in the session.
	• They may observe any part of the session, for a minimum of 45 minutes.
	• They may talk to trainees and time for this should be allowed for.

What should training be on?	- Refer to each trainee's overall Assessment Plan on Page 8 of their Skillscheck that shows the target month for them to achieve a particular unit. - Follow the Action Plan completed by the trainee's NVQ assessor, given after each assessment. - Embed literacy and numeracy support into the NVQ unit as per the Skills for Life and NVQ Scheme of Work - Use the suggested teaching activities included in the Skills for Life Scheme of Work - The level of teaching should be guided by the Skills for Life Scheme of Work, appropriate to the NVQ level and current Skills for Life level the trainee is working at.
What happens after the observation?	- You should allow 15 minutes for feedback immediately after the observation, which could be during one of your planned breaks or at the end of the session. The observer will discuss with you strengths and areas for improvement, and suggest development actions. - Your teaching will be graded: outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate - Any trainer whose session is graded satisfactory or inadequate will be observed again within 2 months. Any trainer whose session is graded inadequate after the second observation must cease teaching. - SCT will receive a written report from the observer, and a copy will be sent to you within 4 weeks - Examples of good practice will be promoted - The report will be used to inform self-assessment - We will discuss the report with you at the quarterly appraisal meeting, and any development actions required.
Good Practice Checklist: **Preparation**	**Failing to prepare is preparing to fail…** - Check the venue, start time and level of trainees in the group - Use the ILP to gain background information about the trainee, their type of yard, level of literacy and numeracy and key targets - Refer to the overall NVQ and Key Skills tracking grids and Scheme of Work to check on progress and identify action required. - Prepare resources that are relevant, high quality, and of sufficient quantity for numbers in the group. - Be aware of any barriers to learning for each trainee. This could be personal or work issues, disability or other difficulties e.g. you may need resources suitable for dyslexic learners. - Plan contingencies e.g. spare resources, delivery of an alternative unit if the one planned has been completed.

	• Design the session to provide appropriate support for their individual needs. • Produce the Lesson Plan: check if a progress review is needed, plan a variety of activities including time for trainees to share their experiences of work for others to learn from. On arrival at the venue: • Ensure a safe, clean and tidy training environment: with suitable access, warm, well-ventilated, suitable lighting. • Ensure SCT posters are displayed. • Organise the room layout with sufficient chairs and space between. • Check equipment works e.g. speakers, laptop, projector.
Good Practice Checklist: **Teaching**	• Ensure training is relevant and trainee-centred, relates to the job, the qualification and level they are working towards • Ensure that Functional Skills training is embedded and integrated into all learning • Use resources that can easily be modified to enable differentiation between levels for individual trainees • Use real work examples where possible • Ensure key points and spellings are displayed and recorded for future reference • Prompt note-taking. • Follow a clear structure throughout the session and be organised. • Be confident and enthusiastic, and demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject. • Throughout the session emphasise the need for high standards of attainment, presentation and continuous improvement in performance at work. • Use ongoing diagnostic assessment to focus training appropriately. • Give constructive and encouraging feedback and comments on work to enable further progress.
The Session **Introduction**	• Start the session on time. • Explain the context of the session: why we are doing it and how it will help improve performance at work. • Explain the objectives – objectives should clearly link to improving performance at work, preparation for NVQ assessment, and Functional Skills assessment. • Use a recap on the previous session to check what has been remembered and to build on previous learning. • Start with a 2 minute upbeat activity.

	• Set and agree your targets for their learning during the session. Targets should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timebound).
The Session Main part	• Show flexibility in responding to individual learning requirements appropriate to the trainee's age, experience and learning styles • Encourage active participation • Organise appropriate peer assessment e.g putting the right people together, about an appropriate subject for their needs • Plan for and encourage the use of technology, both during the session and in their own time • Use high quality, relevant resources effectively to support and check learning • Make frequent checks on understanding and progress • Use sample test questions to check they can apply the skills in a new context • Ensure actual evidence for NVQ assessment is produced • Ensure activities are always time-bound e.g. 5 minutes to complete the worksheet
The Session Conclusion	• Re-cap of the objectives and identify the progress made and work still to do. • Review the Action Plan and guide the trainee to tick off work now completed. • Ensure the trainee updates their skillscheck with work completed. • Quality assure your teaching: ask the trainee what three things they have learned from the session. • Update the ILP 'Record of progress' with session achievements. • Agree new targets and include them on the ILP diagnostic assessment to inform planning for next time. • Set research for the trainee to do before the next session, relevant to their next assessment. • Confirm the date and time of the next session.
Group management	The management of the group is an important aspect of achieving a successful training session. The following gives some suggestions for group management: • Set ground rules, boundaries and expectations from the Portfolio Workshops and revisit if necessary each session • Challenge lateness and inappropriate behaviour • Make effective use of the layout of the training room

