

Process Observation Template

Process observation is a direct observation of frontline staff performing a specific process. The use of a standardized tool allows the observer to collect important information about a process and/or identify deviations. Process observation can be used to identify barriers in operationalizing a new process, assess compliance, and is part of a sustainability plan.

A process observation tool should be based on a process map or other detailed process for performing a task. For very complex processes, focus on a specific department or singular area of the process (i.e., for a discharge process, the observation could be on the role of case management, nurse discharge instructions, medication reconciliation, etc.) rather than the entire process. This Process Observation Template is designed for teams to customize their tool based on the process of focus.



Process observation is meant to be a **direct observation of the frontline staff**.
So, *Go to the Gemba*^{*} or where the work is happening!

Keys to Performing a Process Observation



- Clarify the purpose of the observation with the team.
- Create a standardized data collection tool based on key steps for your current process.
 - List steps in order.
 - Add additional indicators, such as time to perform step(s), wait times, etc.
- Train all observers to use the tool in the same way.
- Perform multiple observations.
 - Can be a sample, if you are dealing with a large volume.
 - Include all shifts.
 - Observe on various days of the week. Don't forget weekends!
 - Look for interrater reliability (the percentage of agreement among independent observers).

*"Go to the Gemba" is a Japanese term used by Six Sigma that means to go to the actual place or where the work is happening.



Process Observation Template

Process Observed: _____

Date: ___/___/___ Time: ___:___ Location: _____

Observer: _____

Step	Description	Staff Member	Compliance	Reason for Non-Compliance	Observations

This material was prepared by Health Services Advisory Group (HSAG), a Hospital Quality Improvement Contractor (HQIC) under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Views expressed in this material do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of CMS or HHS, and any reference to a specific product or entity herein does not constitute endorsement of that product or entity by CMS or HHS. Publication No. XS-HQIC-QI-07012022-01