

# THE KENTUCKY MOTORCYCLE RIDER EDUCATION PROGRAM (KMREP) Peer Observer Guidelines

**Goals of the Peer Observation Program:** (1) To identify the Instructor's teaching strengths and encourage their continued use to benefit the students; (2) to identify areas needing improvement to enhance the instructor's capabilities; (3) to provide the instructor as well as the observer with opportunities for professional growth; and (4) to improve the instructors and the program through shared experiences and constructive feedback. The Peer Observation Program is a resource provided to Kentucky Motorcycle Rider Education Program (KMREP) instructors.

**Instructor Eligibility and Observation Scheduling Guidelines:** All instructors are considered eligible for observation at any time. Instructors may be observed in the classroom, range, or both. For efficiency and cost-effectiveness, a peer observer will conduct an observation on both instructors. The instructors may be observed in the lead and/or co-instructor role and in the classroom and/or on the range.

All observations will be conducted with all involved parties having full knowledge. The goal of the program is to be constructive and not punitive in any way. There will be no clandestine observations conducted. The observation is expected to cover approximately 2 hours of the classroom and/or approximately 3 range exercises.

## **Instructor Expectations and Responsibilities:**

1. Inform the students in your course that you are being observed for your professional development, not them. Introduce the Peer Observer. This helps to minimize stress and guess work among your students. It is expected that the Peer Observer Program will be viewed positively by instructors and students as they are pleased and impressed that there is a system in place which facilitates instructor professionalism and quality.
2. The observed instructors should not request advice pertaining to instruction in the classroom or on the range while the observation is in progress. If this situation occurs, the observer has been trained to decline to comment.
3. Upon completion of the observation, the Peer Observer can review the observation notes with the instructors at the course site, over the telephone at a later time, or not at all. It is your choice and the observer must be informed prior to the observation of your wishes. If you opt to have a debriefing with the Observer, please be respectful of their time. A maximum of 15 minutes will be provided at the course site. If the Observer agrees to spend additional time, it must be done at a later date that is agreeable to both parties.
  - Understand the following:
    - ⇒ The observation is simply a snapshot of the exercise. It is not subjective but is simply a written record of what was observed to include times, number of repetitions, etc.

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- ⇒ The observation represents an exchange of information about what was accomplished during a short period of time.
  - ⇒ It may not reflect your overall abilities or your best effort.
  - ⇒ You will not be fired or disciplined as a result of a peer observation. You may be asked to complete some review work prior to teaching your next course.
  - ⇒ You can request a follow-up if you are not satisfied or wish to document better performance.
  - ⇒ You will be given opportunities to demonstrate improvement and/or correction if any of your performance does not meet expectations.
  - ⇒ Perfection is not expected. Improvement over time is respected.
5. After the Peer Observer has sent the report to the office, it will be logged and sent to one of the Trainers for review. When the trainer returns the completed report to the office, the information will be reviewed and a cover letter that outlines strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations for achieving those improvements will be devised. Occasionally, remedial activities are identified. Instructors are encouraged to communicate with the trainer to determine activities that will best meet individual needs.
  6. Expect feedback on those things you did well, and variations from the curriculum that occurred during your performance.
  7. Each Instructor is encouraged to respond to the written document. Instructors will be provided an opportunity to correct any deficiencies and/or request a follow-up observation session.
  8. If for any reason you are not satisfied with the observation, you may request a follow-up observation from another Peer Observer or from a trainer. The KMREP encourages each instructor to submit feedback regarding their observation to improve or enhance the experience for future observations.
  9. As KMREP observations are conducted, all information identifying the instructors and sites will be redacted from the report and shared with the instructors in the state.

### A. Site Observation Guidelines

1. **The Peer Observer's responsibility is to observe and record the classroom and range teaching activities.**
2. **The Peer Observer will make every effort to be inconspicuous during the observation.** This involves positioning and personal appearance. In the classroom, the Peer Observer will sit quietly in the back of the classroom. On the range, the Peer Observer must be able to see and hear the instructors without "breathing down their neck." The observer must be aware of the students and

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avoid distracting them or attracting their attention. The observer will present a professional appearance. In any event, avoid over- or under-dressing. The observer's presence should have little to no effect on students and minimal effect on the instructors. Other suggestions are as follows:

- Before beginning the observation, invite the instructor to provide suggestions that will minimize their stress during the observation. During the observation, the instructor is expected to communicate to the observer any position adjustments or behavior changes that could be made by the observer to reduce distractions during the observation.
  - The observer will stand behind the group of students when the instructor is reviewing the directions.
  - The observer will monitor the instructor and students for any non-verbal cues that might indicate there is a distraction. The observer is expected to adjust position and/or behavior, if possible, to correct the situation.
  - The observer will jot brief notes during the observation and fill in the details at a later time. The observer records information that includes positive aspects of the instruction, areas for improvement, and examples of events during the classroom and range observation.
3. **The Peer Observer will not bring other individuals to the course site during an observation session.** This includes other instructors, friends, relatives, etc. There is a degree of stress and discomfort involved without adding additional, unnecessary variables.
4. **The Peer Observer will not intervene with the conduct of the course, with coaching or evaluation of the students, or with either instructor.** The Peer Observer's role is observation only ... not correction, coaching, or evaluation of students or instructors. The Peer Observer does not have the authority to intervene in a lesson or terminate a class.

Do not intervene with weak or poor demonstrations or instruction, or in cases of incorrect range management. The observed instructor must be able to retain the trust and respect of the students through completion of the course. The Observer must never do anything to diminish the instructor's credibility.