	• Organise seating e.g. don't let close friends sit together, seat a more able trainee with a less able so they can support them, seat yourself next to ones who are most likely to find the subject difficult • Be aware of your own body language and positioning. • Use an appropriate voice, pitch and tone during delivery. Do not shout. • Use accessible language, avoid use of slang. • Be encouraging and give positive feedback. • Be aware of any students with additional needs such as hearing disabilities; position yourself where you can be clearly seen. • Use open and directed questioning. • Ensure sufficient time is allowed for trainees to formulate answers to questions. • Have a system for answering questions e.g go round the room and each person has to give an answer, then change direction for each new question. • Check on the progress of every individual throughout the session. • Direct the sharing of resources if required e.g a worksheet for each pair. • Allocate responsibilities and activities e.g pair or group work. • Encourage peer assessment activities. • Ensure involvement of every trainee.
Good Practice Checklist: **Learning**	• Keep trainees challenged, interested and motivated. • Encourage trainees to be enthusiastic for further learning and motivated to continue with further work/research outside the session for their own self-interest. • Encourage trainees to critically evaluate and compare/contrast. • Ensure trainees develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. • Enable trainees to apply new skills to their job, and to different contexts. • Check trainees are fully aware of the action required to improve, and their targets for improvement. • Record progress on the ILP.
Good Practice Checklist: **Formative and summative** **Assessment**	• Assess if trainees' skills, knowledge and understanding are appropriate to the level /qualification. • Assess if trainees' skills, knowledge and understanding are high in relation to prior achievement. • Record competence ongoing on the record of progress in the ILP.

	• Ensure trainees are effectively prepared for work, NVQ and Functional Skills assessment. • Communicate the progress made to employers. • Recognise and reward attainment. • Ensure trainees know what they are doing and what they need to do to improve. • Enable trainees to make significant measurable progress to achieving their targets. • Assess and provide encouraging feedback on how far the trainee has progressed within the session and against the national standards for the qualification.
Safeguarding	SCT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and expects all staff, trainees, and employers to share this commitment. Safeguarding should be actively promoted during sessions by emphasising the importance of: • being safe e.g. by doing risk assessments • PPE – ensuring all are aware of the types, suitability for different tasks, availability • hygiene, e.g. remind to wash hands after handling horses • correct use of computers and the internet • finding out what they have enjoyed • occupational health and how to promote a healthy lifestyle at work e.g. use of PPE, hot water, clean loos, clean towels, hand gel, dust masks, correct storage and use of chemicals and veterinary products • being aware of signs of abuse and reporting any concerns to SCT's Designated Person, Belinda Turner
Equality and Diversity	Equality and Diversity should be actively promoted during sessions by: • integrating the use of positive images in resources e.g males, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities • use of resources that some trainees will find easier to use e.g if using paper or Powerpoint should be produced on pale pink, blue or green, using Arial font at least size 12 • incorporating visual images wherever possible, as most trainees working with horses are visual learners • promoting additional opportunities to develop their skills e.g helping with horse trials or shows, doing work experience in a different yard, writing articles for the newsletter, producing safety signs for their workplace • ensuring access for trainees with mobility problems e.g not using an upstairs room • using large size font for trainees with visual impairment • positioning yourself appropriately for deaf trainees who may