If the Peer Observer believes that a student is in imminent danger and is likely to be injured if the conditions continue, the Peer Observer has a responsibility to "notify" the instructors of the dangerous activity or condition. This must be done in a professional non-threatening manner and without interfering with the students or drawing undue attention. Be brief and speak quietly. People with equivalent training have a legal responsibility to each other and to the students to provide information regarding unsafe conditions. The peer observer must "notify" the instructor(s); however, the assigned instructor(s) is/are not obligated to incorporate

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or take action if they believe they are correctly and adequately handling the situation.

The Peer Observer is expected to report the “notification” to the Office.

5. **The Peer Observer is not a range aide or co-instructor.** However, if it does not interfere with the observation, the observer may assist with range set-up, motorcycle maintenance, or other range aide duties.
6. **The Peer Observer is not an advisor.** In normal circumstances, let the instructor teach. Do not interrupt or interfere.
7. **The Peer Observer may provide advice or assistance before or after the observation, but not during instructional time... and then only if asked.** A request for advice should not involve asking the observer to provide instruction during a lesson or exercise. The observed instructors should not request advice pertaining to instruction in the classroom or the range while the observation is in progress. If this situation occurs, the observer has been trained to decline to comment.

### B. Debriefing

1. The observer will ask if the instructor would like to receive a verbal summary of the observation immediately after the observation has been completed at the course site. **The Peer Observer will provide a summary at the course site only on the approval of the instructor.**
2. **The information sharing session must be conducted privately with the instructor.** Select an area away from the students over the lunch hour or after the class.
3. The Information Sharing Session can be more stressful than the written report. Point out particularly effective techniques as well as any deviations from the curriculum.
4. This is a conversation between peers. The observer will talk with the instructors, listening as well as speaking. Simply point out the significant observation notes in a brief conversation.
  - The procedure used when sharing information with the instructor is important. There usually isn't much time on-site to complete the debriefing. Be organized and prepared to cover the significant points. Avoid lengthy discussions that interfere with the schedule for the course. Do not get involved in debating points with the instructor. The purpose of the debriefing is to present information.
  - Start at the top of the observation/notes form and quickly proceed through the points identifying the significant observations. Remind the instructor that they

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will receive specific feedback and recommendations from the Trainer and/or the KMREP office.

### 5. Debriefing Recommendations

- Identify time available for the debriefing (15 minutes).
- Reassure them that this is considered to be a Continuing Education experience and learning opportunity. It is not a pass/fail situation.
- Present the most significant 3-5 points to remember based on the items listed below. Do not argue if the instructor disagrees with your observation(s). Just present the information.

#### **Classroom Priority Categories for Debriefing**

1. Use of Small Groups
2. Key Points Reinforced
3. Met Objectives
4. Use of Time

#### **Range Priority Categories for Debriefing**

1. Demonstrated Exercise Correctly
2. Conducted Coaching Appropriate to each Student
3. Maintained Safe Learning Environment
4. Met Exercise Objective
5. Use of Time

- Start at the top of the form (time management) and move through to the bottom of the form.
- Show the instructor your notes from the beginning to enhance credibility and dispel any misunderstandings of the process and reporting.
- Ask if there is anything they would like you to help with or if they would like to know how you do certain things. Do not offer if not asked.
- Identify anything that you learned from their teaching.
- Give them some positive feedback before giving the constructive observations.
- Debriefing on the same day is helpful.
- Cover specific items that the instructor requested feedback on first.
- Avoid using terms such as good/bad, right/wrong, or correct/incorrect.

### **C. Accidents**

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1. The Peer Observer will provide necessary assistance in the event of an accident, as directed by the instructors for that exercise. **The class instructors are in charge at the course site. Do not usurp their authority.** In an emergency situation, the Peer Observer will be prepared to render First Aid, assist when needed, and fill obvious needs. The Peer Observation Written Report will not include reference to the accident or the First Aid that was administered. This information will be recorded on the Accident Report Form as required by the site provider.
2. The observation will be resumed as soon as possible after the accident.

## D. Written Report

1. Use the check sheets and forms provided by KMREP. The forms and standards are based on the evaluation standards, curriculum criteria and processes used during the Instructor Preparation Course.
2. Report the facts only. Do not provide opinions or conclusions.
3. If something was said or done either correctly, or incorrectly, report it.
4. Emphasize the positive aspects and strengths of the instructor; report the errors or weaknesses.
5. The focus of this activity is a “continuing education” experience that can be beneficial for all parties ... the instructor, the observer, and the program.
6. The Peer Observer has a responsibility to report any deviations from the curriculum. It is the Project Director or Trainer’s responsibility to provide appropriate feedback and corrective information to the instructors.

## E. Documentation

1. Each instructor that is observed will receive (1) a copy of the complete written report submitted to the program by the peer observer, and (2) a cover letter from a trainer summarizing the significant points.
2. Each instructor is encouraged to respond to the written document. Instructors will be provided an opportunity to correct any deficiencies and/or request a follow-up observation session.
3. Any and all comments or suggestions from Instructors are welcome and encouraged. Our goal is to continuously evaluate and improve the Peer Observation Program.

## F. Confidentiality

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Peer observers agree to maintain confidentiality regarding each observation conducted; all subsequent follow-up discussions for each observation; any feedback exchanged as part of each observation; and feedback received from the observed instructor regarding the observer or the process. Observers will discuss the specifics of the observation and/or report with KMREP program staff. Observers agree to refrain from discussion of observation specific information with other instructors, students, and parties not associated with the KMREP program.