	• need to lip-read • directing note-taking for trainees who may have difficulty remembering key points / instructions • finding alternative assessment methods for trainees with writing / speaking difficulties • encouraging the use of technology e.g for reminders using mobile phones, digital cameras / video for evidence of practical performance, computers for producing portfolio work and completing worksheets.
Effective use of ICT	Trainers should promote the use of technology within the sessions to develop trainees' ICT skills for training and work by encouraging and facilitating the use of ICT: • for producing portfolio work • to improve presentation, layout and accuracy • for record-keeping so information can be stored, shared, and edited at a later date • for internet research • for evidence of practical performance using digital cameras • for accessing resources and websites to enable the use of a wider range of learning resources.
How to make sessions more challenging	All sessions should involve trainees being challenged to further improve their skills, confidence and competence. This is often the weakest area found when trainers are observed. Actions that can be taken to make sessions more challenging include: • making the subject more challenging by relating it to the job not the performance criteria e.g travelling horses to a show 200 miles away, rather than a local show 10 miles away • using what-if scenarios to transfer skills to different contexts • setting research to do before the next session, and asking the trainee to give a short presentation next time • using test questions to check understanding • reducing time limits for completing questions and activities • increasing the complexity of questions e.g the impact of breaking down / taking an extra horse / stabling two nights instead of one • giving more responsibility e.g for planning the work of others, completing documentation normally done by the employer • encouraging more awareness of their own competence e.g by asking them to teach another member of the group / check their work and provide feedback on areas for improvement • further develop critical evaluation skills e.g ask them to identify four features in a piece of writing, not two.

What makes an outstanding trainer?	Some key characteristics of an outstanding trainer: • Inspirational role-model in terms of commitment to high standards, attention-to-detail and organisation skills • Professional in appearance, behaviour and standards • Ability to set, reinforce, monitor and meet targets • Shows accurate knowledge of trainees' overall progress towards meeting targets, and focuses attention on meeting outstanding targets • Ability to increase trainees' self-esteem through successful outcomes and early experiences of success • Makes effective use of the time of the training session • Has an excellent rapport with the trainees • Shows respect to the trainee and employer at all times • Differentiates learning for learners to ensure that learning takes place, sets work that is challenging and rewarding but not so difficult as to discourage the trainee • Adept at problem-solving and enabling the trainee to develop the skills of problem-solving • Uses a variety of learning styles in each training session to cater for the trainees' individual learning style. • Ensures subject knowledge and specialism is to the highest level, undertakes any CPD which is appropriate and actively seeks out and pursues any additional training opportunities • Effectively communicates with and motivates trainees and employers to raise standards • Provides and obtains feedback on work performance and continuously makes the link between work performance and Functional Skills.
Completing documentation	The completion of documentation is an essential part of recognising and rewarding progress, and ensuring systems are in place to enable further learning to take place. Trainers are responsible for: • Completing the Lesson Plan including the quality assurance section after the session • Updating the ILP including the record of progress and diagnostic assessment • Checking the trainee has updated their Skillscheck • Checking completed actions have been ticked off by the trainee on the Action Plan • Completing the Progress Review with the trainee if necessary • Ensuring their IFL membership and other professional memberships are up to date and at the correct level

Ofsted inspection reports: **Strengths in Skills for Life teaching**	Ofsted observes and grades training sessions and comments on their findings in inspection reports. Here are some examples of good practice highlighted by Ofsted in their reports: • Well-managed support and resources motivate learners with additional learning needs to succeed in their training. • Comprehensive individual learning plans are used for effective target setting and for monitoring progress • Support is well structured and co-ordinated and staff are well supported in their roles • Well managed programme helps clients increase their employability skills and find suitable work • Good additional learning support • Use of technology to deliver literacy and numeracy results in good retention, motivation and achievement of personal and group goals for learners • Senior managers are very supportive of the provision and good links with other curriculum areas ensure a genuinely inclusive approach • A well-structured system for developing participants' competences, which prepares them for employment • Several motivating rewards have been introduced to encourage achievement. • Learners can take part in literacy and numeracy training at remote centres. • Introduced better methods of initial assessment, more detailed individual learning plans and more thorough matching of learners to employers, leading to a substantial improvement in retention rates.
Useful links and other reading	• LSIS Excellence Gateway http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/ • Skillsworkshop literacy and numeracy worksheets http://www.skillsworkshop.org/ • BBC website for literacy and numeracy worksheets http://bbc.co.uk/skillswise • National centre for excellence in mathematics https://www.ncetm.org.uk/ • Lifelong learning UK http://www.lluk.org/ • Geoff Petty Teaching Today http://www.geoffpetty.com/